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Fuck Around and Find Out

An Obituary for Victimhood

Flower Bomb

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2023

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mothers, or fathers...to anyone who dares to fuck around and find out.

As beautiful as the smoke of Tambora, life and love flow shapelessly, interwoven with the breath of wrath and death.

This text is dedicated to every individual, past and present, dead or alive, who bravely reclaims life by taking matters into their own hands.

is expressed. It is a civilizing mistake to treat safety and danger as if they can not intertwine.

Does a first kiss not detonate like a pipe bomb of emotion, releasing nervous tension and vibrating every blood cell in circulation? After smashing a window for the first time, does one not experience a flash flood of maniacal excitement that further suspends the gravity of fear? These are the emotions that blur the lines of violence and safety, leaving only an experience beyond the grasp of articulation.

Sometimes I feel as though words and language were constructed to compensate for the dying experience of physical connection. Brought on by the domesticating force of industrial society and technological intermediaries, we have become alienated, fearful strangers to primal intimacy – intimacy that transcends the representation of words and language. Just as emotions commit the crime of defying logic, a kiss commits indecent exposure through escaping the confines of definition.

Just as the climate-controlled safety of a house acts as a grave for the living, the wild world dances and dies within view from behind mesh screened windows. All the empty spaces separating the humanized animal from the wild are filled with the gospel of industrial progress and myths of species superiority.

I wonder if without social law and order people would be encouraged to reengage with their senses and survival instincts – to discover a self-love so vivid in the ecstasy of embracing one’s self as worthy of violent self-defense. In a dangerous space, there would be no victims – only independent individuals in full ownership of their lives, each peacefully existing with a mutual understanding of assured consequences.

To synthesize safety through violence, to become dangerous and reject the sterilizing sanctuary of victimhood, and to reject the narcotics of safety sold by those who offer protection in exchange for social conformity - is to present a warning... to the rapist, to the bully, to the misogynist, to the fascist, and to abusive lovers,

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night. The future was written. He was lucky to still be alive - and seemingly had no intentions on taking that gamble.

I suppose one might say that perhaps I could have been the unlucky one. What if I would have failed in my night time ambush attack and had been killed myself? I say to this: long live anarchy! My attack wouldn't be limited by the confines of a win or lose motive; my attack would be a wild reaction to any authority that attempted to subjugate me. So to win or lose is irrelevant. This type of attack in itself would embody an expression of pure negation – attacking despite the possibility of an unpleasant outcome. Sometimes death becomes an acceptable outcome in pursuit of expropriating life from abuse. The fear of losing a fight is the essence of enslavement, and the fear of death is a profitable social currency. To fight without a fear of losing or a fear of death is to set fire to the social contract of submission.

Some might interpret this text as a mere obsession with individualism or even machismo. But quite simply it is a response to the failed approach of relying on others, in particular groups, for protection: the Family, Community, and the State. And really though, let's not allow violence to be monopolized by masculinity any more than it always has been.

Becoming dangerous doesn't just mean accepting death rather than fearing it, or accepting the infinite potential for encountering violence rather than deflecting it with moralist naivety. Just as violence is interwoven within the fluidity of emotions, so is love, affection, and compassion. Like when the empowerment of recognizing one's own unique beauty has intercourse with firebombing the temple of standardized attraction. In the face of every form of authority, there is an individual who conceals an intimate communion of violence and love - a love for one's self against the violence masquerading as so-called safety within the Family, Community, and the State. Within every "crazy bitch", hoodrat, harlot, or trailer trash armed with an incendiary selflove, a secret language of fury

Fuck Around And Find Out

I have heard there are troubles of more than one kind.

Some come from ahead and some come from behind.

But I've bought a big bat. I'm all ready you see.

Now my troubles are going to have troubles with me!

-Dr. Suess

Here, I reflect on a specific memory that involves physical abuse and sexual assault...

...after years of accumulated anger and despair, something changed. The line between life and death blurred as I stood up holding a chair over my head and screamed incoherently at a man who, for years, used my body for both sexual assault and various forms of corporal punishment. This man who was supposed to be my father figure, my role model, my trusted best friend slowly backed away. Today was the day he lost all power and control over me. For the first time there was fear in HIS eyes instead of mine, and years of childhood mental and physical abuse would cease forever.

It wasn't until I became aware of my own violent potential that I experienced freedom. Despite being much smaller and weaker I was no longer afraid. A new confidence had consumed me – one that could never be inspired by the protection of my Family, Community, or the State. Even the threat of imprisonment couldn't subdue this de-ranked exhilaration. I waited. I waited for him to try again. I watched him poison himself with the usual gin, brandy, and beer combination, waiting for his drunken wrath to return. But it never did. My abandonment of victimhood hadn't gone unnoticed. Almost as if he could smell his own pool of blood from an impending ambush attack in the

America – the land of the free - where commercialized seasons greetings decorate the tarnished brass of senile happily-ever-after fairytales. A place where on any winter night a freezing alley could drain the warmth from a homeless body while a family somewhere else bathes in the luxurious spoils of upper-class materialism. For every noble consumer who separates their recyclables from trash, an oil tycoon continues ecological destruction with impunity.

Violence permeates industrial society on a day to day basis – a routine of cold and calculated brutality hidden all around in plain sight. Beneath the duvet of bright and technicolorful convenience – fast food, high-definition plasma screens, iPhones etc. - a violent reality is suppressed out of focus. Out of sight, out of mind is the mantra for many who parade blissful ignorance. But unlike a fairy-tale that ends with a closed book and a kiss good night, human monsters dominate the landscape. Their primary mode of expression is warfare, social control, and brute domination - a language of human-centric progress like a nightmare without a dreamer to awaken.

