Radical Everyday Practice

Gillian Rose, Ernst Bloch, and seven activist-philosophers of Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Aotearoa

By
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abstract

How are we to live?   How do we sustain our emotional commitment to utopia? Answering these questions necessarily calls for a reconceptualisation of subjectivity and sociality, in order to overcome the depoliticisation, resignation and despair captured by the neoliberal subject.   Drawing together qualitative and theoretical research under Ruth Levitas' framework for the 'imaginary reconstitution of society' – *Utopia as Method* – I argue utopia is the otherwise that we navigate, create and learn of, together, through every moment.   Where the neoliberal subject signals a collapse of subjectivity that contributes to the depoliticisation and resignation of our contemporary times, I offer an alternative account of subjectivity through Gillian Rose and Ernst Bloch.   In an original theoretical encounter, I connect Rose's concepts of reason and 'inaugurated mourning' with Bloch's concepts 'the darkness of the lived moment' and the 'not-yet,' towards imagining subjectivity differently.   Further, through six conversations with seven activist-philosophers from Te Whanganui-a-Tara (Wellington) – Jen Margaret, Jo Randerson, Thomas LaHood, Richard D. Bartlett, Benjamin Johnson, Cally O'Neill and Kassie Hartendorp – I make visible already-existing emancipatory practices and subjectivities from within radical Aotearoa (New Zealand,) from which we can learn and locally ground our imaginings.   Combining the conversations held with the activist-philosophers with the alternative account of subjectivity developed, I move outwards – from the individual and the particular to the collective – to specifically name five key modes of radical everyday practice: *embodiment, not knowing, trust, care,* and *imagining*. Understood as an articulation of *docta spes*, or a praxis of educated hope, these five modes capture a sense of everyday sociality imagined otherwise, as well as articulate a collaborative, sustainable and localised account of the emotionally demanding pedagogical pursuit towards the realisation and experience of utopia.   An answer to the first question – *how are we to live?* – is thus processually found within the second question – *how do we sustain our emotional commitment to utopia?*

key words

acknowledgements

The world demands so much of us, Kassie Hartendorp wisely told me at the start of 2017 - the "system propels itself on burnouts" and this plays on repeat in my head. It is close to my heart as it turns into a fist. We have to rest and we have to keep turning up, and we have to do it in ways that sustain the web of ourselves, each other and the world. In our attempts, we also never get quite right. And so, no number of thank you's will ever match: every interaction mattered, remains to matter.

Yet, still – thank you all who moved with me, moved me and imprinted my world in the ways you did and continue to do. Thank you for the endless plurality of your love, your support and the depth of your challenges. Thank you for being kind, for being strong and for being unforgettably yourselves in ways that are endlessly tender. You are all inspiring, and have given me all of the strength that ever took me anywhere.

This work is a refraction birthed from our many webbed interactions: it is a cartography of on-going relationships in the hopes that they may move us all together.

And things do, after all, move – for who could have imagined March 2020?

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introduction

In the strangeness of our twenty-first century times, it is difficult to know how to be together, to know how to let go of the things that separate us from ourselves and each other as well as from the intergenerational nature of life and being. It is difficult to how to begin again, to return to the work that calls out to us most desperately. We find ourselves in a world that encourages – on almost all fronts – resignation, depoliticisation, despair, impotence, exhaustion, self-interest, anthropocentrism, the elevation of aesthetics of representation over the profundity of actuality, and the attempted marketisation of values, with seemingly little chance of escape. The devastating consequences are felt by the land, by our bodies, by tomorrow. Refusing to fold into the absolute devastation of the collapse of otherwise itself, the central question this thesis seeks to answer is: *how do we sustain our emotional commitment to utopia*?

The only place we can begin is where we are. *We* are *here* and we are here with each other. The 'we' is always different, the 'here' is always changing. 'We' and 'here' offer up the intersection of meaning, as if it were a radical site of beginning that has already begun and is never anywhere besides caught in the middle of the pursuit towards an 'us, there'.

Indeed, the practices we need now embrace an oscillation between renewal and reintroduction; creation and discovery; tending to as well as be tended by; teaching as well as remaining teachable. Utopia is the otherwise that we navigate, create and learn of, together, through every moment. Utopia is the hard labour of care work.

the first move

How are we to live?

This is a question that Vincent Lloyd gifts to the late philosopher Gillian Rose, in the introduction to her interview with Andy O'Mahony; Lloyd calls it the "most basic ethical question."[1]

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[1] Vincent Lloyd, "Interview with Gillian Rose," *Theory, Culture & Society* 25, no. 7–8 (2008): 203.

By seeking to think through the question *how are we to live?*, I hope we may gain a little more clarity about where we find ourselves, about who we are and about who we want to be, so as to explore how we may travel there. Though the 'we' and 'here' are ever-changing, the stake I put in the ground is the 'we' of left politics and the 'here' of Aotearoa New Zealand.

I nevertheless hope that the words offered in these pages are generous and hospitable to people from all walks of life who wish to move together towards a relational otherwise.[2] The openness of Lloyd's question manifests in latent possibility – possibility that leaks as it infiltrates, affects and transforms our subjective experience of the world, and indeed, hopefully, the world itself.

My first move is to offer a second question:

How do we sustain our emotional commitment to utopia?

This 'utopia' is understood as a processual practice and framework that reflects, enacts and births the possibility of an emancipatory *sense*, which, straddling the space between what is and what might be, generates movement towards otherwise and pivots – in this movement – towards emancipation. Succinctly put, this is *docta spes*, or, *educated hope.*

As in Lloyd's question, I too call on the relationality of a 'we'. The specific 'we' for whom this research was first conducted for, and in relation to, is the radical left in Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Aotearoa as in 2017 and 2018. I aim to contribute to a future possible articulation of a 'we' that extends beyond these particularities.

In emphasising the critical nature of our 'emotional commitments,' I introduce Bloch's 'warm-stream' Marxism, noting the importance of renewing our "passion for the cause and anticipation for the future"[3] – this offers a pathway to directly respond to the apparent foreclosure of possibility at the heart of contemporary depoliticisation and resignation.

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[2] The term 'otherwise' refers to that which is radically beyond the present, and as yet cannot be specified due to its openness and alterity. As Bloch indicates, 'otherwise' signals the possibility of intentional and active movement and realisation: "things can be otherwise. That means: things can also *become* otherwise." Ernst Bloch, "Man as Possibility," *CrossCurrents* 18, no. 3 (1968): 274.
[3] Roland Boer, "Concerning the 'Warm-stream' within Marxism," *International Critical Thought* 6, no. 1 (2016): 21.

The necessity of 'sustainability' foregrounds the importance of continual action, against and despite of the seemingly overwhelming – yet often delayed, distant or abstract - sense of crisis and devastation in these twenty-first century times.

In answer to my second question – *how do we sustain our emotional commitment to utopia?* – I offer an emergent and emancipatory account of everyday politics, capable of sustaining as well as pursuing the real possibility of otherwise. Here, by engaging with Gillian Rose, Ernst Bloch and seven activist-philosophers from Te Whanganui-a-Tara (Wellington), I hope to contributions towards a re-imagining of subjectivity and sociality.[4]

Where the contemporary neoliberal subject signals a collapse of subjectivity, I claim Rose and Bloch return agency, potency and openness to the becoming of subjectivity. Brought together in an original encounter, I argue they together help to name the ongoing and always relational work of being in the world. Subjectivity is, I therefore posit, found amidst: the weave of intuition and intellect; our mournful movements through disappointment; mis-intention and the return of agency; our simultaneous materiality and ineffability; our constant, entangled becoming.

Jen Margaret, Jo Randerson, Thomas LaHood, Richard D. Bartlett, Benjamin Johnson, Cally O'Neill and Kassie Hartendorp were the seven activist-philosophers I spoke to in conversation with in 2017 as part of this research. Their words extend my theoretical account. From these conversations, I gained two critical insights which filter through the research project: relational and speculative sustenance in the pursuit of otherwise emerges in those practices that maintain our connection to ourselves, to others, to the world and to the land upon which we stand; and, that our strength grows by retaining, recognising and celebrating the tending-to-ourselves-and-others in ways that escape the attempted total neoliberalisation of life. Radicality is here found in the return to the everyday roots of our becoming: to subjectivity and sociality, and to the persistent influence of micro-actions, gestures and movements as they cumulatively make our world.

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[4] I refer to Wellington as Te Whanganui-a-Tara, following Jen Margaret and Kassie Hartendorp. See Kassie Hartendorp, "Transforming Our Future in Te Moana Nui a Kiwa," *Counterfutures* 2 (2016); and Jen Margaret, "Groundwork: Facilitating Change," https://groundwork.org.nz.

Though our practices must remain open and changeable, I offer an account, practice and pedagogy of *docta spes*, educated hope, through the relational interplay of the following five modes of radical everyday practice: *embodiment*, *not knowing*, *trust*, *care* and *imagining*. I argue, therefore, that it is in the midst of our active and everyday movements towards otherwise, armed with the dual speculativity and relationality of *docta spes*, that we may together realise and experience utopia. An answer to the first question – *how are we to live?* – is thus processually found within the second question – *how do we sustain our emotional commitment to utopia?*

thesis outline

The core contribution of this thesis can be understood as two-fold: *first,* as the attempt to actively think and feel different about our relationships to ourselves, to others and therefore to the world more generally. In order to, *secondly,* articulate and practice acting differently in the world together, such that our everyday actions contribute to the real possibility that things can be otherwise.

The radicality of this thesis is found in the actively utopic attempt to locate, name and employ a process of *docta spes*, or educated hope, as drawn from the work of Ernst Bloch. This process centres the ongoing, and difficult, care work of re-cognising and socially reproducing the world. The 'educated' refers to the on-going entanglement of one's own reflexivity and activity as relationally bound to ourselves, others and the world. The 'hope' refers to the always-live possibility of that which can never be settled: the strength of time and action. This hope is educated in that it seeks to be consciously and relentlessly responsive, engaged and attentive to the fluidity, collectivity and entanglement of shared reality. 'Educated hope' is thus both a process and practice, for the pursuit of utopia is hard work.

In Chapter 1, I introduce Ruth Levitas' Utopia as Method as the guiding methodology of the thesis, and, through a review of the radical literature, detail and expand on the proposed symbolic collapse of subjectivity at the heart of the neoliberal subject to which this thesis responds.

In Chapter 2, I introduce the seven local activist-philosophers to whom I am deeply indebted: Jen Margaret, Jo Randerson, Thomas LaHood, Richard D. Bartlett, Benjamin

Johnson, Cally O'Neill, and Kassie Hartendorp. I turned to local activist-philosophy in order to provide a uniquely relational and place-based response to the growing calls, within academia, and society more broadly, to think otherwise. The 'other thinking' explored in this thesis is, therefore, a weave of the radical and processual political practice inherited from these seven activist-philosophers, with their roots in Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Aotearoa. Chapter 2 thus specifically grounds this thesis in place.

Chapter 3 works to speculatively articulate a theoretical alternative to the subjectivity of the neoliberal subject, through an archaeological and architectural examination of Gillian Rose and Ernst Bloch. From their work, I draw on Rosean reason, inaugurated mourning, the darkness of the lived moment and the not-yet. Through a theoretical application of Levitas' Utopia as Archaeology and Utopia as Architecture, I offer an alternative account of subjectivity as a reparative response to the apparent collapse of subjectivity within the neoliberal subject.[5] This chapter begins the 'imaginary reconstruction of society' at the inner-site of the individual, understood most broadly as subjectivity, as a recognition of the long-term experiential consequences of neoliberalism, but also capitalism, colonisation and patriarchy, to the actuality of our starting place.

Chapter 4 ties together the triptych of Utopia as Method, bringing together the alternatively conceived sense of subjectivity posited in Chapter 3 with an archaeological and architectural investigation into the already-existing practices of the seven activist-philosophers, in order to move outwards from the individual to articulate a sense of sociality imagined differently. In responding to the question *how do we sustain our emotional commitment to utopia?*, I offer five modes of activist-philosophy and practice: *embodiment*, *not knowing, trust, care* and *imagining.* I argue these fives modes of radical everyday practice can be understood as particularly localised articulations of an actively pedagogical, and therefore educated, sense of hope, or *docta spes.* As both educated and educating, these practices are inherently relational; as both hopeful and forward-facing, these practices are inherently speculative. Together, these five modes emerge as a local-form articulation of *docta spes*, emergent from an alternative sense of subjectivity, towards an alternative sense of sociality.

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[5] Eve Sedwick, "Paranoid reading and reparative reading, or, you're so paranoid, you probably think this essay is about you", in *Touching Feeling,* eds. Eve Sedgwick, Michele Barale, Jonathan Goldberg, and Michael Moon, (Durham, UK: Duke University Press, 2002).

Regarding form, in this thesis, the reader and the writer were, and remain to be, positioned as active contributors to the content itself – even as the work ages and the readers change. Both reader and writer are called on to do personal pedagogical work in the process of reading and writing respectively; such that a key aim of the work remains the dispersion for any capacity for detached or passive being-in-the-world, in favour of a sense of being that is applied and cognisant of on-going entanglements which constantly forge new ways. This process can be understood as auto-poeisis: "in writing… I began to live in another present, to settle in another present, to make another future livable for myself."[6] Imagine this also read, 'in reading, I began to live in another present'; 'in acting'.

Critically, sustaining our emotional commitment to utopia is thus demonstrated to be a practice of hard work at multiple sites of relation and futurity; this social labour necessarily bears its own fruits in ways that work on alternative scales of measure, time and sense to the framework offered within the sensibilities of the neoliberal subject. The sustenance of our emotional commitment to utopia is always already a live process that consistently calls us to both articulate and actively live with a considered sense of relationality and speculativity that can be articulated as a practice of educated hope, as 'docta spes.'

The articulation, exploration and discussion of 'docta spes' within this thesis hopes to contribute to the overcoming of the contemporary political impasse indicated by the 'neoliberal subject' through an imagining-into-then-living-into a different sense of subjectivity and sociality that, here – explicitly – grounds itself in Te Whanganui-a-Tara. In these pages, I hope that utopia offers itself as a practice and lived articulation of the work and efforts of social reproduction, or perhaps, the magic to make and re-make worlds.

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[6] Armen Avanessian, *OVERWRITE: Ethics of Knowledge – Poetics of Existence,* trans. Nils F. Schott (Berlin, Germany: Sternberg Press, 2017), 19.

chapter 1:
from 'what is' to 'what might be'[7]

It would seem our horizons of possibility have collapsed. Yet the edge of otherwise resists, keeps hold of the 'Novum' as it continues in pursuit of the 'Front.'[8] Where and how can these seemingly collapsed horizons open again? Beginning with an account of neoliberalism and the neoliberal subject, I argue the criticality of re-cognising subjectivity itself, if we hope to find again the expanding horizons of sociality and thus the realisation of possibility as such. I claim a critical contemporary impasse in our movement from 'what is' to 'what might be' can be situated in the *collapse of subjectivity* within *the neoliberal subject*. This chapter details, situates and explores, with considerable reference to the literature, this 'collapse' with reference to 'the neoliberal subject'. In this introductory section, I begin by offering a brief account of what is meant by these two phrases ('the neoliberal subject' and 'collapse of subjectivity'), before moving forward to detail an outline of the chapter that follows.

'The neoliberal subject'[9] names a set of experiential qualities (epistemological, ontological and ethical in nature), specifically found under the conditions of 21st century late neoliberal capitalism, that equates to an effecting presence which infiltrates our sense of self, other and world, such that there are metaphysical consequences to our sense of possibility regarding being-in-the-world, and much more. The 'collapse of subjectivity' names the moment where the effected presence of the neoliberal subject comes to undermine the possibility of political agency itself, at a pre-reflexive level. As a premise to this claim, I take it to be true that agency and subjectivity are distinct, yet interconnected and inseparable. This collapse, then, stands as a fundamental challenge to the very possibility of our being-in-the-world, or, in other words, a challenge to our becoming, and most sharply, to our becoming *otherwise*. In the pages to come, I demonstrate that both phrases are theoretically rooted in radical contemporary

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[7] "For Bloch, the spirit of utopia and the principle of hope are to be understood as tendencies and latencies, endlessly open possibilities dependent on the dialectical interplay between contingency and necessity, between what is and what might be." In Peter Thompson, "Ernst Bloch and the Spirituality of Utopia," *Rethinking Marxism* 28, no. 3–4 (2016).

[8] The 'Front' designates the unfolding temporality of the present, while 'Novum' connates that which is "coming up" through time. See Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, trans. Stephen Plaice, Neville Plaice and Paul Knight, 3 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 8, 157.

[9] The phrase 'the neoliberal subject' was first directly encountered in a presentation delivered by Annie McCalahan in 2017, see "Annie McClanahan – Serious Crises: Rethinking the Neoliberal Subject," YouTube video, 1:14:14, "boundary 2 journal," Mar 21, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kiAicELzWGQ..

literature as well practically rooted in the experience and praxis of the seven activist-philosophers whom I spoke to in 2017.

To respond to the collapse of subjectivity pragmatically, then, poses the challenge of rethinking our very relationship with time and space itself, at the same time as finding ourselves amidst these very same powerful forces that have lead to the need for a rethinking – to resituate our relationship to what is and what is not-yet – such that our sense of possibility is able to remain *in excess* of any pre-articulated frame of reference which may have otherwise collapsed our "capabl[ity] of producing surprises."[10] Yet, this too remains speculative. In the spirit of sociology, this thesis hopes to be a contribution to the theoretical and lived re-imagining of subjectivity and sociality that will be required as we continue to travel through these twenty-first century times.

Methodologically, I draw on Ruth Levitas' emancipatory system of analysis, Utopia as Method, for the 'imaginary reconstruction of society' (IROS). In application, I offer a reparative reconstruction of subjectivity and sociality, which I show to be grounded in the philosophy of both Gillian Rose and Ernst Bloch as well as the daily practice of seven activist-philosophers from Te Whanganui-A-Tara in 2017. Critically, I argue that a reparative approach to subjectivity and sociality are entangled, and therefore any movement of utopia entails we examine and work through a reimagining of both. Doing so weaves the particular individual and the (more-)universal collective together towards the (re)production of otherwise manifest in our cumulative micro-actions, gestures and movements that make our world, over and over again.

This chapter is split into three parts. First, I turn to define what is entailed by 'utopia', beginning with a first encounter with the work of Gillian Rose and Ernst Bloch, referencing the materialist concept of hunger as an indication of the capacity to overcome a limit; I then outline Ruth Levitas' Blochian framework of Utopia as Method, and situate this methodology as my broad methodological framework. Second, I follow with an application of Utopia as Ontology and Utopia as Archaeology, offering an excavation of the ontology carried within the neoliberal subject to demonstrate the apparent collapse of subjectivity that symbolically and materially renders sociality into transactionality. Third, I conclude with reference to the possible emancipatory alternatives found in conversation with the seven activist-philosophers of Te

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[10] Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Zero Books, 2009), 7.

Whanganui-a-Tara. Their already-existing relational practices of resistance, renewal and radicality offer the basis for an archaeological and architectural reimagining of subjectivity, sociality and everyday agency in combination with the theory of Gillian Rose and Ernst Bloch.

utopia as method

For both Gillian Rose and Ernst Bloch, 'utopia' signals a processual relation to the specificity of the present, binding together the relation difficulty of actuality with the agentic and speculative promise of possibility. In this bringing-together, Bloch emphasises that the particular content of the utopia changes according to social circumstance, condition and situation.[11] For Bloch, the utopian impulse continually signals an essential "invariant of direction," which entails a critique of the present.[12] For Rose, too, "the utopian impulse always has a relation in the real world to things that are difficult."[13] In this sense, the utopian impulse is here understood as the ever-present desire for a better world: the struggle of action catalysed by this impulse, whilst grounded in the everyday, seeks to move beyond and outside the 'what is' of existing society. In articulating the grounds of possibility that draw us forward, as Kate Schick notes, agency is gained so as to take "the risk of the universal alongside the pursuit of justice in the here and now."[14] As a method, then, the processual movement of utopia works through the difficulty of unflinchingly facing and moving through lack towards the possibility of otherwise – though this is engagement for its own sake rather than for the moment of arrival as such.

Returning to the question *how do we sustain our emotional commitment to utopia*?, no 'we' can exist where subjectivity is collapsed and sociality is rendered transactionality. Yet, as I demonstrate through an excavation of the neoliberal subject in the section to follow, the ontological assumptions carried most closely to the surface today symbolically and materially fold in on themselves, reproducing rather than overcoming resignation and depoliticisation as if they were an insurmountable limit. Learning from

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[11] Ernst Bloch, "Something's Missing: A Discussion between Ernst Bloch and Theodor W. Adorno on the Contradictions of Utopian Longing," in *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays*, ed. Ernst Bloch, trans. Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 4.
[12] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 4–5, 12.
[13] Lloyd, "Interview with Gillian Rose," 209.
[14] Kate Schick, *Gillian Rose: A Good Enough Justice* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 124.

Rose and Bloch, however, I seek to re-cognise this limit as if it were the determining call for agency as well as the necessary catalyst for action. [15] This is a conception of 'limit' premised in the materiality of *hunger*.

Irreducibly beginning in the body, the call to overcome hunger is an unavoidable processual rhythm that moves through lack towards fulfilment, so as to sustain the very basis of life itself. [16] The overcoming of hunger indicates the necessity of fulfilment so as to avoid starvation, whilst also calling for the specific and yet repeated act of consumption. As Rose suggests, in understanding existing conditions as both signifying the necessity of action as well as themselves being the catalyst for a particular act itself, the limit identified can be transcended, by transforming the specific initial conditions so as to realise the "totality of its real possibilities."[17] This notion is similarly found in Bloch's distinctive conception of 'cold-stream' Marxism, where what is actually possible is constituted by the existing conditions, where those existing conditions also structure what is perceived as possible.[18] Never able to be "repressed for long," however, hunger is the persistent indication of our capacity to act so as to negate and overcome a limit.[19] As such, Rose suggests that hunger articulates the dutiful ought that returns to maintain being-in-itself: this ought, on the grounds of its perennial recurrence, is "perennial finite."[20]

In hunger, then, we also find the rhythm of return captured and sustained in Bloch's unique conception of 'warm-stream' Marxism. While 'cold-stream' Marxism offers analytical diagnosis, negation and "precise strategy," warm-stream Marxism emphasises the persistent "enthusiasm" that maintains the rhythmic return of prospective acts in the constant pursuit towards "the Possible which is still unexhausted and unrealised."[21] This warm-stream actively sustains the soul and spirit in the pursuit of an alternative future, despite repeated disappointment and disenchantment.[22] Further, as the movement of the warm-stream embraces the "growing realisation of the realising

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[15] 'Re-cognise' is used throughout this thesis to refer to an ongoing rhythmic sense of recognition. For more, see Kate Schick, "Re-Cognizing Recognition: Gillian Rose's 'Radical Hegel' and Vulnerable Recognition," *Telos* 173 (Winter 2015).
[16] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 65.
[17] Gillian Rose, *Hegel Contra Sociology*, Radical Thinkers (London: Verso, 1981), 204.
[18] Boer, "Concerning the 'Warm-stream' within Marxism," 23.
[19] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 11.
[20] Rose, *Hegel Contra Sociology*, 204–05.
[21] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 208–09.
[22] Thompson, "Ernst Bloch and the Spirituality of Utopia," 438.

element," so too does it signify itself, in this movement, as becoming the object and goal of utopia.[23] Warm-stream and cold-stream are, Bloch emphasises, necessarily entangled – split apart, the path towards and the goal of emancipation may, in its particular conception, become reified or isolated.[24] Further, though entangled, warm and cold operate from different poles, most bluntly conceived of as the head and the heart.[25] Despite the necessity of overcoming the drive to satiation, the perennial finitude within hunger signals a rhythm of return that recognises this limit as surmountable, when conceived of as hunger, through precise action in response to specific conditions, as it also is able to persistently sustain belief in the possibility of the limit's overcoming.

The consistent rhythmic return of the "rejection of deprivation" in hunger comes to signal, for Bloch, "the most important emotion: *hope*."[26] Hope, for Bloch, is a fundamental element of being human, and can be understood as both a cognitive faculty and a "practical and militant" emotion.[27] Rose's relation to hope is complicated – on her reading, it signals a passive belief in a messianic time to come. In response, she offers the concept of 'faith': this term contains within it both 'negative capability,' the acceptance and welcoming of difficult uncertainty, which may disrupt our held sense of world and self,[28] alongside 'positive capability,' whose reasoned capacity of "learned improvisation" offers reflexivity amidst the risk of engagement, despite the uncertainty of outcome.[29] This 'faith' thus appears more similar to Bloch's 'hope' than the variance in terms may first indicate: both can be read through Schick's words, as if an emotional commitment which "works precisely by making mistakes, by taking the risk of action, and then by reflecting on its unintended consequences, and then taking the risk, yet again, of further action, and so on."[30]

Emancipatory agency, in connection to the active and processual sense of utopia proposed here, is thus sustained through a learned and persistent engagement with actuality towards the transcendence and overcoming of a limit. As in the satiation of

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[23] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 209.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Boer, "Concerning the 'Warm-stream' within Marxism," 23.
[26] Emphasis added, Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 11.
[27] Ibid., 12, 112.
[28] Kate Schick, "'The Tree Is Really Rooted in the Sky': Besides Difficulty in Gillian Rose's Political Philosophy," in *Misrecognitions: Gillian Rose and the Task of Political Theology*, ed. Joshua B. Davis (Oregon: Cascade Books, 2018), 94.
[29] Gillian Rose, *Paradiso* (London: Menard Press, 1999), 62.
[30] Schick, "'The Tree Is Really Rooted in the Sky,'" 95.

hunger, this is also an engaging for its own sake amidst, and despite, difficulty and uncertainty, as if a commitment to the justice gleaned amidst active life rather than for the sake of a possible just time and life to come.

The future we encounter in Bloch is the consistently moving horizon that emerges in the processual mediation of human action itself.[31] This claim furthers the necessity of sustaining our emotional commitment to otherwise. Though the radical potential of possibility may begin latent within present actuality, Rose and Bloch emphasise that its realisation depends on the continual and focused reflexive return of collective labour, work and activity. In actuality there is no paradise without the persistent difficulty of action.[32] In its "hoping beyond the day which has become," utopia demands an active and persistent pursuit of willed transformation as an emotional commitment, which remains despite the devastation of possibility's failed arrival in actuality.[33] This calls for a rhythm of collective movement in combination with "a holistic, sociological approach," "normative judgement" and "political commitment" – all qualities, Ruth Levitas contends, "called into question by the social and cultural conditions of late modernity."[34]

Learning from Levitas' Blochian framework for the IROS, I turn to her three-part model of Utopia as Method as a guide for the research and construction of this thesis. This framework reflects Bloch's utopian hermeneutics as a system of interpretation that seeks to restore hidden or seemingly lost anticipatory elements contained within both warm-stream and cold-stream praxis.[35] Further, premised in the conviction that things could be otherwise, Levitas suggests the utopia emerges from the following two questions: "How then should we live?" and "How can that be?"[36] Such a method, therefore, fits explicitly with the guiding research questions and aims of this thesis.

As Levitas writes, in the core of IROS and Utopia as Method lies the "desire for being otherwise, individually and collectively, subjectively and objectively."[37] In recognising

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[31] Catherine Moir, "Beyond the Turn: Ernst Bloch and the Future of Speculative Materialism," *Poetics Today* 37, no. 2 (2016): 331.

[32] Lloyd, "Interview with Gillian Rose," 209.

[33] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 10.

[34] Ruth Levitas, *Utopia as Method: The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 108.

[35] Ruth Levitas, "Educated Hope: Ernst Bloch on Abstract and Concrete Utopia," *Utopian Studies* 1 (1990): 14.

[36] "The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society: Utopia as Method," in *Utopia Method Vision: The Use Value of Social Dreaming*, ed. Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007), 48.

[37] Levitas, *Utopia as Method*, xi.

the widespread disdain and disregard often associated with the term 'utopia', I note that the sense of utopia carried within Levitas, as within Rose and Bloch, demands consistent engagement with actuality, begins and remains grounded in the world whilst reaching outside to what might be, and offers no idealised moment of arrival. Utopia is instead offered as an active method, bringing together past, present and future through methods of excavation, re-construction and investigation into ontology and social formations, as well as a centring of that which is silent or absent. The three distinct modes Levitas offers are archaeological, ontological and architectural, though these distinctions are blurry as they cross and weave into each other. These three modes can work to illuminate both negative and positive sociological patterns, reflecting Bloch's suggestion that utopia contains dual latency. [38] I now offer brief summaries of the three modes of Utopia as Method developed by Levitas, before detailing their role in this thesis more specifically.

