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## EDITORIAL: CAN WE BE WATER?

月白山

I'm hoping this text is going to be short. I don't have the time, because I simultaneously have to work multiple jobs to make a living. I don't have the energy, because I am weary from working the work, from dividing myself to contribute to various struggles in different places where I have lived and made friends. I'm exhausted because at the same time I feel responsible for all the disasters around me.

A schizophrenia.

I don't think I contribute to the problem at large, or at least I try to resist what

the system dictates as much as possible while drawing my own paths and acting collectively within my capacity. I'm engaged. I try to follow as much as possible what is happening around me, the political decisions about the contexts I am in. Through research, conversation, and improvised modes of action, I participate in places and with those of whom I feel a part. I feel I am part of different 'we's.

Who is we?

Why should we be in solidarity? And why should we align?

What is to be done?

Between 2013, during the Gezi Park Movement in Istanbul, and 2019, during the Anti-ELAB (Extradition Law Amendment Bill) Movement in Hong Kong, it was much easier for me to identify the 'we' at large—the issues we dealt with and were in solidarity about. But the same we acts and reacts differently in the transformed contexts now, so much that we fall into conflict with our own positions. There is our first buzzword: situatedness. Emphasis on locality and situatedness intensifies difference—the fact that our values don't apply in the same way across different contexts. Think about ➡ 24



## ESTALLIDO SOCIAL 19.

SÁNCHEZ g.

### I. ¿Cuando se abrirán las grandes alamedas?

**1.** Mi madre colgaba un retrato de Allende en cada casa que vivimos. En Miraflores, en Agua Santa, en las Siete Hermanas. **2.** Era su fotografía más célebre: gruesas gafas de acetato negro, pelo engominado hacia atrás, un limpio bigote gris. Parecía más la imagen de un burócrata que la de un héroe revolucionario. **3.** Al ver hoy ese retrato, pienso que la tragedia de Allende sintetiza la tragedia de Chile y la de todo el continente. Un conflicto no resuelto entre los pueblos que habitaban el territorio y las potencias europeas que lo devastaron.<sup>1</sup> **4.** Por una razón que desconozco, los únicos pueblos que resistieron la salvaje ocupación, fueron las comunidades Mapuches que vivían en la Araucanía. Un extenso paraíso húmedo en el extremo austral del continente. **5.** Valparaíso fue la frontera norte de aquella nación Mapuche. Aquí coexistían con los márgenes meridionales del Imperio Inca. Para incas y españoles, esta fue una frontera hacia un sur indómito imposible de conquistar. **6.** Algo de esa sangre indígena resiste y florece en cada movilización del pueblo. **7.** La mayor movilización desde la vuelta a la democracia a principios de los noventa, comenzó en octubre del 2019. Luego de una semana de protestas y evasiones masivas por el alza en la tarifa del metro, el conflicto se agudizó, convirtiéndose en una protesta nacional masiva y transversal que se conoció como “Estallido Social”. **8.** Mientras en las calles la gente marchaba de a millones, en los barrios y en las casas, familias enteras niños y abuelos incluidos, asomados a puertas y ventanas golpeaban cacerolas como en los viejos tiempos de la dictadura. Una protesta pacífica contra el gobierno y sobretodo contra un neoliberalismo extremo que prometió felicidad y progreso y que por el contrario, solo había traído un abismo de desigualdad y un manto de tristeza que cubrió cada rincón. **9.** No es casualidad que Chile tenga una de las tazas de depresión más altas del planeta. Cerca de 16%

de los chilenos expresa sintomatología asociada a cuadros depresivos. En las marchas abundaban carteles como: “No era depresión, era capitalismo” o, “¿Estoy deprimida o simplemente soy latinoamericana? O, “Agárrate Piñera, se nos acabó la sertralina”. **10.** El Estallido Social tuvo lugar entre octubre del 2019 y marzo del 2020. Su saldo: 34+ muertos, 3300+ heridos, 400+ víctimas de trauma ocular. La policía disparó contra los cuerpos con total impunidad. **11.** Durante el Estallido Social la gente salió a marchar con banderas Wiphalas o con la bandera Mapuche, los símbolos patrios de Chile fueron usados por reaccionarios y gente de ultraderecha. Esto me devuelve al conflicto fundamental y a la figura de Allende. ¿Porqué la gente se identifica más con los pueblos ancestrales que con la idea de Chile que construyeron concienzudamente? **12.** Chile es el país que crearon los descendientes de españoles para seguir a cargo del territorio sin tener que comerciar solo con la corona. La independencia de Chile fue solo un cambio de administración para entrar en el libre mercado del capital a inicios del siglo XIX. El conflicto está intacto. **13.** Algo que siempre me ha remecido en lo más profundo, son las palabras de Allende horas antes de entregar su vida por el pueblo. ¿Cómo alguien que ha decidido su destino, que ha aceptado su muerte, es capaz de hablar con tanta lucidez y elocuencia? **14.** Palabras finales de Allende, 11 de septiembre de 1973: “Tengo la certeza que la semilla que entregáramos a la consciencia digna de miles y miles de chilenos, no podrá ser cegada definitivamente. Tienen la fuerza, podrán avasallarnos, pero no se detienen los procesos sociales, ni con el crimen ni con la fuerza. La historia es nuestra y la hacen los pueblos.(...) “Sigan ustedes sabiendo que mucho más temprano que tarde, de nuevo se abrirán las grandes alamedas donde pasará el hombre para construir una sociedad mejor.” **15.** ¿Cuando se abrirán las grandes alamedas?

### II. “Donde hay poder, hay resistencia”.<sup>2</sup>

**E**stallaron mis sentidos la noche que besé a Melissa y luego nos cayó la policía y tuvimos que correr hacia la noche, deslizándonos por escaleras y pasadizos inaccesibles para los patrulleros. Por aquel entonces llevábamos medio año en toque de queda por el Estallido Social + un año entero de confinamiento a causa de la pandemia. Para muchos, el acto cotidiano de salir a pasear por el barrio, se había transformado en un recuerdo ajeno de un mundo anterior. Para el gobierno, el COVID había caído como anillo al dedo, justificando la extensión y profundización de las medidas de control y censura a la población general. Pero como diría Foucault, «donde hay poder, hay resistencia» y para cuando los días fríos del invierno comenzaron a aflojar, despertaron los cuerpos y los barrios y los parias que no conocen más ley que la solidaridad de clase y el sabotaje al capital, volvieron a organizarse en los márgenes de un país hipnotizado por las cifras repetidas en la TV. Coexistieron entonces dos países. Uno seguía al pie de la letra cada norma y daba cada paso como si la muerte le respirar en la nuca, el otro vivía a su deliberado gusto, como si la pandemia fuese simplemente otra dificultad, en una vida que ya pende de un hilo.

Buscando algo de esa libertad perdida conocí a Melissa. Melissa un humano indómito que amarró su proa a un sueño. Vivía junto a otros muchachos en una casa tomada que tenía un gran árbol de paltas en el patio. Durante el día nos escapábamos por los cerros, como cruzando un laberinto, hasta una cancha donde jugábamos fútbol. Por las noches tomábamos vino y jugábamos ping pong bajo el gran palto. Esto era la libertad. 🍷

Seen at the entrance of the RT 2 residential community just behind Pasar Raya 2 in Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia. The entrance has two columns. The column on the left is metallic. The column on the right is probably cement, painted in blue with a bit of pink on the top. To the right of the right column is a large two-storey building. Hung between the space between the blue column and the building is a sign which reads ‘Free Palestine’.

## SOCIAL OUTBURST 19.

SÁNCHEZ g.

### I. When will the great avenues open again?

**1.** My mother hung a portrait of Allende in every house we lived in. In Miraflores, in Agua Santa, in Siete Hermanas. **2.** It was his most famous photograph: thick black acetate glasses, slicked-back hair, a clean, grey moustache. He looked more like the image of a bureaucrat than a revolutionary hero. **3.** Looking at this portrait today, I think that Salvador Allende’s tragedy synthesizes the tragedy of Chile and that of the entire continent. An unresolved conflict between the peoples who inhabited the territory and the european nations that devastated it.’ **4.** For some unknown reason, the only people who resisted the savage occupation were the Mapuche communities living in Araucania. An extensive humid paradise in the southernmost part of the continent. **5.** Valparaíso was the northern frontier of that Mapuche nation. Here they coexisted with the southern margins of the Inca Empire. For the Incas and Spaniards, this was a frontier to an untamed south that was impossible to conquer. **6.** Some of that indigenous blood resists and flourishes in each mobilization of the people. **7.** The largest mobilization since the return to democracy in the early nineties began in October 2019. After a week of massive protests and evasions due to an increase in the subway fare, the conflict escalated, turning into a massive and transversal national protest that became known as the “Social Outburst”. **8.** While people marched in the streets by the millions, in neighborhoods and homes, entire families leaned out of doors and windows banging pots and pans



Photograph by Riskya DUAVANIA,  
25 February 2023

as in the old days of the dictatorship. A peaceful protest against the government and above all, against an extreme neoliberalism that promised happiness and progress but, on the contrary, had only brought an abyss of inequality and a blanket of sadness covering every corner. **9.** It is no coincidence that Chile has one of the highest depression rates on the planet. About 16% of Chileans express symptoms associated with depression. The marches proliferated with posters such as: “It wasn’t depression, it was capitalism”; or, “Am I depressed, or am I just Latin American?”; or, “Hold on Piñera, we’ve run out of sertraline.” **10.** The Social Outburst took place between October 2019 and March 2020. Its toll: 34+ dead, 3300+ injured, 400+ eye trauma victims. The police shot at bodies with impunity. **11.** During the Social Outburst, people marched with Wiphalas flags or with the Mapuche flag while the national symbols of Chile were used by reactionaries and far-right people. This brings me back to the fundamental conflict and to the figure of Allende. Why do people identify more with ancestral communities than with the

idea of a country named Chile? **12.** Chile is a country created by the descendants of Spaniards to remain in charge of the territory without having to trade only with the crown. Chile’s independence was only a change of administration to enter the free market of capital at the beginning of the 19th century. The conflict is intact. **13.** Something that has always shaken me deeply are Allende’s words, hours before giving up his life for the people. How is someone who has decided his destiny, who has accepted his death, able to speak with such lucidity and eloquence? **14.** Allende’s final words on September 11, 1973: “I am certain that the seed which we have planted in the good conscience of thousands and thousands of Chileans will not be shrivelled forever. They have strength and will be able to dominate us, but social processes can be arrested neither by crime nor force. History is ours, and people make history. [...] Go forward knowing that, sooner rather than later, the great avenues will open again where free men will walk to build a better society.” **15.** When will the great avenues open again?

<sup>1</sup> Se estima en 90 millones los humanos asesinados durante el proceso de conquista y exterminio. An estimated 90 million humans were killed during the process of conquest and extermination.

<sup>2</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction* (México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores) 1977.



## II. Where there is power, there is resistance.<sup>2</sup>

My senses exploded the night I kissed Melissa and the police fell upon us and we had to run into the night, slipping down stairs and passageways inaccessible to patrol cars. At that time we had been under curfew for half a year due to the Social Outburst, plus a whole year of confinement due to the pandemic. For many, the daily act of going for a walk had become an obscure memory of an earlier world. For the government, COVID fit like a glove, justifying the lockdown extensions and deepening control and censorship

measures on the general population. But as Foucault would say: "Where there is power, there is resistance", and by the time the cold winter days began to slacken, bodies and neighborhoods awoke, and the outcasts, who know no other law than class solidarity and sabotage to capital, returned to organize at the margins of a country hypnotized by the figures repeated on TV. Two countries coexisted. One followed every rule to the letter and took every step as if death were breathing down their neck, and the other country lived as it pleased, as if the

pandemic were just another hardship in a life already hanging by a thread.

Looking for some of that lost freedom, I met Melissa. Melissa, an untamed human who tied her bow to a dream. She lived with other boys in a squat that had a large avocado tree in the yard. During the day we would escape through the hills as if crossing a labyrinth, to a field where we played soccer. In the evenings, we drank wine and played ping-pong under the big avocados. This was freedom. 🌀

BANGKOK/  
MEXICO CITY

### NAMKHEUN NOTE #3

น้ำขึ้นคอลเลคทีฟ NAMKHEUN Collective

The year 2019 meant for us a few different things. 2019 was the year Victoria first decided to move to Mexico. 2019 was the year Kritti first started working a 9 to 5 job. It also marks the year the two of us got to talking, which led to Namkheun Collective being formed the following year. All of these events happened against the backdrop of many different things: demonstrators resuming their fight for democracy on the streets after a few-year hiatus; the lavish coronation of the new king; the dissolution by court order of one Thai political party which led to a growing anti-government movement that soon came to a halt once COVID made its way to Thailand; and, devastatingly, the socioeconomic consequences of the virus which rekindled the movement in its wake.

were exhumed. Atonement became a new currency. "I'm sorry I let you die when you took to the street a decade ago." #whats happening in thailand went global, even viral many times...

