

**|Towards a Gender Disobedient
& Anti-Colonial Redistribution
of Violence|**



The Following text was taken from a tract delivered and handed out as part of a gathering entitled 'Who would be Free Themselves must Strike the Blow' following the 'Still I Rise' exhibition at Nottingham Contemporary. It was written originally in Portuguese by Jota Mombaça and translated by Daniel Lourenço. At the time of printing this zine an online version was not available. This zine is part of 'Bootlegs' by Down & Out Distro, a project which aims to reproduce texts from books, journals, blogs, newspapers etc and turn them into condensed and easily accessible zines (without ever editing the texts themselves). Texts have been chosen which carry themes of insurrectional transfeminisms, queer nihilism, cruelty, amoralism, insurrectional praxis, and revenge. They are presented as a 'collection' which we offer in an effort towards building intimacies/familiarities with certain emergent trajectories in insurrectional theory - in particular with regard to queer and transfeminist developments in insurrectionalism.

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|Towards a Gender Disobedient & Anti-Colonial Redistribution of Violence|

Jota Mombaca
Translated by Daniel Lourenço

*'Just because there's not a war, doesn't mean
there's peace'*

"Mystique, X-Men Apocalypse, 2016"

Scene 1_ Who Polices the Police?

C. was found strangled to death in the trunk of a vehicle belonging to the military police in Sao Paulo. The official narrative is that she had entered the trunk of her own free will, so as to steal something, and that she ended up dead. According to an online news website, the vehicle was repaired, cleaned and put back on the streets in a matter of days. No one was held accountable except C., who died of asphyxiation and had her face purple and her hands dirtied with blood when she was found, on the back of a military police vehicle, at 19 years old.

A police report was made against her.

Police in Brazil is the only criminal faction responsible for the investigation of its own crime.

Scene 2_ What is a Crime?

Vera Malaguti describes the absolutist fantasies of social control of the police in the period following the formal abolition of slavery in Brazil, so as to develop a more acute perception of today's criminal justice system. It is mainly by means of systemic control of the transit of free African people and afro-descendents that the police will start operating there, as a member of the colonial projects in its modern version, ensuring the safety of the white and mixed race elites and the terror of the impoverished and racialized communities. Racism against black and poor people is, therefore, in the DNA of various police forms and the networks of surveillance and extermination which are articulated around them. But it would not have been necessary to listen to a white academic to realize this. It wasn't today that political movements such as *Maes de Maio* or *Reaja* or *Sera Morta(o)*, as well as a series of voices implicated in black activism and organizing, began producing content, complaints and articulations so as to render visible the effective role of these racist and classist genocides in Brazilian grammars of domination.

The presence of racism as a colonial fantasy, perpetually actualized in the context of the colony's collapse, is exposed as a wound in the cities landscapes, in the density of the walls, fences, and borders. It is also exposed in the choreography of the fleshs, the intensity of the cuts and the ancestrality of scars. And all of this is quite evident, though disguised; it is patent in every emotion which can be generated under this regime. Even when the machines that unmake the meanings of conflicts and structural inequalities arbitrarily project truths whose promise is to be neutral, just and universally applicable- as well as transcendent, legal, modern, and colonial-, on what it means to be a criminal, or what security is, or how much

this world is worth to the industry of penalization, or which social markers draw the graphics of systematic, continued and neocolonial extermination, or why there are killable lives, or which bodies adorn projects of the future, or who the subjects of history are, or what catastrophe, coup, crisis, or extinction mean....

With all this in mind, what is a crime, when justice's very way of opening is inseparable from a perpetual project of actualizing injustice as a fantasy of control? What is a crime, when all that is understood under the rubrics of normalcy and legality does not cease to re-perform the presence of death as the life expectancy of entire communities, of people here and elsewhere both human and non-human?

