

# Making meaning at the end of time

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Dear friends,

I have been necessarily pondering “end times” –conceptually a troubling thought. We’re seeing the slow motion collapse of ecology, social fabric, and empire. However, we are not seeing, as Marx and Engels infamously foretold, the end of capital concomitant with these collapses. Instead, capitalism’s hegemonic stranglehold on thought, production, ideology, community and more is ceaselessly suffocating any revolutionary potential. So powerful have the oligarchs become that alternatives are endlessly forestalled in capitalist realism.

Who voices “different” in these times? And what possible alternatives exist to create a new world, a new way, and some hope? This is what occupies my thoughts – cheery, ey?

Borrowing from some of the best of philosophy and ontology, let’s consider that time is cyclical. Imagining that the “end” of an era is, in fact, the beginning of something new. At the moment, I feel a grim and troubled modernity encapsulating the very way we speak, think and interact –bound in a deep evil, capitalism. This endless intensification of a singular mode of production, such that it has embraced a truly global exploitative and extractive way of working (ontology), feels inescapable –and that is part of the problem. If I, too, accept that capitalism is the end of humanity, then I have succumbed to capitalist realism. Instead, we need radical hope in the face of these times.

So, in practicing what I preach, let’s really think about what the future might be –the end of the world is the end of capitalism, but the end of capitalism is the beginning of something new and different. My hope is that humanity, this too often selfish, manipulated, and narcissistic being, flourishes and finds its positive transformation. Instead of negativity, social and cultural disintegration, and fatalism in capital’s grasping of ecology and economy, that rather we *collectively* wake up, pump the breaks, and seize capitalism’s fall, not as the end of ecology, but as the beginning of a new form of truly grassroots participatory democracy and change.

There is an inevitability in collapse, fatalism, capitalism, this will either lead to our collective heat death –the intensification of the already back-to-back record breaking global catastrophes, including floods, tornadoes, fires, and more that currently grip our ecology. Or, it could lead to the end of the expropriative and pathologically evil capitalist class. Redistributing resources, knowledge, and power back to the people to whom it belongs –the 99%. I hope that we are able to realise the damage that this sociopathic class enact on us every single day, and that we assert a better way. Not a new group of capitalists –but genuine distributive decision making.

This doesn’t mean, as some racists have suggested, a return to sticks, rocks and foraging –not that this is a true depiction of history, but rather a fallacy manufactured by capitalism to enable its realism. Rather, that we turn the tools of technology away from profit and instead focus on creating *globally* a better way of living. One that really embraces diversity, that finds strength and hope in human invention, and marvels at the possible. Our collective creative, inventive, and fundamentally intelligent energies turned towards survival, thriving, and lifting “all the boats” could truly see the end of expropriative capitalism.

Yes, such a thing as socialism, or anarchy, or whatever you want it to be – it could be. We could assert our values as “care for each other and for the planet” . This is our true role, and it always has been – responding to the needs of our ecology, not destroying it for profits. When we fall out of relation with place, environment, whatever you want to call it, we disconnect from each other, from reality, and allow the narcissistic, manipulative, and

despotic reign to ruin us. This needs to end - and the planet will ensure that it does. So how do you want this to go? Work to create collective change now, or give up and let the capitalists make the 99% 's lives even more impossible before they escape in Elon' s bullshit spaceships?

I think we are past due for serious collective rethinking of governance, collectivity, participation, purpose, and so on. We -the working class -need to assert something new, that cares, that values each other, that builds comradeship, before heat death. Because, I, for one, don' t want to see this beautiful planet further damaged by vanity and corporate profits. Its a fake, empty, and bullshit system. Only together can we create hope, alternative ways, and a better world. So let' s do that instead, yeah?

The task before us is always feels monumental, as does anything transformative, but it is never impossible. We can reimagine our relationship with labour, with each other, and with the planet. This reimagining requires a fundamental shift in our ontology -our way of being in relation to the earth. We can move beyond the capitalist realism that has infected our collective imagination and embrace what Gramsci might call a *new common sense* [1]. This new common sense must be rooted in solidarity, mutual aid, and ecological stewardship.

But how do we get there? How do we find the cracks in the stranglehold of capitalist hegemony? The answer, I believe, lies in praxis -the unity of theory and practice. We need to engage in what Fraser calls boundary struggles [2], challenging the artificial separations between production and reproduction, economy and ecology, that capitalism relies upon - this is not difficult, and is a project we are continuing here in partnership, you and me. This means building alternative institutions and ways of living in the here and now -or at least finding ways of thinking about the possibilities -while simultaneously working to transform existing structures.

We might look to examples like the Zapatistas in Chiapas, who created autonomous zones of democratic self-governance [3]. Or to the growing movement for a "pluriverse"-a world where many worlds fit [4]. These are not utopian fantasies, but real, lived alternatives to capitalist domination, even if they have flaws.

Crucially, as I keep harping on, such transformative projects must be intersectional. We cannot separate the struggle against capitalism from the struggles against racism, patriarchy, colonialism, and other forms of oppression. As Bhattacharya reminds us, social reproduction theory offers a way to understand how these various forms of oppression are interconnected and essential to capital' s functioning [5]. By centring social reproduction in our analysis and our organising, we *can* build a truly inclusive and liberatory movement -but will we?

The ruling class will not give up their power willingly -they fight dirty. We continuously face repression, co-optation attempts, and, of course, battle at the front lines of ecological collapse. But we have no choice but to persist. The alternative -the continuation of capitalism' s death march -is simply unacceptable, or rather "the end of humanity" (and, yes, maybe that' s not the worst thing).

So, comrades, let us embrace this moment of crisis as an opportunity for radical transformation, please? Let us build networks of solidarity and mutual aid that can weather the storms ahead. Let us create spaces of prefigurative politics where we can experiment with new forms of democratic decision-making and ecological stewardship. And let us never lose sight of the world we' re fighting for -a world of justice, equality, and harmony with nature. The end of capitalism need not be the end of the (human) world. But it will be if we don' t act. I think we could start something beautiful -if we have the courage and creativity to make it so. The future is unwritten - but it' s not looking great. We can do better.

In solidarity,

Aidan

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  2. Fraser, N. (2016). Contradictions of Capital and Care. *New Left Review*, 100, 99-117.
  3. Holloway, J., & Peláez, E. (1998). *Zapatista!: Reinventing Revolution in Mexico*. Pluto Press.
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  5. Bhattacharya, T. (Ed.). (2017). *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentring Oppression*. Pluto Press.