By the end, the state once again managed to maintain its control. But some people say we too have managed to usher in a kind of cultural revolution (no, not the one led by comrade Mao, although we're sure some people wouldn't be against that, not through their online personae at least). Call it a postmodernist win. A post-post-modernist era. A post-post-post everything-ism. But the aunty next door—a figure, our very own killjoy figure, a *homo matertera* if you will—is still shaking her head fiercely. Does the revolution hold any space for her?

Fighters fought and new fighters recruited. Bodies of past revolutionaries

We are translators. At times, non-alignment feels like a luxury. To relocate certain

时间在猫爪下  
心  
在白云边

- 2019年12月作于盘山县看守所羁押期间

Time under the cat's paw  
Heart  
Next to white clouds

Written while in custody at the  
Panshan County Detention Centre, December 2019

PANJIN +  
GUANGZHOU

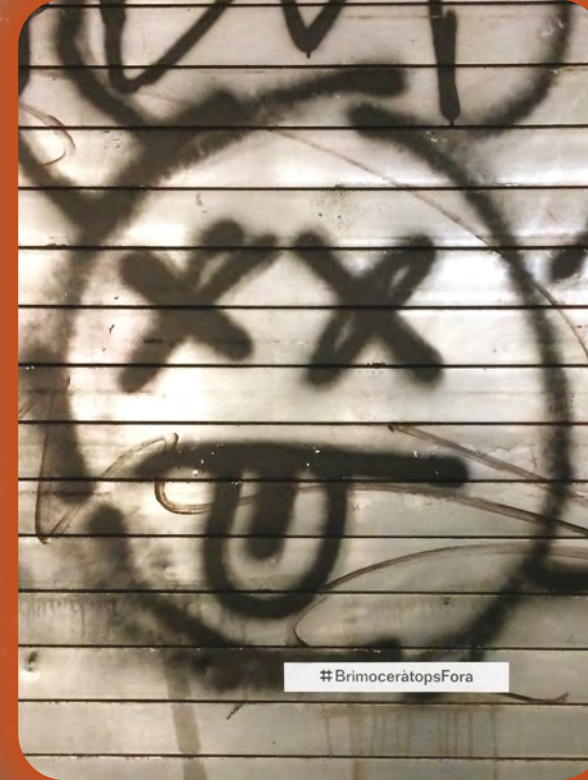
### 囚伴 CONVICT HAIKU

杨立才 YANG Licai

BARCELONA

### STICKERS

Gerard ALTAÍÓ



In 2019, during the demonstrations against judicial repression of the Catalan movement and the jail sentences of independence movement leaders accused of sedition, we used our letterpress to make stickers of dissent. During these protests, there were strong battles between young people and the police, and many containers were burned in the streets. We participated in street fights, and our stickers were placed all around the city. 🌀

两张图片都是我杨立才在2021年12月刑满释放后所做的新作品，都可以看作是对人类社会在2019年前后面临一个新的转换点时的某种描述。 Since YANG Licai was released from prison in December 2021, he started to learn woodcut printmaking. Both of these pieces depict incidents faced in society since 2019.



“铁链人”那幅，是我初次尝试版画完成的第一张作品，是对铁链女事件的回应。

*Iron Shackles* is the first piece I made and responds to the "Xuzhou Chained Woman Incident" case of human trafficking, false imprisonment, sexual assault, severe mistreatment, and subsequent events that went viral in late January 2022.

BACKGROUND IMAGE

我们是人!不是羊!不是牛!  
Wō mén shì rén! bú shì yáng! bú shì niú!  
We are people! Not sheep! Not cattle!

《我们是人》那张木刻拓印作品，取材于一段线上视频，新疆疫情封控期间，一个男子的声音，在被封控的楼上对着窗外无人的城市景观大声呼喊出来的话。

*We are people!* is a woodcut rubbing. The text comes from a video shot during COVID lockdown in Hami (Kumul), Xinjiang. The camera pans across the view of a completely empty city, and a young man's voice is heard shouting these words from his window.



RIGHT

을지OB베어가 강제철거 당한 장소에서 사람들이 피켓을 들고 서있다. 피켓에는 여러가지 구호가 적혀있다. 반대쪽에는 술을마시는 사람들이 골목을 가득 채우고있다.

People stand with picket signs at the site where Eulji OB Bear was forcibly evicted. Various slogans are written on their signs. Opposite the building, people drinking alcohol fill the alley.

BELOW

테이블위에 올려진 판화그림 : 사람들이 서서, 앉아서 음식을 먹는모습이 그려져있고, 위에는 “낮은자들의 채식회”라는 글씨가 적혀있다.

Food and woodcut print on a table with the words “Lowly People’s Vegetarian Party”.



SEOUL

안경을 닦고, 주방을 청소한다. 음식을 준비하고, 포장해서, 집회로 간다.

Wipe eyeglasses, clean the kitchen. Prepare food, pack it, and go to the meeting.

모자 MOJA

안경을 닦고, 주방을 청소한다. 음식을 준비하고, 포장해서, 집회로 간다. 테이블에 준비한 음식을 올려두고, 간단한 이야기를 나눈 후 나누어 먹는다. 한 손에는 피켓을 들고 한 손에는 음식을 들고, 옆에 사람과 잡담하고, 오랜만에 친구를 만나 반가워하기도하고, 혼자서 책을 보기도 한다. 음악을 틀고, 들려오는 음악이 흥겨우면 춤을 춘다.

2022년에는 이런 자리를 매주 준비하였다. 이유는 을지OB베어라는 한국에서 가장 오래된 생맥줏집이 강제 철거당했기 때문이다. 한국에서는 젠트리피케이션이 점차 일상화되고, 이제는 특별한 문제라고 여겨지지도 않는지, 뉴스의 소재로도 잘 사용

되지 않는다. 뉴스에 나오지 않는다고, 문제가 없어진 건 당연히 아니다. 여전히 많은 공간과 가게들이 쫓겨나고 있다. 을지 OB베어도 그런 장소 중 한 곳이었다. 다른 점이 있다면, 부당한 강제퇴거에 맞서 투쟁하기로 하였고, 이를 지지하기 위한 많은 이들이 모였다는 것이다. 내가 참여하고 있는 모임 중 한 곳은 투쟁하는 이들을 지지하기 위한 행사로서, 채식모임을 열고 있다. 이 모임은 채식을 하거나 채식에 호의적인 사람들이 모여서, 준비해온 채식음식을 먹으며, 투쟁하는 사건에 연대하는 자리를 갖는 모임이다. 비정기적으로 가끔씩 해오던 모임이었지만, 을지OB베어 강제 철거에 항의하기 위하여 일주일 중 하루 정기적으로 진행하게 되었다. 다른 행사는 라디오방송, 길거리 강연, 디제잉, 공연, 등이 있었다.

몇몇 중심이 되는 사람들이 메인메뉴를 준비하고, 참가자들이 가져온 음식을 테이블 위에 올려놓는

Put the food on the table, start to eat together. Hold a picket sign in one hand and food in the other, make small talk with the person next to me. Sometimes I catch up with a friend I haven’t seen in a while, or read a book. If the music is good, we dance and give a big hand.

것으로 채식모임이 시작한다. 오늘은 어떤 음식이 준비되어있는지 설명하고, 더 할 말이 없으면 마이크를 끄고 음식을 먹기 시작한다. 물론 발언을 하고 싶은 사람이 있으면 마이크를 잡고, 발언하고 발언이 마음에 드는 사람은 박수를 치거나 공감한다. 구호를 외치기도 하고.

외국의 발음도 잘하지 못하는 신기한 음식부터, 익숙한 외국음식, 매일 먹는 한국의 음식부터 특별한 날 먹는 한국 음식 등 다양한 음식들을 준비하였고 맛보았다. 많은 이들이 모였고, 그렇게 강제 철거 당한 후 1년이 되어가는 오늘날까지도 모여서 음식을 나누고 피켓을 들고 있다.

우리가 음식을 만들고 나누는 것이, 젠트리피케이션 더 크게는 사회의 부정의를 막는 직접적인 힘이 되지는 않을 것이다. 우리가 하는 건 사람들이 모이고 이야기 나눌 장소와 기회를 만드는 것이고, 투쟁하는 사람이 일어설 수 있는 발판을 다지는 것이니까. 🌀

In 2022, we organize these activities every week. The reason: the oldest draft beer bar in Korea, Eulji OB Bear, was forcibly evicted. When the Black Book Assembly gathered together in 2019, I shared about the problems of gentrification in South Korea—both falling victim to it but also my participation with actions in resistance. Now in 2023, gentrification has become so common that it is no longer considered a special problem, and it is rarely seen as a topic for the news. Just because it’s not in the news 📺 8



Wipe eyeglasses, clean the kitchen. Prepare food, pack it, and go to the meeting.

CAIRO

## FIVE METAPHORS ON HEALING

Alaa Abd EL-FATTAH

FIVE METAPHORS ON HEALING

REBIRTH

Every parting gives a foretaste of death, every reunion a hint of the resurrection.’  
— Arthur Schopenhauer

‘You must be ready to burn yourself in your own flame; how could you rise anew if you have not first become ashes?’  
— Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

For most of its history, humanity has grappled with two certainties: that life is suffering, and that innocence, once lost, can never be regained. Yet both scripture and myths reverberate with tantalizing alternatives of death and rebirth, sacrifice and resurrection: variations on the phoenix in which the burning of the old and the emergence of the new from its ashes give us a chance to break the cycle of fate, either in the form of a blank slate or a return to roots – a continuity of the self after getting rid of wounds, impurities and sins. Pain is the price to be paid for redemption.

II. AMPUTATION AND CAUTERIZATION

‘One is always in the position of having to decide between amputation and gangrene. Amputation is swift but time may prove that amputation was not necessary – or one may delay the amputation too long. Gangrene is slow, but it is impossible to be sure that one is reading one’s symptoms right. The idea of going through life as

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No stranger to persecution by authorities for his life long political activism, Alaa Abd EL-FATTAH wrote “Five Metaphors on Healing” from the Doggi Police Station in September 2019 during the mass Egyptian protests calling for President Abdel Fattah EL-SISI to be removed from power. A few days after the text was published, he was taken by the National Security Agency on unknown charges, and he was later convicted of ‘spreading fake news’ and jailed for five years. The below English translation by anonymous supporters is part of the anthology *You Have Not Yet Been Defeated: Selected Works 2011-2021*.

keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.’  
— Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History”

Suffering is not sacrifice and the body is not a machine. The pain is not yours alone; every individual belongs to a social class and these classes emerge as history marches on. You can become an agent of history, instead of its victim. Make of your pain a revolution, your suffering is resistance. Destroy the sources of pain, and with the ruins of the old we shall build the new as an act of collective agency. This is inevitable, for history follows a logic as deterministic as the laws of the material universe. You just have to recognize the right moment when it comes, and pick the right faction.

IV. HAUNTING

‘Capitalist societies can always heave a sigh of relief and say to themselves: communism is finished since the collapse of the totalitarianisms of the twentieth century and not only is it finished, but it did not take place, it was only a ghost. They do no more than disavow the undeniable itself. A ghost never dies, it remains always to come and to come-back.’  
— Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*

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a cripple is more than one can bear, and equally unbearable is the risk of swelling up slowly, in agony, with poison.’  
— James Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son*

The body, not the soul, is the locus of pain. Homo sapiens is but a rational animal. Modern medicine, with its rationalism, terminology, methods and machinery, is able to cure all pain. Medicine originated in surgery. In acts of precise violence. A precision that might dictate the removal of an entire diseased organ, not because the organ is disposable but because it’s not essential. As long as you are alive and in possession of your mental faculties, you’re fit. Who among us has not dreamt of a decisive delivery from pain? And if the pain lingers after surgery, fear not for these are ghost pains, mere delusions caused by your nervous system. Just be rational about it. If it worries you that your imagination and your mind are one and the same, there’s psychiatry for that. Trust the experts and relax. Amputate, then cauterize, and before that anaesthetize. And after the deed is done, the painkillers, rehabilitation therapy and patience will see you through. Life will go on.

III. RECYCLING

‘We are building the new order out of the bricks the old order has left us.’  
— Vladimir Lenin

‘His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which

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They will not eject you from history as long as you can still speak; they will not banish you to the past as long as you can still listen. But which present do you inhabit? Haunt the dreams of your comrades, and the nightmares of your enemies; live in a future that never came – be a spectre, a memory, and a herald. Remind them that the current state was not inevitable until it came to be. Do not occupy yourself with the question of why this very possible future failed, leave the victorious to grope for answers. Be the question, and do not heed your impotence. A ghost has no need for material presence or action, you just need to shimmer.