Scene 3_ The Fictions of Power or the Power of Fictions

Power operates by means of fictions, which are not only textual, but which are materially engaged in the production of the world. The fictions of power spread along with its effects, in a funeral march celebrated as unavoidable development, progress or fate. The monopoly of violence is a fiction of power based on the promise that it is possible to create a neutral position from which to mediate conflicts. The justice system, produced by modern-colonial mentality as a policing system, seeks to neutralize social conflicts, by managing all of the tensions at the limit of a very small network of institutions and myths, which are represented as a neutral by hegemonic narratives. Besides a fiction of power, the neutrality of the justice system- which makes the monopoly of violence morally and politically plausible- is a mechanism of alienation from conflicts, which isolates the people involved in them from their own process of resolution.

Science fiction is one of the lines between fictions of power and the visionary power of fictions. If we consider the canonical speculative axis as disseminated by literature, by cinema, and by North American art in general, mostly formulated from the position of masculinity, whiteness, cisgenderedness and heterosexuality, it is understandable that we see ourselves circumscribed to the circularity of power, in a dystopic spiral which is only capable of moving us from control to even more control. The contradiction is that authors and stories which are apparently critical of the disciplinary and control society can operate so as to actualize the systems against which they write and are written. The incessant work of revealing the machinery of power, projecting it into the future or into the domain of the fantastical, thus coincides with the ungrateful task of producing such machinery, imagining it as a set of inescapable entities. The unsuspected power of fictions is that of being the cement of the world because as Walidah Imarisha and Adrienne Maree Brown- the co-editors of the anthology book *Octavia's Brood*- suggest, "we cannot build what we cannot imagine", so that all that has been built required, prior to that, being imagined. Therein resides the power of fictions.

It is not, therefore, the fictive nature of power that I am interested in confronting. Rather, I want to confront the specific fictions of power and systems of values which operate on this world's shape, and their dominant modes of actualization. On that note, the monopoly of violence has its premise to manage not only the access to the techniques, machinery and devices with which it performs legitimate violence, but also the limits of its definition. These two processes of control are mutually implicated in each other, and they engender a permanent war against visionary and divergent imaginations- that is to say: against the ability to perceive, from captivity, the appearance of

worlds in which confinement no longer oppresses us. To free the power of fictions from the totalizing dominion of the fictions of power is part of a dense process of re-articulation regarding the systemic forms of violence, one which requires a continuous work of re-imagining the world and the ways of knowing it, as well as demanding the ability to conceive of resistances and lines of flight which continue to deform the shapes of power across time.

Scene 4_ The Molecular State

The state, like the police, is moved by and with desire. When the Brazilian LGBT movement fights for the criminalization of homophobia, it is fighting, at the limit, for that desire. The desire to be protected by the police and neutralized by the state- no matter the cost. It does not take into consideration, for instance, the structural racist dimension of the prison system, the largest target of which remains black and poor people, including those whose gender and sexual positions could be understood to be within the LGBT spectrum. The investment in those normative structures as a source of comfort and security for the communities grouped under the acronym LGBT is an evident sign of the lack of intersectional political imagination within those activisms, which limit themselves to fight within a project of the world from which we have been repeatedly shut out.

The state is of tremendous proportions, but it operates through its molecules. For many years, a section of the Brazilian feminist movement fought for the Maria de Penha law, which typifies domestic violence and implements a more rigorous treatment towards those who commit that kind of crime. In 2006 , the project became a law. In 2013, the rate of crimes against women in domestic spaces was already greater by 12.5% than in 2006. The law did not manage to contain this violence, because it provided a

transcendental solution to an immanent problem. Despite its institutional aspects, violence against women, just like violence against bodies which are gender disobedient or sexually dissident in general, is rooted in a politics of desire which operates beyond the law. For this reason, when calling on the police to intervene in situations of violence of a sexist and/or transphobic-homophobic-lesbophobic-etc nature, it is common for them to act in favor of the assailant, because what organizes the police's actions is not the law, but desire- the desire in this case, to perpetuate the system which endows not only the state, but also the cisgender man, the right to manage and perform violence.