The violence of industrial society conceals itself within the layers of social deception and market manipulation - intentionally designed with carefully constructed imagery to portray a false sense of safety and positivity in the world: a blood diamond to symbolize love, bricks of cheese sold with the image of a laughing cow (a morbid irony that contrasts the reality of industrialized sexual assault through restraining devices and forceful artificial insemination). The violence of human progress can be seen in the reflection of catastrophic oil spills and species extinction, widespread air pollution and top-soil degradation from agriculture and deforestation. Marine debris and acidification from plastic and other industrial waste toxify oceans and other bodies of water around the globe.

And as if these things weren't alarming enough, nanotechnology - the furthest advancement in the history of biotechnological progress – continues its exploration into manipulating and dominating the smallest biological elements. Nanotechnology

has opened the door to capabilities including but not limited to carrying systems of social control directly into living bodies. And as with any other form of technological advancement, millions of non-human animals are taken from the wilderness and forced into laboratories for torturous testing and experimentation. All of this in the name of science – the ideological descendent of christianity – carrying with it the demand for mass worship and global expansion.

Almost all of this done in classified secrecy, largely unknown to the general population.

Under capitalism, safety is often prescribed in the form of censorship or concealment – an intentional information gap in order for the market to conceal the brutality of production. For example Ag-Gag laws created for the sole purpose of “gagging” potential whistleblowers and undercover vegan activists by punishing them for recording footage of animal agriculture. The market profits most from the consumer who is ignorantly safe from knowing exactly what happens behind the curtain – like the blood bath of animal cruelty in the name of human progress and supremacy.

At the same time, secrecy is upheld with the help of distractions created by the products themselves. This includes social trends of new high-tech gadgets, genetically engineered food, weight loss solutions, and so on. Foxconn—one of the world’s largest contract electronics manufacturers of Apple and HewlettPackard products – has suicide nets installed outside its buildings in response to its large number of workplace suicides. But in terms of social concern, the roar of conversations about the fastest network or newest iPhone ultimately sinks this tragic reality to the bottom of the algorithm.

Capitalism innovates the masterful ability to distort and conceal the violence behind every product on the market through years of advancing mass deception. Deflecting and distracting people from having a full understanding of how industrial society truly operates is essential for life-long consumer loyalty. Safety is used to subdue

timhood imprisons an individual with a false sense of safety that is dependent on their social status as a victim. This does not take into account the dangers that exist beyond the politics of victimhood, morality, or allyship. For some individuals or organized groups that want nothing less than violent control, glorified victimhood – especially that which outsources personal armed selfdefense – can be perceived as an easy target. The age-old approach of appealing to the morality or kindness of others is a noble one for sure, but not always practical. For power-hungry authoritarians, the idea of peace and harmony, empathy and innocence can never measure up to the desire for social control and domination.

The abolition of victimhood isn’t an erasure of oppression-based personal experiences or events. Nor is it a denial of the violence that exists all around. Instead I intend for the abolition of victimhood to be understood as a personal acknowledgement of individual power expropriated from the delusional constructs of safety - the Family, Community, and the State. And in leaving these authoritarian formations behind, I embrace an individualist self-love that experiences safety and violence as a feral coalescence rather than a civilized dualism.

37 year old Dennis Butler was shot and killed after attempting to shoot around 40 people attending a birthday party. After being confronted about speeding in an area where children were playing, Dennis Butler returned armed with an AR15-type rifle and began firing from his vehicle on the birthday-graduation party outside the apartment complex. A woman who, instead of running from the dangerous situation engaged and fired back multiple times killing Butler. She did not have any law enforcement background and she has not been publically identified.

in order to create positions of social power by taking advantage of well-meaning people.

Within the realm of identity politics, the victim relies on both the pity of individuals belonging to a guilty or oppressor identity category, and unity with other victims in order to complete the circle of Community. The victimist approach attempts to find freedom and safety in this Community where those who are considered to be most marginalized are offered the most support and safety, guarded by those who have successfully been approved as allies. But even here, victimhood encourages the dangerous delusion that all marginalized people are incapable of becoming controlling or dangerous themselves. Similar to Family, Community, and State, when safety and trust are unequivocally put into the concept of victim, this label can be used by those who seek to exploit the weakness found in placing identity over experience.

It is not uncommon to see how victimhood is used to deceive or manipulate others. In these particular cases, the strength of the victimist narrative is based less on actual events and more on one's ability to guilt and silence skeptics. This is done best when identity politics are used. A common trend is the use of marginalized identity to place one claiming to be the victim beyond criticism or reproach. This authoritarian tactic coupled with the compliance of those too cowardly or simply unwilling to critically examine these dynamics ultimately allows an authoritarian so-called victim the power to enact top-down violence on anyone of their choosing. Since victim itself implies innocence, challenging the narrative of someone identifying as a victim often leads to an overwhelming backlash from more people even further outside of the situation.

Despite the model and idea of victimhood being the focus in many activist circles, the victimist approach to safety is limited by the fact that not everyone is sympathetic, or shares a common view of what constitutes abuse, accountability, or even victimhood itself. Victimhood is granted safety and protection only by those who subscribe to its meaning. Similar to Family, Community, and State, vic-

concern with manipulation, and fear is used to gain positions of power - and even motivate more consumerism.