V. REGENERATION

‘For salamanders, regeneration after injury, such as the loss of a limb, involves regrowth of structure and restoration of function with the constant possibility of twinning or other odd topographical productions at the site of former injury. The regrown limb can be monstrous, duplicated, potent. We have all been injured, profoundly. We require regeneration, not rebirth, and the possibilities for our reconstitution include the utopian dream of the hope for a monstrous world without gender.’  
— Donna Haraway, *A Cyborg Manifesto*

There can be no return to paradise lost, for we were not born innocent; there can be no resurrection for we are not holy, and our sacrifices were not consciously made. No surgery can cure us and no medicine, for the decision to amputate is not ours, and no clinical research was conducted to explain away our ailments. There will be no rebuilding as the land itself can no longer withstand



any more clearing. Let us postpone the wandering of our souls till after death, for each one of us is haunted by comrades who departed, and it would not do to leave them desolate before their time.

If we are to be treated like animals with no agency, so be it. But we shall bypass cattle and livestock, ignore pets and domesticates. We shall look to the lizards, starfish and earthworms – those beings that can regenerate after any injury, no matter how grave. We shall accept that regenerated organs may not be identical to what was lost. They could appear to be mutilated, but look closer and you will see the beauty in monstrosity, for only the monstrous can hold both the history of dreams and hopes, and the reality of defeat and pain together. The monstrous need not forget their old injuries in order to lose their fear of acquiring new ones.

Written in the Kiosk of Solitude,  
Doqqi Police Station  
Published on 26 September 2019  
in *Mada Masr*

Two days later Alaa was arrested by State Security plain-clothes officers inside Doqqi Police Station.

In September 2019 some small street protests had erupted, triggered by a building contractor revealing details about government corruption, details shocking even to a populace that expects a high level of corruption.

Seeing these small protests as a critical security failure, Sisi re-organized the division of power among his security agencies. State Security, Mubarak's feared domestic security force, had been sidelined to some degree since failing to prevent the outbreak of revolution in 2011. Now, they are placed in full control of operations again, and a massive sweep of activists begins.

Alaa is one of dozens of targeted arrests, among thousands of people arrested randomly from the street.

On 10 October 2019, Alaa's sister, Mona, wrote on Facebook:

"After a long day at state security prosecution Alaa Abdel-Fattah was just returned to Torab Maximum Security 2 an hour ago, Alaa reported to the Prosecutor the following:

1. He was blindfolded as he was brought to prison, forced to strip off all his clothes except his underwear, beaten up and verbally abused as he walked through a corridor into the prison.

2. The beating stopped for a moment as he was spoken to by the prison doctor, who asked him if he had any medical conditions. Alaa told him he has a history of kidney stones and that he needs clean water. The beating resumed afterwards.

3. He was also threatened by an officer – he could not

no sure if i would be able  
to contribute anything, still  
uncertain of how to come to  
terms with what happened  
and is happening and the  
way forward. although i do  
believe that i have been  
trying to test the water  
droplet by droplet.

NARCISSAN

HONG KONG

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6 con't from "Wipe glasses..."

doesn't mean the problem has gone away, of course. Many spaces and shops are still being pushed out. Eulji OB Bear was one of them. The difference is that they decided to fight back against the unjust eviction, and a lot of people have been gathering to support them. One of the groups I'm a part of organizes a vegetarian gathering to support the struggle. It's a gathering of people who are vegetarian or vegetarian-friendly, who come together to enjoy vegetarian meals and stand in solidarity with the struggle. It was an occasional gathering but became a regular weekly event to protest against

the forced eviction of Eulji OB Bear. Other events include radio broadcasts, street lectures, book talks, literature nights, DJs, live music shows, and more.

Once the main dishes are prepared by the organisers and they are set on the table, the gathering begins. If there are no further comments, the microphone is turned off, and we start eating. Of course, if anyone wants to speak, they can take the microphone and speak, and if others like what they say, they can clap or agree with them. Sometimes we chant.

We prepare and taste a variety of

food we can't pronounce from various countries, but also typical Korean food for special occasions. Many people gather. Even now, one year after the eviction, we are still gathering, sharing food, and picketing.

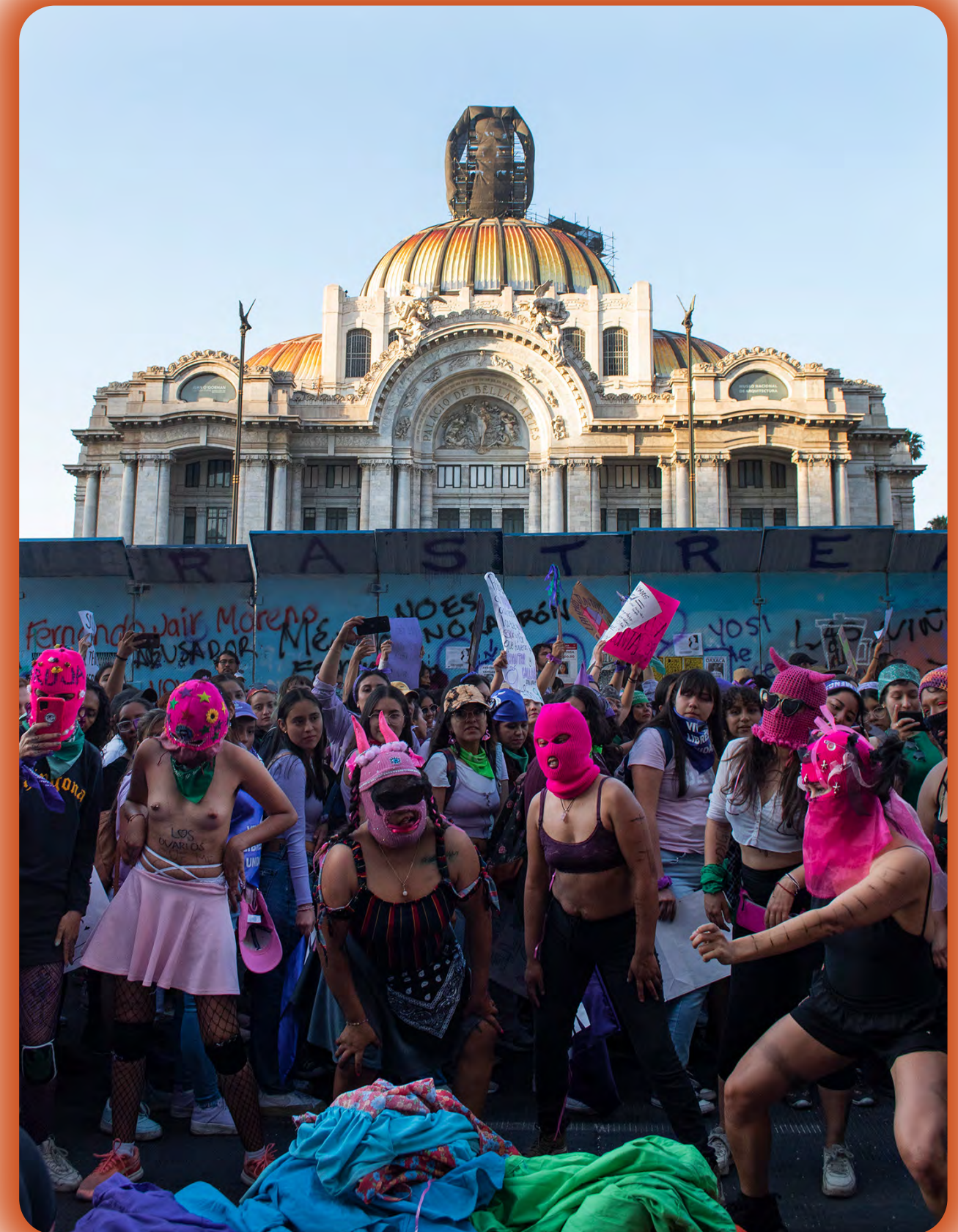
The food we make and share is not a direct force to stop gentrification and other social injustices. What we do is create space and opportunities for people to gather and talk. It's about building a platform for those who are struggling to stand up. 🗨️

## CARING FOR THE LESS-THAN-PERFECT

Nina HOECHTL + Wirunwan Victoria PITAKTONG

In Mexico before 2019, abortion was available on request to any woman up to 12 weeks into pregnancy only in the capital city of Mexico City. Then in September of 2019, the 'Green Tide' reached other parts of Mexico, and Oaxaca became the second state to allow abortion under the same conditions. Other states, though not all, would soon follow suit. Although many have won the (conditional) access to abortion, however, on average 10 women are killed each day in Mexico – a gender-based and intentional killing that is called femicide. The song "Un Violador en Tu Camino" ("A Rapist in Your Path") and various translations included in the previous issue of the BBA newsletter, have emerged since 2019, all over Latin America and beyond, as part of a crucial global solidarity movement against femicide and patriarchy.

During the first week of March, I was impressed how (girl)friends here in Mexico City asked each other, "What are you doing for 8M (8 March, International Women's Day)?" The phenomenon demonstrates a strong solidarity, but it is one necessitated by extreme violence. Two weeks after the march, I had the opportunity to interview artist and researcher Nina Hoechtl, and of course, we started our conversation with our experiences of the 8M rally this year. We also talked about her 82 year-old friend Ana Victoria Jiménez, a photographer, publisher, and self-declared feminist who participated in several feminist actions throughout her life. From 1970 to 1990, Jiménez gathered her photographs and collected other graphic ephemera such as posters, flyers and documents. Since 2011, this precious feminist archive has been housed at Ibero University in Mexico City. When Nina and Ana Victoria participated in 8M this year, Ana Victoria recalled that back in her day, there were only 50 women demonstrating. This year, there were almost 100,000. We talked about the enraged demands and hopeful dreams graffitied all over the blue sheet metal installed along the streets to protect



monuments and shop windows. It is clear what the state deems important. Also pasted on those metal walls were posters of men accused of perpetrating sexual violence. Questions arose. What follows is part of a conversation that responds to those questions and explores the necessary complications of care outside legal bounds. In this time of polarization, how do we co-respond not only as individuals but also as a community?

Wirunwan Victoria PITAKTONG (V): To start this conversation...personally, it

is important to know how you would like to represent yourself. Could you introduce yourself, please?

Nina HOECHTL (N): It always depends on the context. Perhaps this is where identities that are always in process change with the context: the roles and positions that they perform, as well as their different responsibilities and privileges. At this very moment, we are in my home, where I feel comfortable, and that allows me another way to share things about myself. As you can hear in this recording, I have an accent. My first language is German, and I started learning Spanish here



in Mexico City where I have been living for more or less 16 years. And yes, each exchange with another person changes the way you use your languages in relation to dialogues with another person. I am an artist and researcher. I love to talk with people, to listen to them, to hear different dreams

perspectives do you think you have gained from being here in Mexico and being far from your previous contexts?

N: Yes, I'm also very interested in translation, and not exclusively from one language to another. That is one of its aspects, but there are also other



and ways of expressions but also to see and experience how they express themselves through their bodies.

Although there are many challenges, I like to work collectively, as a group. At the moment when you are working with people who have not necessarily grown up in the same place as you, who do not speak the same language or share the same interests, there are perhaps differences in terms of education, desires and expectations, etc. The challenge is how to traverse these differences without breaking the exchange.

***Yo diría que estamos traduciendo todo el tiempo. Somos seres traducidxs. El reto es traducir en maneras que no son extractivas, que apoyen la comprensión; encontrar maneras de traducir los daños en vigor.***

V: Actually, I prepared a question related to what you just said. As a translator, or a person who likes to translate, I am very interested in this question of the distance of places...when I am in Mexico, I am closer to Spanish. However, because of such a distance from my homeland, I can also see society in Thailand more clearly. What

forms of translation. For example, translation to another genre, to music, to a drawing, to an exhibition, right? I would say that we are translating all the time. We are translated beings. The challenge is to translate in ways that are not extractive, that support understanding—to find ways to translate pain into vigor.

Even if I was speaking in my first language, German, there would not necessarily be less misunderstanding. It is also important to establish how you understand the words you use; for example, what is your understanding of feminism? Maybe we share the same concerns, but we don't necessarily understand the same things or start from the same place. So, communicating, listening to each other, and translating are very complex acts. They are a constant challenge, but yes, they also open many possibilities to cross borders and differences.

And yes, languages situate you; the context situates you. And certainly, not being in the context you grew up in lets you see other things.

V: When we talk about translation, we generally think about translation between languages, but as you said, it can also be between many other things. I think about the incidents or moments when we cannot talk calmly with people supposedly on the “same

side.” It makes me feel sad when we can't translate our feelings in the process of conversation. This relates to the conversation around gender. For example, in Mexico, I see that there is more denouncing of men who have done harm, and I completely understand the intentions and resentment. However, I also wonder what the other possibilities are? How do we continue the conversations? I'm curious what you think in relation to this topic.