Toxic masculinity as a project of power must be taken into consideration in any discussion regarding the social distribution of violence. Male violence is a transversal weapon normalization and social control. It affects not only cisgender women, non-heterosexual, and trans bodies, but also cisgender men themselves, who must reach these ideal degrees of virility so as to fulfill the role that gender normativity requires. Meanwhile, this unequal distribution of violence- which constitutes cisgender male bodies as inherently virile- is responsible, on a micro-political scale, for the reproduction of fear as the basis on which trans, sexually dissident and female subjects relate to the world.

In one of their songs, the Paraiba-based collective Eke-Candomble Sound system[1] recounts an experience which haunts the imaginary of bichas[2], dykes, travestis and other creatures in the radical spectrum of gender disobedience and sexual dissidence, regarding the possibility of assault in public space.

[1] Eke- Candomble Sound System is a Paraiba-based collective which works on the intersection between music, performance and design, producing radical critical content from their position as black, Northeastern Bichas. The song referred to here is available at: <https://youtube.com/watch?v=oOvRDxRGPh&feature=youtube>, and the collective's work can be followed through their Facebook page: EKe- <https://www.facebook.com/Ek%C3%A9-25177767849066/?fref=ts>.

[2] Translator's note: here, under the author's own advice, the word "bicha: a derogatory word for a non-heterosexual and effeminate people who are assigned male at birth with some parallels to english terms such as "queer" or "faggot", is left in the original as an acknowledgement of the specific sexual and gender politics of the reclaiming of bicha as a rubric of identity in contemporary Brazilian activist, academic and affective contexts.

The Lyrics go:

Praca da Alegria
One bicha, eight machos
Praca da Alegria
One Bicha, eight machos

Coming back home
Painted nails
Tiger Shorts
Earing in my ear
Eyeliner in my eye
One bicha, eight machos

Stick strikes
Stone strikes
Glass Shattered
Stick strikes

Stone strikes
Glass Shattered
Brick strikes
Stone strikes
Push push
Macho-ness
Macho-ness

One bicha, eight machos
Full of hatred
Against bichas
Little queers
Dykes
Butches
Travestis
Trans women
Trans men
Cis women

The macho who beats us is all the same
The macho who beats us is all the same

Listening to these lyrics, one might certainly object that they reproduce an essential image of cis masculinity, and that this should be interrogated when taking into account advances made in debates regarding gender and sexuality. This critique- though it may hold some pertinence- seems, nonetheless, to throw a veil of smoke over that which Eke's lyrics seek to expose: "machoness[3]" (one of the names of toxic masculinity) as a fiction of power. "The macho that beats us all is the same one" because the figure of the macho, as a tool of social normalization, ensures that the positions of cisgender masculinity have access to legitimated violence- which should not be understood, in this context, as legal violence, but as forms of violence which are thinkable and plausible within the system of distribution of violence in which we are implicated.

Scene 5_ Pure Violence as a Global Design

A few weeks ago, there was a video being shared through my Facebook timeline. In it, a travesti bled on the floor of a public hospital after being stabbed. She screamed "Please, don't let me die now". No one came to her aid. Instead, another woman (a cisgender woman) beat her face while someone filmed the entire situation with a video camera. Public beatings, medical omission, spectacularization of death, naturalization of social extinction, genocide, processes of systemic exclusion and violence which make up the daily life of many trans people, as well as dykes, bichas and other sexually dissident and gender disobedient bodies, especially those which are racialized and impoverished. All of these forms of violence and brutality are in fact part of a global design, which seeks to define what it means to be violent, who has the power to do so, and against which kinds of bodies violence may be exercised without causing damage to social normalcy. In the context of this global design, violence is managed so as

[3] Translator's note: "machulencia" in the original.

to be deadly for many and profitable and/or pleasurable for a few. In the context of this global design, violence follows a program and operates in favor of a power project which is attached to heteronormativity, cis-supremacy, neo-colonialism, racism, sexism and white supremacy as regimes of exception.