As humans, we are "embodied animals": Utopia as Ontology consequentially emphasises that the content of any collectively held assumptions and common sense accounts of 'who are we' are critical sites for utopic investigation, analysis and reconfiguration. [39] What "implicit models of persons" do we hold and how are these conditioned by existing society? [40] As Levitas notes, following Bloch, any carried sense of being is indicative of the social conditions within which we find ourselves, influencing the forward motion of our becoming, so as to structure future possibility and realisation. [41] Any sedimentation around a so-called inherent 'human nature' captures within itself, as if a kernel, a general representation of the society from which it is formed. In Levitas' words, however, these two claims neither "mean there is no such thing as human nature, nor that it is infinitely malleable." [42] Rather, it is more apt to suggest that any particular sense of being will emerge with reference and in response to the embedded experience of a particular actuality. Politically and socially, ontological norms have deep effect: our sense of self founds our values, rippling into our frameworks of flourishing and dignity, thus structuring what counts as worthwhile as well as conditioning the perceived viability of particular actions, systems or structural arrangements. Our ontological assumptions consequentially shape and influence the perceived realm of the

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[38] Bloch, "Something's Missing," 5.
[39] Levitas, *Utopia as Method*, 176.
[40] Ibid., 154.
[41] Ibid., 181.
[42] Ibid., 175.

possible. If, in other circumstances, we might be otherwise, Utopia as Ontology offers a site of agency at our most basic conception of self.[43]

Utopia as Archaeology entails the excavation of 'what is': as a method, it is the gathering of fragments in combination with deduction and imagination both to piece together something as whole and for the creation of new assemblages.[44] "Complete description is not possible," Levitas writes, hence the archaeological mode centres partiality via the explicit identification of silences.[45] Archaeology scours implicit ideas, assumptions or entailments, whether positive or negative, in order to increase clarity and visibility of that under question, as a 'reading between the lines' that reflects carefully on what is not said, alongside the bringing-together of those pieces not otherwise held together. Here, Levitas notes, the distinction between archaeology, architecture and ontology begins to blur.[46] The archaeological mode engenders a methodological form of seeing through and seeing across: seeing through, as in an uncovering of the heart of a matter that may otherwise remain obscure; seeing across, as in identifying emergent patterns that begin to connect things that may have otherwise been separate or disparate.

Neither programmatic nor a blueprint of an abstracted and idealised elsewhere, Utopia as Architecture embodies Bloch's sense that utopia is processual and autopoietic, emerging out of the process of its own becoming.[47] As a response to the difficulty of the present, the architectural mode offers a reparative critique through the construction of alternatives. These 'positive proposals' bear within them a seed of hope that may flourish into otherwise.[48] In this sense, rather than folding into the simplicity entailed in critique that offers no alternative, Utopia as Architecture also captures the Blochian utopian hermeneutic, which offers interpretive reparation, responding to the 'absent present' through attempts to construct, articulate, capture and give shape to that which is missing.[49]

In response to the horizon of foreclosure catalysed by the collapse of subjectivity, as detailed in the neoliberal subject below, I deploy Levitas' Utopia as Method throughout

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[43] Ibid., 177.
[44] Ibid., 153–54.
[45] Ibid., 154.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Thompson, "Ernst Bloch and the Spirituality of Utopia," 442.
[48] Levitas, *Utopia as Method*, 197.
[49] Ibid.

this thesis in order to gather already-existing fragments of a better world, found within theory and through qualitative research, so as to construct an account of radical everyday practice that works to returns potency and agency to subjectivity and sociality, that we then may once again pursue the real possibility of otherwise.

the horizon of the 'neoliberal subject'

As a contentious nomenclature, neoliberalism is frequently problematised as a porous, dense, over-determined and obfuscating signifier.[50] Yet the term occurs again and again within and outside academia as it continues to move further into public discourse. Following William Davies, neoliberalism here is understood as an interdisciplinary, colonising process that straddles sociology and economics in pursuit of absolute transformation of social life towards marketisation.[51] I offer a brief account of neoliberalism below, before turning to focus on the transformative influence and impact neoliberalism has had on the ideal subject, and society more broadly. I argue that the term 'neoliberal subject', as well as the ontology carried within and reproduced by, signals a collapse of subjectivity, whereby little other than resignation and strategic adaption becomes viable on the basis of the seeming foreclosure of the future, thus folding into a reproduction of transactionality over sociality, which undercuts emancipatory political possibility.

Neoliberalism is often associated with the state-led policy shifts and reforms of the 1970s and 80s, led by Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan and, in Aotearoa New Zealand, the Fourth Labour Government and then Finance minister Roger Douglas. These shifts and reforms entailed, among many, the deregulation of the financial and corporate sector, privatisation of state-owned enterprises, welfare reforms, and changes to income and corporate taxation, constituting an expansive reconstitution of the relationship between the market and the state that shifted the mode of production and signalled a development in capitalism.[52] The roots of neoliberalism lay deeper, however, in the outgrowing of finance capital from post-war Keynesianism, Fordist production

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[50] Regarding the challenges and defense of the term 'neoliberalism', see Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015); William Davies, "The New Neoliberalism," *New Left Review* 101 (2016).

[51] William Davies, "The Difficulty of 'Neoliberalism.'" Political Economy Research Centre, January 1, 2016, http://www.perc.org.uk/project_posts/the-difficulty-of-neoliberalism.

[52] Jane Kelsey, *The Fire Economy: New Zealand's Reckoning* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books with the New Zealand Law Foundation, 2015).

and the constraints of the Bretton Woods system entailed by the New Deal.[53] Further, as a political project, these changes coincided with elite-class interest strengthened by the ideological framework articulated in the Mont Pelerin Society, which was founded in 1947 and drew together prominent thinkers such as Friedrich von Hayek, Ludwig von Mises, Milton Friedman and Karl Popper.[54]

The role of globalised finance in ever-greater areas, both economic and social, is a salient feature of neoliberalism.[55] The term 'neoliberalism' entered public discourse amidst the anti-globalisation movements of the 2000s – yet as Damien Cahill and Martijn Konings note, discursive accounts are often premised in a binary between market and state, whereby a lean towards the 'free market' or 'invisible hand' are often framed as an attempt to eliminate the state.[56] Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval join a chorus of voices to stress the mischaracterisation and obfuscation of such a binary, emphasising instead the continuing and deliberate role of state-led intervention that supports neoliberal governance.[57] Amidst these transitions, so too has the nature of the economic and social subject shifted in light of developments in governmentality.[58] As in Thatcher's famous words, "economics are the method; the object is to change the heart and soul."[59] Here, the formation of the neoliberal subject indicates the financialisation of everyday life, as *homo oeconomicus* is rendered by capital into the 'entrepreneur-of-the-self.'[60] This transformation of subjectivity and its consequences are where my interests lie.

Employing Ruth Levitas' ontological mode of Utopia as Method, I offer an account of the neoliberal subject below in order to indicate the socially and politically impoverished terrain of subjectivity from which political accounts that seek to extend beyond neoliberalism begin today. I argue that the neoliberal subject articulates and embodies the assumption of *a collapse of subjectivity*, vis-à-vis a seemingly inescapable

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[53] Wolfgang Streeck, *How Will Capitalism End?: Essays on a Failing System* (London: Verso, 2016).

[54] Philip Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe, ed., *The Road from Mont Pèlerin: The Making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

[55] Ben Fine and Alfredo Saad-Filho, "Thirteen Things You Need to Know about Neoliberalism," *Critical Sociology* 43, no. 4–5 (2017): 687.

[56] Damien Cahill and Martijn Konings, *Neoliberalism* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2017), 8–14.

[57] Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval, *The New Way of the World: On Neo-Liberal Society*, trans. Gregory Elliot, 3rd ed. (London: Verso, 2017), 45.

[58] Thomas Lemke, "'The Birth of Bio-Politics': Michel Foucault's Lecture at the Collège De France of Neo-Liberal Governmentality," *Economy and Society* 30, no. 2 (2001): 200–02.

[59] Ronald Butt, "Margaret Thatcher: Interview for Sunday Times," Margaret Thatcher Foundation, May 1, 1981, https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104475.

[60] Dardot and Laval, *The New Way of the World*, 106–19.

transformational cycle that renders sociality transactional life. Such an ontological poverty bears profound consequence for, as will be argued below, little more than resignation and depoliticization comes to appear politically viable. On these grounds, I follow Stephen J. Ball and Antonio Olmedo to stress that subjectivity itself must be framed as a site of and for resistance.[61] Further, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri critically emphasise that a post-neoliberal society can only emerge through the formation of alternative subjectivities.[62] As Levitas notes with reference to Bloch, and as will be explained further in Chapter 3, an alternative ontology of 'not-yet' emphasises the possibility for "transcendence without transcending," squarely grounded in practices of immanent and imminent transformation that begin from within existing conditions.[63] In this way, the central point of Levitas' ontological mode of Utopia as Method is to emphasise the real possibility of movement from claims about who we are towards the realisation of claims regarding who we might and should be: working through an account of the neoliberal subject offers a beginning towards such movement.[64]

In the sections that follow, I begin with a review of the radical literature that first articulates the general social field within which the neoliberal subject emerges, before moving to a closer ontological excavation of key characteristics of the neoliberal subject within this literature. I follow by offering my own account of the neoliberal subject as the collapse of subjectivity, with specific focus on the subjective, social and political consequences. Specifically, I argue that the ontological basis of the neoliberal subject offers a nullified politics: contemporary depoliticisation is rooted in a sense of resignation and despair conditioned by the seeming inescapability of transactional life. In the final section of this chapter, I conclude with brief reference to literature that seeks to excavate existing sites with the neoliberal subject, so as to return latent possibility to the promise of "transcendence without transcending" – here, I move to indicate the importance of my conversations with the seven activist-philosophers as I move into the chapters to come. Importantly also, the totalisation of marketisation of life excludes the critical role of coloniality.

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[61] Stephen J. Ball and Antonio Olmedo, "Care of the Self: Resistance and Subjectivity under Neoliberal Governmentalities," *Critical Studies in Education* 54, no. 1 (2013): 85.
[62] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Assembly* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 295.
[63] Levitas, *Utopia as Method*, 194.
[64] Ibid., 196.

I begin with a broad account of the social field in which the neoliberal subject emerges, drawn from prominent literature. Dardot and Laval draw on Michel Foucault's lectures on 'The Birth of Biopolitics', presenting neoliberalism as the rationality of contemporary capitalism that, through the combination of discourse, social and economic practices and apparatuses of control, comes to reflect a personal disciplinary form of governmentality premised in competition that centres the individuated primacy of care-of-the-self.[65] Similarly, Wendy Brown offers an updated account of Foucault, positing neoliberalism as an expansive normative order of reason and governing rationality whereby all aspects of human life are transformed into economic terms. Through processes of responsibilisation, self-reliance and self-investment, subjects must either align themselves with the broad forces of macroeconomic growth and credit enhancement to thrive, or else find themselves "discarded."[66] Byung-Chul Han's conception of "psychopolitics" extends this notion: strengthened by digital technologies and the collection of big data, the "smart power" of contemporary neoliberalism invisibly exploits the human psyche so as to "seductively" encourage self-subordination.[67] Franco 'Bifo' Berardi reformulates power today as "techno-linguistic automation": working to subjugate the future through the introduction of causal linkages that render and transform the field of the possible, life itself comes to reflect a deterministic, pre-emptive structure of predictable and linear automation.[68] As captured in Mark Fisher's term "capitalist realism," neoliberalism here embeds itself in the seemingly inescapable belief that capitalism is the only viable political or economic system, thus rendering it impossible to even imagine beyond.[69]

As a subjective experience, Fisher's "capitalist realism" signals the deep resignation generative of a depoliticising effect, whereby the calculations of pragmatic survival trump any capacity for collective political action.[70] This is similarly emphasised in Berardi's account of the choice between "impotence or suicide" emergent from cognitive

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[65] Dardot and Laval, *The New Way of the World*, 4–5, 263.
[66] Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, 84.
[67] Byung-Chul Han, *Psychopolitics: Neoliberalism and New Technologies of Power*, trans. Erik Butler, Verso Futures (London: Verso, 2017); Byung-Chul Han, *In the Swarm: Digital Prospects*, trans. Erik Butler, Untimely Meditations (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017).
[68] Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, *Futurability: The Age of Impotence and the Horizon of Possibility* (London: Verso, 2017), 106.
[69] Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism,* 2.
[70] Mark Fisher and Jodi Dean, "We Can't Afford to Be Realists," in *Reading Capitalist Realism*, ed. Leigh Claire La Berge and Alison Shonkwiler (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014), 27.

automation and so-called 'neuro-totalitarianism'[71] – automation invades human cognition at the sites of memory, learning and decision-making towards "mental subsumption," as neoliberal power weaves itself into the very "neuro fabric of social life."[72] Rather than seek political change, Han notes that the transformation of self from subject and citizen to project and work of art reflects a newfound compulsion towards achievement and optimisation; yet this subjugated neoliberal subject fails to recognise its own subjugation and consequentially believes itself to be free.[73] In Dardot and Laval, the consistent emphasis of working on oneself reflects widespread norms of self-mastery, flexibility and entrepreneuriality, where all individual activity comes to be captured in processes of self-valorisation towards ever-greater self-marketability.[74] In even stronger language, Brown emphasises that the triumph of *homo oeconomicus* as the "exhaustive figure of the human" ultimately equates to the nullification of political agency.[75] As in Han, neoliberalism today is thus argued to have deeply rooted itself at the "pre-reflexive, half-conscious, physico-instinctual level of action."[76] Tying these accounts together, Dardot and Laval emphasise the deep self-affirming logic at the processual heart of this subject formation: "[W]hen one cannot change the world, it only remains to reinvent oneself."[77]

Learning from this literature, I argue that the term 'neoliberal subject' ultimately posits an account of the collapse of subjectivity at the most interior site of human existence, catalysed by the apparent total marketisation of human life. As individuals become primarily motivated and responsive to economic forces, selfhood moves from a thick, relational experience of subjectivity embedded in sociality to a thinned reconceptualisation based in the experience of individuated ownership of self over self as 'human capital,' or self as "value to be ever further valorised."[78] Subjectivity, in its inherently ineffable, heterogeneous differentiation, is thus collapsed, and all that escapes market rationale, coherence, consistency and communicability is to be either demystified or violently emptied. What remains is a homogenised and enterprising sense of selfhood that, whilst both ubiquitous and diverse across global space and time,

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[71] Berardi, *Futurability*, 111.
[72] Ibid., 106.
[73] Han, *Psychopolitics*, 1.
[74] Dardot and Laval, *The New Way of the World*, 264–67.
[75] Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, 79.
[76] Han, *Psychopolitics*, 48.
[77] Dardot and Laval, *The New Way of the World*, 273.
[78] Ibid., 15.

consistently emphasises performance and pleasure.[79] Performance: as a measure of ambition and indicator of worth where the self is rendered a site of investment towards achievement calculable and comparable in monetary terms. Pleasure: as a deserved hedonistic reward for the realisation of individual interests via the maximisation of one's entrepreneurialism, as well as the motivational promise of future enjoyment that lubricates and guides processes of self-investment, self-mastery and auto-exploitation.

At its core, the hollowing of subjectivity reflects the internalised neoliberal kernel of competition that ripples across culture, morality, politics and society, in attempts to transform the contemporary basis of being in the world towards transactionality.[80] The internalisation of market logic casts an atomised ontology primed for comparison, quantifiability and distrust. Any sense of sociality as interconnection or relational cohabitation is reformulated as discrete interactions between competitive and maximally self-realising, self-interested individual market actors. Competition is further entrenched through precarious life experience that normalises social life as a "field of war."[81] Agency is dominated by justificatory narratives of gamified freedom and choice; accepting and subjugating oneself to the competitive conditions of the game enables clever and rational calculation on the basis of one's own interests, so as to return the maximal yield of success and reward.[82] Agility and dexterity complement flexibility and self-development towards the multiplication of skills so as to inaugurate innovative and original movement through accepted obstacles; yet this critically calls for a tunnelling of vision, which manifests as the collapse of possibility beyond the achievement horizon.

Caring becomes self-interest, and agency emerges as calculated purpose. This bleak ontology is its own replication, its paranoia seen everywhere: in the hyper-saturation of public consciousness; with narratives that centre material success; in the persistent necessity to aestheticise and document one's own life; in a sense of reward as hedonistic sensory experience; in the elevation of self-centric logics over relational frames of sense-making; in the elevation of the human over the natural world; in the pursuit of luxury over morality; in the demonisation of struggle; in a belief in persistent progress via the maximisation of output; and in a desperate desire to belief in the promise of

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[79] Ibid., 255.
[80] William Davies, "Populism and the Limits of Neoliberalism," *LSE Review of Books*. The London School of Economics and Political Science, 2017. http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lsereviewofbooks/2017/04/12/lse-rb-feature-essay-populism-and-the-limits-of-neoliberalism-by-william-davies.
[81] Berardi, *Futurability*, 46.
[82] Han, *Psychopolitics*, 49.

aspiration. The privatisation of debt reflects the privatisation of risk, as the cold punitivity of transactional life consistently renders solidarity and empathy into signs of weakness.[83] Competition dominates, calling for consistent self-improvement and upskilling as valiant signs of character in an age of quantification.[84] Achievement is measured through the aetheticisation of success, 'wellness' and monetary figures. The cultivation of one's own personal creative potential and distinctive identity offer a mode of labour differentiation as well as a site of self-fulfilment and self-enjoyment,[85] thus doubling as self-regulation and self-management.[86] Short-termism dominates; absolute self-interest reigns; paranoia infiltrates everything.

The atomised ontology of the neoliberal subject further signals experience a de-historised abstraction,[87] as if a "purification of the future from the slag heaps of the past."[88] Now an individuated subject displaced from time and space, a sense of "situationlessness"[89] ruptures repeatedly against a calculating presence continually called to wield entrepreneuriality towards the promise of future salvation.[90] Deep obfuscation of historical, structural and systematic inequalities lubricate ever-increasing self-responsibilisation, rendering 'failure' and 'loss' into private matters indicative of poor choice and bad character. Here, intersectional oppressions along race, class, gender, religion and other lines fail to offer significant purchase beyond their manifestation in the individuated freedom and choice-based identity politics, whilst also elevating some identity markers above others in popular discourse. A considered account of the intersectional structure of inter- and intra-hegemonies remains absent; the violence of colonisation is missing.

Together, these ontological disjunctions equate to a dissonance between what is actual and what is recognised as 'reality,' through a post-modern, constructivist framework that problematically suggests what we accept and name as 'reality' thus equates to what really 'is' reality: 'out of sight, out of mind' becomes a new mantra. Formulaic patterning

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[83] Berardi, *Futurability*, 46.
[84] Ibid., 117.
[85] Jodi Dean, *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies: Communicative Capitalism and Left Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 76.
[86] Nina Power, "Don't Smile, Organise," in *Work Work Work*, ed. Lisa Rosendahl, Cecilia Widenheim, Michele Masucci, Annika Enqvist and Jonatan Habib Engqvist (Stockholm: Sternberg Press, 2012), 35.
[87] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), xi.
[88] Berardi, *Futurability*, 119.
[89] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 241.
[90] Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, 94.

of life pathways proliferate: compulsive use and addiction to new technologies offer a sense of safety and control found in the smooth surfaces, interfaces and scrolling screens. 'Unfollowing' equates to erasure, as algorithms increasingly structure experience according to preference. Broad connecting frames of reference that link collectivities begin to disappear – there is a persistent failure to position oneself within large networks of consequence, power, hegemony, structure or historically unfolding systems.

As an ideal type, the neoliberal subject therefore offers an account of subjectivity premised in the proclamation of the absolute market capture of our deepest human impulses – emotion, morality, communication, sociality, play, love, hope.[91] Here, caught between disillusionment and suspended-yet-hopeful anticipation, the subject is propelled towards consumption as the ultimate ailment to their ineffable ills. Further, as captured in the poverty of the term, there is little promise or possibility of otherwise. I therefore read the term 'neoliberal subject' as a justificatory name for the *euphoric* pain that bears within itself a resigned narrative about the devastation of actuality: frozen in place, this subject is unable to do the work of realising any sense of alternative. Here, the widespread pattern of 'leaning into' marketised forces embed narratives that centre on freedom as choice – life itself appears to confirm the assumption of Thatcher's that *there is no alternative* (TINA). This generalised ontological collapse and loss of agency leads to a resigned folding into depoliticisation. The general resignation and total sedimentation that follows the collapse of subjectivity is echoed in an interview with Han, as if a signal of the foreclosure of our very humanity:

> **Wissen**: Your analysis isn't very encouraging. We exploit ourselves, we risk nothing, neither in love nor in politics, and we don't want to be wounded or to wound.
>
> **Han**: I'm sorry, but those are the facts.[92]

Despite Han's own call for "de-psychologization," the very frame of reference captured in the term 'neoliberal subject' appears to reproduce itself as the self-affirmation that there exists no outside.[93] The isolated and isolating sense of 'freedom' apparently

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[91] Han, *Psychopolitics*, 3.
[92] Byung-Chul Han, "Byung-Chul Han: 'I'm Sorry, but Those Are the Facts.'" *ZEIT Wissen* no. 5, August 19, 2014.
[93] Han, *Psychopolitics*, 79.

experienced by the neoliberal subject offers no space for politics to take root; any sense of collective organisation is deeply disrupted by the internalisation of social distrust and absolute competition that renders the fragmented collective unwilling and unable to produce collective self-consciousness.[94] As Brown notes, even the celebrated "least worst" political system of democracy is argued to have been captured and hollowed out by neoliberalism.[95] Attempts to hold onto any remaining hope of alterity carries exceptional personal risk rendered illogical by both the schematic of a self-interested, investment-oriented utilitarianism and the internalisation of TINA. Otherwise is thus subsumed by this very sense of anxiety that offers itself as fuel for gamification. "Reflexive impotence" becomes, as Fisher notes, the necessary condition for the acceptance of the rules of the "game" one must coldly play in a competitive world of winners and losers.[96] This collapse of subjectivity thus equates to the collapse of the realm of the possible, of ways that everything could be otherwise. The anxiety of competition breeds a deep risk-aversion that buys into gamification and individuated accounts of reality through a haunting sense of total fear and paranoia. The pursuit of securitisation regards relational vulnerability as illogical; and thus the other no longer appears as a human being. Short-termism justifies the pursuit of self-interest over collective well-being whilst simultaneously obscuring broader structural patterns of oppression, exploitation or power. For, as Kassie Hartendorp notes, it is fundamentally critical that we conceive of "neoliberalism as a colonising project."[97]

Yet, I argue, these conditions remain to offer the potentiality within themselves to be subverted into new forms of subjectivity and social re-politicisation. In response to these conditions, this thesis therefore offers an articulation of both subversive theoretical and practical re-imaginings of subjectivity and sociality, in attempts to extend beyond.   In line with Brown's contention that the neoliberal subject is "made, not born,"[98] it is the very site of persistent self-management that reflects a deep inconsistency within the ontology of the neoliberal subject – for it is against the consistent rupture of the ineffable actuality of human subjectivity that such practices of self-management are deployed, time and time again. This is the suppressed back-and-forth of an atomised, achievement-oriented self whose gamification of actuality seeks

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[94] Berardi, *Futurability*, 112–13.
[95] Brown, *Undoing the Demos*.
[96] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism*, 21.
[97] Kassie Hartendorp, *Neoliberalism as a Colonising Project* (Auckland: ESRA, 2016).
[98] Brown, *Undoing the Demos*, 84.

the pure realisation of a self-oriented futurity whilst also continually confronting and suppressing leakages of a latent subjectivity. Any pain that falls outside the imperative towards self-optimisation becomes taboo: yet this continual suppression contributes to an ever-increasing sense of perpetual anxiety borne amidst the perceived and actual loss of basic social support and communal systems alongside a creeping sense of hopeless despair premised in the foreclosure of the future.

Erasure of self is the ideal strategy: "[I]nstead of searching out sins, one hunts down negative thoughts" as "healing becomes killing."[99] The so-called 'neoliberal subject' is encouraged towards and participates in the collapse of its own subjectivity, imposing a sense of limit on the experience and organisation of life itself that appears to offer no escape, alternative or response. This is an ontology that offers neither inside nor outside but rather introduces itself as a boundary: the survival drive towards self-interest and the emergent transactionality of life reaffirm and thus collapse in on one another. This is the collapse of subjectivity entailed by the neoliberal subject: the heaviness of TINA, to which we are all capable of moving beyond.

alternative horizons of Te Whanganui-a-Tara

The frame of subjectivity, sociality and political life found within the neoliberal subject consequentially quashes emancipatory possibility and represents a foreclosure of the future. Further, it erases and excludes the existing and historical violence, oppression and trauma of colonisation. As with the limit of *hunger*, it is critical to articulate that the flipping of this limit towards an agentic, interconnected and relational otherwise is fundamentally necessary for human survival – this is not to be read as an exaggeration.[100] The deep marks of neoliberal subjectivity and its entailed resignation nevertheless persist in the cultural and social mind of our time. This thesis seeks to overturn the solipsistic caricature of the neoliberal subject. The flipping of this 'limit' necessitates the practice of Utopia as Ontology, Archaeology and Architecture across both theory and qualitative research to weave together a reparative response that traverses both subjectivity and sociality. To strengthen this argument, I offer below

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[99] Han, *Psychopolitics*, 30.
[100] Extinction Rebellion, "The Guardian Press Letter – 100 Academics Support Extinction Rebellion," XR Blog, October 27, 2018, https://xrblog.org/2018/10/27/the-guardian-press-letter-100-academics-support-extinction-rebellion.

accounts of two pathways beyond the resigned and reflexively impotent foreclosure of otherwise, drawn from the radical literature.

Melanie Gilligan and Marina Vishmidt use the archaeological word "excavate" explicitly; together, they posit the question of "reproduction" as a means of exploring existing and emergent properties of entrepreneurial subjectivity, which can be "mined" for "perverse – and emancipatory – implications."[101] Capital's grasp on contemporary subjectivity is visible in the move from a "speculation as a mode of production" to the "becoming-speculative of reproduction."[102] In that reproduction is noted to be a fundamental site of organising for both "capital done with labour and a post-capitalist future," Gilligan and Vishmidt position and emphasise the criticality of social reproduction to contemporary struggles.[103] Vishmidt's conception of "the labour of the negative" here comes to offer strategy: despite a necessary and antagonistic interaction with 'what is' – taken as the conditions that seek to reproduce a nihilistic entrepreneurial subjectivity – a negative labour *works through* whilst neither affirming nor cancelling, learning from the notion that "the experience and activity of making and finding the world [is] constitutively unknown – but knowable, and changeable, and starting with our own contingent crystallisation as subjects."[104] If "utopian thought is always immanent, which is to say, broken and concrete," a materialistic excavation of 'what is' that neither seeks escape nor fixed identity is itself the emancipatory site for reproduction amidst enactment.[105] Thus, Gilligan and Vishmidt demonstrate a political strategy that begins with a strategic excavation, so as to "rearticulat[e] 'really-existing' subjectivities" that offer within themselves a promise for alternative "social synthesis" whilst nevertheless remaining in "unhappy détente with the structures that have shaped them."[106]

Caught in a cycle of 'work, produce, work, produce,' for Christoph Brunner, Halbe Hessel Kuipers and Toni Pape, the contemporary moment can be described as one of "exhaustion": environmental exhaustion, material exhaustion, psychological exhaustion,

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[101] Melanie Gilligan and Marina Vishmidt, "'The Property-Less Sensorium': Following the Subject in Crisis Times," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 114, no. 3 (July 2015): 622.
[102] Ibid., 620.
[103] Ibid., 626.
[104] Marina Vishmidt, "Known Nowheres: Some Short Thoughts on Going Beyond," in *Utopian Pulse: Flares in the Darkroom*, ed. Ines Doujak and Oliver Ressler (London: Pluto Press, 2015), 125.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Gilligan and Vishmidt, "'The Property-Less Sensorium,'" 628.

"an exhaustion of the potential to think and act constructively."[107] Amidst this, they posit a re-cognition of exhaustion as if a "limit concept" that extends "the boundaries of the possible both in its devastating and potentializing ways," so as to advocate the unflinching and emancipatory embrace of the uncertainty and possibility found whilst "existing at the limit."[108] As we may attempt to forge openings of "escape (or flight) in the tight fabric of exhausting social relations," they turn our attention to the potential emergence of "vacuoles" catalysed by those "*micropolitical* techniques and *minor* gestures" that simultaneously make the present more "liveable" whilst remaining deeply embedded in the urgency of the political totality constitutive of the very limit of the exhaustion in question.[109] Brunner, Kuipers and Pape's excavation turns over the potentiality found in an architectural bringing-together of those intersections that meet at the limit, as if they are a "co-composing" experimental sense of becoming amidst limits that hold within themselves the promise of possibility alongside the option to fail.[110] In this sense, micro-political techniques and gestures offer themselves as the daily sustenance towards a necessarily articulated relational otherwise that remains firmly grounded in actuality, whilst politically committed to the possibility of alterity.