In terms of social safety most people living in the United States have very little idea how dangerous the world around them really is. Between mainstream news and the internet, the amount of danger and violence in everyday life is often under-represented due to under-exposure. There are beatings, sexual assaults, and killings that go undetected every day. Behind every recreational drug bought and sold in America is a bloody power struggle between competing cartels fighting for control of narco empires. There are workplace related deaths intentionally hidden from public knowledge, and consumer deaths at the base of almost every product recall. In addition to plane, train, and automobile fatalities there is the death and destruction of wild habitats in order to maintain the necessary infrastructure for these forms of transportation to operate in the first place.

All this violence woven into the fabric of industrial society, exacerbated by technological expansion. All of this violence despite the promised safety and protection offered by the Family, the Community, and by the State.

*Here's a little song I wrote
You might want to sing it note for note
Don't worry, be happy
In every life we have some trouble
But when you worry you make it double
Don't worry, be happy
Don't worry, be happy now
- Bobby McFerrin*

The Family, Community, and State: Illusions of Safety

The Family

Kiranjit Ahluwalia is an Indian woman who came to international attention after burning her abusive husband to death in 1989 in the UK. Kiranjit looked to her family for help but was reprimanded and told it was a matter of family honour that she remain with her husband. She attempted to run away from home but was found by her husband and brought back. One night in the spring of 1989, after 10 years of domestic abuse including physical violence, food deprivation, and marital rape, Kiranjit fetched some petrol and caustic soda mixture from the garage and mixed it to create napalm. She poured it over the bed while her husband lay asleep and set it alight.

"I decided to show him how much it hurt. At times I had tried to run away, but he would catch me and beat me even harder. I decided to burn his feet so he couldn't run after me... I wanted to give him a scar like those he had given me, to have him suffer pain as I had."

(Generally speaking the word "Family" is used in a variety of ways. Since most people are familiar with "Family" in the nuclear sense (as opposed to "chosen family"), I will go ahead and use "Family" throughout this text.)

The Family is considered by most to be the primary center of comfort, love, and support. The Family is the first collection of faces a child experiences and becomes familiar with, learns to accept and bonds with. This bonding through familiarity helps develop a sense of reliability and security. As children we're taught to unconditionally love our Family members, accept them for who they are, and

Whenever there is conflict between two individuals, the first question people ask is who is the "victim"? Based on this victim/non-victim interpretation of a situation, people make moralist judgements as to who was in the right and who was in the wrong. This binary interpretation of conflict is beneficial for the Family, the Community, and the State – allowing for a quick and easy ruling followed by a set of standardized consequences. This routine process pressures people into suppressing and governing their instinctual actions within conflict in an attempt to minimize any negative perception from others. I believe this is one of many aspects that play a major role in conditioning people to rely on authority for conflict resolution. The relevance of victimhood is only known when resolutions are outsourced and subsequently carried out by those not directly involved. When this becomes a procedural norm it can only serve to materialize and enforce the idea that individuals are powerless in solving their own conflicts.

In addition to creating a habitual co-dependency, this actively prevents an individual from developing contextual flexibility when determining a response, as well as necessary self-defense and independent decision making skills. Leftism time and time again reproduces this by promoting the group-mentality of identity politics as a universal response to all social problems.

Due to the recognition of victim implying a need for outside support or protection, a savior complex becomes necessary and is found at the root of all forms of statism. Victimhood also seems to rely heavily on the acceptance of moralism for its power and influence. The word victim itself carries the loaded connotation of innocence which is used to imply good and innocent, as opposed to guilty and bad. Today, the social status of victim often receives an abundance of social love, care, and support. And while these expressed forms of unity and healing are noble, they are also vulnerable to exploitation. For some, social deception and manipulation are used as a practical pursuit toward recognition as a victim

every form of enslavement. It pumps blood and sweat like crude oil, giving life to the logic of control and domination. The fear of violence and death coerces submission to the Family, Community, and the State – as well as any other social relationships that deplete self-determination and independence.

If I accept my death as a real inevitable conclusion that awaits me, then there is no reason for the fear of it to impede my embrace of life currently within my grasp. And if I accept violence - not just as an element present in all surroundings, but also as an internal element within myself - then I realize there is no weapon more qualified than I to defend my life.

Abolishing Victimhood

'We are Accelerationists. We want the U.S. to burn'

- The Atomwaffen Division (AWD), known as the National Socialist Order (NSO), an accelerationist neo-Nazi militant organization responsible for killings and sabotage in the United States and beyond, with “cells” committed to using violence and chaos to speed up worldwide governmental and societal collapse, with the goal of taking over and establishing a fascist new world order based on white supremacy.

Some of the most dangerous people are the ones who have a strong awareness of how dependent many are on institutional infrastructure. Where there is the illusion of safety, especially that which is granted by external protection, there is the danger of such external protection failing. When personal responsibility is outsourced, one's ability to react in dangerous situations is diminished by a blanket of inexperience. In order for the idea of so-called safe spaces to truly be safe, all individuals within such a space must be as dangerous as any potential threat outside of that space.

most importantly - recognize their authority above all and any outsiders: Family comes first. But what is the root of this unquestionable obedience to familial authority? Is it fear of abandonment? Is it love? What is “love” if only a bond characterized and defined by mere biological significance? Is it an empty expression merely guided by moral values assigned to those of blood relation? Is this the same love expressed by those who declare their unwavering obedience to God, Government, and Country? Is it possible that the word love is really only used to disguise coerced obedience to Family? I ask these questions not because I don't believe genuine love can exist between Family members, but because there are so many instances where love is merely performance demanded by social pressure. And these experiences and the people who have them remain marginalized, buried, and silenced in the name of preserving the illusion of a happy, ordinary household.