From my own perspective, as a racialized, fat and non-binary *bicha* from the periphery of the Brazilian Northeast, it is impossible to deny the impact of this distribution of violence as a threat to my everyday life. Simply walking down the street, can be a difficult event, when your clothes are considered "inappropriate" and your very presence is understood as offensive, just because of how you act or present yourself. The risk of becoming part of the horrifying statistics regarding anti-bicha (and anti trans, anti north-eastern, anti-black...) violence in Brazil is a constant, and it is not fair that we alone- who take on as an ethics of existence disobedience to social normalcy, or who are simply poorly positioned in the "human rights of the right humans" ranking- have to deal with this risk. The redistribution of violence is a practical demand when we are dying alone and without any kind of reparation, be it from the state or from organized society. The redistribution of violence is a social justice project in a full state of emergency, and it should be performed by those for whom peace has never been an option.

Scene 6_ The Redistribution of Violence

The basic premise of this proposal is that violence is socially distributed, there being nothing anomalous about the way it intervenes in society. It is all part of a world-making project, of a policy of termination and normalization, guided by racist, sexist, classist, and cis-supremacist principles of differentiation, among others. To

re-distribute violence within this context is a confrontational gesture, but also one of self-care. It has nothing to do with declaring war. It is, rather, a matter of sharpening the blade so as to better inhabit a war was declared behind our backs, a war which is structural for the supposed peace of this world, and which is waged against us. After all, these necro-political cartographies of terror in which we are capture are the very condition of the (private, social and ontological) security of the very few people who hold a fully human status in the world.

Scene 6.1_Naming the Norm

I now address the whites- white men, as well as all white people- whose whiteness is not so much a color as a way of understanding themselves and organizing life itself; a particularly privileged inscription in the history of power and a form of presence in the world: we will infiltrate your dreams and upset your balance.

To straight people, whose hetrosexuality is continuous to the political regime of sexual homogeneity, termination of sub normal desires and genocide of devious corporealities, I would like to say: we will penetrate your families, mess up your genealogies and fuck up your fictions of lineage.

To each cisgender person who looks at his or herself as the norm, and then looks at the world and perceives it as a mirror of their own, I leave the following note: we will de-naturalize your nature, break all of your rules and hack into your informatics of domination.

And, finally, I address all of the wealthy, those whose class positions ensure them privileged access to forms of comfort, foods, knowledge, possibilities and structures of reproduction of injustice and economic inequality as a

paradigm of social organization: we will invade your houses, set your cars on fire, stone your malls and banks, swear at your police forces, curse your safety, empty your fridge and mock your illusions of ontological comfort.

Naming the norm is the first step towards a gender disobedient and anti-colonial redistribution of violence, because the norm is that which is not named, and that is its privilege. Not being marked is what ensures the privileged (normative) position, its principle of non-interrogation, that is to say: its ontological comfort, its ability to perceive itself as a norm and the world as its mirror. As opposed to that, "the other"- as a diagram of images of alterity which shape the margins of the identity projects of "normal" subjects- is hyper marked, incessantly translated by the analytics of power and of raciality, simultaneously invisible as a subject and exposed as an object. Naming the norm means returning that interpellation and forcing the normal to confront itself, to expose the regimes that maintain it, to mess up the logic of its privilege, to intensify its crises and break down its dominant, controlling ontology.

Scene 6.2_Fantasies of Effeminate Violence

One of the effects of the monopoly over violence, as I have tried to demonstrate, is not only an affective control of access to the techniques, tools and mechanisms to perform it, but also control over the limits of its definition= which precipitates, for instance, the representation of the police's constraining and racist check-up (baculejos) as a security issue, and of the powerful critiques made by black people about whiteness' dissimulate institutional violence in Brazil as aggressibility- and, besides that, over the limits of what is thinkable as violence. Thus, it is perfectly common for us to be bombarded with imagery and narratives of violence

performed by cis men, and many of the social processes of elaboration of masculinity imply an apprenticeship in virility that tends to become indistinguishable from the monopoly over violence, making it not only imaginable but in fact likely that the violence which is thinkable always comes from that position[4].

As a result of this, the simple imaginary invocation of other forms of violence is already invested with a disruptive effect over that grammar, which seeks to ensure the stability of representation of male violence through a negative parallel with effeminate positions- cis women, *bichas*, *travestis*, and other corporealities marked as feminine and represented as necessarily fragile and passive in relation to violence.