***Entonces comunicarse, escucharse y traducir son actos muy complejos. Son un reto constante, pero sí, también abren muchas posibilidades de atravesar fronteras y diferencias.***

N: I think we reflect a lot about communication with respect to the use of speech, of languages. But as you said, communication is also bodily, especially if we talk about things that hurt us. Not everyone benefits from talking about harm or putting things into words. Some people find it much more helpful to draw a picture or to dance, among other possibilities. What I do think is that unfortunately, in general, in our contexts—or at least in mine—there is not much room for emotions in all their diversity. Emotions are complex and often contradictory. For me, the key question is how we can be co-responsible from the point of a community itself, of friendships, etc. How can we find non-punitive, non-canceling ways of dealing with the harm inflicted?

I understand very well how someone harmed would not want to share space with the person who has caused harm to them. However, I believe the community is co-responsible in a way that we often do not assume. How can the person who has harmed others find a way to assume responsibility, a way to be accountable, to unlearn? The community offers many possibilities. Canceling a person cannot and should not be the only option, though it may seem to be the way at the moment.

Going back to cancel culture. The “I believe you” is very important because there is a lot of fear of speaking out. Maintaining the system of silencing and re-victimization flows without much effort. So, the question is what do we do with the “I believe you”? Cancellation cannot be applied as

an automatic reaction from “I believe you”. It does not seem to me to be a way to help heal harm or recognize what gave rise to it. Nor does it help the aggressor to recognize the harm that has been done, to take responsibility, to unlearn old behaviors and learn new ones. The great challenges are, first, that the person harmed will not (re)find themselves in situations of silencing and re-victimization, and, second, finding the best way to support them. It is precisely here where co-responsibility from the community, from the affective network, plays a key role in addressing harm, particular situations, and the conditions and social forces that have created harmful possibilities.

V: About this word you said: co-responsibility. I would like to share a personal experience related to what we are talking about. A person hurt me. At the time, I didn't know or realize it.

N: This happens a lot.

V: I think a year passed, and somehow I realized what had happened, and as angry as I was, I wanted to tell the person what he had done. I forgave him, and he told me he didn't know that he had caused harm. At the time, I also told my girlfriends, and many told me that I should report, denounce, or cancel him. But we remained friends and talked about the issue many times. I told him that at that moment I could not forgive him, but it was good he felt “bad”—or a better word would be that he felt “responsible.”

N: I would say that's another complexity. A lot of times the people who cause harm don't realize what they have done. And what I say should not be taken as an excuse, but many times those people have also experienced a lot of violence. You had the courage to approach the person who hurt you and talk to them. However, not all people want to, can, or would be recommended to do that. There are very few mechanisms that, for example, offer the possibility of approaching a person or an organization to see what options exist. For me, it would be very important to have possibilities for someone else to help communicate what you have shared. In your case, fortunately, the other person responded with an apology, but many times other people also respond with more violence, re-victimizing the person, etc.

Sometimes we realize the harm maybe only ten, twenty years later. With

whom can we work on this harm? Who can accompany us in the process? The process to find what each person needs to heal and live in their own way—more at peace with respect to the harm. What works for one person may not work for others.

***Me parece crucial acompañar a ambas partes, a las personas dañadas, pero también a las personas que han causado el daño. Claramente solo si ambas partes entran de manera voluntaria. Si no estamos acompañando a las personas que han causado el daño, ¿cómo pueden encontrar otras maneras de ser y estar? Y ¿cómo podemos analizar los patrones que hay que tratar de cambiar en primer lugar?***

V: I also think about how this way worked for me because the other person also felt responsible. And I have also inflicted harm in other ways. How are we going to translate this co-responsibility to other cases? How can we start this conversation of responsibility so as not to go into combat with one another, but to work as a community. I'm still in a fog. I don't have the language, bodily or textual, for this.

N: I know we are living in a carceral society. I am not in favor of prisons. We already know that they do not work. We already know that people in prisons almost never find a way to assume responsibility for the harm they have caused. We are in need of ideas, of imagination on how to deal with harm. There are varying levels of harm, and each needs different approaches to deal with the very conditions and social forces that have given rise to them.

At least in my context here in Mexico, it has been for generations very complicated to talk about violence. For many people it is very difficult to name harm. And if you can't name it, who can? How can you communicate harm? For example, there are AA groups for alcoholics, but if I realize that I have caused harm, where do I go? It may not necessarily help if I seek out the person harmed at that moment, as it will most likely cause even more

pain. What I have seen in relationships with people who have caused a lot of harm is that they are very, very afraid of losing everything, and in order to avoid losing everything they do everything possible so that no one ever finds out what they have done. In this spiral, we are very far from beginning the process of accountability to recognize, end, and assume responsibility for the violence and harm we have caused. To me, it is crucial to accompany both parties: those who were harmed and also those who have caused harm. Clearly, only if both parties participate voluntarily. If we don't accompany the people who have caused harm, how can they find other ways of being? And how can we analyze the patterns that we need to try to change in the first place?

That takes time. It takes a lot of time to find the best way to support people. How much time is there? We are overwhelmed by a lot of work, obligations, and a great deal of pressure. How much time and energy are there to accompany people who, yes, are not perfect? Neither am I.

In the Bay Area of California in the early 2000s, primarily undocumented people of Color began to develop other tools to deal with violence. They call it transformative justice. And everything I told you just now has a lot to do with what Creative Interventions ([www.creative-interventions.org](http://www.creative-interventions.org)) proposes: to look in your community for ways of how to accompany people who have been harmed, as well as those who have caused harm. Transformative justice is a non-punitive justice, but it is also a justice that implies a lot of care and time from the community itself. It implies that you are present, that you are listening, that you put your energy into it.

And here we find another complexity. When harm has been inflicted, it is almost too late. What have we done before? What tools do we have to communicate things we observe to have caused harm? How can we practice a generous critique, a critique that comes from a place of care? You are very important to me, and that is why I am sharing this with you. Also, how much room is there for error? We didn't necessarily do it on purpose, nor are we evil people. That doesn't excuse us, however. Rather, it calls us to begin a process of accountability.

V: I don't know if this is true, but I feel like every year there is less room for mistakes.



N: Uffffff, yes, I agree.

V: And I'm not that old either. I think political correctness is very rigid. I think if you don't know the right word, you're wrong. And political correctness is also more punitive now.

N: I agree that everything became much more punitive. Some also use the expressions of internal and external policing. I can already be your police, and so I have the right to tell you which word you can say and which word you can't. As you said, there are tasks to be done. And my tasks are different from yours. There are things that we can learn, but it's also very important to see where the person is situated, from whom we claim other words, other behaviors, or whatever.

There are words that have a racist history. For example, the colonizers gave names to indigenous groups. If the indigenous group has the patience to explain to me that they are actually called X, then it is my task to learn the new name and unlearn the other. To take their clarification seriously and thank them for teaching. How do we use inclusive language? Now we use X or E in Spanish because language also changes over time due to the demands and needs of people who have been harmed by how language had been applied before.

Using preferred pronouns is easier on virtual platforms because pronouns can be written next to one's name. However, we can also ask. We need time and patience. We need time to build a space where everyone feels heard, seen, and safe. What is built in one space does not necessarily work for others in another context.

**¿Cuánto tiempo y energía hay para acompañar a las personas que sí, no son perfectas? Yo tampoco lo soy.**

V: I like what you said about caring. Recent conversations about care are good, but I think sometimes we, including myself, forget to also include care for those who have caused harm. Caring is not something that is only soft and sweet.

**Voy a cometer errores, pero voy a tratar de des/ aprender. No solo puedo comunicarme conmigo mismx, ¿o no? Solo puedo des/aprender en un intercambio entre personas, escuchándolas de manera vulnerable, para que me pueda responsabilizar desde la comunidad con ella misma.**

N: It would not be your responsibility to take care of the person who has hurt you. From my point of view, it should be the community around you that becomes responsible for what happened to you, becoming co-responsible. This is the challenge. In relation to care, for me a key question is how to take care of myself without being selfish. And in relation to receiving care, what expectation do I have of the people around me? How do we know what is "satisfactory" care? Care work involves commitments on all sides. Receiving care requires responses. That's also something very complex,

because maybe here not necessarily everything that I think has to be the best for me.

As people, we are very diverse and very complex. So yes, we can nurture conviviality and care. For example, now we try and use the pronouns with which people identify themselves. I will make mistakes, but I will try to un/learn. I cannot only communicate with myself, can I? I can only un/learn from exchanges with people, listening to them in a vulnerable way so that I can take responsibility from within the community itself. 🌀



NYC + ATLANTA

**SOME "BIG BRICK ENERGY"**

UNITY & STRUGGLE

Uprisings and struggles are often spontaneous. While there can be months and years of on-the-ground organizing and planning, what kicks everything off is often a mystery. However, as things start to gain momentum, there are things that we

can see that can tell us where the moment is heading. Some of the lessons we came away with in "Big Brick Energy" have provided us with signposts for how to tell when events are about to pop off.

香港的快馬工友組是2022年初出版的黑書眾《半年多報》第一期通訊參與者之一。作為一個速遞公司的員工群體，他們在整個疫情中不斷面臨特別不穩定的條件和不公正的待遇。以下來自快馬阿輝的最新消息：

The Fast Horse Workers' Group in Hong Kong contributed to the first issue of the Black Book Assembly More-Than-Half-a-Year-in-Review newsletter, published at the beginning of 2020. As a group of courier company employees, they have continuously faced especially precarious conditions and unjust treatment throughout the pandemic.

The following is an excerpt from "Big Brick Energy: A multi-city study of the 2020 George Floyd uprising". The full text can be found online via [unityandstruggle.org](http://unityandstruggle.org) or by scanning the QR code at left.

*It is crucial to recognize when people start to move in a new way. This lets us accurately assess the moment's potentials and contribute to it meaningfully. But it can be hard to tell when something is about to erupt. We see injustices and protests constantly: why should one police murder spark shit, and not the one before? We also learn to underestimate events. The more we see abuses pass unchallenged, the more retreats and defeats we suffer, the more inclined we are to view events cynically.*

*The early days of the uprising showed signs we can watch for, which might indicate that a larger rupture is emerging. Nearly all our comrades first realized 2020 was different when they saw people respond to ordinary crowd control with extraordinary combativeness. It was obvious when cars or precincts burned. But it was visible even at early demonstrations over George Floyd's murder, or in the weeks prior. In New York City, hundreds of youth had participated in militant "FTP" protests over the preceding months, and comrades also noted a growing restlessness during the pandemic: people came to see themselves as essential and entitled to protections, but lost confidence in state services and occasionally launched small workplace walkouts against unsafe conditions.*

*Several comrades argued that this new combativeness reflected new consciousness. Participants arrived to 2020 already clear that police were an enemy and that greater militancy was justified. In Minneapolis, this common sense built on earlier protests over police murders (Jamar Clark, Philando Castile): people had observed prior waves and absorbed their norms and expectations. As protests proliferated, they also sensed that distant actions were creating opportunities for them to act, and vice-versa. There was a sense of, "this is our chance."*

我係快馬工友組阿輝。由於上年聖誕節前夕，對抗早晨速遞公司經常要求我做替工(頂請假同事)，遭公司解僱，失業後，身上錢越來越少，終於喺上月尾搵到新工，喺奔達公司做速遞員，事前都係搵屋企人借錢返工，即使3月頭已出糧，因上月只返3日，人工只有547.5元，加上出劃線票要多日先可提取，我依家戶口只得500多元，不足維持到4月出糧，公司又不肯借糧，現在要有3,000-4,000元先維持到4月嘅生活費，唔知你手頭是否鬆動，借少少錢應急，唔一定要借\$3,000，如你願意借，就入錢以下匯豐戶口：472 4 035144

Because of a resistance action against Morning Express & Logistics, Ltd that took place on Christmas Eve of 2022, Fast Horse Workers' Group member Fai was afterwards only called in to work as a replacement for other colleagues taking leave, after which he was completely dismissed from the company. Upon losing his job, he grew more and more financially unstable, and it has only been since last month that he found a new job as a courier for Thunder Logistics. Before this he had continually borrowed money from family. But even if now he has received wages at the beginning of March, he only actually began working three days in February, so his salary amounted to only HKD \$547.50 (EUR ~€74). On top of that, the check was dated in advance so it was some days before he was able to receive it. At the moment there is only HKD \$500 in his bank account, which will not be enough for him to sustain himself until April's wages are distributed. The company will not advance wages, and he needs around HKD \$3,000-\$4,000 (EUR ~€350-475) to be able to make living costs until April. If any of you have any flexibility in your situation and have any possibility to support or lend any amount, he would be most grateful. Your contributions can be directly advanced to Fai via HSBC Bank Hong Kong, account number 472 4 035144. For other ways to donate, write to [assembly@blackbook.page](mailto:assembly@blackbook.page).