Weaving these two excavatory accounts, I emphasise the potentiality of already-existing subjectivities, social practices and everyday action that work to resist and move though – without becoming – contemporary conditions of neoliberality. Following Gilligan and Vishmidt, I turn to speak to seven activist-philosophers from Te Whanganui-a-Tara who embody the possibility for social synthesis beyond what is. In the chapter to follow, I offer extended introductions for Jen Margaret, Jo Randerson and Thomas LaHood, Richard D. Bartlett, Benjamin Johnson, Cally O'Neill and Kassie Hartendorp. Together, they articulate an alternative and emancipatory sense of subjectivity and sociality that centres relationality as it commits to the real possibility in speculativity. In recognising the potentiality contained within the micro of 'everyday' and the potency of 'co-composition,' as in Brunner, Kuipers and Pape, I focus particularly on the everyday commitments, practices and frameworks that emerge within our conversations as modes of possibility. I directly respond to the limit captured in the ontology of the neoliberal subject vis-à-vis the positing of alternative dimensions of subjectivity

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[107] Christoph Brunner, Halbe Hessel Kuipers and Toni Pape, "Introduction: For an Ethology of Exhaustion," *Inflexions* 10, "Modes of Exhaustion" (2017): i–ii.
[108] Ibid., iv.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid., v.

through the application of the architectural mode of Utopia as Method in Chapter 3, which brings Gillian Rose and Ernst Bloch into an original conversation.

Together, the seven activist-philosophers taught me that life itself is collective life, is shared life, together in small moments, together across days, in our memories, in the marks and movements left behind, in the future that awaits us. This collective life is also interdependent life, the taking care, the maintenance of daily systems, the physical needs of the human body, the different interweaving relationships around us, the tending to our emotional landscapes, our chosen and unchosen responsibilities to others and to ourselves; our chosen and unchosen responsibilities to the world around us; all so that we can continue to move in rhythm with one another. Their practice, work and sense of relational sociality enlivens the warm-stream of possibility as found in our humanely materialistic real tendencies of everyday actuality; this sustains the enthusiastic and prospective acts whose fullness, when entwined with understanding, analysis and precise strategy, coincides in offering the path and the goal that brings forth and the realisation of real possibility towards otherwise.[111]

Every moment counts, for these moments make our world. Every person counts as together "we are."[112] Sustaining ourselves is reciprocal care work understood as the labour required to maintain an openness to what might be otherwise than we can yet imagine. As will be discussed, the radical everyday practice borne from this activist-philosophy is difficult, demanding and joyous. In the pursuit of an ethical world, this work is total and requires "the most extreme effort of will."[113] In this narrative of otherwise, there is no proclamation of innocence for we are all equally implicated, embedded within history, caught within our own bodies and the relationships around us, whether personal or institutional. So, dream we must; for the cracks in our dreams open into unanticipated and actively emergent pathways of acting, becoming, making and creating otherwise together.

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[111] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 208–09.

[112] Ernst Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, trans. Anthony A. Nassar (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 1.

[113] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 4.

chapter 2.
seven activist-philosophers of Te Whanganui-a-Tara

The active pursuit towards otherwise is underway in the radical everyday practice of seven activist-philosophers from Te Whanganui-a-Tara: Jen Margaret, Jo Randerson, Thomas LaHood, Richard D. Bartlett, Benjamin Johnson, Cally O'Neill and Kassie Hartendorp. As 'activists,' they share a whole-hearted commitment to the possibility of societal change, emphasising that it can be achieved through speculatively charged, yet "concretely mediated," action that aligns with real possibility.[114] As 'philosophers,' their practice and activity appear to have grown from their considered weaving of thoughtful reflection and emotional experiences towards a framework of meaning-making that traverses human experience, interdependence and the dutiful difficulty of ethic life.[115]

We spoke at the end of 2017, for 90–120 minutes, and our conversations followed a semi-structured guide.[116] After each conversation, I sought to work through with my own reflexivity through poetry and painting, which have been 'offered back' as gifts of gratitude.[117] The visual response pieces follow each introduction below; the response poetry can be found in Appendix A.

My engagement with the seven activist-philosophers followed Levitas' Utopia as Method framework, alongside theoretical learnings gathered from Gilligan and Vishmidt, and Brunner, Kuipers and Pape as outlined in Chapter 1. Learning from Gilligan and Vishmidt, I sought to locate already-existing practices and subjectivities enacted by the activist-philosophers lived experiences that indicated and embodied alternative forms of subjectivity contra the neoliberal subject, from which we may garner an alternative social synthesis. Following Utopia as Archaeology, the activist-philosophers themselves represented already-existing radical subjectivities within contemporary Aotearoa; thus, their very *being* indicated the cracks, resistance and existing subversion against the apparent totalisation of the neoliberal subject within the radical literature explored in Chapter 1.

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[114] Ibid., 198–200.

[115] Rose notes, "[i]n order to ... be a philosopher, you've got to bring together your emotional and your intellectual life." Lloyd, "Interview with Gillian Rose," 212.

[116] This research has human ethics approval from Victoria University of Wellington (# 0000024844) and conforms to the ethical requirements of conducting qualitative research, i.e., each participant was given a participant consent form and information sheet prior to the commencement of any formal interview, to ensure they were able to give informed consent – see Appendix B.

[117] David Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004).

This chapter is broken into three key sections. The first section moves to detail the methods utilised in this qualitative research. The second section contains six sub-sections, with introductions of the seven activist-philosophers as follows: Jen Margaret; Jo Randerson and Thomas LaHood; Richard D. Bartlett; Benjamin Johnson; Cally O'Neill; and Kassie Hartendorp. In the third section, I offer a summary of key themes raised in conversation with the seven activist-philosophers, as brief thematic analysis to be unpacked further in Chapter 4.

research methods

Conducting qualitative research provided an opportunity to draw together theory and practice whilst also grounding my research specifically in Aotearoa. Responding to the collapse of subjectivity in Chapter 1, I sought to conduct face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with seven individuals whose political engagement within and beyond Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Aotearoa indicated that they were 'workers of counter-subjectivity.' This was a term I formed early in my research, though chose to later replace with 'activist-philosophers' for two reasons. First, the term did not resonate with the seven participants. Second, I did not feel that it represented the participants correctly.

For specific qualitative research design, I looked to Anne Galleta's semi-structured interview methodology as a basis for my conversation guide.[118] Galleta advocates an approach that moves through open-ended questions that focus on concrete experiences to more specific, theory-driven questions.[119] Further, I drew inspiration from Irving Seidman's phenomenological interview practice that draws together "life-history interviewing" with "focused in-depth interviewing informed by assumptions drawn from phenomenology."[120] While I chose to only conduct one interview with my participants contra the three suggested in Seidman's approach, I drew on the phenomenological approach as way of engagement through open-ended questions,

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[118] Anne Galletta, *Mastering the Semi-Structured Interview and Beyond – from Research Design to Analysis and Publication* (New York: NYU Press, 2013), 68.
[119] Ibid., 46.
[120] Irving Seidman, *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*, 3rd ed. (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006), 15.

which sought to emerge and build upon participant responses in order to "have the participant reconstruct [their] experience" of the topics under study.[121]

To ensure the emotional comfort and safety of my interviewees, I shared the conversation guide before we met, and interviews were conducted in a location of their choosing. Locations included public spaces, offices, homes and cafes. As Richard Bartlett was out of the country at the time, our conversation took place over Zoom, a Skype-like alternative. I reflexively moved through the conversation guides, shifting the order of questions to suit each conversation as felt appropriate. I transcribed conversations verbatim and shared transcripts with my interviewees. The data collected in this research project (audio files and transcripts) will be gifted to the oral history archive in the Alexander Turnbull Library, as was agreed to by all participants in consent forms.

In choosing to ground research reflexivity in art-based practice, I follow Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor's claim that there are "themes and patterns in human experience that can only be grasped" through narrative and artistic forms.[122] The use of poetic and artistic mediums promised to both capture the specificity of my emotionality during and after interviews, and to reflect my own "way of knowing."[123] In "letting research and creativity unfold together" through art-based practice, Maggi Savin-Baden and Katherine Wimpenny note that "both art and research emerge as outcomes."[124] Following these dual outcomes, I came to see the response pieces as both site for relational accountability as well as the creation of "gifts" to "offer back" to my participants in thanks for their time and wisdom.[125]

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[121] Ibid.

[122] Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor, "The Craft, Practice and Possibility of Poetry in Educational Research," in *Poetic Inquiry: Vibrant Voices in the Social Sciences.*, ed. Monica Prendergast, Carl Leggo and Pauline Sameshima (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2009), 24.

[123] Monica Prendergast, "The Phenomena of Poetry in Research: 'Poem Is What?' Poetic Inquiry in Qualitative Social Science Research," in *Poetic Inquiry: Vibrant Voices in the Social Sciences*, ed. Monica Prendergast, Carl Leggo and Pauline Sameshima (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2009), 562. For further, see, for instance, Kent Maynard and Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor, "Anthropology at the Edge of Words: Where Poetry and Ethnography Meet," *Anthropology and Humanism* 35, no. 1 (2010); Nisha Sajnani, "Improvisation and Art-Based Research," *Journal of Applied Arts & Health* 3, no. 1 (2012); and Janinka Greenwood, "Arts-Based Research: Weaving Magic and Meaning," *International Journal of Education and the Arts* 13, no. 1 (2012).

[124] Maggi Savin-Baden and Katherine Wimpenny, *A Practical Guide to Arts-Related Research* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2014), 1.

[125] Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, 12.

The response pieces emerged as detailed in Table 1. For reference, written poetic responses have been included in Appendix A.

	Written Response		Visual Response	
Jen Margaret	Y	Short Poem	Y	4 x Photographs
Jo Randerson, Thomas LaHood	Y	Short Poem	Y	A3 Acrylic Painting
Richard D. Bartlett	Y	Longer Poem	Y	A3 Acrylic Painting
Benjamin Johnson	Y	Shorter Poem	Y	A2 Acrylic Painting
Cally O'Neill	Y	Longer Poem	Y	A3 Acrylic Painting
Kassie Hartendorp	N	N/A	Y	A2 Acrylic Painting

Table 1: Response pieces

Jen Margaret

Recognising the necessity of honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi in any orientation towards an otherwise emergent from Aotearoa, I was drawn to speak to Jen Margaret about her life and work as a leading and well-renowned Pākehā Treaty advocate and educator. Jen has extensive knowledge around the 'practice' and 'process' of allyship by non-indigenous individuals in supporting indigenous movements.[126] I was interested in learning her account of the paths, challenges and processes surrounding Treaty education work, given I feel the contemporary national environment of Aotearoa New Zealand necessitates decolonisation, despite remaining deeply embedded in violent structures, systems and practices that reinforce settler colonialism every day at many levels. Further, I was curious to hear and learn from Jen's personal reflections of unlearning, decolonisation and 'conscientisation.'[127]

"It is your life, it is not a job you leave when you go home," Jen tells me from across the table, through kind, sun-glassed eyes; we sit by a street-front window at a restaurant called Southern Cross, tucked off the top of Wellington's Cuba Street. Jen grew up on the Canterbury Plains near Ōtautahi (Christchurch). However, like many then and now, she tells me, she did not understand that Aotearoa is Māori land. She first learned about the Treaty of Waitangi during a postgraduate university course in the mid-1990s at the University of Canterbury. "I was really angry that I had never learned anything in my compulsory education." I feel the strength of her profound anger at this critical omission, transformed yet still deeply reverberating, within her. As the conversation unfolds, Jen directly challenges us all to think through the question *whose world are we in?* "We live on a land that is based on a whole different way of being and we don't know that way of being as Pākehā, [we] may not have learned there was another way of being at all really."

At the heart of Jen's work and activism is a commitment to decolonisation, which requires raising Pākehā awareness that living on the land of Aotearoa is premised in Te Tiriti: "The thing that gives us a place is Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and that place is only as good as our commitments to honouring the agreements that allowed us to be here." As a

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[126] Jen Margaret, "Working as Allies: Winston Churchill Fellowship Report," August 2010, 12.
[127] The term 'conscientisation' was emphasised repeatedly at 'Beyond Capitalism, Beyond Colonisation,' Economic and Social Research Aotearoa (ESRA) conference, held at Massey University, Auckland, 2017.

response to the popular lack of awareness, Jen established Groundwork, providing Treaty workshops for individuals and organisations, alongside a number of side projects that see her offering the resources she has acquired to groups and organisations who require them. The Groundwork workshops are offered on a sliding pay scale, reflecting her commitment to ensuring these educational resources are as accessible and sustainable as possible.

Further, Jen stresses the necessity of Pākehā articulating and demonstrating positive ways that other Pākehā can contribute to the decolonisation of Aotearoa. "Our challenge is to think about how to make the sphere [of kawanatanga, the sphere of governance] not something we reject but rather something that we transform to be what might be honourable kawanatanga." One example Jen indicates is Matike Mai, the recent constitutional reformation project led by Moana Jackson and Margaret Mutu.[128] These state-level shifts require "people on the outside taking action, because radical change is not necessarily going to be government-led." Advocating the importance of extra-parliamentary politics, Jen suggests we need to start with both a collective vision and a related sense of grounded responsibility and action. She emphasises over and over to me the depth of privilege that must be confronted: 'For me, that is a continual process of mourning, because there are always new dimensions to that to be learned about." This work is difficult, yet, "as Pākehā, you still do have options to compartmentalise often, much more than Māori do in these spaces." And so, Jen stresses over and over again, in different ways, sometimes softly, sometimes directly: this work is difficult but necessary, difficult but essential, difficult but just.

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[128] For further information, see The Independent Working Group on Constitutional Transformation, "The Report of Matike Mai Aotearoa – the Independent Working Group on Constitutional Transformation" (Auckland, 2016).
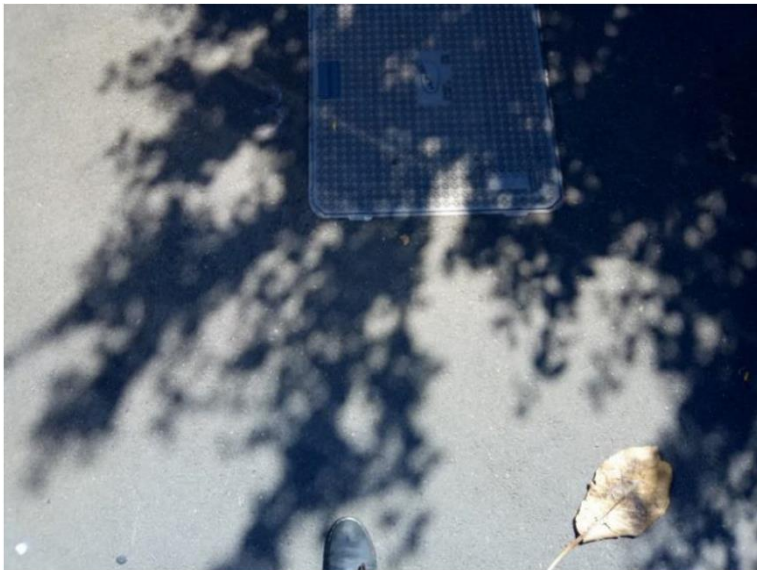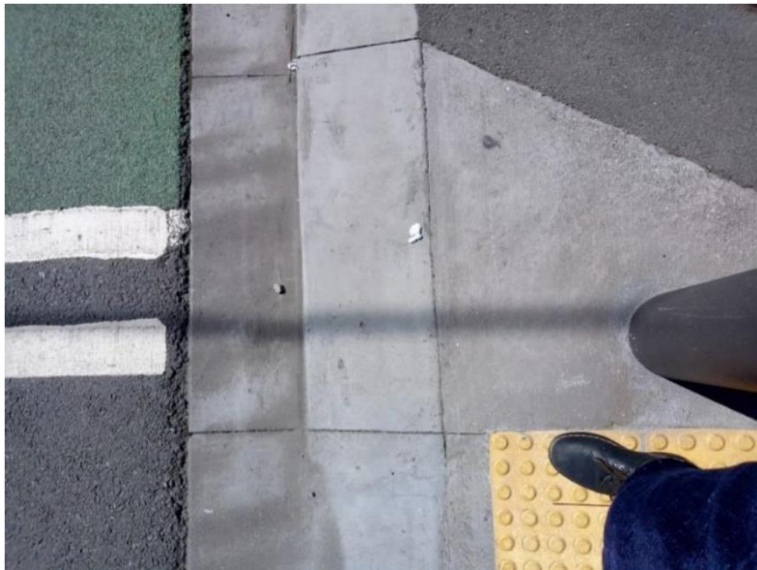
Visual response 1: Jen Margaret – Photographs 1–3: 'The land we walk'

Visual response 2: Jen Margaret – Photograph 4: 'The land we walk'

Jo Randerson and Thomas LaHood

Jo Randerson and Thomas LaHood, partners in life and work, produce innovative, public art that reckons with important and difficult conversations in invitational and playful ways, often under the company name Barbarian Productions. Jo began Barbarian Productions in 2001 – today, she is the artistic director, as well as performer, writer, poet, artist, director and mother. Thomas is the Barbarian's marketing manager – he, too, is an artist, performer, writer, public speaker, mentor and father. I was drawn to speak to Jo and Thomas because of their creative and generous explorations of difficult topics, through surprising, inclusive and invitational artistic forms of engagement. Their sense of change-making combines play and fun with a deep, radical political awareness that tangles together action, responsibility and creativity. Their artistic practice is "intersectional," bringing together "education, therapy, creativity, activism and community building" with an awareness of our shared humanity and an understanding that "artists can reframe society back to itself in a way that enables it to see itself – [as an] invitation to self-reflect." For Thomas, his own utopia is emblematic of this, as a hoping that "maybe we can get back to being able to express" our deepest human impulses "by just dancing together, or singing together, or putting on costumes together."

In work and life, Jo and Thomas both choose optimism. For Thomas, this choice is a profound site of politics and ethics: "Everything about me is pessimistic except my desire to live optimistically," for "the clown is really the eternal optimist, and I really feel that is the way to live in the current climate." In this way, they urge me to remember that we're "not stuck in the situation [we find ourselves] in, i.e., you can break out of this neoliberal paradigm" – doing so just calls for a "subversive" level of "craftiness" and "mischief," as well as a lot of active work. Both serious and gleeful, and aware of the difficulties held here, they introduce me to the clown as "trickster." I sense the contradictions and comedy of the clown's serious play, and its trickster mythology is a rhythm that sits deeply at the heart of their art, politics and activism. This spirit is a mischievous and "prophetic" boundary-crosser who playfully "reveals the hidden pores

that lead out of the mundane world, and the plenitude that lies beyond."[129] Clowns, Thomas stresses, "get shat on by the world, they get slapped, they get beaten, they get their stuff taken away, they fail miserably at everything they attempt, and they never lose that desire to be loved and to be worthy of that love – and they just continue to throw themselves onto the fire."

In their performance work with Barbarian Productions, and beyond in their own artistic endeavours, Jo and Thomas create situated beginnings without specific end, theatrically enacting possibility in the unrelenting pursuit of otherwise. These moments invite you in, call you to take part in the prefigurative play and becoming of the translucent, ineffable actual, as it is both beautiful and painful, struggle-filled, and spent with others. Critically, their artistic practice is a prefigurative politics that disrupts and exerts agency as it seeks to collaboratively shift what is actual through thinking, doing and being with others. This practice is the "artist-faith-shaman-kind," Jo tells me, and so Barbarian Productions "use[s] clown, mask, music, song, dance, wigs and puppets – forms that we bastardise and fuse together – to create unique hybrids."[130] Their repertoire of activity is vast, interdisciplinary, and always focused on the "inherently political" notion that, as Jo notes, "just creating any kind of new reality helps people realise that we could change anything."

For Jo and Thomas, art is importantly "universal to all cultures," and the "artist [a] core vocational role" that has "been part of humanity since the beginning." Art offers itself as a mechanism within which to create moments that challenge and invite in a future that is otherwise, through the formation of "temporary communities," "bring[ing] people around something that is not about capitalist exchange" – "it is hopefully an exchange of the soul or the spirit – accessible for as many different people" as possible, Jo notes. Further, Jo shares with me, this vision of art supplements an understanding that this "journey is about trying to find other souls here." So art and life calls for a distinctive and whole-hearted commitment to relationship and to being in the actuality of this place, of *here*; against the lure and desire that sees us "circling the planet: you have to land." For Thomas, it is in this way that theatre, performance and art can "be meaningful in the context of the world today." What is therefore needed today, they both stress to

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[129] Lewis Hyde, "Prophecy – Excerpt from 'Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth, and Art,'" *The American Poetry Review* 27, no. 1 (1998).
[130] Barbarian Productions, "We Are Barbarian," http://www.barbarian.co.nz/about.

me, "is not going back to the 'old ways', it is about creating new ways, but also the re-finding somethings."

Visual response 3: Jo Randerson and Thomas LaHood – Painting: 'Yes, but what can you see?'

Richard D. Bartlett

The difficulties and importance of belonging in community runs through Richard D. Bartlett's life and work, and this relational ethics weaves throughout our conversation. Richard has been excommunicated from his family and the tight-knit, farm-based Christian community in which he grew up. Though, he tells me, he found again the possibility of community first as part of a punk/art/music DIY scene, and later in his experiences at the Pōneke Wellington-based camp of the global 2011 Occupy movement. If his early life and excommunication catalysed an undoing, Occupy lit a fire that I sense Richard still carries today: he tells me those weeks spent deliberating, learning and living with others fundamentally transformed his "understanding of the world and [his] sense of power": "You know, my sense of having agency shifted during those couple of weeks." Following Occupy, Richard and friends established Loomio, through the support of Enspiral (both socially focused, Wellington-based, tech-focused organisations, with growing global recognition)*.* After five years of deep involvement, the Loomio team reached "a level of maturity" that no longer "needed [him] in the same way," and Richard set off travelling around the world with his partner, "having adventures [and] meeting with people who are trying to organise in a 'different way', whatever that means – consensus, horizontal, bottom-up, decentralised, participatory, etc."

Talking with Richard presented an opportunity to explore his dual commitments to progressive activist politics and to technology, alongside his experiences of spiritual and relational belonging, exile and connection. Richard was involved for several years with Enspiral and Loomio. Loomio provides "a tool for collaborative decision-making [that is] used by thousands of cooperatives, community organisations, social movements, and government initiatives across the globe."[131] Enspiral was the incubator of Loomio – often described as a virtual and physical decentralised, networked collection of individuals and organisations, Enspiral operates with the aim of co-creation with those who share goals and values.

Occupy was itself, Richard describes, a "prototyping [of] a society built on a completely different logic." Occupy gifted Richard the real and embodied experience of a "different

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[131] Mary Jo Kaplan, "Showcase 2: Ecosystem – Loomio Cooperative Ltd," in *Ours to Hack and to Own: The Rise of Platform Cooperativism, a New Vision for the Future of Work and a Fairer Internet*, ed. Trebor Scholz and Nathan Schneider (New York: OR Books, 2017), 170.

way of making sense," and this, he notes, extended his sense of reason by way of an alternative "logic [that] felt much more equitable, much more fun and much more alive than the prevailing mainstream capitalist, patriarchal modernity that we find ourselves in." Where the contemporary state system is premised in the force of sovereignty, Occupy proved, in a very physical and embodied way, the possibility of "working by consent" whilst also illuminating the profoundly womb-like power of "caring about and caring for" one another amidst these alternative processes of organisation. He also stresses to me that Occupy failed *only* in the sense that "the movement faded away and the camps collapsed." As a globally shared experience, Occupy planted, within the participants, deep seeds of belief in the real possibility of otherwise, thus shifting and changing the sense of reality carried forward into life after Occupy. Richard is testament to this.

Reflecting on the start-up process of Loomio, Richard suggests that it was as much about the creation of a product as it was "an opportunity to do something in a radical way," premised in this post-Occupy sense of being in the world. *How do you raise money? How do you sell a product in a way that is in alignment with your values? How do you manage a team of people to have some sort of coordination, shared focus and sense of productivity without using a coercive hierarchy? How do you account for existing inequalities?* These questions unfold and call us to "confront complexity" – and, as Richard notes, "technology is involved in that process and we are building technology for that process, but mostly it is culture, an epistemology, a way of thinking about the world, a language, a set of instincts."

A year spent travelling, learning and dreaming with people "doing things differently" has clearly cemented in Richard the belief that the possibility of such an otherwise is real, but demands our participation. The kind of utopia Richard is pursuing is held within the "small spaces" he "gets to encounter all the time" – these are growing "spaces where everyone in the room feels good and they are doing something that seems meaningful." We can, through these relational, honest and utopic spaces, "construct liberation from lots and lots of little, joyful moments, and not feel guilty about them."

Visual response 4: Richard Bartlett – Painting: 'We found the social technologists of the future'

Benjamin Johnson

Benjamin Johnson was, until the end of 2018, the founder and director of The Free Store, a Wellington-based food redistribution hub that runs Monday to Friday from 6pm out of a converted shipping container situated on the land of St Peter's Anglican Church, on the corner of Willis and Ghuznee Streets. "That is the *what* we have done," Benjamin shares, "but the *how we have done that* is by creating spaces of inclusive participation." The Free Store acts as a connection point between waste and need, as well as a place of community, generosity, relationship and belonging. Benjamin's story moves me by driving home the depth of meaning that can be collectively gained through the shared experience of "open-ended" yet "whole-hearted" commitment to place when understood as both physical and communal. As Benjamin prophetically notes to me, "we are all trying to construct a raft on which we can float and navigate the seas of life, whilst also dishing out water that is coming through holes… and we are trying to patch them up."

The idea for The Free Store began with Kim Paton's 2010 art project FREE STORE. Operating out of a now-demolished building previously located at 38 Ghuznee Street, Paton's FREE STORE was a "pop-up free grocery store,"[132] that was "supplied by local retailers keen to reduce waste and provide excess stock to the community for no cost."[133] Benjamin recalls taking "some chocolate and some squid ink pasta," but, he notes to me, it "was uncomfortable; it was a weird experience, because at that point, I had never experienced anything like it." Though FREE STORE looked like a convenience store, "money was taken out of the equation," thus disrupting the familiar and internalised rhythm of "consumer behaviour," offering instead "an exchange of conversation." This experience lingered with Benjamin for a "couple of weeks," and talking later with friends once Paton's art project had come to an end, they began to think "what if there is more food in Wellington that cafes are making that is surplus or going to waste, or isn't being fully utilised?" This led to the question, *is the FREE STORE something that could become a long-term, sustainable, community initiative – not just a two-week art project, but something that could continue?*

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[132] jaimeduardo, "No Money," YouTube, July 31, 2010, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kiHyvaQulZE.
[133] Kim Paton, "Free Store," Letting Space, http://www.lettingspace.org.nz/free-store.

And so, Benjamin tells me, "six of us – all students at the time – we met up once a week for a potluck dinner; we'd eat together, we'd discuss, you know, what could this Free Store be; dream and scheme and visions and values… What is possible?" Within four months, The Free Store was "open from a little shop off Cuba Street," in Left Bank Arcade. During their time there, The Free Store operated rent-free through the grace of their landlord, who would later offer only three days' notice to move out. Things scattered: "I was the last of the remaining founders of The Free Store, and I had to make the decision [about the future]. If it's not me, it is not going to happen. But if I do want it to happen, then it has to be me and it is going to cost me a lot, not financially, it is going to cost me opportunity." This decision "weigh[ed] heavily." Benjamin was twenty-two when he chose to commit himself to Wellington and The Free Store – The Free Store today is the result of that decision.

The aims of The Free Store today remain both aspirational and pragmatic, offering itself as a house of hospitality, an everyday site of meeting and belonging, and a mechanism to redistribute food to those in need. Benjamin is frank, straightforward and joyous as he shares that "our Free Store friends are invited to participate in what we do, because it is not about the 'haves' – quote unquote – charitably helping the 'have nots'. It is about actually this mutual and reciprocal participation of community, where yes, I can help people with my skills and can offer to – in this case – feed people, and I can give that, but I actually have just as much to receive." The Free Store is both the response to need as well as the celebration of friendship, relationship and "slow, speculative time" spent together; in between there is an opportunity to pursue otherwise.

Faith holds a fundamental place for Benjamin: as a deeply religious man, our conversation ebbs through the terrain of faith and Christianity. For Benjamin, the "spirit of God is at work in redeeming all of creation" – this is the "Kingdom of now, but not yet," a new way of "being and seeing the world" where "we treat one another differently": not through "fear" or "power" but through "compassion," "love," "vulnerability" and "selflessness"; not from "what-is-in-it-for-me," but rather, "what-can-I-do-for-the-other?" Indeed, Benjamin shows me relationship as if it were a door that allows us see differently, for it is through *mutual participation* that transformation occurs. This is to "allow others to speak into the shape of our lives." He asks: "What would it look like to not create tidy lines around the places in our life, physically and in our being, [that] we allow people into?" This kind of hospitality, Benjamin tells me, leads

to a richness and a bountiful experience of life. Such a transformation, however, requires a fundamental mindset shift. It calls for the death of the "three gods of the West: privacy, property, consumption", and with it "the predominant narratives of who we are."