For those who are willing to dig deep enough, beneath the limitations of class identity, there is a shared childhood experience to be uncovered. Whether a child is raised in poverty or riches, how often does Family act as an adjective for a hierarchical, authoritarian model of interaction between a child and those within the same blood line?

The Family is the primary domesticating force behind almost every child within industrial society. Within the confines of every household, the child learns to depend on the masters of the house for food and resources. Born of this dependency is an emotional attachment that ultimately convinces a child to trust in these masters for protection. Along with resources and protection a child also depends on these masters to know the way of the world. These masters certainly do have experience with life and therefore plenty to offer – including how best to assimilate.

It is within the Family that the bulk of cultural, traditional, and moral conditioning takes place. Quite often a Family asserts its own personalized values borrowed from the broader civilized way of life. This includes (but is not limited to) the enforcement of so-

cially constructed identities, religious indoctrination, dress codes, and other social norms. The Family discourages uniqueness, bodily autonomy, and any and all independent thinking that is considered a threat to its status of power. And any child resisting any of these demands or conditioning is subjected to a number of different verbal and/or physical consequences.

So is it really a surprise that there is an enormous amount of stress and anxiety when an individual expresses personal changes that stray from the Family's value system? From the fearful experience of coming out against heteronormativity, to introducing romantic lovers who fail the familial approval process, the Family ultimately remains the judge, jury and sometimes even a deadly executioner.

What happens when the natural growth and intellectual development of a child takes the form of rebellion against the customs of the Family who, by societal norms, still maintain social and legal control over them? What happens when an individual is sexually assaulted or physically abused by a member of the Family, and the rest of the Family decides to look the other way? Or when a parental guardian commits an individual to a psychiatric prison – or any prison for that matter? All too often the excuse, “I did it out of love” or “It’s for your own good” justifies the incarceration or punishment of the youth.

This brings me to my main point: what happens when the Family is not safe? Since the State upholds adult supremacist values that strip the youth of bodily autonomy, escape or running away often ends with legal consequences. Is it not a form of violence to medicate a child against their wishes - subjecting their brain chemistry to potentially life-long negative side effects - all in the name of behavioral conformity? Despite the re-occurring tragedy of children killed by those they entrust with protection (including the patriarch committing fullblown Familicide), the concept of Family is still upheld as a glorified pillar of society.

The individuals who co-depend on the group for safety and well-being are not in positions to utilize violence themselves. Therefore, utilizing personal violence as a response to harm continues to remain a scary, unfamiliar approach.

Utilizing violence requires an individual to overcome not only the fear of acting without permission from the Family, Community, or State, but also the fear of accepting death as a possible consequence of such independence. The lack of familiarity with violence only exacerbates the fear of death – something people are raised to rely on the group for protection from. Is it any surprise that despite the overplayed slogans of “smash the State” many self-identified anarchists are fearful of weaponry that would (at the very least) help achieve that goal?

For example the fear of guns, knives, and physical confrontation has had a paralyzing effect on the majority of anti-authoritarians. Today it's more common for self-proclaimed anarchists to rejoice in internet mockery aimed at armed right-wingers and fascists rather than take seriously their (the fascists) tactical strength and advantage. I feel this might also be a contributing factor to the fear of civilization collapse that I mentioned earlier. I think it is reasonable to assume that many self-identifying anarchists currently rely on the Commune or Community model for protection against the inevitable bloody power struggle that will commence after a collapse. If not the Commune or Community as a social body itself, perhaps a statist apparatus of an armed militia. And it would be interesting to see what political ideologies fill these power vacuums, and how compatible they will be with any anti-authoritarian elements.

What I find most important is the theory and practice of violence as an accepted element of life, not only environmentally but also accepted as a useful tool when necessary. My own understanding of accepting violence is similar to my acceptance of the possibility of death. I personally feel that the fear of violence and death, when weaponized against the individual, is the heart of

Just as I view people as unique individuals, I view personal conflict, emotions, and communication as unique as well. When it comes to conflict resolution, I believe it is common for many to have difficulty communicating anger and confronting the source of violence. I believe this difficulty is rooted by the same disconnection I mentioned before. There are external ideological systems in place that govern social behavior and are ultimately held in place to discourage handling conflict directly. For example the Family, Community, and State proliferate the idea that physical confrontation or violence is unhealthy. When an individual responds to conflict with violence or displays violent behavior, that individual is subjected to being labelled and lectured by a member of authority – including those of psychiatric authority. If there is a “pattern of violent behavior” the individual is considered mentally ill or unstable and in need of rehabilitation. Under different circumstances - say, circumstances where people were not habituated to rely on external authority or institutions for problem solving - people displaying authoritative, violent patterns of behavior may, for better or worse, encounter more direct and immediate consequences.

But when handling issues in the Family, Community, and State, only those in charge of these groups are socially allowed to monopolize the use of force – even if this force is considered violent. And even if this force is violent and is displayed in a pattern, (for example routine corporal punishment by the Family, beatings and killings by the State, etc.) it is still considered legitimate. This is where the line between individual and group becomes more apparent. Violence - even as a pattern of behavior displayed by the Family, the Community, and the State - is ultimately moralized and monopolized by those in power. Since an individual is considered powerless in the eyes of society, an individual is not allowed to utilize violence in response to conflict - let alone understand violence as a product of emotion rather than an external concept to be owned by those in positions of authority.