In June 2013, I released a song- under the moniker MC Katrina- called "Eu sou passiva, mas meto bala[5]", addressed to the evangelical pastors and believers whose religious practice directly results in the reproduction of movements of hatred and control towards lives which are not adherent to the strict morality proclaimed by their religions. From the get-go, the song also advances a divergent representation of violence, centered on the idea that bicha who is a bottom can also, and in fact does, resist the violent interpellations and movements of cishetronormativity. At the time, the MP/pastor Feliciano had put in motion the Gay Cure project, to which Mc Katrina replies:

[4] It is important to underline that, though this system of distribution of violence to a certain extent privileges the position of cis masculinity, there are always devastating political effects for men- especially black men- as a result of that. We must keep in mind that from an intersectional perspective, the deaths of cis men and boys as a result of the action of the state's police forces make up part of a necro-political regime of social distribution of violence to which this project of anti-colonial re-distribution of violence intends to respond.

[5] Translators note: please note the wordplay of this sentence in Portuguese, which can either be translated as "I'm a bottom, but i'll shoot" or "I'm passive, but I'll shoot"

*Infeliciano[6]
says that bichisse[7] has a cure
but if he comes to cure me
he's the one who'll get a beating
I'm a bottom
who's violent
I'm armed
and I'll shoot
this is a declaration of war
from the third world's bichas*

After these lines, a sample of Pedra Costa can be heard speaking the sentence by the Ludditas Sexxxuales[8], "If we cannot be violent, it is not our revolution". If we cannot be violent, we will not be able to unmake the prisons and limits imposed on our experiences as an effect of the hetronormative, white, sexist, and cis-supremacist social distribution of violence. If we cannot be violent, our communities are doomed to the reiterated assault on our strength, health, freedom and potential. If we cannot be violent, we will continue to be haunted by the politics of fear instituted as a norm against us. If we cannot be violent, we will concentrate on our own bodies, affects and collectivities the deadly weight of normalizing violence. And to learn to perform our own violence, we will also need to be able to imagine it, and to people it with visionary fantasies which reject the way things are as well as daring

[6] Translators note: here, MC Katrina is playing on the names "Feliciano's" relationship to the word "feliz", meaning happy in Portuguese. By dubbing him "Infeliciano", MC Katrina insinuates he is an unhappy- or, more properly, an unfortunate figure.

[7] Translators note: a made-up noun corresponding to "bicha", roughly formally equivalent to "queerness"'s correspondence with "queer" in the English language.

[8] Ludditas Sexxuales [translators note: Sexual Luddites, with an alternative spelling] is a collective based in Argentina responsible for the book *Etica amatoria del deso libertario y las afectaciones libres y alegres* [Amatory ethics of libertarian desire and free and joyful affections] (Milena Caserola, 2012) and for a series of zines, posts and radical queer and feminist texts, including the one where Pedra Costa's sentence can be found: <http://luddismosexxual.blogspot.com.br/2013/03/nosotras-decimos-anarquia-si-no-podemos.html>.

to conjure, here and now, a presence which is capable of striking back at our aggressors, of killing our assassins and of escaping alive so as to reshape our world.

Scene 6.3_Self Defense Training

There are plenty of ways of training in and thinking of self-defense. On a first level, there is physical training and its impacts on the body- but not all bodies train the same way. We must, in this process of subaltern re-appropriation of the techniques of violence, know how to recognize the ways in which each body elaborates its own capacity for self-defense. Part of this work thus consists in a radical shift of perception.

We are taught not to react to the violence which interpellated us at the same time we are bombarded by threats and narratives of brutality against us. In this sense, the project of re-distributing violence depends on us believing our own capacity for self-defense and, starting from there, our changing our posture regarding the world. It is fundamental for us to abandon the position of victim- even when the state, the police, the white person and the cis man have historically demonstrated their inability to abandon the position of aggressor. There is no way out other than accepting once and for all that we have been inscribed within an open war against our existence, and that the only way of surviving is to actively fight for our lives.