## A VERY ORDINARY ACTIVISM (IN TWO ACTS)

Rahma AZIZAH

## 1. Walking with Gadul

One sunny afternoon, I asked Gadul (not her real name) to take a walk revisiting Gejayan, the site of the Gejayan Memanggil protests organised in 2019 by Aliansi Rakyat Bergerak (People's Action Alliance). The site, precisely at the busy Gejayan junction connecting several universities in Yogyakarta, is used as a demo stage. Its significance can also be traced back to 1998, when it was employed as one of the main areas for students and activists to stage rallies demanding reformation at the end of the New Order regime.

Before tracing the demonstration route, Gadul and I met at the Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM). She

shared her experience of being involved in Gejayan Memanggil #1, held on September 23, 2019.

"At that time, I was MC-ing the demonstration," she said with a chuckle.

"What?" I replied, laughing.

"Yeah, I was also confused when one of the coordinators asked me to be the MC. I was like, does a demonstration require an MC?" she said.

Gadul told me she felt insecure when she had to be in the spotlight. There were two reasons: she was shy and afraid that people would remember her. Finally, when

the day came, she wore costumes and disguised her identity.

"By coincidence, my friend had a *macan tutul* (leopard) print vest. I remember other friends also had a blonde wig and leggings with a *macan tutul* print. I borrowed all the clothes.

And in the end, I came as a *macan*," she laughed.

"*Macanista!*" she added.<sup>1</sup>

It turns out that being an MC for a demonstration is not that different from being an MC in general. Because the coordinator had provided a rundown of the action, Gadul just had to follow instructions. The

difference, of course, is that protests are perhaps more violent, tense, and fiery than awards ceremonies. Perhaps.

To attract more people to participate, Aliansi Rakyat Bergerak had since its beginnings tried a strategy of making the actions more fun and less stressful. This was manifested by inviting some musicians and performers to participate as well as avoiding riots and aggressive acts, even though the anger in their initial protest was still pronounced.

"The first action showed that we were all angry, and we all demanded things from the state that were relevant to us. The composition of the masses was varied. There were students, lecturers, artists, and workers. Even some lecturers canceled their classes to encourage their students to participate in the protest. Some people dressed glamorously, and others wore disheveled clothes.

Apart from being euphoric about participating in making or witnessing history, this action was purely driven by the same anger about government bullshit," she explained.

Several issues were being addressed in this action: some problematic articles in the RKUHP revision of the criminal code; the KPK (Corruption Eradication Commission) Law, which tends to undermine efforts to eradicate corruption in Indonesia; the Labour Bill, which does not favour workers; human rights violations; and environmental and agrarian issues.

"When I got home, I told my father: *Hey, Dad. I just finished MC-ing the demonstration, hehe.*" But to my surprise, he scolded me. He was afraid that something might happen to me, or that there would be a riot.

The interesting part is that you can choose to be anything and do whatever you want outside the home. But when you return, you are still a child to your parents, and power relations are unequal. The supreme power remains with them," she explained.

"Against all authority except my parents," I responded.

"True."

I saw some exciting incidents from the Gejayan Memanggil #1 action in several media reports. For example, people collaborated to keep the action clean by picking up all the trash in the demonstration area, and several residents supported the action by giving drinks or food to the crowds.

Puthut EA, a writer and a researcher in Yogyakarta, uploaded those two initiatives on Twitter, and they went viral. A photo of fruit vendors sharing oranges and rambutans to the demonstrators from their upper window really warmed my heart. It taught me that, somehow, those involved in a struggle are ordinary people. And we can contribute anything, no matter how ordinary or small. That is enough. The comments that appeared in the tweet were also mostly positive. Several participants in the action also shared words, feeling proud of the efforts in which they took part.

After our conversation ended, our next plan was to walk together. We moved to the UGM roundabout from the Forestry Faculty area by motorbike since it was too far to start walking from that place. I told Gadul that I like walking because it helps me think, or simply, it can distract me when I feel stressed.

"Yeah, the experience is also different, as if the world becomes slower," she told me.

"And many things might happen during the walk. You will sense a lot, some thoughts will come to you, and you might pay more attention to some details in the circumstances," I added.

After parking the motorbike, we started walking. Gadul pointed out the gathering point for the demonstration and the pickup truck parking position at the Gejayan T-junction. The pickup became a stage for the orators and musicians involved in the action, including Gadul, the MC.

From the UGM roundabout, we headed east toward Jalan Colombo. The roaring vehicle engines were unavoidable. On the almost abandoned narrow sidewalk with lots of potholes, we were the only ones on foot, making our pilgrimage to the demonstration site. Our conversation

during the walk turned into trivia and personal matters related to the things we walked passed: the story of a suicide in one hotel, the experience of a motorbike breaking down at night at the Sagan intersection, a former petrol station that has gone now, and the discovery of several pineapple plants growing along the sidewalk. The latter was an astonishing discovery, at least for me, because one of the plants even bore fruit. *We can go foraging along this street*, I said to myself. I even found some ivy-gourd plants around this area.

We stopped momentarily when approaching the Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY) T-junction traffic light. I looked at the watch in my hand: it was 3:45 PM. I was surprised.

"Don't you have a meeting at 4 PM?" I asked her.

"Yes. That's okay. We're almost there," Gadul said.

"Nooo, we're still at the UNY traffic light!" I said in a rather high tone.

"No way!" she was shocked.

Only halfway, but we didn't have much time. Not wanting to make Gadul late for her meeting, we decided to stop our plan and return to the UGM roundabout where she had parked her motorbike.

Walking and listening to what Gadul experienced was fun and funny. It's honest and sincere. I thanked her before we parted ways. It was a super hot day in Yogyakarta, but she still made effort and granted my silly request. And actually, she doesn't like walking.

"You are really troublesome," Gadul said.

"My god, I'm sorryyyy!" I replied.

The two of us laughed.

## 2. Talking about Activism with Syafiatudina

**S**yafiatudina, known by friends simply as Dina, is a curator and a member of KUNCI Study Forum

ABOVE A photo of fruit vendors throwing edible support to protestors, tweeted by @puthutea on 23 September 2019.

<sup>1</sup> First coined by the Yogyakarta music group Sangkakala, a *macanista* refers to someone who likes to wear tiger or leopard (*macan*) print clothes.



& Collective. In this interview, she tells us about her involvement in social movements and sheds light on the idea of ordinary activism.

What were you involved with during Gejayan Memanggil (Gejayan Calls) protests of 2019, and what was it like? What urged you to get involved in the movement?

I was involved in many forms. I was not directly involved in the first and second protests because I was not in Jogja (Yogyakarta). I started hands-on at the third action in October 2019 and got more involved in a series of actions against the Cipta Kerja (omnibus) Bill.

I was mainly working with the campaign team, making printed versions of joint statements and demands. Sometimes I also helped translate to/from English when needed. Apart from that, because of my curator profession, I often invited artist friends to lend their work as visual material for actions or campaigns.

Before Gejayan Memanggil, I was involved in several street demonstrations because I joined the solidarity group against the construction of NYIA airport. At that time, I saw the importance of gathering by occupying the streets as a public space. It is an opportunity to meet and build relationships with people I would have never met in my everyday social space.

As a student, I was pretty apathetic and felt that street demonstrations would not change anything. At that time, maybe I was also cynical about the 1998 reformation, which had actually created political elites. I was compelled to go beyond my cynicism when I witnessed massive developments that robbed the lives and dignity of local people (such as the NYIA development), increasingly unreasonable government policies, as well as social and political movements abroad, such as the Arab Springs, Occupy movement, and many more.

I also became aware of my privileged position as an art and cultural worker with the tools/methods to create radical imaginations of what the future can and should be. So, I am increasingly encouraged to continue to do something with the people around me.

I learned more about the demonstrations from a conversation with one of the Gejayan Memanggil participants

and from media reports. We agreed that these actions, primarily those carried out in 2019, are unique because the people involved are not only activists or from academia, but also come from other disciplines. There were artists, musicians, writers, and the general public. And actions were carried out in a youthful manner, in forms that were not purely masculine or simply full of tension. How do you see the actions?

I agree about the novelty of methods and diversity of people involved in the Gejayan Memanggil demonstrations. The causes are many and never singular. A lot of people were fed up with the government. Politics did not make sense anymore. Jokowi's pledges in the 2014 election were increasingly seen as nonsense. Also, at the international level, many of us see the achievements of alternative politics (meaning politics built from below, not by elites). So Gejayan's statement prioritising horizontal structure, no representation, and an anti-elite stance really impressed me. Gejayan Memanggil aims to bring democratic discourse directly to the masses and a non-activist general public. Gejayan Memanggil is less masculine because many of us first met at the Kita Agni action.<sup>2</sup> So, the awareness of inequality in gender relations, and the issue of sexual violence, was quite widely discussed within small groups of Aliansi Rakyat Bergerak, the driving force for the Gejayan Memanggil movement. Moreover, addressing the anti-sexual violence bill was one of the points of the lawsuit. However, I still see the lack of intersectionality (links between class, race, and gender within oppression) within activism in Jogja.

It is also interesting to look at Hong Kong because they brought the metaphor of water and manifested it through their movements. I think it is essential to be more adaptable and fluid when facing a difficult situation because it is more difficult to sustain a movement that is rigid and always full of tension. I found a quote by Lao Tzu in an Are.na channel that describes it better: "Water is the softest thing, yet it can penetrate mountains and earth. This shows clearly the principle of softness overcoming hardness." What do you think?

I like the Lao Tzu quote you mentioned. I've seen in activist spaces that there is a lot of emphasis on resistance. And especially in

the types of resistance that are quite rigid. This rigidity arises from habits passed down through tradition or inherited from previous generations (especially the 1998 generation). This inheritance emphasises ideology, theoretical analysis, and state politics. But I met many people (non-activists) who were driven to join street demonstrations or express criticism because of their life experiences and other affective drives (anger, joy, sadness, solidarity, etc). While new people and non-activists often feel disconnected in consolidation spaces because they feel 'less' than those who already know about activism, the good thing is that I have also seen many of these people eventually create their own spaces and networks. Perhaps some have lost hope and stopped believing in collectivity and change from below. If that is true, I hope they see this writing, *hehe* : )

I am also interested in forms of solidarity that are 'soft' or even personal—that in a movement, not everyone has to be on the streets, and that there are other vital roles to play. Are there any forms of gentle solidarity or activism that more people can do?

There is a lot. I was involved in a solidarity kitchen network in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this network, everyone did what they could. Some people cooked, some distributed food, some handled finances, and others created social media campaigns. I see activism as activities that are ordinary but powerful. In our experience managing a solidarity kitchen, we saw this kitchen as an effort to create a care infrastructure in the absence of formal support. During its four months in operation, the kitchens in our network received financial assistance and food. Once we even received a delivery of four packs of instant noodles to the kitchen as support. No one made a hierarchy of contributions, there was no such thing as who gave more and who gave little. The important thing is that everyone contributed anything they could.

Activism that is ordinary and carried out by ordinary people has happened and continues to happen around us. At the same time, violence by the state, police, and corporations—or horizontal violence based upon class, gender, race, and other inequalities—continue to occur. This soft and ordinary activism needs to be nurtured, too. And this requires *ilmu titen*.<sup>3</sup> The things that should be paid

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SANTIAGO

## UN PASEO POR LA MEMORIA:

Re-construir la historia combinando lo analógico y lo digital por medio de un proceso de diseño

Carola Ureta MARÍN

### La(s) pregunta(s)

Suponiendo que la virtualidad y el acceso a internet han permitido establecer comunicación directa por más kilómetros de distancia que se encuentre el lugar o suceso, ¿será posible participar de movilizaciones digitalmente sin ser un hacker? Si las calles están constantemente cambiando y en movimiento, ¿cómo conservar la cualidad efímera del espacio público en momentos de crisis en la historia de distintos países? ¿Podrá el diseño y arte ser herramientas que contribuyan a generar lugares de participación activa y posibiliten crear nuevos espacios alternativos de memoria?

'La Ciudad como Texto' es una iniciativa que nos permite abordar las preguntas anteriores y utilizar como ejemplo este archivo de memoria para abrir nuevos espacios de reflexión en variados temas como por ejemplo el diseño, los derechos humanos, la comunicación, inclusión, diversidad, historia, interfaz, política, antropología, entre muchos otros.

### El inicio

Tres años han pasado desde que explotó el estallido social en Chile (18 de Octubre 2019) una de las mayores crisis políticas de su historia. Según el destacado filósofo chileno Gastón Soublette: Una Mega Crisis. Fue una explosión de demandas derivadas del descontento, que se arrastraba tras años de violaciones de los derechos ciudadanos, desencadenado por un aumento de 30 pesos (aproximadamente USD 0.037) en el precio del billete de metro de la capital. El lema más transversal fue el concepto de "dignidad", es decir, la lucha por conseguir una vida digna para todos los chilenos en la que los derechos o servicios básicos como educación, vivienda, salud y pensiones estuvieran garantizados para todos sin distinción alguna. A pocos días de iniciadas las manifestaciones, las promesas de casi treinta años hechas por el gobierno democrático después de la dictadura militar, se veían rotas y esa "normalidad" con la que los chilenos vivían día a día, ya no sería aceptada. En este escenario, ninguna persona, institución, disciplina o rincón del país quedó aislado

## Revolutions are always politics made bodily, politics when actions become the usual form of speech...

—Rebecca SOLNIT  
*Wanderlust: A History of Walking*

del debate.