Visual response 5: Benjamin Johnson – Painting: 'The end is not an inevitability'

Cally O'Neill

Cally O'Neill and I met first at a talk held at the Vogelmorn Precinct as part of the 2017 Spring Uprising: while it was the first time I had been to the space, Cally was at home, as she was deeply involved in the community and project to transform the Vogelmorn Bowling Club. As we spoke that evening, she shared the architectural drawings pinned to the wall that depicted different possible future plans for the Vogelmorn space – a small outside orchard, a community garden, a public green. As an architect by trade, these were her drawings, and her labour had contributed significantly to the transformation of Vogelmorn from a disused Bowling Club to a vibrant community hub. I was drawn to speak with Cally because of her community-focused architectural practice: at the time we met, she was also working on the Newtown Community redesign project.

Cally shares her worldly orientation as an ethic of human and environmental interconnection, balance and a sense of participation that begins from the material processuality of life itself. We perch on a grassy hill overlooking the ocean in the backyard of a special home. "My mindset has always been, from the outset as a young girl, trying to find a way to be in the world, to not be detrimental." In the "last couple of weeks," however, she shares there had been an immense "pivot" towards "wanting to contribute positively": "That felt like a really big evolution for me, because it sort of says that maybe I feel comfortable enough in how I am living now to feel like I have something to contribute, rather than just holding off being too much of a shit." This perspective is a tethering of hope, action and willingness to see without embellishment: "I feel definitely fine with humans being a parasite, if that is what we ultimately are; but, I also feel like I will keep trying to swing it the other way, as long as I am on the see-saw." In her personal life as in her work, Cally centres the pursuit of otherwise through her dual commitment to live as waste-free as possible and to think through the sustainable transition of the built environment.

The decision to pursue architecture came both "slowly and suddenly." Leaving high school early, she set off travelling. Finding herself surrounded by "beautiful communal architecture" in the south of France, which sensitively drew upon "traditional and local materialities," architecture dawned as a way to creatively combine deep-held "concerns about waste and the general way that society treats producing things" with her "interest

in communities." Returning to New Zealand, Cally accepted a job at Awaroa Lodge in the Abel Tasman and "got really lucky" – "I literally got off of the boat and met the architect who would later become my master," Sir Ian Athfield. "He visited regularly," and, a year and a half later, having completed a correspondence course on ecological building and design, Athfield offered Cally a job.

For Cally, the natural environment offers an aspirational guide towards the embrace of "diversity and collaboration," and having trained through practice rather than tertiary education, this sense of collectivity is reflected in her architectural practice: "Architecture school has a lot of focus on being the Designer, but because I didn't have that experience and my role had always been to support other people – I felt like the information I needed to create a design was in everybody else." In this way, she shares that "working on a building collaboratively sort of has a lot of metaphorical imagery, in terms of working together with people to a common goal – any common goal." These practices can be difficult: despite having actively cultivated a deep "concern about waste, the general way that society treats producing things, and throwing things out", alongside an awareness of the excessive resource consumption, Cally reflexively notes, "there are lots of hypocrisies that I have to deal with in myself as well."

Running her own small business, Co-op Cooperative, and "living in the city," Cally emphasises that ethics comes to "what I choose to put my energy into work-wise," alongside "what you spend your money on, because we are in a Western society." And so, work-wise, she "has really clear guidelines": "Are you interested in considering the environmental impact during this project? Yes, or no?" Looking forward, Cally notes a desire to move back to the "key philosophy of making sensitive buildings" and "housing again, doing more practical stuff" that would allow her to "test the systems I have got running through my head." We need to "understand more about our houses," because an important contemporary architectural challenge is the transitioning of already-existing housing stock so as "to improve what is already here as best we can." This transition, she says, is the "most sustainable" path: "Not to build anything" new because if we "bowl everything over and start again now, we will keep burning up those fuels faster."

The future Cally looks to is hopeful in its reach towards possibility, just as it is grounded by its reach towards actuality. Simple, communal and interconnected, Cally stresses the

real possibility of "having more holistic systems in place" – "we can create spaces that create wellness and are conducive to what people need, then just keep spreading that wider." "Get rid of capitalism, get rid of the corporate mentality," she stresses; in its place, she advocates a greater understanding of our environment and the cycles of life within which we are embedded as "human creatures." Though Cally notes that she doesn't "know if we have words for what I hope," there are practices that could change: "I hope to see us understanding more about our houses, collecting water and being able to take in more people if necessary, that kind of hospitality and capacity." A future where "time is freed for solving problems, and if your problem is how many potatoes you are going to have this winter, it is a good problem to solve." This is a gentle and considered sense of living amidst the "complex, fractal patterns" of human life and the natural worlds, towards the establishment of communal and anarchist social arrangements.

Visual response 6: Cally O'Neill – Painting: 'The ebb in tomorrow'

Kassie Hartendorp

I first heard Kassie Hartendorp (Ngāti Raukawa) speak at an early Economic and Social Research Aotearoa (ESRA) meeting in Wellington, and I couldn't forget her – the main agenda of the meeting was discussing possible names for the budding think-tank. About a year later, I invited her to speak at Forethought,[134] and we shared a beautiful conversation over coffee on Cuba Street. She encouraged me to actively refer to New Zealand as Aotearoa. Though one of the youngest people I spoke to, Kassie has nevertheless influenced my politics and activism more deeply than any other interviewee. I remain deeply inspired and immensely grateful to her for sharing her time, energy and wisdom with me on multiple occasions.

In conversation again, we sit together on the Hunter lawn, as Kassie gathers together in front of her the pinecones that lie around us. Kassie is in the midst of a "spiritual renewal" – reflecting, she speaks of the "different knowledges" to which we can be attentive, noting that, once you start looking, "you can see the kinds of things that we get stuck in." But, she stresses, "there is always death within life, and life within death; in exploitation you have kindness, and vice versa… But it is like, which forces are you contributing to and where is that balance at, at this point in time?" It is in this sense that Kassie offers a politics grounded in an astute sense of practical aspiration: "My belief is that you just do what you can do. And hopefully, you go beyond that… Momentum builds [and] you never know who is going to be inspired by what you do." Looking towards the future, Kassie stresses that "it is up to people collectively to determine what their future is. And I only wish to be able to contribute to help to enable that to happen." Kassie's presence, ethics, actions and words are steeped in her persistent dedication and courage to pursue the realisation of otherwise.

"By day," Kassie has often been a youth worker, most recently working for Evolve with "inner-city, urban young people, often low-paid, unemployed, homeless and particularly gay, lesbian, transgender, LGBTIQ, with a particular focus on takatāpui communities."[135] Identifying as takatāpui and queer herself, Kassie is also one of the younger "architects" of Tīwhanawhana, a "takatāpui community group based in Wellington that welcomes

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[134] Forethought Talk Series was a talk series co-founded by Sasha Francis and Amelia Jones, and ran from 2014-2017 in Wellington and Auckland, New Zealand.
[135] At time of print, Kassie had moved on to a new role as Community Manager at ActionStation.

people of diverse sexualities and gender identities."[136] She considers herself to be blessed with the guidance of older generations who paved the way for younger takatāpui and is thus always thinking about how to honour their legacy. At the launch of ESRA in 2016, Kassie delivered a 10-minute speech under the title 'Neoliberalism as a colonising project.'[137] In 2017, she featured in a documentary *He Kākano Ahau – From the Spaces In Between*;[138] in 2018, a *Vice* article.[139] More recently, Kassie has been involved in union activism based in Te Whanganui-a-Tara.[140] She is currently working on publishing *Aunties*, along with two others, a "one-off magazine project" that offers a "collective how-to-guide" on the basis of "women's experiences of political organising in Aotearoa."[141] She is also, she tells me, studying Māori Laws and Philosopher at Te Wānanga o Raukawa – "it's just been so on point, because it is teaching me everything I needed to know about my tūpuna."

It was during her earlier university experience that Kassie found the "tools and framework and definitions" that helped to translate her gut feelings into an account of collective experience. It was Teresia Teaiwa who taught her to ask, *who is 'we'? Who is the 'we' we were talking about? And who are we? What is the 'we' that we are thinking about? And once we know who we are, who do we want to be?* In an interview with Sue Bradford for *Counterfutures* in 2016, Kassie noted of her time at university: "I didn't want to just sit around and think about things, I wanted to be on the ground making changes."[142] Beyond the classroom, Kassie found like-minded others in socialist and communist groups, such as the Workers Party and Fightback. These varied frameworks, forms of analysis and engaged practice "have, to this day, remained really important." She continues, playfully: "Everyone would be like ah yeah, yeah, everyone is a student radical then they get a real job, and I thought yeah, maybe that will happen, but I am actually more focused on destroying capitalism now, ten years on!"

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[136] Tīwhanawhana, "Nau Mai; Haere Mai; Welcome," http://www.tiwhanawhana.com.
[137] Hartendorp, *Neoliberalism as a Colonising Project*.
[138] Kathleen Winter (director) and Jaimee Poipoi (producer), *He Kākano Ahau – From the Spaces in Between*, short documentary film, in Loading Docs, 2017.
[139] Kahu Kutia, "Kassie Hartendorp Is Rewriting the Narrative on Being Queer and Māori," VICE, April 25, 2018, https://www.vice.com/en_nz/article/vbxnn9/kassie-hartendorp-is-rewriting-the-narrative-on-being-queer-and-maori.
[140] Kassie speaks at 31 minutes, Renters United, "Launch of 'The Plan to Fix Renting,'" 2018.
[141] Aunties Magazine, "Aunties Magazine," https://www.facebook.com/auntiesmagazine/videos/aunties-magazine/1880811935292259.
[142] Hartendorp, "Transforming Our Future in Te Moana Nui a Kiwa," 174.

Kassie remains deeply committed to identifying the "stepping points for getting from the current context to one where we're working collectively and fighting against oppression and exploitation."[143] This is a politics that demands both a sense of global solidarity as well as an openness to transformational possibility. "We don't see how we are oppressing or exploiting other groups in this global scheme of things. And that to me is a real important thing; and that is what I worry about." Further, without being able to address transitionary challenges that manifest from beginning within the problematic 'what is', any framework will remain "lacking in some respects."[144] She urges me to understand the need to find a politics that is "a combination of the heart, mind and gut," noting from her own experiences that "there are lots of political people who cannot deal with that… [yet] there will always be a spiritual element to human beings." For Kassie, this is to embrace our whole selves, amidst the implication that "we are all connected" – "we have to be able to know that our behaviour and our interactions don't just affect ourselves. When you claim that, that is a big deal."

Visual response 7: Kassie Hartendorp – Painting: 'Practice; guidance'

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[143] Ibid., 175.
[144] Ibid.

summary

The politics, practice and relational sense of meaning-making of the seven activist-philosophers importantly signals the emancipatory possibility of already-existing subjectivities and social practices that move beyond the impoverished terrain of the neoliberal subject. In this way, Jen, Jo, Thomas, Richard, Benjamin, Cally and Kassie belong to the 'not-yet.'

Together they taught me real lessons of an everyday commitment to a sense of active speculation that binds itself – in mourning, in work and in relationship – to the possibility of an otherwise "renewed in and by every moment."[145] Collectively, theirs is a politics of activity, as our conversations consistently moved through an inescapable sense of engagement and interconnection with self, others and world. Their work is multidimensional, traversing the relational planes of community, self and other. Community is found, they suggest, in spaces of support, relationship, collectivity – relationships that offer the location of self-determination yet demand persistent effort, commitment and contribution. They frame the self as a site of reflection, intuition, fallibility and possibility. Finally, the politics and practice of the seven activist-philosophers is both deeply speculative and relational: their timelines for action are intergenerational, though they all remain deeply rooted in the present.

From their voices, therefore, emerges an articulation of embodied relationality with the world, themselves and others. This relationality is marked deeply by recognition of the plurality of perspectives, experiences and actions – past and present – that weave to create the social experience of what is actual. Their life's work and everyday practice of activism centres a "driving towards what is missing," as if it is the recognition of a lack whilst seeking to openly, joyfully and collaboratively live in such a way to enable the collective "escape from this lack."[146] Thus, in their expansive offering of an alternative subjectivity, they illuminate a sense of spirited togetherness. This is to live as if "every lived moment would therefore, if it had eyes, be a witness of the beginning of a world which begins in it time and time again."[147]

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[145] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 307.
[146] Ibid., 306.
[147] Ibid., 308.

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chapter 3.
philosophical framework

This chapter articulates an alternative account of subjectivity as a reparative response to the apparent collapse of subjectivity within the neoliberal subject in Chapter 1. Applying Utopia as Archaeology, I draw two concepts from both Gillian Rose and Ernst Bloch which, together, posit a sense of subjectivity imagined differently. Through Utopia as Architecture, I weave these concepts together to offer a theoretical account of subjectivity that extends beyond the impasse of the neoliberal subject. Contra the resigned collapse of subjectivity, reimagined subjectivity can offer within itself grounds to influence and engage with existing historical processes so as to remain "in league with the good which is working its way through."[148] Utopian horizons therefore re-emerge as the outcome of participants who are affecting and affected.

This chapter is broken into three key sections. I begin with Gillian Rose, offering brief introduction before moving to explore her account of reason and concept of 'inaugurated mourning.' I then move to Ernst Bloch, following an introduction with a discussion of his concepts 'the darkness of the lived moment' and the 'not-yet.' Third, I offer a theoretical account of subjectivity able to move beyond the impasse of the neoliberal subject towards the realisation of otherwise.

The four concepts discussed additionally strengthen Levitas' Utopia as Method as way of navigating the world towards otherwise. Rosean reason is the foundational basis of an alternative sense of subjectivity, with connections to Archaeology, Architecture and Ontology. Expanding the boundaries of experience to include both intellect and emotion, intuition and feeling, (as well as thought and intellect) offer archaeological evidence in fragments of collective experience itself in the midst of its own becoming. Architecturally and ontologically, the ongoing processual negotiation and reconstruction of meaning is taken as contingently premised in embedded experience and relation. Secondly, inaugurated mourning centres processuality, offering guidance that moves through the malaise of disappointment towards the potency of a return to action. Bloch's darkness of the lived moment reflects our experiential epistemic limitations: this offers grounds for the archaeological gathering of relics, whilst also legitimating the possible failure of surmounting those very epistemic limits. Lastly, the

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[148] Ibid., 198.

not-yet disrupts any sense of reality as foreclosed, emphasising instead that the "world is not finished."[149]

Gillian Rose

Gillian Rose knew she "may die before [her] time."[150] On 9 December 1995, age forty-eight and hospital-ridden from ovarian cancer, she did.[151]

Straddling the challenging path "between tragedy and utopia," Rose's work simultaneously offers an everyday ethics and a far-reaching social theology. Her writing equally retains a haunting sense of complicity matched by a persistent necessity to the ongoing commitment of risking political action, again and again.[152] Despite frequently avoiding normative injunctions, Rose often emphasises the necessity of acknowledging the interplay of one's own sense of agency *and* ambivalence. For, amidst human life as loss, love, pain, power, reflection, faith and the passage of time, the ongoing lessons of experience can only be truly garnered through a bringing-together of our emotional and intellectual lives, alongside a willingness to face actuality despite its devastation. A tending in this way to *eros* and *logos* inhabits the tension, relationship and revelation found in the working-through of idealisation and actuality. For Rose, it is thus in experience understood as vulnerability that subjective strength and agency is found, as indicated in her final injunction to "keep your mind in hell, but despair not."[153]

rosean reason

Rather than invoking new laws, Rosean reason offers itself as a way to "navigate the law we have."[154] For, as Rose writes, a reason that is "actual" is able to engage with the surprise of actuality precisely because it is able to continually make and re-make sense amidst always-moving meaning.[155] Rosean reason thus captures the sense of reason with which we navigate the *shared* world; this account is both difficult and joyous, influenced by our own presence and yet entirely greater than our own capacity to articulate actuality. We are constantly 'coming-to-know,' and it is the faculty of reason

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[149] Bloch, "Man as Possibility," 274.
[150] Gillian Rose, *Mourning Becomes the Law: Philosophy and Representation* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 146.
[151] A. J. Wolf, "The Tragedy of Gillian Rose," *Judaism* 184, no. 46 (Fall 1997): 482.
[152] Schick, *A Good Enough Justice*, 106.
[153] Gillian Rose, "The Final Notebooks of Gillian Rose," *Women: A Cultural Review* 9, no. 1 (1998): 18.
[154] Lloyd, "Interview with Gillian Rose," 202.
[155] Gillian Rose, *Judaism and Modernity: Philosophical Essays* (London: Verso, 1993), 5.

that helps us to make sense and meaning amidst this movement. Against the back-and-forth of experience and account, universals emerge, are formed and come to guide us through life, infiltrating our relations with others, how we shape the world we inhabit and thus the material conditions that come to be and to influence the future realisation of otherwise.[156] Yet, such universals are not absolute. Rather they are bounded by time, experience and relationship, and the disruption of actuality means they are "always and hence currently being revalued."[157] Rosean reason thus demands that we continue to rhythmically act in response to all that is around us; its attentive, nimble and processual reconstructivity offers a speculative path that works through ambiguity towards the realisation of pathways beyond the seeming impossibility of an impasse that presents itself as if a limit.

"Reason is not this monolithic, domineering, authoritarian thing. It's our bread and butter," so Rose says.[158] As I argue, Rosean reason is the articulation of our "all too human" faculties of sense and meaning-making that pervade both thought and experience, are of mind and body and of self and other, amidst actuality.[159] Positioned here as the first architectural move of Utopia as Method, Rosean reason offers an emancipatory sense of subjectivity that works with the totality of human experience, as feeling and thought, emotion and intellect, amidst the ongoing and ever-shifting relationality of social life. Whether "enlarged" or "full of charity," Rose notes "you can't escape reason."[160] As a practice and sense of being that embraces the equivocation of life in the ambiguous and yet profound material entanglements of meaning, act and intention, Rosean reason also explores the overcoming of the particular limit reflected in the reflexive impotency and resignation of the neoliberal subject, as discussed in Chapter 1.

For Rose, "the severing of existential eros from philosophical logos amounts to a *trauma within reason itself*."[161] As Rose suggests, then, this split is the very site of trauma that appears an insurmountable limit that "disallows itself any conceptuality or means of comprehension for investigating its own implication and configuration."[162] The split

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[156] As in Rose, the 'universal' refers to the general *concept* of friendship, whilst 'particular' references the *specific friendship* in question. For more, see ibid., 2–5.
[157] Gillian Rose, *The Broken Middle: Out of Our Ancient Society* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), xii.
[158] Lloyd, "Interview with Gillian Rose," 209.
[159] Rose, *Mourning Becomes the Law*, 43.
[160] Lloyd, "Interview with Gillian Rose," 210.
[161] Rose, *Judaism and Modernity*, 1.
[162] Rose, *The Broken Middle*, xii.

itself, therefore, undermines the capacity to form a fully reflexive account so as to overcome the split. In starting from a mischaracterisation that renders *eros* less than and subject to *logos*, the very ways in which these subjective forces are made sense of and navigated reproduce the inability of overcoming their split. Indeed, the pilgrimage of *logos* towards an imaginary otherness of actuality seeks the overcoming of equivocation towards the deliverance of certainty, understanding and fixity of actuality – this calls for abandonment of *eros* in its imperious persistence towards vulnerability and movement.[163] Yet, Rose stresses, reason is not "adequately described" when "characterised as dualistic, dominant and imperialistic: it is only demonised."[164] The dualistic split and dominance of *logos* over *eros* represents a movement that, in exodus from equivocation, "*mystifies something we dare not understand*, because we fear that it may be all too understandable, all too continuous with what we are – *human*."[165] In undermining and refusing the connection to the equivocal expansivity that make us human, Rose suggests, the real possibility of otherwise is radically undermined by our pursuit of idealisation.

The "missing resources" needed in the speculative movements able to overcome the limit of possibility towards the realisation of otherwise are to be found, Rose offers, "not in the dogma of truth but in the politics which has been disowned, and in the theology which has been more thoroughly suppressed."[166] Social theology is the terrain of Rosean reason, as it draws together ethical concerns with the challenging gifts of metaphysics, whilst also reflecting the entangled sociality of life itself. Here, reality is intrinsically relational, experience emerges from "what interconnected actors posit as independent of themselves," and the difficulty of discovery works through mutual positing and their breakdown whose risks bear within themselves an opening towards the possibility of learning, growth and knowledge contra an enclosure of actuality.[167]

"Reinvigorated, open-hearted reason can discern" that which is "buried alive"[168] – our subjectivity, sociality and actuality itself. Through Rose, we are called to "bring together [our] emotional and intellectual life … through suffering. Through growing. Through

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163 Rose, *Judaism and Modernity*, 1.
164 Ibid., 4.
165 Rose, *Mourning Becomes the Law*, 43.
166 Ibid., 10.
167 Ibid., 13.
168 Ibid., 11.

failing. Through illness."[169] As actuality retains its capacity to unfold in unpredictable ways, the disruption of held universals is the boundary of violence that "is *love's formation* by being its education."[170] To think through one's own violence despite good intentions is to recognise mutual implication and to let go of innocence; moving again, Rose suggests, calls us to look backward so as to re-cognise our own actions, in order to move forward through the renegotiation of actuality in all its equivocation. Rosean reason thus offers the practice of an immanent here and now that seeks the promise of transcendence in the overcoming of an apparent limit. The reworking of universals is a reworking of one's self-definition.[171] Rosean reason therefore offers itself as the back-and-forth dynamic of a "learned improvisation" that moves through equivocation armed only with the anthropology of human experience and an orthodoxy of faith in the possibility of otherwise, creating space as it does for experimental play that stretches beyond any limit.[172]

Rosean reason's embrace of equivocation offers in its ambiguity the potential opening of otherwise, for it refuses the absolute closure that would render something entirely knowable as if it were fixed. Indeed, fixity is "fascist."[173] This is an account of reason that seeks the unification of existential *eros* and philosophical *logos* towards a way of being and navigating the shared world understood as inescapably "relational, responsive, and reconstructive."[174] In *Judaism and Modernity*, Rose demonstrates this through a metaphor of friendship. Having been unexpectedly and then repeatedly disappointed by the friend through whom one came to understand the concept of friendship, the renegotiation of this particular relationship also catalyses both a renegotiation of the universal concept of friendship and a renegotiation of self. Our account of the universal concept – here, friendship – is shown to be relationally formed, never fixed and always vulnerable. Further still, the negotiation needed to rearticulate the universal concept calls us to interrogate our own complicity and role in the experiences that catalysed disruption in the first, or following, instances. Thus, universality is a tumultuous space

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[169] Lloyd, "Interview with Gillian Rose," 212.
[170] Rose, *Judaism and Modernity*, 154.
[171] Ibid., 4.
[172] Rose, *Paradiso*, 62.
[173] Lloyd, "Interview with Gillian Rose," 210.
[174] Rose, *Judaism and Modernity*, 4.

where, through experience and actuality, "boundaries are transgressed and redrawn and ever-vulnerable."[175]

In this way, our sense of reason is bound to the struggle that emerges through ethics and responsibility manifesting in everyday life. [176] The self is inescapably bound as well as reconfigured through the joy and difficulty of life among others; as society remains awash with unintentional meanings and outcomes, these can only be worked through in the active challenge of negotiation.[177] *Eros* is the beginning of ethics,[178] for, in its hunger, *eros* indicates the satiation that *logos*, in its intellect, offers itself towards.[179] *Eros* is desire, curiosity, considerance and intuitive passion, though it is *logos* that makes it "possible [to] speak, to propose or raise the difficulty of knowing or not knowing."[180] In time, the separation blurs between *eros* and *logos* amidst reason's dialectical dynamic that "refuses any beginning or end," yet continues to "induce repetition forwards" without any new security, for the promise of movement towards the universal consistently meets its revocation.[181] The movement persists, and amidst the processual fulfilment of *eros* in its hunger, it becomes "agapic," a site of "care" that enables its own reproduction.[182] Critically, then, the internally dialectic relationship between *eros* and *logos* as in Rosean reason reflects the socially dialectic process in Bloch's account of 'warm-stream' and 'cold-stream' Marxism, as discussed in Chapter 1: both draw together and recognise the necessity of spirit *and* intellect, as well as subjectivity and sociality, in any movements beyond.

inaugurated mourning

Rose's 'inaugurated mourning' gives name to the work of the subjective rhythm of return within an emancipatory processual politics that doggedly pursues immanent transcendence towards otherwise through the binds of 'what is.' The persistent commitment to action works through the dual bind of actuality and possibility that forges a chasm of devastation, recognisable in the consistent suspension of otherwise's full, or even partial, arrival or realisation. Here, for there to be "morning (dawning or

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[175] Rose, *Judaism and Modernity*, 4.
[176] Rose, *The Broken Middle*, 264.
[177] Rose, *Judaism and Modernity*, 4.
[178] Rose, *The Broken Middle*, 61.
[179] Lloyd, "Interview with Gillian Rose," 208.
[180] Rose, *Mourning Becomes the Law*, 10.
[181] Rose, *The Broken Middle*, 255.
[182] Lloyd, "Interview with Gillian Rose," 218.

future), and *not* interminable dying," Rose writes, "mourning (or absence) must become our norm (or presence)."[183] In turning to inaugurated mourning, I outline the subjective process and inner dynamic between relationality and speculativity that Rose offers as this "norm", or sense of presence. Inaugurated mourning captures the work that maintains the "sustenance" of our emotional commitments so as to enable the 'dawning', again and again, of our processual engagement and pursuit towards otherwise. Completed, inaugurated mourning is the process of process, the self-reflective disentanglement that takes place as thinking- and feeling-through the difficult "legacies of ambivalence" that keep things moving, as they also disappoint.[184] As a recognition of actuality that is nevertheless able to continue to retain the agency of movement and engagement with the world, I turn to inaugurated mourning as a site of movement in response to the reflexive impotence and resignation of the neoliberal subject.

Inaugurated mourning is offered as the inner process that enables and maintains those speculative emotional commitments from which we gain the capacity to act towards otherwise, amidst and despite the ongoing difficulty and disappointment presented by actuality. If, as Bloch suggests, engagement with actuality is a "question of learning hope [whose] work does not renounce,"[185] then, as Rose suggests, it is the "learning" that "in this sense mediates the social and the political: it works precisely by making mistakes, by taking the risk of action and then by reflecting on its unintended consequences, and then taking the risk, yet again, of further action, and so on."[186] This is an *active* sense of mourning that accepts one's own complicity and seeks to complete the working-through of the "contradictory emotions" aroused in devastation, failure and disappointment.[187] Specifically, inaugurated mourning points to the internal reflection and recalibration of subjectivity required to maintain the ongoing return and commitment to a political practice grounded in the everyday pursuit of otherwise. This mourning is the painful work of ethical accountability that always falls short of its own standards; nevertheless, as Rose stresses, "if you don't feel pain, you won't feel anything else."[188]

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[183] Rose, *Mourning Becomes the Law*, 103.
[184] Ibid., 70.
[185] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 3.
[186] Rose, *Mourning Becomes the Law*, 38.
[187] Ibid., 70.
[188] Rose, *Paradiso*, 38.

Rose offers a distinction between inaugurated mourning and "abberated" mourning through Walter Benjamin's positing of Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus* – the figure of an angel frozen in place by the sight of catastrophe, yet nevertheless caught in the forward motion of time. Klee depicts this impotent angel in sepia tones: unable to act, neither able to 'stay' nor to 'dissolve,' *Angelus Novus* is an emblem of "speechlessness and inaction," the abdication of one's own complicity and agency through the disavowal of active mourning.[189] Looking backwards, *Angelus Novus* remains cognisant of the unfolding consqueunces of time, circumstances and happening, yet without agency of the courage of intervention, fails to engagein a way that effects history's unfolding. This loss of meaningful action and failure to see, or turn towards, the future is mirrored in the neoliberal subject. Contra both, it is movement itself that Rose's angel, *Angelus Dubiosus*, embraces as a vision of inaugurated mourning: "[W]ith voluminous, blue, billowing and enfolded wings in which square eye-holes are cut for the expanse of rotund, taupe flesh, to gaze through, this molelike angel appears unguarded rather than intent, grounded and slack rather than backing up and away in rigid horror."[190] A colourful figure marked by its own complicity, *Angelus Dubiosus* is found within the rhythmic forward and backward interplay of mistake, fault, failure and persistent revelation of one's subjective understand and account as it traverses past, present and future so as to retain "the courage to initiate action and the commitment to go on and on, learning from those mistakes and risking new ventures."[191]

As a consistent process and practice, inaugurated mourning reckons with the challenges faced at the inner and outer boundaries of subjectivity: between our intentions and their unfolding in the world, between what we hoped for and the disappointment of arrival. Rose's inaugurated mourning, unlike melancholia, does not read these painful gaps as a sign of one's own poverty.[192] Rather, inaugurated mourning willingly confronts the devastation of actuality, in its demanding, problematic, unintentional and never-as-promised arrival. This is not easy work: as *Angelus Dubiosus'* abstract figure suggests, it is difficult to identify the ever-moving boundaries of the self. Further, amidst pain, disappointment and lack, these boundaries become ever more difficult to discern.