Yes, we are potentially frail, but that should not be understood as an inability or ineptitude for self-defense. To learn how defend oneself requires the articulation of other ways of understanding one's own frailty. There are strategies, techniques and tools which only a corporeality and a subjectivity able to inhabit frailty may come to

develop. Self-defense isn't just about striking back, but also about understanding your own limits and developing exit strategies, so as to flee when necessary. It is also about learning to read the choreographies of violence and studying ways of intervening upon them. It is about painting through fear and dealing with indisputable condition of not having peace as an option.

Scene 6.4 Redistribution of Violence as Self-care

What kinds of ethics should we elaborate so as to embrace our own violence without subsequently re-structuring the global design of pure violence against which we organize? what modalities of political care should we generate so as to heal the wounds that violence- both the one perpetrated against us, and our own- produces on us? Questions such as these are not separate from the political process of re-distributing violence, since it is not a case of merely claiming for a cultivation of force which replicates the ignorance- the very frailty- that characterizes the performances and fictions of power.

Nor is it a matter of holding on to a rigid notion of justice making, which always departs from the same suppositions and is calculated from a supposed stability of conflicts and, subsequently, of the political responses we produce from them. Redistribution of violence- so as not to be confused with a process of generalizing violence- should be committed to an ethics which sees justice as a mutant entity which is contextual and provisional, and which accepts from the get-go that there is no safe response to conflicts and questions so paradoxical, complex and unlikely as the ones we deal with.

No one goes through violence unscathed, and all of us who

have been the object of violence and injustice in our lives are well aware of that. Violence creates marks, it implicates itself in lives- it is not a simple event, it is always complex and multidimensional, and thus requires care. As such, so that they are not confused with a loss of sensitivity, it is necessary to articulate the processes of re-distributing violence by departing from the principle that it is as fundamental to embrace your own violence as it is to become responsible for it.

Scene 7_The End of the World as We Know It

In the first part of the book *The wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) claims that decolonization is a project of total disorder, given that it has as its radical horizon the destruction of all the regimes, structures and political effects inaugurated by colonization. It is not a matter of finding a consensus, adjusting the world and conforming colonial difference withing a peaceful arrangement. The colonial situation allows for no conciliation, because it is always already asymmetrical: it is founded on the colonizer's violence against colonized peoples, and is sustained by the establishment and continuity of a fundamental hierarchy, within which the colonized can only exist beneath the colonizer. There is therefore no possible negotiation or reform. The struggle for decolonization is always a struggle for the abolition of the point of view of the colonizer, and consequently, it is a struggle for the end of the world- the end of a world. End of the world as we know it. As it was given to us to be known- a world devastated by the creative destruction of capitalism, ordered by white supremacy, normalized by cisgenderedness as a regulatory ideal, reproduced by hetronormativity, governed by the sexist ideal of silencing women and the feminine, and actualized by the colonality of power; a world of controlling reason, of an unequal

distribution of violence, of a systemic genocide of the racialized, impoverished, indigenous and trans populations- among so many others.

The apocalypse seems to be, at this point in time, the only reasonable political demand. However, it is necessary to separate it from the urge to predict what will follow it. Certainly, if there is a world to come, it is being contested now- however, we must resist the controlling desire to project, from the ruin of this one, what may be of the coming world. That does not imply abdicating the responsibility of imagining and conjuring forces which inhabit that dispute and which are able to cross the apocalypse, towards and unknown future. Quite on the contrary: resisting projective desire is a bet on the possibility of evading the capture of our visionary imagination by the reactive powers of the world against which we struggle. Refusing to provide alternative is not, therefore, a rejection of imagination, but a gesture in the struggle to make of imagination not a mere means for re-centering man and restructuring universalizing power, but a decolonial force, which liberates the coming world from the traps of the ending world.

Postscript_This Here is a Barricade!