How many people, especially those with anti-authoritarian views, live double lives in order to co-exist with their Family? Due in part to the artificiality of the bonds that structure a Family, genuine trust between members is often difficult to maintain long-term. Without tip-toeing secrecy, those with anti-authoritarian views and lifestyles risk a trusted Family member becoming an informant for the State. It is not unheard of for Family members to snitch on close siblings - either due to political differences or financial incentive. I think a big reason why the State looks at Family members for potential informants is because they assume the target of their investigation will be more vulnerable with those typically trusted the most - Family members. And if the State knows that the average Family most likely upholds capitalist, moralist values, then the Family is considered a reliable source for cooperating and turning over a targeted relative. This reality can be verified with the sheer number of relatives that call the police on one another – despite the very real risk of a police-related fatal escalation.

While there certainly are positive examples of supportive, genuinely loving nuclear families, a Family having a positive or negative relationship between members isn't the only purpose of this critique. At the root, society refuses to allow an individual the choice to decide between living with the Nuclear Familial structure or roaming free to discover life independently. The Family also represents the consolidation of capital and resources - providing some financial advantage to remaining loyal. One can observe how class, continuity, and the number of Family members not only influences consumerist spending in society - but multiplies it for each individual. For example, typically speaking, care and love are measured by the amount of materialism gifted for one another during holidays and other traditional cultural events. Families often use holidays as an opportunity to compete with one another over whose Family purchased the most amount of gifts. Similar to the desire for a storybook wedding, people desperately

attempt to create a storybook Family – often upholding impossible standards of perfection and financial prestige that lead to tension and stress. And when this tension and stress leads to struggles with intoxication or addiction for example, those struggling are often scolded rather than supported.

Families in poverty experience the blunt force of judgemental shame and ridicule during seasonal holidays. This is often due to limited financial accessibility to materialism, creating a subsequent perception of lovelessness and carelessness in the Family. The pain and isolation experienced by those who are houseless or without Family is compounded by holidays due to this same measurement and sense of personal worth.

Another form of worth a Family member is often measured by is productive worth. How an individual contributes to society reflects a reputation-based value that represents the Family. In addition to the first layer of moral conditioning by the Family, an individual is required to submit to the education-industrial complex for further indoctrination. Without an education - an abstract standardization of intelligence used to measure ones intellectual worth - one is ridiculed and mocked for failing to intellectually qualify in becoming a productive member of society. Consequently a so-called uneducated individual is subjected to mockery and ridicule, on top of being considered an embarrassment to the Family. The Family, in the interest of its reputation, often distances itself from these individuals either by placing them in institutions or locking them away in rooms, like being incarcerated in ones own home.

Like a cog in this machine called Society, an individual Family member represents a value reflected by their productivity in society. This value is a contribution to the collective legacy and reputation of the Family. The individual will either be celebrated as successful or shunned as a disappointment.

The Family plays a vital role in the reproduction of society on a micro level. Bonded by blood along with the domesticating effect of a co-dependent attachment, every individual encounters the op-

empted from being potential predators, authoritarians, and manipulators with patterns of abuse. By this logic, all people socially assigned as white, cishet, male are inherently predators, authoritarians, and manipulators with patterns of abuse and therefore morally qualified to be recipients of violence. If an anarchist project truly insists on an aim of total liberation, then the framework of locking individuals within their identities – and then moralizing violence based on those identities – must be abolished altogether since such a framework would only invert oppressive power rather than destroy it.

My refusal to moralize violence or non-violence is based on an understanding that self-defense and retaliatory responses to violence are subjective experiences. Generally speaking there is no consensus held by all when determining any inherent truth to violence and non-violence. I believe a pretty good source for violence or non-violence being perceived as morally right or wrong can be found within propaganda generated by both the Church and State. Both entities maintain heavy influence on many peoples perception of violence as good or bad. Personally, I feel violence can be used for so-called good or bad, or be considered so-called good or bad itself, depending on subjective opinion. Since I don't personally believe in good or bad as universal truths, I personally don't view violence in terms of good or bad. For me, there are times when violence is practical, and other times when it is more practical to be non-violent. And each situation will be interpreted differently depending on who is present. For example, I consider poverty to be an undesirable, institutionally systemic form of violence. But to many capitalists, the violence of poverty is a social necessity that comes with the desired effect of motivating wage-slavery. Due to anthropocentric morality, the brutal death of millions of non-human animals in slaughterhouses is often trivialized due to generalized apathy. But the violence of a single school shooting causes nationwide outrage.

One of the many problems with mass society is the organizing of people based on systematized thinking. This type of thinking upholds a binary interpretation of reality used to standardize responses to harm. And like every other form of standardization, there are limitations that arise when ideological rigidity meets the chaos of complex life. For example in some situations, a non-violent approach to conflict can result in an increasingly violent repeat of that conflict. So one might respond with violence as a practical method of eliminating that conflict. In other situations, violence may lead to an increase in violence. So a non-violent approach to that violence might lead to a peaceful outcome or deescalation.

The problem with the violence and non-violence debate is that at its core exists a desperate attempt to standardize, or universally apply one or the other to all situations. In my opinion, this effectively limits the scope of conflict resolution by encouraging the intervention of a rigid, dogmatic way of thinking - rather than allowing for the ungoverned fluidity of reaction between individuals in conflict. Despite controlling attempts by the Family, the Community, or the State (and the Church) the nature of conflict resolution is far too complex and subjective for the binary programming of moralist dogmatism. Identity politics plays a role in attempting to control violence by moralizing it based on identity.