Desde finales de Octubre, Chile en su totalidad se empezó a manifestar y organizar, haciendo uso del espacio público que fue el escenario de las protestas y la mejor expresión de la sociedad en su conjunto. La calle, como

se podían leer mensajes vinculados a educación, salud, pensiones, derecho al agua, respeto e inclusión de los pueblos originarios, femicidio, Servicio Nacional de Menores (SENAME), derecho al aborto, calentamiento global, por nombrar algunos.

A menos de un mes de iniciadas las protestas, el gobierno a cargo amenazó con censurar y borrar en la capital, todos los mensajes de los muros de la calle principal donde ocurrían las manifestaciones. Y fue este el momento clave donde nació 'La Ciudad como Texto', un nuevo archivo de memoria en formato virtual levantado colaborativa y autogestionadamente (un centenar de contribuciones y aportes de personas no solo en Chile sino que globalmente). Hoy en día, este archivo ha transmutado dando origen a una plataforma web, dos libros impresos, un libro digital, un cortometraje, un disco musical que están recorrido el mundo.

[www.laciudadcomotexto.cl](http://www.laciudadcomotexto.cl)

### La forma

Por esos días las calles de Santiago estaban cortadas no solo por las barricadas y gases lacrimógenos, sino que también por la policía que intentaba reducir los espacios de protestas. El 23

espacio compartido, se convirtió en lugar de encuentro, de conversación, de baile, lugar de barricadas, trincheras y comercio, un espacio para diversos usos. Diariamente cientos de mensajes, tags, graffiti, dibujos se fueron tatuando en los muros de las calles como si fueran la bitácora de la protesta. La multiplicidad de demandas era tan amplia que fácilmente en un par de metros

de noviembre 2019 y por medio de una caminata experiencial se registraron más de 200 fotografías de los muros, desde el epicentro de las manifestaciones hasta el palacio de gobierno, lugar donde las demandas deberían ser escuchadas. Unos pocos días después del registro, el gobierno blanqueó los muros tal como había amenazado. Tras un proceso análogo de montaje físico, se reconstruyó



Censorship of the walls by the government. The top image was recorded 23 Nov 2019 and the bottom image 2 December 2019. Courtesy of *The City as Text*

<sup>2</sup> A solidarity action consisting of students, alumni, and the academic community of Gadjah Mada University (UGM) demanding a resolution to a case of sexual violence experienced by a UGM student while carrying out community service in Maluku.

<sup>3</sup> Stemming from traditional Javanese knowledge, *ilmu titen* means the ability or sensitivity to observe and pay attention to repetition and redundancy in both visible and invisible forms.



el recorrido dando como resultado, 2.4 km de trayecto por medio de 136 fotografías. La obra física posee más de 12 metros de fotografías impresas en 10x15 cm que permitieron resguardar y preservar ese momento histórico violentamente censurado por el gobierno. Luego, se digitalizó el recorrido y por medio del diseño y programación, seis meses más tarde se implementó una plataforma web de libre acceso. En paralelo, se invitó a 40 personas de diversas edades y ámbitos del saber a seleccionar algún mensaje de los muros y escribir un texto de no más de 100 palabras que permitiera profundizar en temáticas, sumergiéndose dentro de los muros. Así, durante la caminata virtual se visibilizan asteriscos clickeables a lo largo de la ruta, que despliegan los textos. La plataforma se ha utilizado como material de estudio para investigaciones y charlas en diferentes disciplinas como: Arquitectura, Derecho, Sociología, Ciencias Políticas, Urbanismo, Diseño, Arte, Antropología, entre otras. Su condición virtual posibilitó, especialmente —durante la pandemia— que se utilizara constantemente por universidades y colegios para continuar con sus programas de estudios en sus clases remotas.

La invitación

‘La Ciudad como Texto’ es una invitación a hacer un recorrido virtual por los 2,4 km registrados en Santiago, el día número 36 del Estallido Social. El ejercicio manual y digital de reconstruir este paño kilométrico, permite rescatar demandas, consignas, frases, personajes y mensajes gritados en las calles y posteriormente blanqueados con pintura.

Del mismo modo, permite que personas de todo el mundo puedan vivir la experiencia de caminar por esas calles y fijar la memoria en un momento importantísimo en la historia de Chile,

recopilando de manera única, todos aquellos mensajes que fueron grabados en los muros de las calles como eco de las demandas sociales. Este material-gratuito y de libre acceso- se presenta como insumo para diversas investigaciones y trabajos a nivel educativo, artístico y cultural.

La perspectiva

‘La Ciudad como Texto’ pretende desarrollar la idea de concebir el espacio público como una entidad viva, que proporciona información histórica e identitaria del lugar donde se ubica. Documentando y explorando distintos formatos para decodificar el espacio urbano en nuevos lenguajes, se pueden crear potentes archivos de memoria. Incluso el espacio público puede entenderse como un “Libro Ciudadano” escrito día a día por sus habitantes. Preguntas como: ¿Cómo se convierten los muros en las páginas de este libro que representa una identidad ciudadana colectiva, popular y polifónica a partir de las voces de la calle? Esto requiere pensar en nuevas materialidades para escribir la historia y también, para registrar la naturaleza efímera del espacio público. Además de repensar la forma tradicional de cómo se suele leer el espacio público, porque este nuevo libro requiere enfoques rizomáticos o tentaculares. Cada persona es libre de seleccionar los mensajes que desee y de este modo, construir su propio tejido discursivo.

El antropólogo británico Tim Ingold señala en su libro ‘Lines: A Brief Story’, “El ser humano genera líneas allá donde va” dejando huellas al caminar entendiendo que una huella “es cualquier marca perdurable dejada en o sobre una superficie sólida por un movimiento continuo”. La condición efímera de las calles nos recuerda también la conocida

obra del artista Richard Long titulada ‘A Line Made by Walking’ de 1967, una línea recta “esculpida” en el suelo simplemente pisando hierba. Esta obra está sujeta a un marco temporal breve porque desaparece del suelo a medida que el césped recupera su posición natural. Igualmente, esta obra puede interpretarse como una forma de protesta porque plantea preocupaciones medioambientales y ecológicas. La Ciudad como Texto, propone hacer un alto y mirar en profundidad los mensajes, quitando el velo de nuestros ojos de un panorama destructivo y violento en un contexto de protesta, podemos ayudar a entender o leer la ciudad desde la construcción de significados. Ciertamente es el reflejo de una crisis pero, al mismo tiempo, nos da la posibilidad de reimaginar qué tipo de sociedad queremos ser y proyectar futuros mejores. Esta escritura representa huellas de memorias y también tiene una existencia temporal, una duración que depende de diferentes agentes.

El misterio

La Ciudad como Texto busca cambiar el paradigma de considerar la protesta y los actos públicos como experiencias efímeras que sólo tienen cabida en un momento y luego se evaporan. Italo Calvino se refiere en el libro ‘Ciudades Invisibles’ al hecho de que “La ciudad, sin embargo, no cuenta su pasado, sino que lo contiene como las líneas de una mano, escritas en las esquinas de las calles, las rejas de las ventanas, las barandillas de los escalones, las antenas de los pararrayos, los mástiles de las banderas, cada segmento marcado a su vez con arañazos, hendiduras, volutas”. ¿Será que este tipo de plataforma experiencial y virtual, también pueda guardar esta memoria entre sus códigos virtuales activados con la visita de sus caminantes inmateriales?

Art can use a powerful, albeit controversial, weapon: beauty.

-Chantal MOUFFE  
‘Alfredo Jaar: The Artist as Organic Intellectual’,  
Diseña 11, 2017

The correspondence between politics and beauty reveals unusual modes of social transformation, mobilising ideas, provoking the regeneration of forms of resistance, and giving protagonism to performativity in the political manifestations.”

-Ximena ULIBARRI  
‘Design and Politics’, Diseña 11, 2017

WANDERING THROUGH MEMORY:  
Re-building history by combining Analog and Digital through a design process

Carola Ureta MARÍN

The Question(s)

Suppose virtuality and internet access have made it possible to establish direct communication—no matter how many kilometres away the event is taking place. Is it possible to digitally participate in mobilisations without being a hacker? If the streets are constantly changing and in movement, how can the ephemeral quality of public space be preserved during moments of crisis in the history of different countries? Can design and art be tools that contribute to generating places of active participation, making it possible to create alternative spaces of memory?

The City as Text is an initiative that allows us to address the above questions and to use this archive of memory as an example to open new spaces for reflection on various topics such as design, human rights, communication, inclusion, diversity, history, interface, politics and anthropology, among many others.

The Beginning

Three years have passed since the social uprising exploded in Chile (18 October 2019) and escalated to become one of the biggest political crises in Chilean history. According to the prominent philosopher Gastón Soublette, it was A Mega Crisis. It was an explosion of demands stemming from discontent carried over from years of violations of citizens’ rights, the last straw broken by an increase of 30 pesos (approximately USD 0.037) in the price of the capital’s metro fare. The most widespread slogan focus upon the concept of dignity—the struggle to achieve a dignified life for all Chileans, whereby fundamental basic rights or services such as education, housing, health, and pensions can be guaranteed for all without distinction. A few days after the demonstrations began, the promises made by the democratic government for almost thirty years since the previous military dictatorship were broken. The ‘normality’ Chileans lived with on a daily basis would no longer be accepted. In this scenario, no person, institution, discipline or corner of the country was isolated from the debate.

From the end of October, Chileans began to demonstrate and organise, using the public space as a stage for the protests and the best expression of society as a whole. As a shared space, the street became a meeting place, a place



Manual assembly process of the 136 photographs that gave rise to the 2.4 km walk, January 2020.  
Courtesy of Carola Ureta MARÍN

of conversation and dance, a place of barricades, trenches, and commerce—a space for multiple uses. Hundreds of messages, tags, graffiti and drawings were tattooed on the walls of the streets daily as if they were the logbooks of the protest. The multiplicity of demands was so broad that within a couple of metres one could easily read messages related to education, health, pensions, the right to water, the respect and inclusion of indigenous peoples, femicide, National Service for Minors (SENAME), the right to abortion and global warming, to name a few.

Less than a month after the protests began, the ruling government threatened to censor and erase all the messages from the walls of the main street where the demonstrations were taking place in Santiago. This was the key moment when The City as Text was born, a new memory archive in a collaboratively built and self-managed, virtual format (100 contributions from people in Chile and globally). Today, this archive has transmuted into a web platform, two printed books, one digital publication, a short film, and a musical album that tours the world. [www.laciudadcomotexto.cl](http://www.laciudadcomotexto.cl)

The Process

In those days the streets of Santiago were

cut off not only by barricades and tear gas but also by the police trying to reduce protest spaces. During an experiential walk on the 23rd of November 2019, more than 200 photographs of the walls were recorded from the epicentre of the demonstrations to the government palace, the latter being the place where the demands should be heard. A few days after the documentation was made, the government whitewashed the walls as threatened. Using an analogue process of physical montage, the route was reconstructed, resulting in a 2.4 km journey through 136 photographs. The physical work contains more than 12 metres of pictures printed in 10 x 15 cm each, making it possible to safeguard and preserve this historical moment violently censored by the government. The tour was digitised, and with design and programming a free-access web platform was implemented six months later. At the same time, 40 people of different ages and backgrounds were invited to select a message from the walls and write a text of no more than 100 words to delve deeper into the issues, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the walls. On the website, clickable asterisks are visible along the route to display the texts. The platform, free and freely accessible, has been used as study material for research and lectures in different disciplines such



as architecture, law, sociology, political science, urbanism, design, art and anthropology, among others. Its virtual access made it possible, especially during the pandemic, to be constantly used by universities and colleges to continue their curricula in remote classrooms.

The Invitation

*The City as Text* is an invitation to take a virtual walk of the 2.4 km recorded in Santiago on the 36th day of the social uprising. The manual and digital exercise of reconstructing this kilometres-long stretch allows us to rescue demands, slogans, phrases, characters, and messages shouted in the streets and later whitewashed with paint.

In the same way, it allows people from all over the world to live the experience of walking through these streets and to fix the memory of a crucial moment in the history of Chile—uniquely compiling all those messages that were engraved on

the walls of the streets as an echo of the social demands.

The Perspective

*The City as Text* develops from the conception of public space as a living entity, revealing the history and identity of various locations. By documenting and exploring different formats to decode urban space with new languages, powerful memory archives can be created. Even public space can be understood as a ‘Citizen’s Book’ written daily by its inhabitants. Questions such as: How do the walls become the pages of a book representing a collective, popular, and polyphonic civic identity based upon the voices of the street? This requires thinking about new materialities to write history, record the ephemeral nature of public space and rethink the traditional way of reading public space, because this new book requires rhizomatic or tentacular approaches. Each person is free to select

the messages they want and, in this way, build their own discursive framework.