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[189] Schick, *A Good Enough Justice*, 47.
[190] Rose, *Judaism and Modernity*, 209.
[191] Ibid., 10.
[192] Rose premises her distinctions between mourning and melancholia in Freud: in melancholia, loss cannot be worked through and is thus internalised and subsumed into the ego itself. See Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in *Collected Papers* (Oxford: Basic Books, 1959).

Yet only in the completion of mourning, having experienced, felt through, let go and recognised, is it possible to "return the soul to the city, renewed and reinvigorated for participation, ready to take on the difficulties and injustices of the existing city."[193]

The work of inaugurated mourning is therefore the active, engaged and attentive tending-to that finds itself within itself, working its way through the "swamp" of action, consequence and actuality.[194] It reflects the difficulty and vulnerability of actuality in practice, where our "aims and outcomes constantly mismatch each other," as it is this mismatch that "provoke[s] yet another revised aim, action and discordant outcome."[195] Inaugurated mourning demands from itself, therefore, the continual participation amidst trauma. The realisation of these demands occurs in offering the possibility to disentangle the self from one's own account of 'what is' and 'what was perceived to be,' towards an openness and active engagement that moves amidst the possibility of 'what might be.'

Inaugurated mourning's working-through is essential: it offers hope of "transcendence without transcending," bearing within itself a glimmer of justice in its reflexive return. Taking pause, recalibrating, reassessing and letting go are essential to the work that allows us to move forward. Though a momentary vision, inaugurated mourning's glimmer of justice offers hope that we may garner the political will and sense of agency to traverse those very pathways just forged as we acknowledge our own complicit, human role in the interweaving and relational webs that constitute the particular world around us. Inaugurated mourning captures the necessary processual metaphysical movement that recalibrates our deepest sense of self and account of the world, so as to once again enter the utopic work of a courageous, political practice that rhythmically stakes itself everyday towards otherwise. This work reflects the immanence and embeddedness of a subjectivity that feels with intense passion, as well as a relational subjectivity that must think and work through its boundedness in networks of relation.

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[193] Rose, *Mourning Becomes the Law*, 36.
[194] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*.
[195] Rose, *Mourning Becomes the Law*, 72.

Ernst Bloch

Born in 1885 in Germany, Bloch is notably the least-known philosopher and critical theorist associated with the Frankfurt School.[196] Though Bloch's work from the early to mid-twentieth century offers a deeply considered philosophy of speculative materialism, much is untranslated and therefore remains to have significant influence in the contemporary resurgence of speculative and materialist philosophies.[197] *The Principle of Hope* is his magnum opus: the three-volume, 1,376-page text offers itself as a pedagogical account of history, an encyclopaedia of all that moves the human soul, a powerful theology premised in a political trajectory of change, and, in Bloch's own words, an account "of the meaning and ultimate significance of life, of the world, of humanity."[198] This sweeping sense of social theology offers a productive companion to the work of Gillian Rose.

Learning from Marx's *Eleven Theses on Feuerbach*, Bloch believed philosophy offered the means by which to generate interpretations of the world that have as their goal and meaning the transformation of the world.[199] His work thus presents an "activist political metaphysics."[200] In his own account of Marxism, Bloch details the warm-stream and cold-stream that together are equally dialectically necessary for the realisation of Marxism. While the cold-stream represents the necessity of technical and socio-scientific engagement and understanding with the processes of economics, society and history, the warm-stream represents the necessity for renewing subjectivity, so as to sustain and maintain belief in the real possibility of a better world capable of withstanding the challenging recurrence of historical disappointment. Though both warm- and cold-stream are posited a halves of a whole, Bloch's own work moves predominantly within the mystical theology of the warm-stream – stylistically, this is also indicated in the poetic and metaphoric romanticism of his prose, noted to be a philosophical representation of "late expressionism."[201]

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[196] Matthew Beaumont, "Not Yet: Reconsidering Ernst Bloch," *Historical Materialism* 1, no. 1 (1997).
[197] For further discussion of Bloch's speculative materialism, see Moir, "Beyond the Turn."
[198] Ernst Bloch, Michael Lowy and Vicki Williams Hill, "Interview with Ernst Bloch," *New German Critique*, no. 9 (1976): 45.
[199] Ernst Bloch, *On Karl Marx*, trans. John Maxwell, Radical Thinkers (London: Verso, 2018), 126.
[200] Wayne Hudson, *The Marxist Philosophy of Ernst Bloch* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 215.
[201] Jürgen Habermas, "Ernst Bloch – a Marxist Romantic," *Salmagundi*, no. 10/11 (1969): 316.

the darkness of the lived moment

'The darkness of the lived moment' appears first in *The Spirit of Utopia* and returns in *The Principle of Hope*. Joining a wealth of voices that span history, this concept suggests that at the heart of experience lies an ineffable kernel; Bloch adds that this kernel may always remain inaccessible in its totality. Our comprehension of reality is impartially mediated through our subjective experience of reality, where this experience is itself also an impartial mediation. Though we may be able to attribute characteristics to our experience of reality, its total actuality always escapes complete articulation or closure: subjectivity will always escape transformation into pure information, contra the psychopolitics of the neoliberal subject.[202] Indeed, the subject of the darkness of the lived moment comes to find itself among others through relation and among the traces left behind in its action and inaction. In this sense, the darkness of the lived moment indicates a social subject who, through the blind spot of being, is called to generously mediate the relational world whilst also exemplifying the political potency of possibility as it escapes enclosure.

For Bloch, the concept of the darkness of the lived moment has a *materialistic* beginning: "[T]he blood runs, the heart beats without us being able to sense what has set the pulse in motion."[203] As a condition of experience and site of being, the darkness of the lived moment captures "the flowing, partial correlation of consciousness to itself as experiential reality," and can be understood as the experience of "being-unfamiliar-to-ourselves, being-enfolded, being-missing."[204] Our experience of reality is constituted by a series of "forward-surging," "transitive" moments, and, as Bloch notes, our capacity to become aware can "only stretch to the point where the lived moment can in fact be experienced and characterised as dark."[205] The darkness of the lived moment thus reveals "a blind spot in the mind," where "just as little as the eye can see at its blind spot, where the nerve enters the retina, is what has just been experienced perceived by any sense."[206] Though the darkness is experiential, it begins, irreducibly, in the materiality of the fleshy body.

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202 Han, *Psychopolitics*, 9.
203 Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 287.
204 Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, 200.
205 Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 292.
206 Ibid., 290.

The darkness of the lived moment signals our all-too-human epistemic limitations. Experience is both an excess that is ineffable and an excess that is unobtainable, grounding ourselves directly in what it might mean to be present, despite the seeming inaccessible of presence as such. This concept captures our limited yet malleable sense of attention, the moveable boundaries of consciousness, and the competing combination of thought, feeling, body and world as it is given form by our particular sense of attention and mediated through frameworks of meaning-making, caught in the gauze of culture, history and memory, to be drawn between the me and the you. Darkness is the space between: between ourselves as who we are and who we think we are, between my body and yours, between future and past, the chasm between possibility and actuality. As the continually passing 'lived moment,' the temporal location of this darkness is that of "the most immediate nearness."[207] Here, there is a "blur," to use Benjamin Johnson's words. What is captured by any attempt to know is always less than that which is experienced by any actual subject in the midst of experience: "[T]he That and Now, the moment we are in, burrows in itself and cannot feel itself" – "it is completely immersed in the juice in which it is stewing."[208]

Between "memory and prophecy," we "find ourselves in every lived moment" as if presence were a perpetual midway point.[209] The darkness of the lived moment recalls what we knew, felt, intuited and sensed but could not capture; it reflects what we did not know but whose "trace[s]" we sought to make sense of through reflection and relation to others.[210] Likewise, however, it reflects the absolute porosity of our account and the ephemerality of a present that escapes us. As a site of escape, the present remains a site of contestability: unfixed, uncertain and entirely vulnerable to our own actions and those of others. Bloch writes, "what really happened there, then, what we really were there, refuses to coincide with what we can really experience."[211] What we choose to 'read' amidst, from and as this relational milieu of experience remains inexact. We remain indescribable, and yet we are continuously called to make and locate sense as the process of mediation between self, others, world.

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[207] Ibid., 12.
[208] Ibid., 287.
[209] Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, 200.
[210] Ibid., 32.
[211] Ibid., 7.

The form of our mediation amidst the inescapable materialistic and symbolic human limit offers itself a site of politics for the conscious *thinking-through* of our narrations, frameworks and sense of meaning-making. As Rosean reason reflects, our attempts at making sense expand over time into the account of reality we carry, through which we consciously and unconsciously engage with ourselves, others and the world. Inaugurated mourning's thinking-through seeks to continually move amidst these gaps. And still, "the darkness of the just lived moment" will always stay in "its bed-chamber" – "together with its content, the lived moment itself remains essentially invisible."[212] Piecing together the fragmentary nature of experience and reality, over time we come to understand the world through our own accounts, our narrations, of past experiences taken as memory and relationality as a site of extending clarity; on this basis, we speculatively prophesise moments to come. The dispositions with which we navigate are formed amidst the materiality of what is, as this sense of navigation acts upon emergent materiality, mediated by and originating in the body. Central is subjectivity as a vast site of experience: it is "the source or beginning of the world, still driving and still hidden in the darkness of the lived moment, which grasps and dissolves itself."[213]

The concept of the darkness of the lived moment presents a site of action within the everyday, premised in the very notion of subjectivity as open, persistent, unknowable and yet entirely experiential in its escape from becoming pure information, instrumental tool and lever of capital. First, our experience of reality, as always already mediated *through* experience, contains inherent unknowability: this unknowability holds potential for both positive and negative futures, as possibility remains to be illuminated by will and circumstance. Second, this unknowability is both personal and collective, social and subjective – a universally shared sense of being. Third, the experience of the 'darkness' captures the pulsating, leaking, marked traces we ourselves leave, and the reconstructive responsivity of sociality itself within which we are all, as relational and social beings, intermeshed and entangled. Thus, fourth, Bloch demonstrates that it is within the darkness of the lived moment that the 'I' and 'we' meet endlessly in overlapping relations that result in a "superabundance" of experience.[214]

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[212] Ibid., 291.
[213] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 306.
[214] Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, 202.

In the midst of the darkness of the lived moment, hiddenness offers itself as the marker and possibility of an expansive political potency that remains as yet unrealised in the everyday, as we learn to see the "sublime in the pedestrian."[215] Hiddenness is a force and a site of agency, Rose suggests, that "deploys sensual, intellectual and literary eros, companions of pain, passion and plain curiosity, in order to pass beyond the preoccupation with endless loss to the silence of grace."[216] Thus, let us "leave this soul hidden."[217] For the darkness of the lived moment emphasises that subjectivity can never be fully bounded or rendered transparent, just as actuality as an absolute can never be fully grasped. The hiddenness contained withing critically stands in stark contrast to contemporary psychopolitical attempts to "strip people of interiority," so as to turn them into "information."[218]

Amidst experience, the darkness of the lived moment calls us to let go of the promise that we may never know completely, encouraging instead a generous reading of the world that welcomes the always-plural contingencies at play. This is the learning to embrace and mediate the uncertain equivocation of experience through a generous reading of social circumstance that gives due space for the unfolding surprise held in unintended consequences and unanticipated outcomes. How we respond to what is contained within the darkness of the lived moment, despite its unknowability, amounts to a social and existential posture that has actual and material consequences for present, future, past. Whether our response to the indeterminacy of the darkness of the lived moment is one of openness or closure – or paranoia or reparation – influences the overall patterning of relations that emerge as community, collectivity, society and world. For, as Bloch notes, "the human interior and the world's shift together."[219]

not-yet

The 'not-yet' challenges and radically extends our assumptions of "what counts as real."[220] Indeed, as Bloch notes, "reality is a category which is exposed to doubt and

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[215] Rose, *Paradiso*, 18.
[216] Ibid., 17.
[217] Ibid., 32.
[218] Han, *Psychopolitics*, 9.
[219] Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, 32.
[220] Kathi Weeks, "The Future Is Now: Utopian Demands and the Temporalities of Hope," in *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 189.

which is liable to change. It merely appears simple and solid."[221] As, for Bloch, what is "real is process," and this includes those "*anticipating elements* [that] are a component of reality itself."[222] In order to grasp what is real and actual, the not-yet indicates that we must tether the present to the past and future: the lingering genealogies of the past offer understanding, a recognition of the future born in every moment illuminates the unclosed possibility in becoming, precisely because it calls us to presently participate in that which is "advancing and breaking out at its edge."[223] Reality, therefore, is a process within which we can intervene so as to collectively determine the process itself: the future is not-yet decided, "it is still somewhat open."[224]

The not-yet is the present place where utopia makes its appearance.[225] It is otherwise, as otherwise "permeates almost every human engagement."[226] It is the space-to-be-filled that becomes a site of agency, for the not-yet "signifies the dynamic incompleteness of the world."[227] The not-yet reveals a faithful commitment and connection to the latent spirit of a utopian future, to the renewed possibility of otherwise.[228] As a crucial and vast concept, the not-yet is encountered again and again in *The Principle of Hope* in various forms: Not-Yet-Conscious,[229] Not-Yet-Become,[230] Not-Yet-Achieved,[231] Not-Yet-Appearance,[232] Not-Yet-Being,[233] Not-Yet-Closedness,[234] and That-Which-Is-Not-Yet.[235] In its most common form, the not-yet is encountered as the Not-Yet-Conscious, and used to designate the "anticipatory consciousness" that "inheres in human beings and their cultural efforts as they struggle to connect their sense of as-yet immaterial future possibilities – social freedom chief among them – to the convulsive trajectory of history."[236] The not-yet is prior to the prefigurative: its function is to preserve an interior of otherwise within actuality, to preserve the inherent

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[221] Bloch, "Man as Possibility," 275.
[222] Emphasis added, Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 197.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Bloch, "Man as Possibility," 281.
[225] Ibid.
[226] Nina Rismal, "The Ends of Utopian Thinking: Marx, Adorno, Bloch" (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2017), 126.
[227] Beaumont, "Not Yet: Reconsidering Ernst Bloch," 175.
[228] Thompson, "Ernst Bloch and the Spirituality of Utopia," 442.
[229] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 11.
[230] Ibid., 131.
[231] Ibid.
[232] Ibid., 132.
[233] Ibid., 142.
[234] Ibid., 196.
[235] Ibid., 237.
[236] Beaumont, "Not Yet: Reconsidering Ernst Bloch," 175.

openness that things can and always will be different, and to signify that the possibility of movement towards that openness is always already contained within what is actual. In subjectivity, the not-yet teaches that how we interpret the world, how we move through and the rhythm we adopt in response to latency can begin to change the nature of what is possible. Further, the not-yet offers a speculative orientation and sense of drive, amidst the processual changes in the movement of the darkness of the lived moment, inaugurated mourning and Rosean reason, that illuminate a future beyond the shadowy foreclosure to which we had felt ourselves resigned.

In the first volume of *The Principle of Hope,* Bloch notes: "[W]e are the travellers and the compass at the same time."[237] In the third and final volume, he writes: "[W]e alone are the gardeners of the most mysterious tree, which must grow."[238] In the midst of these two propositions is the not-yet, the latent ontological incognito that signals the agentic possibility held within the temporality of becoming itself.[239] In this sense, the not-yet bears the irruptive weight and movement of 'is', 'possibility,' 'reflection,' 'action,' 'process' and 'time'. Drawing being, matter and subjectivity together, this term offers a unique account centred on the already-existing openness of existence itself. Despite its perceived ephemerality, the not-yet is distinctly materialistic. It is the temporal interior within the processual existence of matter itself, for, as Bloch writes, "man is not solid."[240] We are, as humans, better understood as responsive, four-dimensional matterings with indistinct boundaries who become through, with and across time in its processual totality.

The account carried by the phrase 'not-yet', therefore, deeply troubles the foreclosure central to collapse of subjectivity experienced by the neoliberal subject. As Bloch passionately charges, "'accepting things as they are' is not an empirically exact formula," rather it is a "formula for vulgarity, cowardice and wretchedness."[241] Thus, though the realist may appear one who may know their way about, this figure is a "caricature."[242] For this sense of realism is premised in recollection, under which there is "nothing new"

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[237] Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, 277.
[238] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 1370.
[239] Nathaniel J. P. Barron, "Anacoluthon in Ernst Bloch's Ontology of Not-Yet-Being: Reading a Trace," *Bloch Almanac* 34 (2017).
[240] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 195.
[241] Bloch, "Man as Possibility," 274.
[242] Ibid., 275.

– thus, "no surprise is possible, no genuine future."[243] Contra the reflexive impotence of the neoliberal subject, the not-yet reflects the cumulative potency of immanent and imminent actions towards the real possibility of "transcendence without transcending," as action imprints the material over time.[244] In the feeling of the foreclosure of the future, however, the neoliberal subject reflects a failure of belief, a loss of the warm-stream that energises and renews our subjective commitment to utopia.

Indeed, the structurally patterned and self-imposed collapse of subjectivity within the neoliberal subject, as discussed in Chapter 1, is premised on a reflexive impotence that manifests as a folding into pre-established and pre-determined boundaries, so as to maximise one's capacity for successful gamification whilst also minimising the highly individuated risks associated with extension beyond these parameters. This collapses the belief in an immanent otherwise as well as renders a foreclosure of the future, where the subject is ultimately split from existing and emergent conditions of actuality that are presently either underway or in the process of emergence, as, for instance, in the age of the Anthropocene. Nevertheless, the creative potential and expansivity of the not-yet, given its inherent material basis, are not extinguished. Rather, following Marina Vishmidt's contention that speculation has become a mode of production, the latent potentiality of the not-yet can be understood as having been captured, rendered towards profitable production, and thus financialised as a further sign of the attempted total marketisation of life.[245]

Yet, still, the not-yet retains the fundamental imaginative potential that enables the adaptive possibility of response to new historical processes beyond what presently is, as a ground for immanent action towards otherwise. As a signifier of metaphysical incompleteness, irruption and interruption, the not-yet reaffirms the cumulative possible notion of "transcendence without transcending" through latent interiority, which, in time, unfolds as the becoming-real of possibility through the consistent commitment of immanent action. As Bloch writes, "subjective potency coincides not only with what is turning, but also what is realizing in history, and it coincides all the more, the more men become conscious producers of their history."[246] Further, "the

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[243] Ibid., 279.
[244] Levitas, *Utopia as Method*, 194.
[245] Marina Vishmidt, "Speculation as a Mode of Production in Art and Capital" (Queen Mary University of London, 2012).
[246] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 248.

process is made by those who are made by the process."[247] In this sense, there is a dual movement held within the not-yet: our agentic acts can cumulatively forge an autopoietic pathway that makes its way towards an alternative horizon, as they also, drawing on the contingency of Rosean reason, reflect the existing terrain that patterns the very process itself. The not-yet is the witness to becoming, as it is also a signal of the agentic possibility to infiltrate, subvert and transform the historical processes of actuality, for the interior potential of otherwise "exists everywhere."[248]

As a future orientation, the not-yet entails the experience of the expansive movement of possibility's enlargement: "[N]othing is complete, nothing has already been closed off, nothing is solid all the way to its centre."[249] The content of the not-yet can be metaphorically articulated as the growth held in the hidden promise of a seed, as it is also the reflexive becoming of the tree that may burst forth within an already-existing environment, whose roots weave with the land and with others, and whose branches remain to be trained, tied together, cut down, left to blossom. Here, too, is the not-yet the tending that keeps the environment balanced, carefully considered and hospitable to the very possibility of otherwise's emergence, growth, seeding across time. In this sense, Bloch teaches that "temporality can indeed play a pedagogical role" – in its restless "wandering with us, through us," fixity is no longer the sole theological state, for time holds within itself "something other than absolute mundanity."[250] This expansive, blooming movement becomes a working method that is both restorative and reparative in its recognition of the 'then' held to become through and within the 'now.'[251]

In the binding together of absence with expectation, the not-yet works as the conceptual tool of sight that offers speculative grounds for political action.[252] The present is always a beginning, found in the middle: we are where we are, caught in time's unrelenting passage, "the trip has already begun materially."[253] Uncertainty and openness tangle together: "[W]e live within this time, physically and organically, and either we just barely keep up or as creative beings we overtake time, leading, plunging into what has

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[247] Peter Thompson, "The Frankfurt School, Part 6: Ernst Bloch and the Principle of Hope," *Guardian*, April 29, 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2013/apr/29/frankfurt-school-ernst-bloch-principle-of-hope.
[248] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 241.
[249] Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, 278.
[250] Ibid., 127–28.
[251] Ibid., 128.
[252] Levitas, *Utopia as Method*, 6.
[253] Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, 129.

not yet really occurred."[254] This not-yet offers little solid ground except process itself, for it is a being captured in the process of becoming, a subjectivity composed relationally by the sociality it binds and is bounded to: here, the not-yet echoes the movement of Rose's *Angelus Dubiosus*. The inescapability of action draws within itself the force of re-cognition as a site of considered agency, able to inaugurate a rhythm that welcomes possibility's arrival and seeks to witness its blooming. Its pedagogy teaches that just as we ourselves may be many things at once, all unfolding, becoming, diminishing, flourishing through time, so too is the world more than what can ever be fixed. Through our considered attempts to run alongside the latent emergence of history, there is possibility – though not promise –that we may contribute to the realisation of otherwise.

theoretical account of subjectivity

Rosean reason, inaugurated mourning, the darkness of the lived moment and the not-yet together indicate the interplay of becoming that can be responded to generously, attentively and intentionally so as to remain actively "in league with the good which is working its way through."[255] Through Utopia as Method, the architectural building together of these four concepts from Rose and Bloch indicates a reparative sense of subjectivity able to move beyond the resignation, depoliticisation and disengagement captured by the neoliberal subject. Brought together, then, these concepts represent the possibility of recalibrating our collectively shared, experienced and produced metaphysical grounds towards a sustainable willingness to see, do and be differently in the hopes of realising otherwise. In conclusion and summary, I indicate the interconnected, relational dynamic of a subjectivity articulated through these four conceptual dimensions.

As a multifaceted concept, Rosean reason offers the foundational basis for a sense of subjectivity conceived differently. Beginning with the interplay between thought and intuition amidst the equivocation of experience, this sense of reason underscores the political potency found in bringing together the centripetal force of intellect and the centrifugal force of emotion in the pursuit beyond our present conception of

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[254] Ibid.

[255] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 198.

actuality.[256] This reason does not, however, abstract itself from lived experience to offer overarching principles or rationale: rather, it contains a recognition of the formative influence that contingent material experience has had, over time, in the establishment of meaning through which we come to understand ourselves and the world. This recognition is situated as the premise that our mechanisms of understandings and our perceived bases for action are both contingent and could be otherwise. Further, echoing Bloch's distinction between "contemplative reason" and "participating reason,"[257] the tying-together of *eros* and *logos* in Rosean reason troubles distinctions between interpretation and creation, discovery and invention, as it draws together affect and cognition at the pre-reflexive level.[258] The entanglement of contingency and action offers a critical political opening towards the promise and possibility of otherwise: the disruptive force of experience and relation indicate the ongoing potential for negotiating and reconfiguring our account of reality, our sense of meaning-making and our frameworks of understandings. As such, Rosean reason contains the possibility of the not-yet, whereby through the pedagogy of experience and relationship, we can overcome that which may have previously appeared insurmountable so as to become otherwise.

Inaugurated mourning and the darkness of the lived movement together expand on this dynamic movement between action, experience and the formation of subjectivity. In the pursuit of otherwise, Bloch notes that travelling a new path "can only be skipped or jumped over with some failures"[259] – indeed, the risk of an unintended outcome is the "comedy" Rose points to as the consistent mismatch between aim and outcome.[260] Hence, action requires, as in inaugurated mourning, the constant reflection, response and reconstruction before the initiation of further action.[261] Here, too, learning from the darkness of the lived moment, there is potency found in recognising our own epistemic contingency and limitations so as to position ourselves squarely in the frame of that which must be interrogated. Inaugurated mourning is the processual working-through that calls us to take responsibility for our presence as it causes effect in the world,

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[256] For more, Flusser explores the interaction of 'poetic intuition' and 'critical conversation' as centrifugal and centripetal force, see 'III. On Name,' in Vilém Flusser, *On Doubt*, trans. Rodrigo Maltez Novaes (Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2014).
[257] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 4.
[258] Weeks, "The Future Is Now," 188.
[259] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 205.
[260] Rose, *Mourning Becomes the Law*, 64.
[261] Ibid., 121.

whilst also offering means by which, through the latency of the not-yet, to de-couple the entirety of our sense of self from our actions or inactions and their intended or unintended outcomes.[262]

Drawing on the pedagogy of Rosean reason, the experience of hiddenness in the darkness of the lived moment brings together a willingness to sit in doubt and mystery amidst the challenging suspension of certainty, as well as a learned improvisation whose wisdom is visible in knowing when to act, when to pass unnoticed.[263] In line with the darkness of the lived moment, the self is found both in the midst of and in excess of action, where subjectivity and our epistemic limitations signal what we cannot know as well as the emergence of that which is otherwise to what we can claim to know. In representing the ineffability of subjectivity, the darkness of the lived moment offers an escape from the present through *participation,* rather than mere contemplation.[264] Thus, inaugurated mourning and the darkness of the lived moment indicate the processual movement and ineffability of and within experience that contributes to the realisation of otherwise amidst contingency, given that they both shape and are mediated by our own manifestation of Rosean reason.

The not-yet offers ontological and epistemological grounds to re-cognise 'reality' as such. Where the "Not" signals a "lack of something and also escape from this lack," it is the not-yet that captures the "*tendency* in material process, of the origin which is processing itself out, tending towards the manifestation of its content."[265] It is the moment of reality from which possibility emerges, as it is also the moment within which possibly remains latent: thus, where the "beginning occurs in it time and time again," the not-yet realised possibility of reality conceived otherwise emerges through and is sustained by the reparative, social rhythm found in between the darkness of the lived moment, Rosean reason and inaugurated mourning. In combination, all actions, relations and experiences come to *matter*, for their presence and intra-action fundamentally influence the account of reality we carry, which then influences the patterning of our engagement with and production of reality, influencing our felt experiences, our frameworks of meaning-making, what comes to hold meaning, and so

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[262] Importantly, however, this is not to be read as a license to reject the taking and maintaining of responsibility for our in/actions and their un/intended outcomes.
[263] Rose, *Paradiso*, 32.
[264] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 4.
[265] Ibid., 306–07.

on. This is double sense of matter as both meaning and material.[266] As utopia presses forward in unfolding contingency, the not-yet is the "force of production on the repeatedly bursting Front of an unfinished world." [267] Hence, our expanded capacity to make sense despite a recognition of our epistemic limitations energises our repeated movements through contingency, failure and loss so as to return again, as process calls us forward towards the bursting horizon of otherwise.

A reconceptualisation of subjectivity based on a Rosean and Blochian framework therefore provides the theoretical grounds and framework to recognise already-existing practices that create, sustain and renew the movement towards otherwise from within the actual. This offers point-of-connection back to Brunner, Kuipers and Pape's emphasis on the importance of minor-actions and micro-techniques amidst everyday life. The seven activist-philosophers collectively demonstrate that the ongoing work and maintenance of sociality is a critical pre-condition of a sustainable processual politics: this, however, requires a sense of subjectivity that differs from the neoliberal subject.

This theoretical and architectural exploration of subjectivity is intended to both invite the reader into imagining themselves and the world otherwise, as it is also a provisional offering given in the hopes of movement beyond the collapse of subjectivity entailed in the account of the neoliberal subject.[268] I turn now to ground the theoretical account offered in this chapter with reference to the already-existing practices of the activist-philosopher. In doing so, I detail five modes that embrace the moveable boundaries of subjectivity and sociality, as well as emphasise the ongoing relational struggle towards otherwise.

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[266] For more on the concept of 'intra-action,' see Angerer's account of Karan Barad, in Marie-Luise Angerer, *Ecology of Affect: Intensive Milieus and Contingent Encounters*, trans. Gerrit Jackson (Lüneburg: meson press, 2017).

[267] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 309.