Within anarchist spaces, violent retaliation or self-defence is largely condemned when exhibited by anyone assigned an oppressor identity at birth. But physical violence or threats of such in response to, for example, so-called white dreads is acceptable – as long as it comes from someone identified as oppressed. Aside from the immediate question of how a hairstyle can be materially oppressive to anyone, why is morality or identity politics applied to the fluidity of conflictbased response in the first place? This moralizing of violence as good or bad based on identity allows identity to permanently incarcerate all individuals within a hierarchy of social stratification. This also perpetuates the assumption of identity-based innocence; that all individuals of color are categorically ex-

tion to either remain obedient to Family values or become insubordinate by merely asserting their independent thinking. For better or for worse, each decision ultimately determines the longterm growth and potential of that individual.

The Community

“My whole life I have suffered from poverty and have faced many disappointments and pain, like a man is used to. That is why I want to make other people happy and want them to feel at home.”...

...“I tell you, I don’t care how many screams you hear, I don’t care how many anguished cries...death is a million times preferable to 10 more days of this life. If you knew what was ahead of you– if you knew what was ahead of you, you’d be glad to be stepping over tonight.”

- Jim Jones

Jim Jones is known to be the cult leader who spearheaded the Jonestown Massacre. But who interests me the most for this topic isn’t Jim Jones but rather the Community of people whose forfeiture of individually independent critical thinking would eventually lead them to a communalized death trap.

Whenever I hear anti-authoritarians use the word Community, the first question I always ask is who makes up this Community? Does this Community include police? Or even secret snitches and informants? Do all the people in this Community know they’re being spoken on behalf of? Are all of their views in general (and specifically about authority) uniform?

Years ago, I attempted to organize my so-called Community. As if the idea of organizing other people wasn’t embarrassing enough (and for ever thinkin’ people needed to be organized in the first place), I realized not everyone livin’ in my hood shared my vision of anti-capitalist liberation. As a matter of fact not very many at all.

After a while I realized Community, even in the radical sense, was simply too vague and too disingenuous to be useful as a descriptor. But today many people from all over the political spectrum use Community to advocate programs, campaigns, and movements. I mean shit, the probable reason for this seems pretty obvious. The word Community carries along with it heavy social influence – and intimidation.

I think it is safe to assume that by now, many anti-authoritarians have had some experience with how the concept of Community has become a popular tool for social control and manipulation – especially by those who have less interest in genuine liberation, and more interest in gaining social popularity to better conceal authoritarian objectives.

For example if an individual is perceived to be speaking for, or acting on behalf of a group of people - or in this case the Community - they are less likely to be confronted or criticized. I believe this is partially due to the element of group intimidation being brought into the equation, with the Community acting as a force multiplier. Confrontation with, or criticism of, a Community member is often perceived as confrontation with, or criticism of, the Community. Similar to the State, it is more intimidating to confront a group than a single individual, since the consequences are multiplied by the number of people in the group.

In addition, all too often the so-called Community protects its founder(s) with celebrity status and special attention. This is not a coincidence but generally the logical result of an individual (or few individuals) assuming the position of spokesperson, and claiming to speak for all. But quite frequently, the Community really only consists of a few people whose views are in alignment with the spokesperson. Anyone else belonging to this so-called Community is treated as nothing more than an invisible force – many heads without faces, whose opinions are assumed to all be identical.

Those who act as the spokesperson for their Community (or speaking for other individuals or communities) tend to recreate a

experience with confronting conflict? Could this explain why the leftist response to conflict is often to push it elsewhere through banning – a form of statism used to protect the borders of so-called safe spaces?

In society the concept of safety nurtures co-dependency by normalizing the recruitment of others for conflict resolution. In my opinion, the concept of safety is at the core of domesticated alienation from the wild, leaving a void to be filled by any civilizing process of specialization or agency representation. Safety often serves as an excuse to observe from afar rather than interact with directly, to emotionally disengage and instead cling to apathy, or to trivialize harm and live in silent subjugation. From this perspective, safety is a socially constructed space of denial that exists between acceptance and the infinite possibility of danger, between provocation and primal reaction

Perhaps the illusion of safety or of a so-called safe space is at the core of the Family, Community, or State. And maybe this illusion has influence in continuing the preservation of these groups. If one were to abandon the illusion of social safety and accept danger as an inevitable element of life, safety becomes as useless as every law, morality, and social grouping created to uphold its mythical power.

Violence vs Non-Violence: A False Dichotomy

In the Family, Community, and State, individual violence as a response to harm is moralized as an inexcusable negativity. Instead, violence is deemed generally acceptable when used as a form of punishment - approved and executed by the group. But everyone experiences and responds to violence differently. What might feel violent or abusive for one person might not for another. So when deciding a response or punishment, who would know better how to respond than the individual directly involved?

ditions the surrendering of one's physical and mental ability to solve problems autonomously. As personal time and freedom are increasingly surrendered to wage-slavery, the capacity to handle conflict and stress narrows, making the State something like a fast-food version of conflict resolution (well, with the exception of some court proceedings that go on long after emotions have settled). And as a result, comfort and safety become associated with the idea of calling 911.

Society, like a prison, offers safety from other inmates, broken and desperate for freedom. Police are the prison guards of society, maintaining order and on alert for any potential unified rebellion. Prison cannibalism is what I consider violence that occurs within a social population subjected to confinement. We can see everywhere around us the violence that results when a dense population of people are forced to live in the stress and misery of such controlling conditions. Is it really surprising that people look to the guards for protection from the desperate – or when people look to the police for comfort, support, and protection within a violent society?