The British anthropologist Tim Ingold points out in his book *Lines: A Brief Story*, “Human beings generate lines wherever they go” by leaving footprints as they walk, understanding that a footprint “is any lasting mark left in or on a solid surface by continuous movement.” The ephemeral condition of the streets also reminds us of the well-known work by the artist Richard Long entitled *A Line Made by Walking* (1967), where a straight line is ‘sculpted’ in the ground by simply stepping on the grass. This work is subject to a short duration because it disappears from the ground as the grass returns to its natural position, and this can also be interpreted as an act of protest raising environmental and ecological concerns. ‘The City as Text’, proposes to stop and look deeper at the messages on the walls, removing the veil over destructive and violent panorama in a context of protest.

We can help to understand or read the city by the construction of meanings. It is undoubtedly a reflection of a crisis, but, at the same time, it allows us to re-imagine what kind of society we want—to project better futures. This writing of the city represents the traces of memories but also has its own temporal existence, a duration that depends on different agents.

The Mystery

*The City as Text* seeks to change the paradigm of considering protest and public acts as ephemeral experiences that only have a place for a moment and then evaporate. In *Invisible Cities*, Italo Calvino refers to the fact that, “The city, however, does not recount its past, but contains it

like the lines of a hand, written on street corners, window grilles, step railings, lightning rod antennae, flagpoles, each segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls”. Could it be that this experiential and virtual platform can also keep this memory among its virtual codes, activated by the visit of each immaterial walkers?

Orthodox female Jews in wigs and black skirts, Arab male youths dressed top to bottom in black t-shirts and black jeans, singing through loud speakers, and Muslim women in black hijabs, their entire bodies covered in black. Male Russian Jews run topless, Orthodox Jewish couples enjoy somewhat awkward outdoor dates, African Jews wear the yellow, green, and red scarves symbolizing Ethiopia, and tourists take a break from Europe while cruise ships circle the Mediterranean in the distance.

Today’s Israel is a mix of Jews who immigrated before and after 1948, indigenous people who originally lived in the Palestinian territories, and nomadic Bedouins. The main immigrant groups are Western Europeans represented by Germany, Russian-speaking Eastern Europeans, Africans from Morocco and Ethiopia, and Arabs from the Middle East. There are two main religious groups: Jews and Muslims, with Jews divided into Orthodox and secular Jews. Ethnically, racially, religiously, culturally, and linguistically they share a territory, but they do not share life. Their worlds are strictly segregated. The education system differs according to religion and ethnicity. Orthodox Jews attend Orthodox schools until adulthood, Arabs attend Arabic schools, Russians attend Russian schools, and secular Jews attend Hebrew schools. Among Orthodox Jews, the Neturei Karta is anti-Zionist and rejects the state of Israel. Schools teach different cultures and religions in different languages. They may meet in college, but they have already lived in so many different worlds that it is not easy for them to cross religious and cultural divides.

The weekend Shabbat (or Sabbath), begins on Friday afternoon around 1-3PM and ends the following Saturday evening around 7-8PM. The difference with weekends in other countries is that no one works during this time. Transportation such as the subway, buses, and taxis are shut down, and all shops are closed. As a rule, you shouldn’t use electricity or machines. The extent to which this is practiced depends upon the level of piety. Of course, Russian-run supermarkets and Arab taxis are open. But there is one day

에 한국식으로 말해서 군대에 말뚝을 박게 될 경우 더 없이 좋다. 군인으로 20년을 연속 근무하고 40대에 은퇴하여 두둑이 퇴직금을 챙기고 연금을 받으면서 대학교나 국가기관에 재취업할 수 있다.

기차는 지중해 연안을 따라 달린다. 멀리 왼편으로 분리장벽과 그 너머로 팔레스타인 지역이 보인다. 짹짹한 하늘 아래 지평선 아래로 베이지색의 석회암이 펼쳐진다. 이스라엘에서는 어느 지역이든 세계에서 가장 복잡한 민족 인종 종교의 사람들을 볼 수 있다. 사람들이 해변을 산책하는 모습도 가지가지다. 반바지에 샌들을 신은 전형적인 세속 유대인들, 가발을 쓰고 검정색 치마를 입은 정통유대교 여성들, 위아래로 검정색 티셔츠와 검정 진을 입고 크게 스피커를 들고 노래를 즐기는 아랍계 청년들, 검정색 히잡을 쓰고 온몸을 검정 옷으로 뒤덮은 무슬림계 여성들, 자유분방한 차림으로 상의를 벗고 달리기 하는 러시아계 남성들, 다소 어색하게 야외 데이트를 즐기는 정통 유대교 남녀 커플, 에티오피아를 상징하는 노란색-초록색-빨간색 스카프를 두른 아프리카계 유대인들, 그리고 유럽에서 잠시 쉬러 온 관광객들과 멀리 보이는 지중해 연안을 도는 크루즈 선박들이 준비하다.

오늘날 이스라엘에는 1948년 전후로 이주해 온 유대인들, 원래 팔레스타인 지역에 살던 원주민들과 유목민인 베두인 족 등이 섞여 살고 있다. 대표적인 이주민들은 독일로 대표되는 서유럽계, 러시아어를 쓰는 동유럽계, 모로코와 에티오피아를 비롯한 아프리카계, 중동의 아랍계이다. 종교적으로 구분하면 크게 유대인과 무슬림계로 나뉘고, 유대인은 정통 유대인과 세속 유대인으로 나뉜다. 민

이 스라엘에서의 일요일 아침, 기차역으로 향한다. 이스라엘의 일요일은 다른 나라의 월요일과 같다. 일요일부터 일요일이 시작되고 금요일 오후 한 주가 끝난다. 풀빛 군복을 입은 18세가량의 남녀 군인들이 기차를 타고 부대로 돌아가는 시간이다. 군인들로 몹시 북적이는 기차역과 버스 터미널에서 이들을 헤집고 기차에 올라 텔아비브로 향한다. 정통 유대인을 제외한 세속 유대인들은 남녀 모두 징집된다. 아랍계 이스라엘인과 타종교를 가진 시민권자들은 군사적 비밀보호 및 종교적 가치를 이유로 징집에서 제외된다. 그리고 군대에 복무하지 못한 2등 시민으로 살아가게 된다.

군인들은 주로 웨스트뱅크나 가자지구 배치되고 본인의 충기를 소지한 채 주말에 집으로 돌아가고 매주 일요일 부대로 복귀한다. 군대에서 특정 임무를 부여받고 전문적인 군사교육을 받는 것은 이들의 미래에 큰 영향을 미친다. 군대에서 유리한 부대에 배치되어 고급 기술을 배우고 나아가 군대

PHOTO A Declaration of Dignity: The City as Text short film presentation at the ART-ACT Festival screened at Ten Square in Singapore, January 2023. Courtesy of Aura MURILLO, Ahad MAHMOOD + Arnau DONATE

TEL AVIV

이스라엘, 난민국가의 정신세계와 분열된 공동체  
한국인이 이스라엘을 이해하는 방법

THE MENTALITY OF A REFUGEE STATE  
AND DIVIDED COMMUNITY

A way to understand Israel as a Korean

글씨 GULSSE



족적 인종적 종교적 문화적 언어적인 차이를 지닌 이들은 영토를 공유하지만, 삶을 공유하지 않는다. 이들의 삶은 철저히 분리되어 있다. 종교와 민족에 따라 교육시스템이 다르다. 정통 유대인은 성인이 될 때까지 정통 유대인 학교에 다니고, 아랍계는 아랍어를 쓰는 아랍 학교를, 러시아계는 러시아어를 쓰는 러시아 학교를, 세속 유대인들은 히브리어를 쓰는 학교를 다닌다. 정통유대인들 중 네츄레이 카르타<sup>1</sup>는 반시오니스트로 이스라엘 국가를 거부한다. 학교에서는 서로 다른 언어로 다른 문화와 종교를 가르친다. 대학교에서 이들이 만날 수는 있지만 이미 너무 다른 세계를 살아왔으며 종교문화적 차이를 거슬러 서로를 만나는 것은 쉽지 않은 일이다.

금요일 오후 1-3시경부터 주말 안식일, 사밧(Sabbath)이 시작되고 다음날 토요일 저녁 7-8시경 끝난다. 다른 국가의 주말과 다른 점은 이 시간 동안 아무도 일을 하지 않는다는 것이다. 지하철, 버스, 택시와 같은 교통수단도 모두 셧다운 되고, 모든 가게가 문을 닫는다. 원칙적으로는 전기도 기계도 사용해서는 안 된다고 한다. 신앙심의 정도에 따라 실천하는 정도가 달라진다. 물론, 러시아인이 운영하는 마트나 아랍계 택시는 운영한다. 유대인 공휴일 중의 하루는 자가용도 이용하지 않는 날(욥 키푸르, Yom Kippur)이 있다. 그날 오토바이나 차를 타고 도로를 가로지른다면 돌을 맞을 수도 있다. 종교가 지배하는 세계에서만 가능한 낯선 풍경이다. 이스라엘은 공식적인 국교가 없지만 유대 민주주의 국가이다.<sup>2</sup> 그 말은 유대인들을 위한 나라이며 비유대인을 법적으로 ‘차별’해도 된다는 의미다. 종교가 지배하는 세상에서 ‘차

별’은 ‘율법을 따르는 행위’이다.

그렇다면 유대인은 유대 공동체 안에서 어떻게 생활할까? 텔아비브 거리를 걷다 보면 각 구역별 굉장한 빈부격차로 놀랍다. 텔아비브는 세계적으로 가장 비싼 물가를 자랑하는 도시이다. 하지만 그 명성에 미치지 못하는 거리풍경을 쉽게 접할 수 있다. 무너져 내리는 건물과 슬럼화 된 거리 속에 아프리카계 유대인들과 수단인들이 가득하고, 꽤 적하고 고급화된 타운에는 백인 유대인들만 모여 산다. 주로 서유럽에서 온 유럽계 유대인 아슈케나짐(Ashkenazim)은 이스라엘의 최고 상류층을 이룬다. 독일에서 이주한 유대인들이 상류층을 이루며, 동유럽계는 상류층이 아니다. 러시아에서 온 유대인들은 구소련의 탄압을 피해 건너온 사람들이며, 최근에는 러시아-우크라이나 전쟁으로 전쟁 난민들이 이스라엘로 몰려들었다. 중동계 유대인은 세파르딤(Sephardim)으로 불리는 중동 및 모로코 출신이다. 이스라엘의 하류층을 이루는 아프리카계 유대인들은 주로 에티오피아계로 베타(Beta, Ethiopian Jew)라고 불린다. 유대인이 라면 인종과 민족을 가로질러 이스라엘이라는 국가에서 공동체를 이루며 서로 돕고 지지해주는 지혜롭게 공존하는 삶을 살 것 같지만, 실제로는 전혀 그렇지 않다. 유대인들은 자신과 타인을 인종과 민족, 종교에 따라 구분 짓고, 유대인인 그 자신들도 인종과 언어에 따라 차별화한다. 끝없는 차별과 구획이 유대 공동체 안에서 일어난다. 동일한 영토에서 이웃으로 살아가면서 철저히 분절된 삶을 산다는 것이 이해되지 않지만, 이는 ‘분리’된 세계 속의 삶에서 끝나지 않는다. 이는 이스라엘의 아파르트헤이트 정책 때문이다.

이스라엘의 유대인들은 지난 2천년 간의 디아스포라 끝에 중동의 모든 국가와 전쟁을 벌이며 끝내 영토를 손에 쥐었으나, 왜 유대인을 위한 영토에서, 유대인 공동체 내에서 유대인들은 분열되어 있을까? 나는 이스라엘이 유대인을 위한 공동체 국가 형성에 실패했다고 생각한다. 이스라엘은 OECD국가 중 빈부격차가 가장 높다. 특히 예루살렘의 빈곤율은 48% 이다. 수입의 47%를 세금으로 거둬들이지만 국방비 지출 및 종교적 지원이 높고, 백인 유대인 위주로 지원된다.

이스라엘은 건국 이후 유럽과 미국으로부터 많은 지원을 받았고 마치 유럽의 일부가 중동에 펼쳐진 것 같은 꽤나 발전된 국가로 시작했다. 하지만 오늘날 이스라엘의 상황은 건국 후 내리막을 걷고 있

는 것으로 보인다. 나는 이스라엘의 곳곳을 걸으면 서 유대인들의 공동체 의식에 대한 생각을 하게 되었다. 거리에서 공사에 필요한 자재가 적재되어 있으면 이를 훔쳐가는 사람이 있고, 같은 건물에 살면서 다른 층의 사람을 고려하지 않고 제멋대로 집을 리모델링하여 다른 층의 사람에게 피해를 주고, 공공기관의 공무원들은 민원인을 하인처럼 대하면서 권력을 누린다. 시장에서는 몇 폰의 세켈을 더 아끼기 위해 흔히 말싸움이 일어나는데 서로를 속이고 속이는 게임을 하는 것이다. 이스라엘에서 타인을 신뢰하는 것은 순진한 행동이다.