[268] Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, 198.

chapter 4.
radical everyday practice

Together, the seven activist-philosophers represent already-existing radical subjectivities within contemporary Aotearoa, demonstrating the real possibility of otherwise contra the collapse of subjectivity as in the neoliberal subject, discussed in Chapter 1. Collectively, their already-existing relational practices of resistance, renewal and radicality offer the basis for an archaeological and architectural reimagining of subjectivity, sociality and everyday agency is strengthened with combined reference to philosophical work of Gillian Rose and Ernst Bloch. On this basis, I bring these nine voices into conversation to offer five modes of radical everyday practice: *embodiment, not knowing, trust, care* and *imagining*. These five modes both demonstrate and produce an emergent and emancipatory socially-bound and socially-binding politics, capable of sustaining as well as pursuing our collective movements towards the real possibility of otherwise. I argue in conclusion that these five modes reflect the entangled, moveable, reflexive and pedagogical modes of study, sustenance and sight for the rhythmic movement of action and reflexive recognition. As such, I argue they offer space to see, do and be differently, together.

Learning from Ruth Levitas' Utopia as Method, I apply Utopia as Archaeology and Utopia as Architecture within this chapter. Archaeologically, the five modes reflect themes 'excavated' from explicit and implicit content covered in the six conversations with the activist-philosophers. Architecturally, I 'build' the conversational fragments together so as to articulate five modes of radical everyday practice; I strengthen these accounts with reference to the sense of subjectivity developed in Chapter 3, the theory of Gillian Rose and Ernst Bloch more broadly, and brief connection to further literature.

The chapter is broken in six sections. In section one through to five, I work through the five modes in the following order: *embodiment, not knowing, trust, care* and *imagining.* These five sections each loosely follow an internal structure as follows: an overview; a discussion connecting to the collapse of subjectivity and the neoliberal subject, as articulated in Chapter 1; a discussion of reparative responses with reference to the seven activist-philosophers, Rose and Bloch; a discussion of subjective and social implications of this reparative response. By way of conclusion, the sixth section draws the five modes together to offer a summary, before arguing that these five modes of radical everyday practice constitute a relational account, practice and pedagogy of *docta*

spes, or educated hope. This is otherwise articulated as a pragmatical account of sociality necessarily bound to Te Whanganui-a-Tara, as specifically known through myself and the seven activist-philosophers.

<div align="center">pragmatic account of sociality</div>

embodiment

The "courage" to "be present" is, in Cally O'Neill's words, the courage of "being a human creature." As the first mode of radical everyday practice, *embodiment* straddles the material experience of being a physical body and the subjective, ineffable experience of being embodied, opening space for attentive awareness, recognition and engagement with actuality. Drawing the conversations with the activist-philosophers together with the account of subjectivity discussed in Chapter 3 and the work of Rose and Bloch, I argue embodiment is a primary relational experience. Attention to embodiment therefore constitutes a radical everyday practice and reflects the interface between interiority as subjectivity and exteriority as sociality. As interiority, embodied subjectivity is caught in the darkness of the lived moment yet finds space to emerge through Rosean reason's rebinding-together of emotion and intellect. As exteriority, the movement and boundary of the body signals, in its physicality, a material connection to the actual and equivocal milieu of collective life, as it also reflects the productive capacities held within our all-too-human capacity for labourand agency. The body is a tool, a primary relation, a source of power and a place of embodied intervention. As such, the body *matters*. Indeed, embodiment signifies the primacy of being, as it captures the inherency of connection, presence and subjecthood: to the self, as relationship between physicality and subjectivity; to others, as a chasm both uncrossable and yet bridgable, always porous in our mediated translations between one another, and the world.

"Everyone has a body after all," Bloch writes, and it is this body that is "present throughout."[269] Being a body and being embodied are dialectically entangled: there is "no drive without a body behind it," yet, so Bloch also writes, it is "as if the body did not contain the drive, but the drive contained the body and determined it."[270] Here, Rose

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[269] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 451, 49.
[270] Ibid., 47–48.

similarly notes, "'the soul' is not a prisoner in the body; the body is in the soul."[271] These accounts extend self beyond the confines of the skin, though still the flesh remains constitutive. Speaking of embodiment offers space to restore and navigate the dialectical relationship between interiority and exteriority as a holism. Further, following a wealth of feminist literature, a focus on embodiment offers space to explore the patterning influence of social, cultural and historical context as it weaves with our account and experience of the world, thus offering direct connection to the movement captured in Rosean reason.[272] As Kassie Hartendorp stresses to me, "if we are to fight for a world where we can be truly human, that actually involves our whole selves" – "the heart, the mind, the gut." Yet, as Kassie continues, this holism has been "literally and physically shaken out of balance."

In considering the relations between embodiment and the collapse of subjectivity as articulated within the neoliberal subject, it is necessary to recognise, acknowledge and historicise this embodied loss of balance in light of the experiences and legacies of violent, asymmetrical assaults on bodies, as they trace through colonial empire into the present context. Recognising the criticality of these historical legacies and their continuing impact into the present day, I turn to offer a brief survey of seminal literature, before turning to explore the extension and continuation of these forces as internalised and reproduced by the neoliberal subject. Philosophically, it is the Cartesian dualism that signals the premise of a split between mind and body, or matter and consciousness, where matter is rendered sheer exteriority and thus "devoid of interiority and ontological depth."[273] As detailed below, historical relations of power through and over the body begin by instigating a split between body and mind, or flesh and subject, so as to render the body an object and the subject either disembodied (or emptied and nullified, and thus rendered in the image of the neoliberal subject). As such, the brief historical account of the intersection of colonialism, power and the body indicates that the collapse of subjectivity stretches beyond neoliberal capitalism to deeply root itself in coloniality.

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[271] Rose, *Mourning Becomes the Law*, 10.

[272] See, for example, Iris Marion Young, *On Female Body Experience: "Throwing Like a Girl" and Other Essays*, Studies in Feminist Philosophy (Oxford University Press, 2005).

[273] Diana Coole, "The Inertia of Matter and the Generativity of Flesh," in *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, ed. Diana H. Coole and Samantha Frost (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 94.

Politically, Giorgio Agamben's seminal concept of 'homo sacer,' or bare life, articulates the account of those human bodies excluded by the state from the category of 'human' itself, thus being rendered bare or naked life.[274] As such, this term captures within it the violence of state biopower to enact, legislate and categorise the life and death of the bodies within its territory, as in Michel Foucault's conception of biopolitical governance.[275] As Alexander Weheliye emphasises, the bareness of bare life emerges in legislative relation, contrast and measurement to those bodies whose existence, survival and visibility is deemed superior and legislated in favour of, for example, the white, masculine body.[276] As Hortense Spillers articulates, with reference to the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the transformation of black bodies to bare life signifies the assertion of flesh prior to both subjecthood and the subject's "posses[ion] of a body."[277] Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, therefore, situate the birth of modern logistics – the detailed, large-scale organisation of contemporary life – in the slave trade through the violent movement and transformation of embodied beings to fleshy commodities.[278] The rendering object of the body indicates the process of subalternation: as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak details, subalternity signals the continued existence yet exclusion of populations rendered, by virtue of their body, unable to "speak" within the imposed political and discursive framework of power and representation that foreclose the possibility of their being heard.[279] Here, it is clear that the collapse of subjectivity as captured by the neoliberal subject grows from a long rooted imperialist genealogy that has persistently and asymmetrically subjugated different bodies across and through history.

Under conditions of neoliberal capitalism, Byung-Chul Han emphasises that the physicality of logistics has been transformed by contemporary technologies. The speed and smoothness of such processes necessitate a "compatible" and homogenised

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[274] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

[275] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1978–79*, ed. Michel Senellart, Francois Ewald and Alessandro Fontana, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

[276] Alexander G. Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 37.

[277] Ibid., 40.

[278] Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (New York: Minor Compositions, 2013), 92.

[279] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

population.[280] Contrasting the punitive, disciplinary forms of earlier governmentality, the subtle exploitation of freedom within neoliberal psychopolitics renders the "achievement subject" both master, as disembodied subject, and slave, as labouring body, in one.[281] Benjamin Johnson recognises this, as he reckons with the paradoxical internalisation of narratives that encourage us to "throw off the shackles of society insofar as it benefits those who are trying to sell us The Dream," for such a dream necessitates "consumption to feel safe that we can be that person." As subjects and labourers, as we traverse digital technologies, so too is our presence to actuality abstracted as we are pulled out of ourselves, disembodied and constituted by the ephemeral, online marks we make and collect.

Learning from the difficulty of working-through as noted in inaugurated mourning, the challenge of embodiment calls, therefore, for: a metaphysical and physical awareness to the actuality of our bodies, an understanding of their position in a historical space and time, a recognition of the internalisations we carry within ourselves, and the asymmetric treatment of the different bodies around us. As Jen Margaret emphasises, "colonisation totally destroyed balance amongst many things, both between Pākehā and Māori, within Māori society – things like gender balance, and all the balance of relationship between people and the whenua [land]." And, as Jen emphasises, "as a peoples, [Pākehā continue to be] privileged at the depravation of Māori." Kassie extends, emphasising that "we inherited ideas that robbed women of their mana from colonisation" and "those same forces at play are linked to the oppression of rainbow communities, people of different genders and sexualities." Further, Kassie attests: "I find it very fucking hard to believe that we would have such rigid ideas around bodies within Te Ao Māori." As in Rosean reason, the binding connection between material experience and the embodied consequences of contingency demonstrate the interplay of physiology and social context, as it is held and reflected in the corporealy mediated subjectivity of the body.[282] Returning attention to the body offers a pathway beyond a collapse of subjectivity through subjectivity itself, so as to rekindle a presence to one's own embodiment and, thus, return to the possibility of agency.

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[280] Tiqqun, *Preliminary Materials for a Theory of the Young-Girl*, trans. Ariana Reines, Intervention Series (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2012), 14.
[281] Han, *Psychopolitics*, 2.
[282] Jennifer A. Sandlin and Will Letts, "More Than Just Skin and Bones: The Cultural Materiality of Bodies and Embodiment," *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy* 13, no. 3 (2016): 187.

In conversation, the experience and transformational passage through, as a mode and form of reconnection, was detailed as if a physical and embodied experience of "productive discomfort."[283] Benjamin recounts the opening and transformation of his worldview as if it were "a complete dismembering of all those things that I thought were important, and a re-building"; "a veil was taken off of my eyes, it was like cataracts were removed." So, too, for Kassie: "It is like you were suddenly walking through the world and you can see things in a different way, and you have a foundation to start making your connections from." Though initially "a dying to the things that you thought would bring you fulfilment," as in inaugurated mourning, Benjamin emphasises it "ultimately is not painful, it is liberation – because you find that those things were never going to satisfy you in the way that they claim to."

Working through the formative influence of the world as it has shaped our embodied experiences entails both a process of grief and a reflexive recognition that the process of disentanglement will likely never be complete. Richard Bartlett is most frank in this regard: "My imagination is all messed up – I can try and switch off the patriarchy, as in I can try to stop participating as a man in patriarchy, but history keeps rolling forward. My experience of being raised as a boy, and then being trained what is boyness, what is maleness, what is manness; I can't really escape that history. So, whenever I try to describe this is my ethos, my kaupapa, the future state – I am describing it from a point that is pretty contaminated by this experience, this way of understanding is partial." As bound by our body and deeply integrated into our embodied experience via intuition and account, it is the re-cognition of these challenges that reflects the processual work of inaugurated mourning. No matter where we go or what we may do, Benjamin notes, "you can't escape you." This boundedness requires equivocation, a willingness to admit that, in Richard's words, "I can have these negative emotions, and they're not even these fleeting things: they are actually part of my psychology." Yet, so too can our embodied experience capture and reflect those positive experiences: for instance, as Cally reflects, there are "people I carry with me always." For our bodies are our "heavy houses," Cally suggests, and try as we may, the imprints of experience bear their mark as we continue to move through time with the "body's blanket tightly wound about us."[284]

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[283] George J. Sefa Dei and Mairi McDermott, *Politics of Anti-Racism Education: In Search of Strategies for Transformative Learning*, ed. Shirley R. Steinberg et al. (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2014), 219.
[284] Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, 161.

In combined recognition of both our agency as embodied and our body as interface with the world, the activist-philosophers emphasise that embodiment offers itself as a "deliberate strategy" to "subvert stereotypes," or as a tool for insight. Here, the recognition of power dynamics entails a practice of deliberately seizing these dynamics in an act of subversive agency that utilises embodiment as both tool and tactic. Jen notes that "at times I have chosen to be very present as my middle-class Pākehā self." For instance, on the first day of the Te Urewera Terror Raids trials, Jen and two Pākehā friends "intentionally put on fancy clothes" so as to attract the attention of the news media in order to deliver a message that subverted the perception of 'middle New Zealand': "I am middle New Zealand and I want to see the Treaty honoured and I want tino rangatiratanga." Further, Kassie reflects an awareness that, as both Pākehā and Māori, the relational space of body and embodiment offers itself to her as a tool, granting access to both worlds: "I have insight into a Pākehā world, and so I have an insight into what needs to change. You can't change what you don't know you need to change." This critically indicates the potentiality of bodies as modes of access, where existing patterns of relationality that mark the body can be utilised to undermine these very patterns. Contrarily, however, so too does this mark the site of otherness subjugated by patriarchial, colonial and capitalist *power-over* and *power-to*.

In the bind of subjective experience to the materiality of the body, embodiment becomes a metaphor for the bind of presence to the present as historical moment and actuality of place. Reflecting the disembodied contemporary experience, Jo Randerson emphasises that "you have to land, you have to actually connect onto this Earth," rather than "watching it and staying distant." Indeed, she suggests this feeling is a "commonality" – "something that lots of humans can relate to" because of "the situation that human kind have gotten ourselves into." Yet she contends, "how helpful is the framework of thinking that you belong somewhere else?" In answer, Kassie emphasises the "work of making connections [as the path] to be able to achieve what we need to achieve, we can't do that in isolation." For, as Jen suggests, "this work is particularly about thinking of the ground we are on, the whenua we are on, and the work we need to be doing – when I say *we*, I am thinking of Pākehā or tangata Tiriti – to be on this land, to honour the commitments that allow us to be here, and the groundwork we need to do to create better working relationships with tangata whenua." In this light, Jo critically emphasises the necessity of "knowing where we are coming from" – "I look to Te Ao

Māori and practices to help keep us connected back in to where we come from and how we see things." Embodiment thus calls for an attentive, and responsive engagement with self as emotionality and intellect, with body as force of agency and resistance, of our historical embeddedness in time and space, and a recognition of our own complicity.

not knowing

I turn now to *not knowing*, understood as an embrace of equivocation amidst the repetitive interruption of movement back and forth between self, others and world. Not knowing is understood and defined as a willingness to invite and sustain openness, through a recognition of our own epistemic limitations. Importantly, not knowing does not equate to silence – rather, it is an active opening that binds us together through relationship. As a bringing-together, not knowing centres the necessary difficulty of an ethics that is bound by the pervasive and persistent practices of re-cognition.

The "process of relinquishing the desire for self-certainty is a difficult and ongoing journey," Kate Schick writes, speaking of the Rosean imperative that calls us "towards an embrace of equivocation."[285] The not knowing that moved through the conversation with the seven activist-philosophers was undoubtably equivocal; as in Thomas LaHood's words, their collective practice worked against the "trap of certainty, the trap of thinking that one thing is absolutely right or true," in order to sit amidst the "ambiguity of reality." This calls for vulnerability, Benjamin notes, which he describes as "the acknowledgement that I can't be everything to everybody and I can't even be everything to myself that I need." Yet it reflects a "willingness and ability to step out knowing that you will fail – not fail necessarily in everything, but that you won't ultimately see everything you want to see, in terms of that future reality that working for a better community, neighbourhood, society, whatever, and being okay with that."

As a mode of being in the world, not knowing reflects both a central point of relational subjectivity, as it does our role in a world on the brink of environmental collapse. In de-centring the self, embracing uncertainty and accepting fallibility, Benjamin's faithful not knowing captures the entangled spirit of inaugurated mourning and the darkness of the

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[285] Schick, "Re-Cognizing Recognition," 104.

lived moment, as it also signals an underlying belief of sustaining persistent dedication of our efforts towards the possible realisation of the not-yet. This stands explicitly in contrast to the tendencies of the neoliberal subject, where action is self-centric, efficacy is accounted for in realisable outcomes, and the mitigation of failure takes precedence. Not only is "abandoning the pursuit of self-certainty and self-advantage … profoundly countercultural," it can seem dangerous, remains difficult and will be painful.[286] Yet, Benjamin continues, "as soon as one preserves oneself and guards oneself and creates safe boundaries around themselves, life dries us" – thus, "self-reflection is critical, because as soon as you are not willing to be self-reflective and self-critique and to break down the things inside of you that have become entrenched, in your thought and heart and the shape of your life, then you're back in the cell again." Without a willingness to sit in our not knowing, the door towards otherwise, alterity and relational recognition remains closed; yet, as with Walter Benjamin's *Angelus Novus*, time will continue to propel us forward.

The "equivocal path is not easy; however, it is the wiser path, one that highlights the contingency of political actions and outcomes and asks us to consider and re-consider our political judgements."[287] As a settler colonial society, Jen calls on us in Aotearoa to actively and openly respond to the ongoing work of not knowing and coming-to-know by embracing critical self-reflection, letting go of the possibility of innocence, and gaining a sense of responsibility over our collective experience. Doing so creates space to reckon with our individual complicity in the social, political and historical circumstance and context of what is. This attitude is reflected, Jen suggests, in the realisation that opens itself to further critique and change: "I didn't know about all this, and in fact, I had a whole lot of assumptions which were wrong about our history, so then, what else don't I know?" This, she tells me, is difficult and challenging work that requires a "degree of courage to enter" – it calls for a fully embodied declaration of one's willingness to be changed. Yet, Jen notes, "as Pākehā, you still do have options to compartmentalise often, much more than Māori do in these spaces." Indeed, for Pākehā, being "open to learning and acknowledging" can be "confronting": as Jen stresses with reference to Aotearoa, it demands "vulnerability" and "courage to front up to the depth

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[286] Ibid., 102.
[287] Ibid., 104.

of white privilege, the depth of destruction of colonisation and your part in that, and the ongoing benefits that that affords you."

To "disarm ourselves of superiority," we must "allow the inhabiting of relationships to inform how we respond and how we live" – for, Benjamin emphasises, an "alternative future" can arrive only as a "lived-into transformative reality." Jen grounds this statement in Aotearoa, stating that "as Pākehā, the answers aren't going to sit with us, so a lot of the unfolding involves better listening, responding and engagement with Māori." In leaving the door ajar for the difficult encounter, the openness and relational intimacy of not knowing demands we let go of "understanding as an idol." Benjamin asks: "Can one let go of understanding, as if that was the only way to transformation?" Such a letting-go calls us to "live in that liminal space of the stepping out from the solid ground of safety and security and comfort, knowing that I am probably never ever going to reach the solid ground again on the other side; things go from black and white to very blurry." 'Blur' is a helpful term to explore not knowing as an experience, reflecting the attempts to make sense amidst ambiguity, as in Rosean reason, as such ambiguity arises from our own epistemic limitations mediated through the darkness of the lived moment. Following Rose, then, it also calls us to "blur the line between victims and perpetrators," as a reminder of our "incrimination and [our] responsibility."[288] Thus, as Benjamin suggests, the 'blur' of not knowing is the embrace of equivocation and a willingness to "open ourselves to the possibility that we know far littler than we think we know."

Learning from Dawn Rae Davis and Natalie Alvarez, the failure to "disarm" is to persist in the assumption of "inherent right-ness," to use Benjamin's words.[289] As Richard notes, the "instinct to categorise actually obscures just the very simple straightforward reality that is in front of you, because you are trying to read too much that is not actually there." This categorical obscuration can be deeply violent: as Rose notes, "certainty does not empower, it subjugates."[290] However, as Jen suggests also, not knowing too can be

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[288] Lloyd, "Interview with Gillian Rose," 204.
[289] For further, see Natalie Alvarez, "Conclusion: On Not Knowing," in *Immersions in Cultural Difference: Tourism, War, Performance* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2018); Dawn Rae Davis, "(Love Is) the Ability of Not Knowing: Feminist Experiences of the Impossible in Ethical Singularity," *Hypatia* 12, no. 2 "Feminist Philosophies of Love and Work" (Spring, 2002).
[290] Rose, *Judaism and Modernity*, 4.

violent: "Privilege means Pākehā can get by without knowing our history."[291] Much like Mark Fisher's claim that, for the neoliberal subject, "forgetting becomes an adaptive strategy,"[292] Kassie stresses that "we have a society that is based on ignoring and blocking out really awful parts of it to justify the wealth that we have created, or the lives that we have created." This is reflected, Jen shares, in that "some people have been really, really resistant to the content in [the Treaty education] workshops."

The resistance of a violent not knowing articulates a haunting condition of unwavering certainty, an abdication of relational responsibility to the actual, and ultimately a refusal to sit within the brokenness and complicity found within an equivocal account of what is. It is a stubborn *euporia*, the easy way, whose violence is carried in its offering of innocence.[293] In this sense, Jen reflects that "there are people who are wanting to discount all of that [history], or minimise it, or put blame elsewhere, or whatever – that can be difficult." Further, too, this resistance to re-cognition extends to, Cally suggests, our "privilege against the environment": "We just throw things in the bin without thinking about it, and if we start questioning people, it is just this big blank and nobody really knows that much and doesn't think about [it] on a grand scale." This *euporia* forms a boundary around that which counts as 'knowable,' as it offers comfort, familiarity, and certainty whilst it simultaneously commits violence in its unwillingness to engage with the actuality of history.

If not knowing calls for engagement with the difficulty of ambiguity, as well as the difficulty of that which we do not yet know, so too does it reflect a willingness to accept and work through the possibility that we will fail each other, that misunderstandings will arise, and that intention and outcome will consistently mismatch. This is pathway that must be doggedly walked: moving to a space of not knowing may entail a deep rupture that uproots and "challenges people's understandings of realities, and framing of the world," as Jen notes. However, this rupturing, rhythmic movement of a metaphysical inaugurated mourning must necessarily remain active, ongoing and "constant," Jen emphasises, "because of the society that we inhabit." As Jen explains, "colonialism is in everything … It filters absolutely through every level, from the conceptual to the emotional. For me, [it] is pretty much most of our society's structures

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[291] Jen Margaret, "State of the Pākehā Nation," *Scoop*, February 3, 2018, http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL1802/S00010/state-of-the-pakeha-nation-jen-margaret.htm.
[292] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism*, 56.
[293] Schick, "'The Tree Is Really Rooted in the Sky,'" 87.

… our legal system, our health system, our education system etc. are all based on colonial structures." As Kassie notes, it is "insidious, and it is everywhere [but] it hasn't always been this way."

In realising the limits and partiality of our individual accounts, as in the darkness of the lived moment and Rosean reason, self-reflexive relationality opens us to the connections that can be made with others across our not knowing. Rather than seeing the limits of knowledge as incompleteness, as something to be overcome, knowledge is here "constitute[d] by its own limitations and transgressions," rather than undermined by them.[294] This possibility of transgression, limitation and failure is the negative not-yet contained, alongside the positive possible realisation of real possibility in the as-yet openness of becoming, that can only be determined through the active work and labour that takes place in actuality.[295] Here, not knowing reflects the "fear and hope" of actions, which, "in a concrete manner and in complete seriousness," pursues that which is "coming up on the horizon": any knowing "confidence" to declare that which is to come bases itself in a "determined world."[296] For indeed, the neoliberal subject exists within a metaphysical landscape structured by that which is already know, and thus determinable. A reparative response to this determinism is the adoption of "an attitude towards failure [as a] really crucial learning point," Cally suggests: "Look at it as a way forward rather tha-n getting too upset by it." The processual movement of action and not knowing creates, therefore, necessary openness and attention for a critical reflexivity that takes all moments to be pedagogical.

As Kassie poignantly suggests, "it is okay to sit in our humanity and our vulnerability of not knowing… Humility is really important; being able to sit in what we don't know, what we cannot know, what we may never know – and also to know what we do know. That is important, too." The humility of not knowing must not, however, equate to silence – Kassie references Audre Lorde passionately, sharing with me her words: "Your silence, at the end of the day, will not really protect you, therefore, we must not be silent."[297] "Finding others" is thus, Jen notes, critical to sustaining the rhythmic return necessary for ensuring persistent agency amidst not knowing. For Benjamin, too, it is

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[294] Davis, "(Love Is) the Ability of Not Knowing," 147.
[295] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 4.
[296] Bloch, "Man as Possibility," 283.
[297] Audre Lorde, "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action," in *An Anthology of Women's Rhetoric(s)*, ed. Kate Ronald and Joy Ritchie (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001), 302.

community that provides support along the "pathlessness" of the *aporia*, so as to resist folding into the easy path of blame, avoidance or erasure.[298]

Transformation cannot, Benjamin suggests, occur as "a distant, disconnected academic pursuit" carried out by the "internal, private, distant, independent individual." Rather, "engagement and participation are conditions not only of being but also of knowledge" – there is a sense of not knowing that is embodied and supported, thus rendered possible, *in* relationality.[299] This is a response and continuation of not knowing as the awareness and account found in "the spirit of participation" that Cally notes. For "courage is a social phenomenon" – as we "marinate" in the relational phenomenon that is "the fluid of courage," Richard shares, we find ourselves "encouraged" by friends, comrades and allies, and, more abstractly, by relationality, towards the radical pursuit of an otherwise that remains not yet known.

As Rose suggests, "to be able to live with uncertainty is terribly important. To be able to say … 'I just don't know what's going to happen and that's all right.' You've got to be able to say that."[300] The politics of not knowing is a pedagogy, a study of "paying more attention," as Cally suggests, and a practice of engaged and collaborative movement towards otherwise. In this way, not knowing is an openness to the suspension of judgement, an awareness of the limitations and complicity of our account of the world, and a willingness to accept persistently ongoing metaphysical reconfiguration. As subjects of a moveable metaphysics, not knowing calls us to stake ourselves so that we may then return, again and again. As Rose ends *Paradiso*: "[W]e need to venture again the courage of suspense, not knowing who we are, in order to rediscover our infinite capacity for self-creation and response to our fellow self-creators."[301] In the age of the Anthropocene, against the collapse of subjectivity and the total marketisation of life, we must learn so that we can be sensitive and privy to, as Jo articulates, the "radical turning of things on their head." For the reality to come, though it may remain not-yet, will be defined by exceptional unpredictability, uncertainty and, above all, our not knowing.

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298 Schick, "'The Tree Is Really Rooted in the Sky,'" 87.
299 Rauna Kuokkanen, "Idigenous Epistemes," in *A Companion to Critical and Cultural Theory*, ed. Imre Szeman, Sarah Blacker and Justin Sully (John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2017), 316.
300 Lloyd, "Interview with Gillian Rose," 214.
301 Rose, *Paradiso*, 63.

trust

As deeply relational, *trust* is thus both fragile and resilient – as in the example of friendship explored in Chapter 3 in discussion of Rosean reason, our relations of trust infiltrate and deeply inform the world we inhabit and the conceptual sense we carry. There is a necessary sense of embodied presence that is called for in trust as it requires our active attention so as to be able to make sense and judgement in the midst of what is felt, intuited, seen and experienced across time. Failure is actuality; disappointment and transgression are bound to the moveable boundaries of friendship and reason, just as to the risk of trust within the interplay of action and relationship in the actually-existing world.

Against suggestions that we are experiencing the "end of trust," [302] it is trust – as bound and found within particular relationships – that is reclaimed by the activist-philosophers a critical site of beginning for a radical everyday politics. "We need to be able to trust ourselves collectively," Kassie notes: "You will never start anything unless you have that seed of trust." Trust has, however, arguably been re-operationalised, from kernel at the "heart of our social relations"[303] to the "foundational element of liberal and neoliberal ideology."[304] Consistently reminded of the apparent "'risk' inherent in individual and collective existence,"[305] we are guided to "conduct [ourselves] as [if] an entity in a competition."[306] The milieu within which competitive market actors find themselves undermines reciprocity, the most basic component of trust. Here, "enclosed and commodified," the "commons of trust" have been split, "transformed into individualised 'self-interest'" and the immaterial intellectual property of trademark.[307]

In this sense, trust has been abstracted and rendered product, commodity and strategic asset. The maintenance of trust in the market becomes fundamental for its promise to secure brand reputation, market security and market relations, thus ensuring a "level of social stability for the smooth ebb and flow of capital around the world."[308] As Ann

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[302] The Invisible Committee, *To Our Friends*, trans. Robert Hurley (Semiotext(e), 2014), 57.
[303] Daryl Koehn, *Rethinking Feminist Ethics: Care, Trust and Empathy* (London: Routledge, 1998), 81.
[304] Roger A. Salerno, "Neoliberal Ideology and the Centrality of Trust," *Comparative Sociology* 17 (2018): 354.
[305] Dardot and Laval, *The New Way of the World*, 166.
[306] Ibid., 261.
[307] James Arvanitakis, "The Commodification and Re-Claiming of Trust: 'Does Anyone Care About Anything but the Price of Oil?,'" *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences* 2, no. 3 (2007).
[308] Salerno, "Neoliberal Ideology and the Centrality of Trust," 360.