I believe this is why so many people fear the collapse of civilization. This includes the leftists who have yet to acknowledge and admit their own subconscious desire for Statism – for the familial and communal guards who will protect them from those savage greenies who desire a world without law and order, without societies or civilizations.

But I ask, protection at what cost? The group – whether it be the Family, Community, or State – utilizes the dualism of violence and safety as a method for social control and manipulation. Individuals offer themselves as obedient members in exchange for safety. And so all around one can see so-called safety in the form of a life-time of surveillance and slavery.

But really though, what is safety? Is it a civilized form of cognitive dissonance in reaction to the myriad of danger present in a civilized society, so convoluted that it overwhelms primal survival instincts? Or is it a distant relative of fear born from a diminished

microcosm of industrial society: them at the top surrounded by the few they are popular with, above all others whose views and opinions are treated as uniform.

Despite the vehement denials of such hierarchical formations within many communes or Communities, these formations are always exposed when such authoritarians surface in response to a perceived threat of rebellion within or against the group. Often these individuals are the loudest, the most well-versed in their condescension and are the most clever at portraying rebels as unreasonable and undesirable. This plays out most frequently in anarchist spaces with those who weaponize lowest common denominator identity politics to paint rebels as oppressors. By using inflammatory words like nazi or oppressor to label any anarchist who openly criticizes or disagrees with their authoritarianism, these individuals seek to stir up the most extreme emotional reactions from their followers.

Over long periods of time these type of (authoritarian) individuals enjoy a community-backed power trip that impacts the opinions of others in all social situations. Some social situations where this type of power trip also has heavy influence include platonic, romantic or sexual conflicts.

For liberals and radicals alike, accountability processes are a common go-to for community-based conflict resolution. One immediately noticeable problem with accountability processes is that there rarely seems to be a general consensus on how to hold them without reproducing statism under a different name. This is one of the main reasons why so many of them fail. Every individual has a unique relationship with, and definition of, abuse. Therefore any standardized method of conflict resolution is destined to fail those who have different ideas of what resolution looks like for their specific conflict.

In addition to this, how often, for example, does the truth of an incident between two romantic individuals quickly become distorted, exaggerated, manipulated, or ultimately too blurred to dis-

cuss when turned into a public affair? Historically how often have private conflicts passed through the community rumor mill, leading to unjust lynch-mob attacks and beatings? Even the most modern, highly evolved court systems today have a pattern of inaccurately interpreting events, leading to wrongful imprisonment and even executions.

These matters become further complicated when Community is defined by the over-simplicity of identity politics. If anti-authoritarians who take antioppression seriously are to understand that abuse can be inflicted upon anyone by anyone, what use is an analysis of identity – other than to make identity-based assumptions about the situation and those involved? While identity-based harm and abuse most definitely do happen, not all abuse or conflict relate to identity. Yet how often do complex, personal narratives of abuse, violence, or safety get invalidated simply because they don't fit the binary rigidity of a oppressed and oppressor framing? Rather than allowing these relationships to safety and abuse be defined contextually within each unique situation, those with identity-based social clout often have the upper hand in applying definitions that sway public opinion in their favor.

Despite the failure of numerous accountability processes and their inability to resolve conflicts, heal, and assure safety, many radicals continue to rely on them. Similar to the continued support and desire for police protection and court systems (despite persistent corruption, brutality, and the colonial origins of such institutions). Community is continuously upheld by many radicals as the mystical provider of both safety and protection. Similar to religion, Community quite often plays out as a group of followers who protect those with social power. Those with the most social power are the ones who preach the gospel of Community the best.

I can't help but view Community and the State as two sides of the same coin: Apparitions of the mind construed in a desperate attempt to eliminate violence with the assumption that conflict can

of statism stumble over their excuses made in support of almost every racially motivated police shooting - justified in the name of the greater good of society - they also continue to concede power to police as problem solvers and protection.

To the general public, the police are often viewed as necessary, uniformed vigilantes with tough jobs. Under capitalism, they exist to protect the things that people wage-slave so hard for. There are also murderers and rapists, and the police, who monopolize force, have a better capacity to confront them than the average unarmed citizen. Therefore, from that limited perspective, it is easy for people to rationalize and accept police and the State as necessary. But who really are the police? And why have people collectively allowed them a monopoly of deadly force?

In the early days when America was first settled, the development of police or law enforcement began as a local responsibility. Fearing uprisings, robberies, and other criminal activity in the newly established colonies, night watchers were created to stand guard. While night watchers patrolled the northern colonies, groups of people organized into slave patrols in the southern colonies. Slave patrols were created with the purpose of controlling the slave population, punishing any that attempted to rebel or run away. Ultimately, these slave patrols were vital to maintaining capitalist order.

After years of normalizing the subordination of any and all people living on this colonized land, is it any surprise that an individual's sense of power and safety would become outsourced? As these slave patrols and night watchers combined, becoming an all-encompassing monopoly of deadly force, a dividing line becomes more apparent between what is now called the State and the people. Equipped with surveillance, digital tracking devices, technologically-advanced weaponry, and thousands of members, the State enjoys total control over every aspect of one's life.

This control isn't just monitoring capabilities, maintaining order, and warfare though. It is also a psychological control that con-

validation of others. Ironically some even go back to wage-slavery for a sense of purpose or meaning.)

In terms of individual (dis)empowerment and victimhood, the relationship between individual and Community is similar to that of a follower of Christianity and God. As long as victimhood serves as an excuse to forfeit personal responsibility, Community remains a god-like authority - judge, jury, and executioner.