이스라엘에 살고 있는 유대인들에게 공동체 의식이란 무엇일까? 오랜 역사를 거쳐 박해를 받으면서 각개 전투하는, 난민, 떠돌이, 집을 잃은 자의 스탠스와 정신상태를 체화 한 것일까? 나는 강력한 정신적인 공동체로서 국민 의식, 민족 의식, 종교적 공동체로서 유대 공동체의 모습을 볼 수 없었다. 건국 이래 최초로 자신들의 터전을 만들었지만, 아직 이방인의 정신세계를 버리지 못하는 것으로 보인다. 어쩌면 유대인이라는 일종의 ‘허구의 정신적 공동체’는 특정한 정통 유대교인들에게만 해당하는 개념일 수도 있다.

심각하게 분열된 유대 공동체의 정신적인 스탠스는 상시적인 테러와 분쟁상태로 인한 긴장상태와 연관되어 있지 않을까? 이웃과도 화합하지 못하고 믿지 못하는 삶, 일상에서 불안한 삶을 살고 있는 사람들의 정신적인 상태가 건강하지 못하다는 의미이다. 주변국들을 전부 적대시하면서 자신의 영토와 정체성을 설정한 부작용인 것이다. 주변의 모든 중동국가와 전쟁을 치르고 팔레스타인을 점령하느라 군사력을 낭비하는 등 상시적인 전쟁상태에서 살고 있는 이스라엘 인들은 외국에 나가서도 환영받지 못한다. 이스라엘인을 반기지 않는 국가가 많기 때문이다. 항상 안전을 염려해야 하는 사람들의 삶, 정신적으로 심한 고립감과 혐오감, 불신감에 싸여 있다. 나는 이것이 이스라엘인들이 겪고 있는 주변과 화합하지 못하는 자의 정신분열적인 스탠스라고 생각한다. 긴 역사를 거슬러 서로를 증오하고 말그대로 죽고 죽이는 전쟁을 서슴없이 저질러온 국가가 민족이 과거에 대한 용서를 빌고 화합의 발걸음을 시작할 수 있을까? 그 기대를 하는 것이 사실상 불가능하다고 할 수 있다. 이스라엘은 주변국들과 화해를 할 수 없을 정도로 피 터지게 싸웠기 때문에 현재의 엄청난 국방력을 통해서 현상유지를 하는 것 외엔 달리 방법이 없다. 오히려 세대에 걸쳐 시오니스트로 세뇌되고 군사적 무장을 강화할 가능성이 높다고 할 것이다.

전범국가들의 과거사에 대한 태도를 상기하면서 이스라엘의 분열적이며 폐쇄적인 민족주의와 더욱더 극단적인 정치적 우파로 치닫는 현재의 모습을 생각해본다. 본질적으로 ‘순혈’의 유대인은 불가능하다. 2천년간 세계를 떠돌면서 수많은 인종과 민족과 어우러져 살아왔다. 모계 혈통에서 유대인인 것을 증명하면 이스라엘 시민권을 받을 수 있지만 그들이 ‘순혈’ 유대인 일 가능성은 없다. 민족적 순혈을 강조할수록 순혈의 의미는 퇴색된다. 그리고 종교적 정당성을 주장할수록 국가 이스라엘은 국가적 정당성이 희미해지는 모순이 있다. 이스라엘은 삼중 딜레마에도 불구하고 유대민족의 혼종적 정체성을 인정하고 나라를 잃고 떠돌고 핍박받은 모든 민족들의 터전이 되어야 한다. 🌐

(Yom Kippur) during the Jewish holidays when even private cars are not allowed. If you cross the street on a motorcycle or car on that day, you may be stoned. It's a strange scene that could only be possible in a world dominated by religion. Israel has no official state religion, but it is a Jewish democracy, which means that it is a country for Jews and that it is legal to “discriminate” against non-Jews. In a world dominated by religion, “discrimination follows Jewish law.”

So how do Jews live within the Jewish community? Walking down the streets of Tel Aviv, you’re struck by the staggering disparity between rich and poor in each neighborhood. Tel Aviv is one of the most expensive cities in the world. However, it’s easy to come across streetscapes that don’t live up to that reputation. Crumbling buildings and slum-like streets are filled with African Jews and Sudanese, while pleasant, gentrified neighborhoods are populated with white Jews. Ashkenazim, European Jews mainly from Western Europe, make up Israel’s upper class. Jews who immigrated from Germany make up the upper class, which does not include Eastern Europeans. Jews from Russia fled repression in the former Soviet Union, and more recently, refugees from the war in Ukraine have flocked to Israel. Jews of Middle Eastern descent are from the Middle East and Morocco, called Sephardim. African Jews, who make up Israel’s underclass, are primarily Ethiopian and are called Beta. One would think that Jews would live a life of wise coexistence across racial and ethnic lines, living together as a community in the State of Israel, helping and supporting each other, but this is not the case at all. Jews divide themselves from others by race, ethnicity, and religion, then



divide amongst themselves by race and language. Endless discrimination and segregation occur even within the Jewish community. It is incomprehensible to live as neighbors in the same territory, but it does not end with living in a “separate” world. This is due to Israel's apartheid policy.

After two millennia of diaspora, the Jews of Israel ended up fighting wars with every country in the Middle East, but why are they so divided, even within a territory meant for Jews, and even within the Jewish community? I believe that Israel has failed to create a community state for the Jewish people. Israel has the highest gap between rich and poor in the OECD. In Jerusalem, the poverty rate is 48%. The government collects 47% of its revenue from taxes, but its military defense spending and religious support are high, and largely they are for white Jewish.

Since its founding, Israel has received a lot of support from Europe and the United States, and it started as a developed country, almost like a European country in the Middle East. Since its founding to today, however, Israel seems to be on a downward spiral. As I walked around the country, I was struck by another sense of community among the Jewish people. There are people stealing construction materials on the streets, people living in the same building remodeling their homes without consideration for the people on other floors, and people in public offices enjoying power while treating citizens like servants. In the marketplace, brawls often happen to save a few extra shekels, and people play games of trickery and deception upon one another. Trusting others in Israel is naïve.

For the Jews living in Israel, what is the sense of community? Is it an embodiment of the stance and mentality of the refugee, the wanderer, and the homeless, each fighting their own battles under persecution throughout its long history? The Jewish community as a national, ethnic, and religious community, as a

strong spiritual community, is nowhere to be seen. They were the first to make a home for themselves since the founding of the country, but it seems that they have not yet been able to abandon the alien mentality. Perhaps the “fictional spiritual community” of the Jews is a concept that only applies to certain Orthodox Jews.

Is the deeply divided mentality of the Jewish community related to the tension caused by the constant state of terrorism and conflict? People who do not live in harmony with their neighbors, who do not trust them, and who live a life of daily insecurity are not in an untroubled state of mind. It is a side effect of establishing one’s territory and identity by antagonizing all neighboring countries. Israelis, who live in a constant state of war with all their neighbors in the Middle East and waste their military power to occupy Palestine, are not welcome abroad. There are many countries where Israelis are not welcome. They live in constant fear for their safety, surrounded by a deep sense of isolation, disgust, and distrust. I think what Israelis experience may be like the schizophrenic condition of those who cannot reconcile with their surroundings. Is it possible for a nation that has a long history of hating and literally killing one another to begin a process of reconciliation? It is virtually impossible to expect that. Israel has fought so bloody a war that it cannot reconcile with its neighbors, so it has no choice but to maintain the status quo through its current military power, where people are likely to be indoctrinated as Zionists and militarized for generations.

Considering the attitudes towards its history, it is disturbing to consider Israel's war crimes, divisive and closed nationalism, and the current shift to a more extreme political right. In essence, “pure-blooded” Jews are impossible. They have roamed the world for 2,000 years, intermingling with many races and ethnicities. People who can prove their Jewishness on the maternal side of the family can be granted Israeli citizenship, but there is no way they are “pure” Jews. The more you emphasize ethnic purity, the less it means. And the more it claims religious legitimacy, the more the state of Israel becomes less legitimate as a state. Despite the trilemma, Israel must recognize the hybrid identity of the Jewish people and be a home for all those who have been dispossessed, displaced, and persecuted. 🌐

Paintings and gas masks in the Walled Off Hotel in Bethlehem.

Soldiers with guns in Jerusalem.



migrant workers' struggles for better working conditions in a corporation with neocolonial attitudes, for instance. During a role-playing game, I asked friends from a grassroots organisation in Indonesia what they would do if they were migrant workers in the Netherlands working for a Dutch company that exploits the oceans of Indonesia. If this corporation were going to seize certain operations as a result of processes of neoliberalisation and decolonisation, would they be in solidarity with the workers in resistance who risk losing their jobs, or would they want the factory to shut down? The discussion continued for hours and did not come to a conclusion.

Then I think of Putin's attack on Ukraine and how my friends are so distinctly divided about an armed struggle and if the US should be providing weapons. Or about Arab friends' feeling of betrayal when the Kurdish don't act in solidarity with the larger struggles of Syria or with the possibility of independence in North Syria. Then I remember how my friends in Turkey were trying to explain that a cultural boycott towards Turkey would only harm the people of Turkey and aid Erdogan's cause.

Most recently, I think about how North and East Syria cannot receive help, not only because international sanctions against Syria have disabled access to support for earthquake victims, but also because Assad has closed down the only road, previously managed by the United Nations for transporting humanitarian aid, under the pretence that it was heavily damaged by the earthquake.

Don't get my rants wrong, I'm not calling out critique to put myself in an ethically superior position. These are wide-sweeping, complex issues with multiple players at stake. Each of these examples require entire papers written on them to analyse each situation. It's just that I am less and less sure if/how I/we can contribute to a change that I/we know is the right direction. I'm/we're less and less sure about what I/we need to do, what I/we can do.

The previous three issues of the Black Book Assembly *More-Than-Half-a-Year-in-Review* newsletter tried to capture the fuzzy overlaps of trans-locality, each focusing upon anarchist and/or leftist sociopolitical currents in particular cities (01 Hong Kong, 02 Seoul, 03 Bangkok). Now for this fourth edition, we reflect

upon a time. That time started for those of us in Hong Kong in 2019 when BBA first assembled, but it was also a time when unprecedented sociopolitical unrest blossomed in so many cities all over the world. What has happened and transformed since then? And now emerging again after the years of lockdown and isolation, how can we think 'pandemically'? Is the response about retreating? Disappearing and becoming invisible? Or are there other new, intersectional networks of solidarity? Other autonomies?

This issue is by no means complete or comprehensive. We miss Beirut, we miss Tehran, we miss Hong Kong. We are biased, completely volunteer-run, and limited by the nodal reach of our own networks of friends and comrades to share views from inside to outside, outside to outside—together and across. If this could be anything, it is a question again if there is any possibility of a trans-local thinking and moving together, of being situated while connected and in solidarity at this time. Should we (re)align, and why? How do we align the non-aligned today? ●

more attention to, such as relationships, connections, and the little things, are often neglected but give strength to the whole.

If we see the history of social movements in Indonesia so far, it is sad and heartbreaking that there is no lack of violence. Do you have other strategies for coordinating action? Or what should we prepare for the next steps?

Maybe my previous explanation has already started to answer this: the *ilmu titen*.<sup>3</sup> I want to connect from there. Apart from the collective strength of *titen* to see invisible or removed things, there is also the continuing to practice many aspects of movements in everyday life. Practicing non-hierarchical relations and organisation, making joint decisions, and being responsible to one another and not to the most powerful are some of the many things that can be done in the family, community, and (hopefully) the workplace. With lots of practice, we will build skills and create tools for coordinating. So that one day, when these tools and skills are needed to engage in something on a larger scale, we will be ready. ●

The Black Book Assembly *More-Than-Half-a-Year-in-Review* is an irregularly published newsletter initiative of the Black Book Assembly, a loose network of activists, writers, artists, and publishers from East and Southeast Asia. Each issue is edited from a different locale but treads across geographies to maintain the affinities of common struggle and deepen the toolbox of means and manoeuvres. The first issue began under the pavement of Hong Kong, followed by issue two edited by the Little Black Book Club of Seoul and the third issue, brought together in Bangkok by textual collective NAMKHEUN in collaboration with Hong Kong-based Display Distribute. This fourth edition has been instigated as ultra-circulatory study material for the Ultradependent Public School, an initiative of basis voor actuele kunst (BAK) in Utrecht, Netherlands. The allotted budget has been utilised in its entirety for printing.

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