Pettifor notes, "all credit and money is a social relationship of trust" without which "monetary systems collapse and transactions dry up."[309] Capital's power in the money-form is reflected in its capacity to secure superficial "connections between those who have no connections."[310] As explored in Chapter 1, the potent smoothness of the money-form in its commodification and transformation of trust reflects the attempted transformation of society into transactionality.

The dismantling and transformation of trust from a social, historical and cultural form of embodied relation to the smooth, anonymisation of swift exchange facilitated through contractuality was felt and raised by the activist-philosophers. For Benjamin, the contemporary combination of de-historicisation and pursuit of "instant gratification" cumulatively forms a resigned distrust and unease with general society. Collectively, "we don't do the things we know we should do, like environmental stewardship, because we don't see the effects of it fast enough." Though we are aware of the environmental harm of a plastic wrapper that is "not going to decompose in my lifetime, or ever," Benjamin points to our rationalisation of these "short-term decisions that have long-term negative effects" as signalling the failure to recognise our own temporariness and the embedded pursuit of self-interest. The dissonance between what we know we should do and the actuality of our behaviour ripples out as if a rupture in the society: mistrust of others is fuelled by "mistrust in self."[311] Further, as Kassie extends, there are many ways we have been systemically taught "not to trust ourselves."

The Overton window of ethical consumerism[312] and individuated environmentalism,[313] in addition to the failure for meaningful structural state- or global-level response to climate change,[314] combine with the persistent complicity and abdication of ourselves and those around us as if an undeniable demonstration of political impotency. Further justification is found to fuel reflexive impotence. Thus, Benjamin notes, with "one life," the narrative becomes "I want to experience what I want to experience, even if the

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[309] Ann Pettifor, *The Production of Money: How to Break the Power of Bankers* (London: Verso, 2017), 19–20.

[310] The Invisible Committee, "The Coming Insurrection" (The Invisible Committee, 2007), 52.

[311] Koehn, *Rethinking Feminist Ethics: Care, Trust and Empathy*, 85.

[312] Colin/Ciara Cremin, "The Social Logic of Late Capitalism: Guilt Fetishism and the Culture of Crisis Industry," *Cultural Sociology* 6, no. 1 (2012).

[313] Campbell Jones, "The Subject Supposed to Recycle," *Philosophy Today* 54, no. 1 (2010).

[314] Bill McKibben et al., "To Save the Planet We Need a Treaty – and to Consider Rationing," *Guardian*, October 29, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/29/to-save-the-planet-we-need-a-treaty-and-to-consider-rationing.

follow-up things of that stuff is negative for other people and for the world, for the environment, for future generations." These narratives contribute to a deepening sense of distrust in the promise of social action and society more generally, in addition to the apparent collapse of the possibility of otherwise. The dismantling of trust as guiding force and means of orientation in the world is therefore undeniably political. As market moralism, "punitive neoliberalism"[315] and growing social and economic inequality combine,[316] the distrust of scapegoated populations, such as the poor, can be explicitly seen in Aotearoa – as Kassie emphasises, the explicit distrust of "everyday people" is embedded, for example, within punitive and violent treatment by Work and Income New Zealand. These narratives of distrust become embedded at both a subjective and societal way, particularly, Kassie notes, "if you are someone in society that is seen as lower down the social hierarchy, whatever it is."

For Kassie, the damage and transformation of trust extends beyond the reach of neoliberal capitalism, however, finding root in the violence of colonisation. "One of the things of colonisation is that it encourages you to lose trust in your ancestors" – indeed, she notes it is a "very convenient thing for [Māori] to hate the people that we came from," to think "[our ancestors] were stupid or dumb," or that they "just gave up their land or they just gave away their language." In the continuing colonial environment of Aotearoa, the encouragement of ancestral distrust reflects colonial violence as both form of historical erasure and oppressive subjugation. "To me, a key part of decolonising is re-finding that trust in your ancestors and what they did to protect you, the future generations."

Across several plateaux, then, the loss or transformation of trust folds directly into the continual fragmentation of sociality that undercuts collectivity as it reproduces depoliticisation and resignation. And, as Kassie again suggests, "if you don't trust in the power that you have collectively – well, fuck, of course you're not going to do anything." Though the contemporary lack of trust in society is commonly grounded by the ungenerous, sceptical, universalist and ideological account of the abstract person, which suggests "people are inherently selfish," like Kassie, "I just don't believe that." Instead, as in Utopia as Ontology, attention to actually-existing social, political, economic and historical conditions helps to account for the particularities of behaviour. Kassie's

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[315] Davies, "The New Neoliberalism," 130.

[316] Max Rashbrooke, *Inequality: A New Zealand Crisis* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2013), 15.

experience reinforces this: "I believe that people survive and exist with the ways and the tools in which they have at the time; that is what I believe. And if you have a world that is fucked, people will act fucked to survive in it."

Critically, the barriers towards developing trusting relations are profoundly intersectional, infiltrating our accounts and sense-making faculties as well as the ineffable connections that bind us together. As Jen suggests, a re-centring of an "intergenerational, long-term thinking in both directions, past and present" returns the radical agility and malleability of trust in a long-term collective vision. Further, echoing Rosean reason, "learning how to trust" ourselves requires restoration of connection to "the heart and the gut," Kassie suggests. Indeed, despite any alienation we may experience from these felt and intuited senses, Jo urges us to remember that these deep "tones and energies" remain "hugely powerful." Thus, disengagement can be profoundly "dangerous," especially in light of the psychopolitical governance of the neoliberal subject – "we are driven by our physicality and our emotions and our intuitions, but we sort of suppress them and don't consciously give them any attention, so that means that we come to have this huge driver within us that we don't really monitor."

Contra disengagement, the activist-philosophers all emphasise the importance of an everyday pedagogical approach to our intuition that reflects a bringing-together of inaugurated mourning, Rosean reason and the darkness of the lived moment. As we listen and learn to the intuitions within our body, so we must be reflexively open to the ways that we carry both oppressive and generous behaviours. Trust, as a site of not knowing, transforms into a site from which to politically re-evaluate our relationship to our self and our relationship to the other. Thus, any restoration of trust calls necessarily for an accompanied sense of not knowing – for, as Richard tells me, "we are contaminated by our experience of the present and we can't really escape those histories." Like Kassie, then, whilst we must nurture a sense of deep trust in our political strategy of relationality toward self, other and collective, we must also heed her speculative warning: "My challenge to myself is that I am equally creating what I am critiquing."

A way of being in the world that centres the heart and the gut, not just the mind, requires faithful trust in the ineffably sensed and inarticulately felt, as if it were an almost spiritual belief in our capacity to make sense and find orientation non-

consciously; it calls us to be open to that which is "divined through intuition."[317] "What I find missing from the activist movement," Jo emphasises, "is deep, spiritual practice." Jen similarly asks, "where [is the] space for wairuatanga, for spirituality and connection in work, in work spaces and in our society more broadly?" As Kassie exalts, "if we are to fight for a world where we can be truly human, that actually involves our whole selves, and there will always be a spiritual element to human beings." This intuition or spirituality, whether grounded in religious belief or not, begins with trust as the collapse of distance between the conscious self and the self residing in the darkness of the lived moment. Bloch's conception of the spirit of utopia premises this spirituality in materiality itself: though our yearning for and acting towards something better is premised in anticipatory consciousness, as not-yet, it offers no fixed teleological end-point through which to offer clarity of action – thus, it calls for a trust amidst the experience of not knowing.[318]

Trust here reflects both the willingness to negotiate and grieve unintended outcomes, and to pursue action on the basis of an expanded sense of reason that comes to include impulse, intuition and emotion. Trusting the way our bodies respond and being attentive to their "tones and energies" is akin to Thomas's account "of the artist" – "to trust that the expression they find will adequately express without having to [be overworked]." As a relation of appropriation, trusting one's intuition is, as Benjamin emphasises, also "the ability to make decisions independent of validation from external sources; it is going with a gut feeling on something and backing yourself to follow through, regardless of whether the decision goes right or wrong."

Trust harbours within it a deep sense of possibility and belief in the everyday infiltration of the not-yet. Cally stresses that "we need to replace the fact that we don't know … with trust. This risk is crucial, fundamental" – without it, "you're narrowing your options before you even know." Though trust is what "makes collective life possible,"[319] it also "has in it the seed of betrayal"[320] – yet, as Cally emphasises, "there is risk the whole time." Just as that which is not-yet arrives first as possibility before

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[317] Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 134.

[318] Thompson, "Ernst Bloch and the Spirituality of Utopia," 446.

[319] Niklas Luhmann, as quoted in Ali Bilgic, "Trust and Power of Social Movements: The Case of Feminist Solidarity in Tahrir," in *Political Science Association Conference* (Cardiff: Political Science Association UK, 2013), 10.

[320] James Hillman, as quoted in Koehn, *Rethinking Feminist Ethics: Care, Trust and Empathy*, 80.

actuality, so too does trust call us to hold speculative belief in that which can be achieved through a combination of relationship, effort and work. As within the entailment of not knowing, in trust space is created to "'suspend' the existing order *understood as a system that has forgotten how to fail*, a system that guarantees successful performance."[321] Trust therefore offers back the grounds of faith – "a commitment to engagement with the world, despite its difficulty, despite its irresolvable tensions."[322] In Benjamin's words: "To go from being at the edge of otherwise to step forward into the otherwise requires that proximity to vulnerable, transformative relationship."

Trust is, therefore, a deeply important site from which to politically re-evaluate our relationship to our self and the other as a radical everyday practice oriented towards a utopic otherwise. Rather than locating the "right thing to do," the most powerful form of organising is, Richard notes, "much more about getting people into really open, honest, authentic, generous relationships" where they "can keep trusting each other." Kassie echoes this, noting that "building high-trust relationships has been absolutely key – those relationships are all the space that I need to be able to do and create anything; the space is in the relationships." In a similar vein, Cally is encouraging the Wellington City Council to "drop their risk mitigation decision-making strategies" on the basis of belief that "we will come to better solutions if we listen to everybody. Trust that if we listen to people, then the best things will happen and options will come out better."

The importance of trust calls towards sites for possible reconstruction amidst experiences of embodied and social alienation that disconnect us from ourselves as social and moral persons; the work of rekindling relationality here is political, personal and social. Trust is fundamental, for it offers the essential grounds upon which to move towards the experience of shared feelings necessary for shared meaning, necessary for maintaining collective commitment towards a shared vision.

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[321] Rowan D. Williams, "Between Politics and Metaphysics: Reflections in the Wake of Gillian Rose," *Modern Theology* 11, no. 1 (1995): 12.
[322] Lloyd, "Interview with Gillian Rose," 203.

care

Jen, Jo, Thomas, Richard, Benjamin, Cally and Kassie all articulate to me a politics deeply embedded within practices of reciprocal *care*. In the midst of their daily work and active political struggle, each emphasise that relationships of vulnerability and support, within which they are able to be "whole selves," have been and remain essential to the sustenance and growth of their everyday practice and their lives, in turn. The characteristics of these connections, however, makes it apparent that this 'care' must not be read as an ethical 'ought' – there is no prescriptive sense of normative 'should' in relation to 'care.' Instead, as María Puig de la Bellacasa notes, it is rather that "there has to be some form of care" in order for "living to be possible."[323] An ethics of care is, the activist-philosophers show me, the womb of sociality and subjectivity, of social relations and personal presence; thus, the consistent recurrence of these tender connections suggests that utopia is itself a daily practice and pedagogy of care, as well as care's associated labour.

Finding and connecting with others in relationships of care is, however, difficult, Thomas reminds me. He suggests that the isolated "modern context and the contemporary experience" of individuation only "adds to the courage that is required to put yourself out there." Furthermore, the relational connections necessary for such sharing and for practices to emerge are largely impoverished, as Benjamin reflects: "We spend a lot of energy in our minds and in our hearts guarding ourselves, and that becomes the norm because we are conditioned to that. But I don't think that we quite realised the energy that it takes to make that happen – it is actually more than we perceive most of the time."

The relational poverty that undercuts care's potential is captured in Thomas's reflection that, though he had an "intellectual understanding of compassion," prior to his experience in the theatre community, he "had absolutely no existing framework of experience for it." Cally situates the negation of care and responsibility towards the natural environment also within the "individualist mentality": "Instead of looking at the greater network of what is happening and your contribution to it, a lot of people just don't look – people just compartmentalise it." Drawing on her experience as an

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[323] María Puig de la Bellacasa, *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 5.

architect, Cally offers an example that demonstrates the intersection of wilful blindness with the capitalist mentality: "I'd suggest a really great environmental product, and people are all for it, until they know that it is a few thousand dollars more expensive than plastic product." Indeed, we don't, in Kassie's words, live today in a way that is based in the practice of care as if it were "sensing what is the right thing to do and how to produce things at that point in time."

Care is a relational connection to others – both an inherent and teachable 'sense' which manifests in its primary social form as an emotional commitment that necessarily extends beyond the bounds of the self to include other and world. Care, as a social form, has arguably been radically transformed by the attempted total marketisation of life and the collapse of subjectivity signalled by the neoliberal subject. Rather than a recognition of relational entanglement, what remains of care under neoliberalism equates to self-centric forms of optimisation and governance. Signalled a biopolitical mechanism by Foucault, "to care for self is to fit one's self out" with internalised "truths and regulations."[324] Han suggests that the psychopolitics of contemporary neoliberalism extends and utilises these "subtle" points of access to the interiority of subjectivity to orient towards transactionality: "[P]ower relations are interiorised – and then interpreted as freedom [to] self-optimise."[325] The hyper-individuated emphasis on self-optimisation and achievement renders care-of-self over care-of-others; in this transition moments of care become moments of "grief competition."[326] Connecting back to Benjamin and Cally's interviews, both offered an account which reflect the duality of an active refusal to engage as well as the loss and impoverished sense of subjectivity, that Thomas notes, comes to be forged over time in the midst of a transactional achievement society. Standing in "stark contrast to universal prescriptive theories"[327] and profoundly counter-cultural, a recentering and a richening of care seeks to disrupt self-optimisation and certainty, so as to reach beyond, and to do so with others, in a sustainable way.

Amidst the re-cognition of subjectivity, caring for the self extends beyond individuation to emphasise the criticality of tending to one's own limits and fallibility so as to ensure

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[324] Raúl Fornet-Betancourt et al., "The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom: An Interview with Michel Foucault on January 20, 1984," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 12, no. 2–3 (1987): 116.
[325] Han, *Psychopolitics*, 28.
[326] brontë velez and Ayana Young, "Embodying the Revolution," podcast audio, *For the Wild*, February 15, 2018, http://forthewild.world/listen/bront-velez-on-embodying-the-revolution?rq=revolution.
[327] Kate Schick, "Critical International Ethics: Knowing/Acting Differently," in *Routledge Handbook of Ethics and International Relations*, ed. Brent J. Steele and Eric A. Heinze (Routledge, 2018), 164.

the capacity to return to the difficulty of the work required to sustain our emotional commitment to each other, the world, and of utopia. In Kassie's words: "We all destroy ourselves in different ways – nobody is immune to it – but aim towards an emotional, spiritual and physical point where you are able to contribute the best you can." As Rose teaches us with *Angelus Dubiosus* and inaugurated mourning, so she furthers the necessary relational boundedness of care in her discussion of Monica and Augustine: "Augustine, even in his most dissolute and abandoned moments, is held by [Monica] in the deepest recesses of his agonies" – "before and after her death, he is held by Monica and he is holding Monica."[328] We are ourselves both Monica and Augustine, where the "mediated and mediating mothering" offered by Monica, herself a "paradox of hiddenness and powerfulness," "softens the trouble in the middle between Augustine's hiddenness and his visible power."[329] The gentle, difficult and necessary tending-to is fundamental, as Richard stresses, for "if you try to do reconstruction without having dealt with all the pain and trauma, you are going to build a really fucked-up alternative." What it means to care for oneself, as in caring for others, can never, however, be prescriptive: intertwining intellect and experience, caring offers itself as a reflexive practice of "paying more attention," Cally adds. It is through attention to actuality – to the multiplicity of existing relations within which we are already embedded – that we learn how to respond to both ourselves and others in tender, sustaining ways fitting for any particular.

Care, in these ways, is thus deeply relational and communal. "For me to be fully alive," Benjamin shares, "means to create space in my heart and in my life – physically around me and in the places that I find myself, but also in my own head and my heart – to allow people who are different to me to shape me." Drawing on the rhythmic process of inaugurated mourning, though not "a walk in the park," Benjamin emphasises "there is a liberation and a freedom bound" to the "letting-go." Indeed, as Cally suggests, it is the very basis of care that shelters us so we may step out and show ourselves with a sense of communal support that offers strengthen and provide safety – "there is room in supportive communities" and relationships for the "ebbs and flows" that mark the full and actual experience of life. Thus, together, the seven activist-philosophers suggest that care *creates* spaces for the self as it does for the other, in freeing up the possibility

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[328] Rose, *Paradiso*, 27.
[329] Ibid.

of engagement with what is actually being felt, and the possibility of tender response, support and working-through. In this way, the visible practice of care offers itself as if a pedagogical rupture, through its hospitality and generosity. This reflects the reciprocal work and learning involved in the gradual re-shifting of the boundaries of the heart, mind and gut.

As a "practical philosophy," then, care starts "from the ways in which we experience our ethical lives."[330] Care is thus immediately tied together with not knowing and trust as a form of sustenance and creation: in the act of being present to the sharing of what is meaningful, this sharing itself forms and becomes meaning. Communities of care call us to "reveal" ourselves, Jo shares – to courageously sit with, step into and feel with the actuality of struggle, pain and joy as we truthfully experience it, and to do so with others so that we may link arms and sustain our emotional commitments to utopia as otherwise. Experientially, care calls for the visibility of our whole self, as bodies and as subjectivities, to ourselves and to others, as embodied beings to which we must respond. Jo continues: "When you feel alone, that is when you don't feel sustainable. But there are so many cool outposts of other people … when you reveal who you are and what you are interested in, then those outposts come to you, as well, and then it becomes this self-feeding mutual, awesome circle of people."

These relations of care may be found with intimate partners, with mentors, through communal living, with friends, within our "worlds of work" (in Thomas's words), or within intentionally formed, supportive and specific safe spaces. Kassie was here explicit: "Isolation kills. It is so dangerous." So she emphasises, "find your people … especially if you are on the fringes, if you don't feel accepted. To me, it is like even more in those situations that you need other people, because they will be the people who save you and you save them, and it's like a mutual thing – you can never underestimate that human connection." Having "loving and supporting relationships wherever" is important, Kassie emphasises, "because that is what pushes you to the next level." The work of care is undeniably demanding, but it is in this difficulty that our collective emancipatory potential can emerge, finds sustenance and is tended to.

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[330] Fiona Robinson, "Globalizing Care: Ethics, Feminist Theory and International Relations," 123, as in Schick, "Critical International Ethics: Knowing/Acting Differently," 164.

Relations of care capture the interplay of relational connection, as they oscillate and move through joy and difficulty. Recognising in ourselves the space between who we are and who we may appear in any given moment, the combined pedagogy of an awareness of embodiment and the darkness of the lived moment encourages a practice of care, manifest as openness and hospitality, that preserves and offers space for the interiority of others, as well as the interiority of self, and, in turn, the metaphysical interiority of the not-yet. Spaces that offer care successfully are, therefore, Richard suggests, premised in "autonomy," "consent" and "a mutual shared awareness of the same moment as it is happening." As such, they are able to "really look after my subjectivity," rather than "threatening" or "trying to collapse" it. Richard continues: "Sharing that mutual awareness of the same moment and mutual care of each other at the same time is a potent feeling to be in, to be in a space where that kind of gentleness emerges." Yet, as Benjamin suggests, care too contains difficulty, as it also represents the "continued process of transformation that is only accessible through the path of suffering, in the broader sense, to lay oneself down for others."

It is for this reason that, Benjamin suggests, care emerges most distinctly in the deep, trusting relationships between friends who have chosen to carefully walk alongside one another. Through invitation and "permission," these deep friendships work both to hold each other up and to "hold each other accountable to things that I think are generally off the table in an individualist society." Benjamin expands with a series of question: *Can we look through your accounts to see how you're spending your money*? *How do you show hospitality to the stranger? Is your home one where it is literally just your private space and no one is welcome; or is it one that is open and the table is ready for people to come and eat with you?* The substantivity of these relational connections and connective moments arises, Cally shares, from "being able to have the experience of community space that you feel comfortable in, to [the] point where it adds value to your life and you can add value to other people's lives more easily."

Jen, Jo, Thomas, Richard, Benjamin, Cally and Kassie teach me that care is a *disposition* as well as a *practice* and *offering* – a way of meeting and engaging with the world, as well as a way to characterise the rhythm and work, that enables, sustains and inspires the continuation of this generosity of spirit. This triptych, they teach me, is hard work. For this is care for the self as subjectivity and body, amidst all intuition and lived darkness; care for the immediate other in their obscurity; and deep care for the world

beyond, as Earth, as land and, more ethereally, as global collectivity. Care ripples across our lives and into all relationships, for it is the marker of interdependence.

Pffering and being offered care requires trust and vulnerability, generosity and attentive specificity. As such, care constitutes an active pathway to sustain and reproduce the conditions necessary for the daily work and utopic visions of otherwise, as in the practice of the seven activist-philosophers. Critically, this care is non-linear, contains lengthy ebbs and flows that move unpredictably, and demands both attentiveness and reflexivity: it calls us to respond differently according to the changing circumstances of what we ourselves need, what the others around us need, and/or what the collective needs, in "specific" ways.[331] As a radical everyday practice, care calls us to approach the world pedagogically, with gentleness, a generosity of spirit, and a sense of reciprocity that centres the importance of non-violence, openness to one another and mutual support.

imagining

As the final of five modes, I now turn to explore *imagining* as a critical mode of radical everyday practice that opens us to the pursuit of otherwise. Kassie aptly stresses the political importance of imagination for radical practice: "If we can't imagine a new world, what the hell are we fighting for?"

All seven activist-philosophers gestured to the ways that our sense of imagining is directly patterned by our life experiences, the stories we inhabit, and the world around. While it may be the case that imagination is inherent to human beings, it is similarly never pure: we are embedded, situated and socially patterned beings.[332] Thus, imagining often begins, as Richard articulates, by moving in negation: "I want to live in a society where you don't have a harsh divide between the people that earn a living from owning stuff and all the others who earn a living by working. It is easy for me to say that I am anti-capitalist, that [capitalism] is the thing that I am against. But if I were to start from a blank slate, that is never going to be the way that I would describe what I am into. But there is no blank slate to describe it from." It is in this way that I read the seven

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[331] María Puig de la Bellacasa, "'Nothing Comes without Its World': Thinking with Care," *The Sociological Reveiw* 60, no. 2 (2012): 211.
[332] Levitas, *Utopia as Method*, 176.

activist-philosophers' discussions of existing ideological and material conditions of which it is necessary to orient ourselves against and imagine ourselves beyond. Jen notes that these existing oppressions and entrenched hegemonies shape the world inhabited by everyone, not just those often explicitly recognised as being affected: indeed, "lots of Pākehā are impacted by the deep imbalance, in terms of the impacts of neoliberalism." As Kassie emphasises, "nobody likes being in a state of imbalance, even if you are in the good part – the *good part* wherever it is." Imagining extends what counts as possible beyond the known horizons, offering within itself both the tools and purpose for sustained, intentional action – where possibility comes to be prefigurably accessible first as gesture, idea, and the promise of natality.

In Kassie's words, imagining requires its "own time and conditions to be able to prosper." Against this, however, we are today "in a world where, a lot of the time, we are so stuck in the day-to-day, we don't have time to imagine – most people don't have that." Indeed, the contemporary depoliticisation and movement towards the collapse of subjectivity, as in Chapter 1, bleeds into the neutralisation of our individual and collective imagination. In Fisher's words, "capital follows you when you dream."[333] The myopia and capital-centric entrepreneurialism of the neoliberal subject comes into stark focus: Thatcher's *there is no alternative* folds otherwise in on itself, as if an implosion of the future as capital seeks to capture the not-yet. Melanie Gilligan and Marina Vishmidt consequentially call for "the violence of the entrepreneur" to be "thought through another kind of violence: the rupture that would bring another social synthesis."[334] This rupture would be "violent" insofar as it is the intentional overcoming of a limit so deeply embedded in our embodied, subjective and social accounts of the world that it appears insurmountable. This intentional process of metaphysical reconfiguration calls us, through inaugurated mourning, to invite a sense of not-knowing, so that we may imagine beyond. The first move, as negation, however, is to recognise the "poison pill" of capital's "ever-lasting ideal, which always lingers and never makes itself concrete."[335] In the promise and suspension of actuality and actualisation, the space for imagining beyond is lost: the painful work of negation is

[333] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism*, 34.
[334] Gilligan and Vishmidt, "'The Property-Less Sensorium,'" 628.
[335] Federico Campagna, "Squandering," in *What We Are Fighting For: A Radical Collective Manifesto*, ed. Federico Campagna and Emanuele Campiglio (New York: Pluto Books, 2012), 154.

inauguration of a mournful release of the suspended promise so as to returns us to the ground, where it is possible to imagine beyond the known horizon.

In this way, just as imagining contains negation, so too does it offer the space for actual positing towards possibility. Imagining is the tool through which we locate visions of the future; our speculativity here works to extend beyond the horizon of the known to tarry amidst the different realms of the possible, returning a sense of hope, play and experimentality to our politics. As Kassie shares, recalling Moana Jackson, the word "*activist* derives loosely from a Latin word meaning hope" – and here, this sense of imagining is active, working doggedly towards the alignment of subjective intention and objective tendency that births the "objectively-real possible."[336] Though our imaginations may seem to be "suppressed, repressed" by the "PR nothingness" of contemporary society, Cally holds to the promise and possibility of imaginative potential: there is "nothing wrong with our imaginations," indeed, we remain "pretty good at imagining." What is critical is "what the emphasis is on."

As Jen reflects, however, "radically imagining something different, particularly something that differs from what the colonial project is, is not something that has been encouraged, at all." Further, Benjamin notes neoliberalism brings with it the manipulative enclosure of imagination through the proliferation of "available options": it is "hard to imagine where there are so many narratives being projected" – "advertising narratives, societal narratives, cultural narratives, faith narratives." "It's like every conceivable reality has been dreamed up for us and we have so much to choose from," and so, encouraged to inhabit the role of consumer, Benjamin continues, "we don't have to think about it hard ourselves; we don't have to imagine what I will be, what life will be, what it could be; [instead] we choose the one that fits us best, like fits us best with our existing values, our identity." Despite the "illusion of freedom and choice" bound within this "smorgasbord," Benjamin concludes that we ourselves "are not actually imagining that reality or imagining that path, or being shaped or transformed into that." Indeed, this is "capitalism at its best." Here, despite the possibility of choice, imagination remains foreclosed, bound already by the posited notions of what counts as possible that make up our world as we can already know it; indeed, this is an overtoun window. This choice-based model embeds the refusal of the

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[336] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 208.

work that calls us to welcome and move within our not knowing as we enter into the unknown space in between, the space of devastation and play, of "fear and hope."[337]

Entering into the equivocal practice of imagining is difficult. As Jo suggests, the repetition of existing narratives "form habitual pathways that have an effect on us." And as Richard reflects, "there is a lot of visibility of the unimaginative type of life … the 'kind of grey, dull, go-to-work-everyday-if-you're-lucky, spend-half-your-life-in-traffic, wind-up-with-a-nuclear-family-behind-a-white-picket-fence' kind of life." Not only is the materiality and form of such a lifestyle "not an expression of the inhabitance," Cally stresses, but "suburban sprawl is environmentally very destructive, [and in] a human sense, it is a horrible environment as well – dead-end streets with no shared spaces; all the houses are the same, or close to it. It's that real each-to-their-own model of success; the quarter-acre dream; the nuclear family." We must remember, Cally emphasises, that "spaces shape the world." Indeed, "in New Zealand," this patterning "is particularly evident because it was a colony. A lot of space; everybody put their stake in the ground and put a fence around it and started looking inwards." Imagining calls us to extend beyond the horizons of our stories as it does the physical pathways that surround us.

Speaking from personal experience, Kassie notes she "often felt that [she] grew up in spaces that did not permit or allow or imagine thinking of a different world." This is deeply "dangerous," she stresses – "having adults who aren't able to imagine is terrifying because imagination is a really beautiful and transformative thing." And so, Kassie continues, imagination is "a challenge" – "it is a challenge because, you know, our education system is often not one that encourages imagination." These challenges bleed into our everyday politics. Richard notes, "our political framing or our attempts to make political change feel pretty dull in most of the Western spaces that I've been in."