But not all individuals remain loyal disciples of Community. For years, individuals have broken away from social groupings, living out the rest of their lives alone and fulfilled. Their stories are weeded out of history in the revisionist pursuit of presenting all 'human' animals as social beings. When an individual decides the so-called Community or group is no longer desired or necessary for survival, a life of chaotic unpredictability becomes the expression for limitless potential - a vocabulary without syllables like an explosion without a beginning or an end.

The State

"To serve and protect"

Joe Arridy was a 23 year old who was falsely convicted, and executed for the 1936 rape and murder of 15 year old Dorothy Drain. Joe Arridy was manipulated by the police to make a false confession due to his difficulties with comprehension. He was said to have had an IQ score of 46, and the mind of a six-year-old. Despite having no physical evidence against him, Joe Arridy was put on death row where he often played with a toy train, given to him by prison warden Roy Best. On January 6th 1939 Joe Arridy was executed in a gas chamber.

In my opinion, the biggest illusion of safety existing in society today is that which is manufactured by the State. While supporters

be controlled. And in doing so unexpectedly creating more conflict by introducing a dualism: danger and safety. Both Community and State propagate the persuasive savior-complex of hope, love, and unity. Both are built on the assumption that individuals on their own or even in small groups are incapable of surviving independently, and therefore always in need of governance as "protection". Both encourage fear rather than individual empowerment.

In addition to personal reasons many may have for their continued self-sacrifice and worship of Community, I believe many self-described anarchists also continue to have difficulty locating the authoritarianism inherent to formally organized groupings. Similar to the State - and every other formally organized group - corruption and exploitation of social power is inevitable within any large body of people - especially where the promise of safety is used as a tool for accumulating membership.

For example if the objective of the so-called Community (or even commune) is power in numbers, what is to stop this same power from expanding, dominating, and controlling like every colony that became a nation-state? What is to stop this Community from becoming a repressive body similar to the State? Is it a few individuals who disagree with it and in an attempt to stop it, are quickly slaughtered? With any group whose power lay in membership, isn't it reasonable to consider the possibility of corruption - even within a selfproclaimed anti-authoritarian group? The group is always vulnerable to either becoming weaponized by a leader or becoming a lynch-mob that ultimately dominates and controls any dissenting individual within and outside of itself.

What creates the conditions for this obsession with Community? Is the Community really safe?

In addition to receiving social capital for claiming to represent a Community, it's also much easier to find comfort and validation for one's views when they are perceived to represent those of a majority. My guess is that this has a lot to do with the conditioned fear of thinking and acting independently in a society that requires

collective subordination to function. Independent thinking and acting takes courage in a society where people are both peer pressured and rewarded to assimilate.

Along with the individual comfort offered by allocating self-responsibility to a Community comes the surrendering of independent thinking. Rather than thinking for ones' self, one instead only thinks for others – fulfilling a circular social co-dependency that becomes the primary communal bond.

In my opinion this type of co-dependency materializes in ways that ultimately coerce mutual aid. For example, people who lack independent motivation require the time and energy of others in order to feel motivated to do things – sometimes even basic forms of self-care. And rather than taking on the personal responsibility to develop independent thinking and determination, they blame their lack of motivation on anyone who prefers to focus on their own personal objectives. This pattern of blaming others is both a result, and perpetuation of, what I call “circular disempowerment”. Circular disempowerment is where personal safety and well-being are not self-created but outsourced as a responsibility of others who, after placing their own needs and objectives second, become exhausted and subsequently dependent on others as well. I believe that this is the most effective weapon used to discourage personal independence. Similar to an assembly line, personal responsibility is watered down and spread thin across a line of people. This certainly does not pertain to those with physical or mental limitations, whose ability to survive relies on trusted friends or loved ones. What I am critiquing here is not the practice of mutual aid but rather the obligatory, compulsary ideology-based motivation for co-dependency, which in my opinion subordinates individual potential in the name of preserving communal power.

One can look at society today and observe how self-reliance and independent thinking become increasingly unnecessary and seemingly laborous as people become more dependent on group-think - as well as more fearful of speaking critically against it. I believe

this fear is at the core of every group – the Movement, Society, Community, The Nation, Collective, etc - that maintains power as a whole despite internal conflict. This fear also empowers the group to dominate and control any elements perceived as threatening to its collectivist authority. Therefore personal resentment is bottled up and suppressed by those who fear any number of social consequences.

When safety and well-being are transformed from self-driven instincts to communal currency, a new hierarchy develops between the individual and the Community.

Disempowered by normalized co-dependency, the need for Community is merely a continuation of the same propaganda taught by the State: the individual is weak, impoverished, and powerless without the guidance of a group. Capitalism and Community discourage genuine individualism with the same subliminal mantra; join Us or suffer alone. Community is romanticized as the embodiment of power and safety, but in terms of individual power and safety it is quite often the opposite; the power of the Community rests not within each individual but within the level of conformity and submission of each individual to the group. The most amount of safety for each individual comes in exchange for the least amount of independent thinking - a subtle but powerful social contract that ultimately discourages members from exploring lifestyles that may wither away their loyalty. The long term effects of this collectivist protection is a degeneration of personal responsibility including emotional selfneglect and debilitating co-dependency. It is no coincidence that these things are also integral to the full-functioning of present day society. (I can't help but mention how some who have liberated themselves from wage-slavery come to find themselves struggling to create their own experiences. This is probably because the group-think within industrial society is so structurally powerful and influential that independent thinking and self-worth seem impossible without the