Given these conditions, the revitalisation of imagination in the everyday becomes a critical mode of a radical everyday practice and politics. Rather than an account of imagining that is disconnected, Jo posits a form of creative and poetic practice bound by relationality: "Sometimes artists talk about finding the work – I know someone who talks about digging it out from sunken treasure chests, other people talk about carving [it] out. Like: I don't design it, I find it. There is a sense that there is something that is already there." This approach to imagining explicitly links to the practice and

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[337] Bloch, "Man as Possibility," 280.

methodology of Utopia as Archaeology. The revitalisation of imagination in the everyday becomes a critical mode of radical everyday practice, for it works towards the familiarisation that things can, and will, be different. The "articulating" and "illuminating of that possibility" are fundamental – "any time we see someone else" doing, being, thinking and acting in ways that help to strengthen our convictions or stretch the realm of what is possible, "even in a fictional context, it helps us," it inspires us and it pushes us further. As Jo continues, this is to "provide people with a place where they can then position themselves in an active, more positive frame."

Historical examples provide important sites to offer grounded possibility for imagining, whilst also rooting contemporary struggle as intergenerational. As Kassie shares, "to me, the answer is to find the models for whom you want to be within that struggle – I think Pākehā, myself included, need to look at these people and be like, *this is who I want to be,* let them be my orienting guiding light, because I can see people who can be that." For instance, Kassie notes the contribution of Pākehā Quakers in Māori struggle: these "Quakers – older Pākehā people – went and formed lines and stood between the police and Māori and linked arms and they were like: if you want to get to them, you will have to go through us first." Kassie concludes: "Pākehā, Māori, everyone needs to find those people" for "they are everywhere." Critically, however, imagining ourselves through the lives of inspirational others ought not equate to heroism. As Kassie further stresses, there are countless "hidden heroes and rangatira and people who have just gone on and done what they needed to do, because they needed to do it."

Yet, irrespective of its abstracted transformative power, imagining becomes "quite tricky" when "you're not drawing on this rich pool of stories that present a way of being that is more just." Though initially, Jen stresses, she felt "proud" to find out that one of her ancestors "was known as a supporter of Māori representation in Parliament in the late 1800s," having recently read his obituary, she discovered that "he won running races, and what he was given, on occasion, as first prize were parcels of land on the Canterbury Plains… the very land his Māori friends were trying to defend." As Jen notes, coloniality continues to run deep as we scour history for role models. She maintains, however, that while "our collective story doesn't have that many good examples," it is important to believe in the possibility that encourages us to continue to look, so that we may "find the individuals in that story who might encourage us to think of other ways of being, in terms of building a different collective story." In returning a tempered sense of

trust in the journeys and decisions of previous generations, so too we create space and narrative to find ourselves amidst an "intergenerational perspective" – that, Jen notes, deeply "supports imagining."

Though contemporary conditions leave "imagination constrained," all seven activist-philosophers maintain that there remain "pockets" where "imagination is alive and well," in Richard's words. Practices of imagining range from the experience of poetry to collaborative, immersive experiences. As Jo suggests, poetry is "so clever": as "super complex communication", poetry offers a "fast" disruption that catalyses imaginative involvement. "You read a big poem and it's like: woah, I need to let that resonate for quite a while." The moments that offer an "exchange of the soul or the spirit" come in many forms, though they can cumulatively shift the fundamental scope of our imagination, expanding, in an embodied, subjective and social way, a belief in possibility. As Jo suggests, in these moments, "you don't need to be able to speak a particular language or join a kind of discourse" – instead, it is "come and join this thing that looks a bit like a party and even help us make that thing, build it together." This is the hospitable and collective invitation of the not-yet.

Richard emphasises the long-term impact of immersive experiences that disrupt our deep-seated understandings. He points to Occupy and to Burning Man: "You have tens of thousands of people experimenting with a different society for a few days, and operating on a completely different logic." Though not all "pockets of imagination" may be "particularly strong forces for social change," Richard reflects that they all have a "kind of potency about them" that carries beyond the experience and helps to stretch the realm of the possible. Indeed, in reference to our political imagination in Aotearoa, "if you think a generation ago," what may now seem small or normal, such as "calls for the teaching of our histories, iwi and colonial, in schools," Jen notes, were not "even on the page."

Centring imagining as a mode of radical everyday practice is to centre the following questions, as Richard offers: *What can we build together? What can we do together? What kinds of utopias are we motivated by?* As we move across and through "unchartered territory," to use Kassie's words, imagining is the seeking of not-yet's

possibility, the practice of an "emancipatory cartography."[338] This imagining is equivocal, difficult, broken and calls us to reckon with a reconfiguration of the future – all this despite, "not having words" to aptly capture or describe that which we hope for. Imagining is the active, grounded actuality of work towards possibility; it is the thinking and the doing, the attempt at finding and the attempt at positing, the stretching and the staking. As Kassie speaks, "if you are really pushing yourself to the next level, it is unchartered territory; and so you don't have a map for that stuff. You can only try to find your guiding lights and then try to orient what you can."

summary: docta spes [339]

Gathered from the six conversations with the seven activist-philosophsers, and reconstructed through Utopia as Method to offer back an alternative account of sociality, *embodiment*, *not knowing*, *trust*, *care* and *imagining* reflect modes of everyday radical everyday practice that are pedagogical and (re)productive, emergent and formative, instructive and under construction. Between them lies the difficult movement of being in the world with others as it is becoming, as it is learning to become. As a qualitative and theoretical application of Utopia as Method, these modes are offered in answer to the guiding question of this thesis: *how do we sustain our emotional commitment to utopia?* In response, Chapter 4 offers back a sense of radical everyday practice, in the hopes that these words offer both a philosophical and pragmatic contribution to thinking differently about subjectivity and sociality as they remain relationally and speculaitively entangled.

The section that follows offers summary, analysis and conclusion, and is broken into three parts. First, I offer a brief account of each mode, before moving to discuss connections in light of the dimensions of subjectivity developed in Chapter 3. Second, I explicitly discuss the pedagogical radicality of these modes. Finally, I offer summary and conclusion.

Combined, these five modes disrupt our ethics, building moveable frames that are under construction as they also guide and teach. *Embodiment* represents the primary

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[338] Federico Campagna and Emanuele Campiglio, "What Are We Struggling For?," in *What We Are Fighting For: A Radical Collective Manifesto*, ed. Federico Campagna and Emanuele Campiglio (London: Pluto Press, 2012), 6.
[339] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 5.

relational experience, straddling the interiority of subjectivity and the exteriority of sociality in an inescapable yet never-mended way. *Not knowing* captures a willingness to invite and sustain openness, through a recognition of our own epistemic limitations. Socially, not knowing gestures to the emergence and becoming of a future that remains inherently unbeknownst, yet whose history can be affected by and through the "most extreme effort of will" realised in our commitment, dedication and willingness to processually engage with histories as they have been, and the present as it actually is.[340] *Trust* grounds reparative restoration within our own bodies, as the recognition and legitimation of that which is felt as one truth among many, given such embodied response is reflective of the particular experiences and relations that have marked and woven through our individual lives in all their beauty and violence. Socially, trust disrupts and seeks to dislodge the perceived primacy of individuation, competition, fear of others, de-historicisation, and the truism of self-interest that pries its way into what is left of relationship following our collective patterning towards a collapse of subjectivity. *Care* is the pedagogy of unassuming generosity that nurtures subjectivity and sociality without expectation in such a way that forever remains tethered to the possible understood as the not-yet. *Imagining* returns strength and validity in our own potential to see, move and realise that which is beyond what has yet been felt, experienced, seen and embodied: the imagination represents the site through which we may draw together objective and subjective experience so as to identify and work through transformative configurations and seemingly spontaneous patterns. Further, in the movement between what is and what might be, imagining offers speculative grounds for action, whilst both – that which is named as what is as well as what might be – are consistently imagined anew.

In practice, these five modes interweave, drawing within themselves and reaffirming the alternativel and repairative sense of subjectivity indicated in Chapter 3. Embodiment captures a willingness to embrace trust and not knowing on the grounds of Rosean reason, so as to offer space for the felt and inarticulable. Further, in recognising the deep contingency at the centre of our experience and frames of meaning-making, embodiment calls us to approach the world with care and generosity. Not knowing grounds the necessary movement of inaugurated mourning, as if a practice that reflects our consistency to traverse the boundaries entailed by interiority and

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[340] Ibid., 4.

exteriority of embodiment as it meets the entanglement of contingency and trust. Further, in signalling space for the not-yet's emergence, a willingness to embrace not knowing ripples into our practices of care, as an alignment with and a tending to the maintenance of conditions for emergence. Trust reflects the potency of the not-yet: a trust of people in and despite their messy actuality, a trusting of the unfolding possibility in process, a trusting of the possibility of intergenerational timelines for action, and a listening to the subtle, directive and non-verbal intuitions we harbour in our bodies. Care welcomes the processual response of inaugurated mourning, offering the space and gentleness necessary for the soul work that renegotiates our political, worldly and relational engagements. Imagining reflects the primary condition of the not-yet, to be realised amidst the movement through and with not knowing. In connection to embodiment, the body becomes the primary site through which to dream and to act, to listen to the world and the self, so as to identify sites of change with specificity as well as to recognise our intuitive impulses, feelings and sense as to what such change may be, from where it may begin, or how we may move towards it.

Just as the *Spirit of Utopia* captures the utopian spirit as pedagogy, practice and universal, so too does the question *how do we sustain our emotional commitment to utopia?* contain within itself its own processual answer. These five modes of radical everyday practice are modes of study, means of sustenance and sites for the rhythmic movement of action and reflexive recognition. As in the not-yet and the darkness of the lived moment, there remains something yet to be seen. Thus, with the rhythmic wisdom of inaugurated mourning, any 'modes' or any sense of 'practice' must themselves remain open to becoming otherwise. Here we see the value and potency of Rosean reason as it emphasises persistent negotiation, response and reconstruction. These modes, therefore, offer a pedagogy for being together in the midst of becoming, of choosing to infiltrate, subvert, care for and trust the possibility held in each other, as well as what we do not yet know.

These five modes are 'radical' for they are an attempt to explore and articulate the ever-changing roots of subjectivity and sociality, as they play out, work their way through, and are constituted by the everyday. It is from these metaphysical sites, I argue, that our particular politics (the left of Aotearoa) grows, is renewed, is strengthened and sustained. Yet too, these particular modes and their accompanying account are surely one of many possible attempts to articulate, make sense of, and reckon with the

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difficulty and bounty of the questions this thesis responds to: *How are we to live? How do we sustain our emotional commitment to utopia?*

The radicality of these modes is therefore not prescriptive, dogmatic or teleological: rather, radicality is found in the refusal to accept resignation, choosing instead to recognise the persistent influence of micro-actions, gestures and movements between self, others and world as they cumulatively make, and hold the potential to re-make, our world. In the midst of our pursuit towards otherwise, the foreclosure of the future and the collapse of subjectivity are two entangled parts that we must actively hope never add up. Watching the future unfold as it grows in catastrophic promise everyday, we must heed Rose's call: "[T]he sky has become dark and occluded, we need to pull up those roots for the channel of grace is run dry."[341] This pulling-up is our move in negation, a return to a sense of *particular* collective agency and reflexivity across both the philosophical and pragmatic plains. In response, the five modes of radical everyday practice move with Utopia as Method to offer sustainable reparation.

I have sought to learn, listen, assemble and offer back what I can. Through theoretical engagement with Gillian Rose and Ernst Bloch, I have articulated four entangled dimensions that help to pragmatically respond to and overcome the collapse of subjectivity. Through conversation with the seven activist-philosophers bound to Te Whanganui-a-Tara, I have sought to ground this research in Aotearoa, sharing their practices, accounts, wisdom and beliefs, and the patterns that emerged across their words as I saw and felt them. Through our conversations, five modes of practices emerged: *embodiment*, *not knowing*, *trust*, *care* and *imagining.* These are, as has been shown, entangled, moveable, reflexive and pedagogical intersections that work to offer a powerful sense of sociality capable of regenerating and sustaining the space to see, do and be differently together.

These five modes of radical everyday practice are, therefore, an incitement *study*. As Bloch suggests, hope is "teachable" – educated, it becomes "docta spes."[342] This is the pedagogy of collecting fragments of possibility so that we may build and sustain the

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[341] Rose, *Paradiso*, 63.
[342] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 3.

possibility of concrete utopias.[343] This is study within and outside of institutions, squarely grounded in ongoing negotiation that occurs in the midst of our relational, responsive and reconstructive becoming together, at the porous boundary between subjectivity and sociality, as well as what is and what might be. Indeed, the ever-present, always re-forming, agentic and relational boundaries of subjectivity indicate that this "study is already going on."[344] The radical everyday practice captured by these five modes is a generous provocation and a hospitable invitation to study, learn, educate and come-to-know together the different ways of becoming, to study as if it were a preparation for the future we do not yet know though we know is coming.

Together, Jen, Jo, Thomas, Richard, Benjamin, Cally and Kassie teach us all that relational and speculative sustenance emerges in those practices that maintain our connection to ourselves, to others, to the world and to the land upon which we stand; that our strength grows by retaining, recognising and celebrating the tending to ourselves and others in ways that escape transactionality. Through each act, relationship and moment of being, our mattering adds to the cumulative pursuit of otherwise. As Bloch writes, "the hinge in human history is its producer."[345] As we are caught up and swept together, history emerges. This intentional, active, directive and committed being-caught-together is perhaps the closest sustaining experience we may find in our journey towards utopia.

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[343] Levitas defines Bloch's term 'concrete utopia' as the anticipatory carrying of hope, as both content and function, latency and tendency, goal and process, through which we actively pursue real possibility. See Levitas, "Educated Hope," 15, 18, 19.
[344] Harney and Moten, *The Undercommons*, 112.
[345] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 249.

conclusion

How are we to live?

How do we sustain our emotional commitment to utopia?

Through six conversations with seven activist-philosophers from Te Whanganui-a-Tara and an original philosophical engagement with the work of Gillian Rose and Ernst Bloch, I have demonstrated that an answer to the first question is processually found within the second. For utopia is the otherwise that we navigate, create and sustain together, through every moment. This thesis, and the gifts it offers back, demonstrates the real possibility of overcoming the limit posed by the collapse of subjectivity within the neoliberal subject. Against contemporary resignation, depoliticisation and despair, it is the ongoing work and pedagogy of relational action and practice that return us to the "Front"; opening again the horizon of possibility and sustaining our ongoing and collective movement towards the "Novum," so that we may see, do and be differently together.[346]

Drawing the work of Rose and Bloch together with qualitative research through Ruth Levitas' methodological framework Utopia as Method, this thesis contributes to existing literature in a number of ways. Through the application of the Utopia as Method framework to both theoretical and qualitative research, I demonstrate the flexibility, strength and applicability of Levitas' methodological articulation of the Blochian spirit of utopia and utopian hermeneutic. In speaking to seven activist-philosophers from Te Whanganui-a-Tara, this research offers contribution to the existing literature on the extra-parliamentary radical-left of Aotearoa.[347] Though some participants are beyond the bounds of what may be traditionally captured by this category, the collective 'militant optimism' and relentless everyday commitment to pursue and realise the possibility of otherwise through the application of their own agency signals the importance of expanding our categories of both who and what counts in the space of radical-left politics today. Critically, what emerges from these dialogues is their shared commitment to unification, relationality and collaborative practice, contrasting the traditional notion of left politics as fragmentary. As such, the seven activist-

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[346] Ibid., 8.

[347] In speaking to just seven participants, I acknowledge that this is a small-scale study; however, qualitative research offers a critical window into lived experience, to gain a broader understanding of the general society within which these participants are embedded.

philosophers here collectively signal the exciting, inclusionary, generous, reflexive and deeply committed radical-left politics emerging from Aotearoa today.

Through the combination of qualitative research, philosophy and art-based practice, this thesis also seeks to demonstrate and contribute to the importance of interdisciplinarity within sociology. The societal challenges and questions we face today are themselves complex and interdisciplinary, with likelihood to affect how we make sense, the politics we practice, the ethics we carry and enact, and the tools we need to respond. It is through considered engagement with philosophical theory that we can begin to imagine new ways to conceptualise these challenges, while it is the inclusion of grounded qualitative research that will ensure the connection to and purchase over actuality. In extending the boundaries of forms of knowledge production and representation that 'count' to include poetry, art and more, our capacity to approach complex, evolving and far-reaching questions can expand again to include our most human and historically persistent forms of meaning and sense-making.

The encounter I establish between Rose and Bloch, primarily in Chapter 3, is one of this thesis' most original contributions: I demonstrate the compatibility and rich overlaps between their thought, though they have not previously been brought into dialogue. Gillian Rose is a relatively unknown philosopher, and this thesis therefore contributes an original reading of Rosean reason and inaugurated mourning, with specific focus on their connection to subjectivity. In connecting Rosean philosophy with qualitative research regarding everyday activism, I show that her thought captures a spiritual and worldly sense of existence, in the midst of our political ethics, the difficulty of disappointment and relationship, our human passions, and our sheer actuality of existence. As such, I demonstrate Rose contains within her thought a radical and persistently active sense of political agency, along with an astute understanding of the ways we make meaning in the world together.

Further, this thesis contributes to the contemporary revival of Blochian research. As with Rose, I articulate an original account of the darkness of the lived moment and the not-yet, with specific reference to subjectivity and sociality. By applying these terms to qualitative research, I make visible the critic potency of Bloch's work to activist practice today: by grounding the sustenance of our emotional commitments towards otherwise in processual, relational and pedagogical everyday practice, I stress the material necessity of warm-stream considerations for subjectivity and sociality amidst the

collective pursuit and movement towards otherwise. Though the challenges of our times are deeply entrenched and complex, following Bloch, both warm-stream and cold-stream accounts are necessary: thus, we must ensure that both technical analysis and emotional soul work remain equal parts of our contemporary practices of radical politics. As a whole, therefore, this thesis seeks to offer contribution to the pedagogical study and practice of how to be, live and move through emotional, relational and material transformation with others sustainably, in the midst of these changing times.

How, then, are we to sustain our emotional commitment to utopia? How are we to live?

Through Gillian Rose, Ernst Bloch and seven activist-philosophers of Te Whanganui-a-Tara, I offer an account, practice and pedagogy of *docta spes*, educated hope, through the relational interplay of the following five modes of radical everyday practice: *embodiment*, *not knowing*, *trust*, *care* and *imagining*. As a form of study and as a way to co-compose the reproduction of social synthesis in and through every moment, these five modes of radical everyday practice capture, reflect and contribute to a restoration of subjectivity, and thus a restoration of sociality. Against contemporary resignation, depoliticisation and despair, hope remains, found between each other.

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Response to Jen Margaret

What does it mean to be self - determining?

In what ways is this different to self -actualising?

Are we collectively paying attention?

--

It is 'not a utopia': it is a real possibility

immersion as action

presence as being where you are

life as connected as relationships

your perspective, alongside mine

Coloniality runs so deep,

coloniality runs so deep.

--

If you feel something is unjust;

       out of balance,

do something:

learn, find new communities, act.

We are where we are and we can only

do what we can do:

ask a question collective,

of which

the asking 'I' compromises an unbounded heterogeneity of possibility.

'If we want to address climate change, we have to address decolonisation'

Pākehā society does little in relation to:

    (de/colonisation)

where we are.

Imagination is distinctly shut down in colonial culture,

but there are small spaces, little moments, pockets.

It is difficult to tell stories in history without history,

And those stories we do tell are singular gestures rather than collective movement; rhythm.

Self-reflection is part of the work.

The heat will rise in our body.

Response to Jo Randerson and Thomas Lahood

The inference of the anthropomorphic eye

gestures between us.

Yes, but what can you see?

Is tomorrow always about forward?

--

uht milk for one,

bougie fantasies,

time is not linear.

--

what is it to be human?

i take a picture in my mind.

i take your hand, gesturally.

i forget my body.

--

Do you ever feel alienated from yourself?

Do you follow your instincts?

Even DNA contains memories.

--

The emotional labour of the future,

radical: a return to the root.

Response to Richard Bartlett

Remember: us social workers;

the value of mutual/self care;

the importance of mothering
our amorphous selves.

--

Find your body, inhabit it, experience it.

Translate your FEELINGS
and communicate:

care for yourself and others,

be in relation.

> (Relationality CREATES meaning,
> it is the becoming.)

--

Are you designing a game you can win?

Do you know the histories of your maps?

What is the *technique* to being human?

Are you used to existing as a memory?

--

Because, what if there has to be a *letting go*;

We can never, however, rid ourselves of our bodies.

VIRTUAL REALITY, in the escape of the body, is a UTOPIA;

> *the invisible position.*

--

What is your subconscious mind hiding from your conscious mind?

--

1) Create new spaces with different dimensions;

2) Make these spaces feel good;

3) Invite 9 friends along.

find your tipping point,

                                        the intimate edge.

--

This is a vision of the 'future' as 'together'

the rhythmic movement of

back   and   forth:

                                        withness.

--

                                        The nipple shoots a sewing needle;

                                        the black hole that breathes.

--

There is no blank space;

we are all contaminated, polluted.

It is a political stance to implicate yourself.

--

(The arrival of

everything   /   anything

into the memory creates a

                                        reproduction;

an IMPRINT, a mark.)

The past is etched into our eyes.

--

The future's becoming is 'hiddenness',

our memory and the knowness of our self.

And any 'visible power' is held in the memory of our past,
as held by others, as held by our bodies;

as cultivated by ourselves.

--

"If you have expectations for dinner, then you can expect disillusionment for desert."

Response to Benjamin Johnson

We are sitting in a room with no windows,

but the walls are made of glass.

I lean back, lean in, curl over, hunch forward,

    look at you.

You ask that the world see you;

How can we find ourselves in a narrative where all the narratives are made up, *made to sell?*

EVERYTHING IS NOTHING.

We live in the kingdom of now,

                         but not yet;

the paradox of human life and being.

Overwhelmed and empty of words, all I have is
'thank you for sharing'

the mind, the body, the soul.

Who is the right person?

The answer is paying

ATTENTION;

    radical, faithful openness

    of the heart.

Do you think we are listening to the music?

Perhaps this rhythm is felt, the heartbeat;

the undercurrent of redemption;

    a veil, lifted;

the horizon beyond the ruins.

Response to Cally O'Neill

The happening of being here – yesterday, tomorrow.

House fronts that look the same; the cracks

in the pavement

                    through which flowers grow

glows in the sun,

your heart – be a body,

non-violently.

To not be destructive in shared space.

The accident of finding yourself here –

the safeness of knowing

the cycles, the ebbs,

that flow into

tomorrow – we imagine the world.

It is all intuition – attention:

How do the spaces we move through teach us about being?

The Private; The Public;

shared spaces and

the courage of

being alive.

birth, death, together.

living is a common affair

which echoes, shakes, moves

in all of us.

indispensably indispensable –

    (the people who brought me here, but not me)

<u>waste</u>, *remember that the world lives on tomorrow.*

The moon, the tide, the seasons,

maybe we are indeed just parasites;

how are you trying to be anything different?

Common thinking, the people we carry with us.

What are your hopes, from the belly of the beast?

Being human means inhabiting this body means inhabiting this world: courage.

whose emotions are listened to? and

then the ones that break through the surface – the anger
of finally being heard.

the future is tomorrow but it is only today;

suburban sprawl, board meetings

    paperwork, emails, computer screens,

sunny afternoons;

chance; conversation.

time is the length of a gust of wind,

a snake. are you catching the rain?

tomorrow is leading us, but to where?

we were never meant to live a lone,

individuals – *our privilege against the environment.*

who am i to speak?

> **what is oppressing us?**

       NOTHING,   *that is the trick.*

> **what are you haunted by?**

       the wasted resources.

> **what happens when we try to exist outside of space, place and time?**

       alienation from the present.

Aotearoa New Zealand
INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Thank you for your interest in this project. Please read this information before deciding whether or not to take part. If you decide to participate, thank you. If you decide not to take part, thank you for considering my request.

Who am I?

My name is Sasha Francis and I am a Masters student in Sociology at Victoria University of Wellington. This research project is work towards my thesis.

What is the aim of the project?

This project focuses on the counter-subjective work of 8-12 Wellington-based "critical intellectuals", enabling me to examine the influence of hegemony and ideology, particularly that of neoliberalism, on the role of subjectivity, resistance, action and social change in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This thesis has three key aims. Firstly, as an investigation into contemporary counter-subjectivity work in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand, I aim to map the characteristics of counter-subjectivity work as it exists in Wellington, with particular focus on the way such work is emotionally sustained by 'workers of counter subjectivity', the visions of the future such 'work' is premised upon, and how and when individuals and groups understand such 'work' to be 'successful.' Secondly, I aim to investigate and articulate the importance of subjectivity and relationality in resistance work with particular focus on social movements and social change in response to neoliberalism. Thirdly, I hope to gesture to the interlinked ways in which disparate workers of counter-subjectivity across the Wellington-region may be united in their attempts to bring about a future that is 'other' than neoliberal.

This research has been approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committeee, application reference number 24844.

How can you help?

I have approached you to ask for your participation in this project as I believe you are a 'critical intellectual' or worker of counter-subjectivity, given your contribution to the community, your resistance of hegemony, and/or your pursuit of social change.

If you agree to take part, I will interview you in a location of your choosing. I will ask you questions that explore the work you do and your personal relationship to that work. An extended conversation guide will be provided to you prior to our meeting for your reference — this will act as a basis for our conversation, but it is unlikely that we will follow it directly. I hope our meeting can be experienced as an informal though rich conversation between two people, rather than as an explicit 'interview' between interviewee and interviewer. In this way, it is my priority to ensure that you feel the dialogue is open, respectful and spacious.

The interview will take between 1-2 hours depending on your availability. I will record the interview to be transcribed later and will take written notes during the interview. You can stop the interview at any time, without giving a reason. You will

be given an opportunity to later review and modify the interview transcript to more accurately reflect your views, or to redact parts, before they will be used in my research.

You can withdraw from the study by contacting me at any point before September 2017. If you withdraw, the information you provided will be destroyed or returned to you.

What will happen to the information you give?

The research is not confidential, and you will be named in the final report, unless you would prefer otherwise. If this is the case, please let me know by indicating this on the consent form you will be provided.

I hope to store collected data and eventually make provision to open it to your own research activities, should you feel that the data collected in this study may be something your community may profit from for many decades to come. Further, as my research is of interest to a wide range of people in New Zealand I intend to gift my data to the oral history archive in the Alexander Turnbull Library. I will follow all policies and guidelines expected for such a donation and am confident that this will contribute to a growing and important set of resources in my area of research.

What will the project produce?

The information from my research will be used in my Master's thesis. Prior to the donation of collected data to the Alexander Turnbull Library, you will be contacted regarding any further use of this material.

If you accept this invitation, what are your rights as a research participant?

You do not have to accept this invitation if you don't want to.

If you do decide to participate, you have the right to:

- choose not to answer any question;
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview;
- withdraw from the study before *[date]*;
- ask any questions about the study at any time;
- receive a copy of your interview recording (if it is recorded);
- read over and comment on a written summary of your interview;
- agree on another name for me to use rather than your real name;
- be able to read any reports of this research by emailing the researcher to request a copy.

If you have any questions or problems, who can you contact?

If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Student:
Name: Sasha Francis
Sasha.francis@vuw.ac.nz

Supervisor:
Name: Chamsy El Ojeili
Role: Programme Director
School: School of Social and Cultural Studies
Phone: 04 4636740
chamsy.el-ojeili@vuw.ac.nz

Human Ethics Committee information

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Victoria University HEC Convener: Associate Professor Susan Corbett. Email susan.corbett@vuw.ac.nz or telephone +64-4-463 5480.

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

At the edge of otherwise:
Aotearoa, New Zealand

CONSENT TO INTERVIEW

This consent form will be held for 5 years.

Researcher: Sasha Francis, School of Social and Cultural Studies, Victoria University of Wellington

- I have read the Information Sheet and the project has been explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can ask further questions at any time.

- I agree to take part in an audio interview.

I understand that:

- I may withdraw from this study at any point before November 2017, without giving any reason, and any information that I have provided will be returned to me or destroyed.

- The data collected in this research project (audio files and transcripts) will be gifted to the oral history archive in the Alexander Turnbull Library.

- The results will be used for a Masters thesis and a summary of the results may be used in future academic reports and/or presented at conferences, as I am planning an academic/research career and envisage to work on these topics for many years to come.

- I consent to information or opinions which I have given being attributed to me in any reports on this research: Yes ☐   No ☐

- I would like a copy of the transcript of my interview: Yes ☐   No ☐

- I would like a summary of my interview: Yes ☐   No ☐

- I would like to receive a copy of the final report and have added my email   Yes ☐   No ☐
  address below.

Signature of participant: _____

Name of participant: _____

Date: _____

Contact details: _____

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