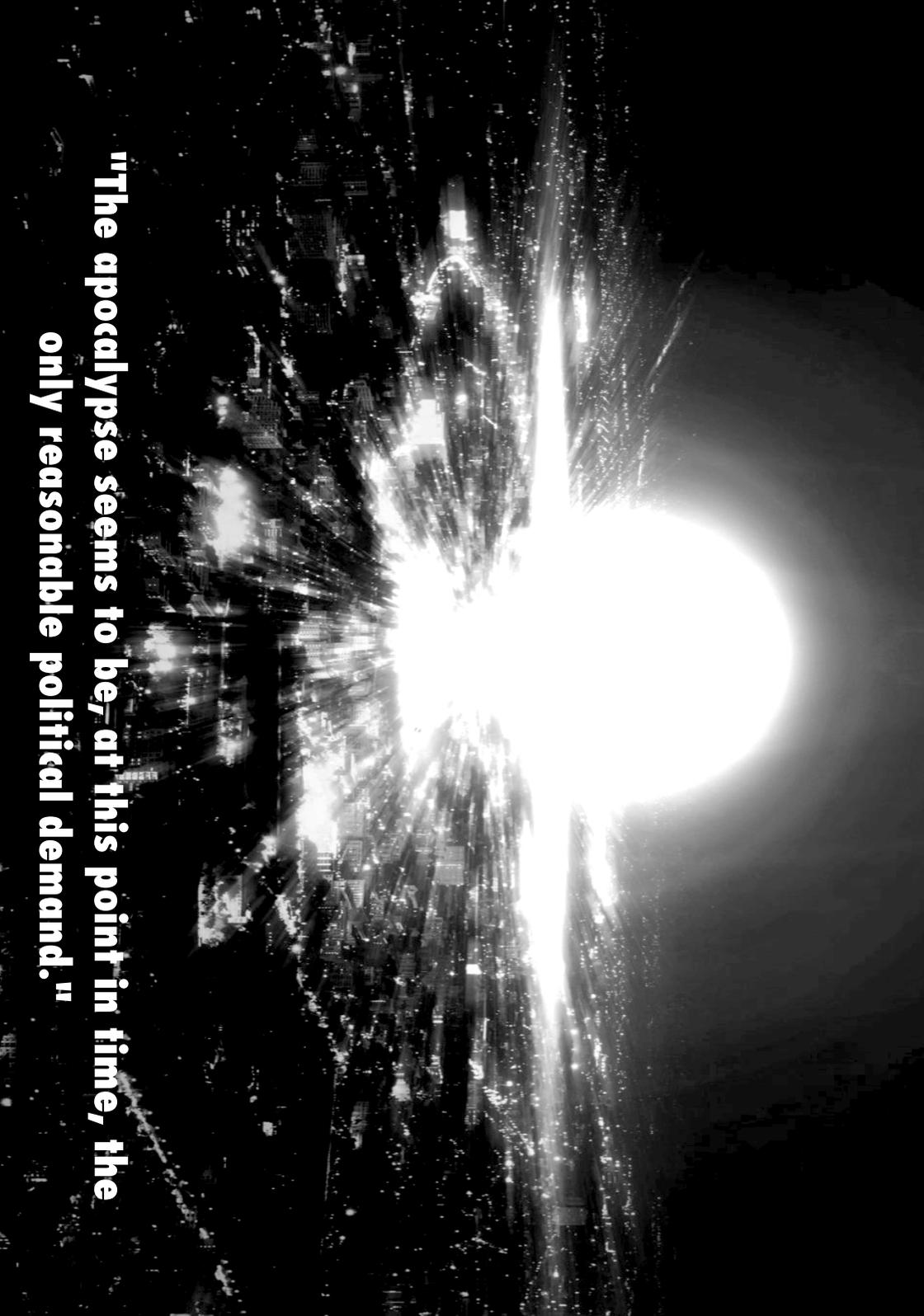
There is no solution. The redistribution of violence is not able to stop the deadly machine made up of police forces, toxic masculinities and all the fictions of power. It is but one of the many ways to deal with the problem without neutralizing it. The redistribution of violence is not capable of avenging deaths, redeeming suffering, turning the game around and changing the world. There is no salvation. This here is a barricade! Not a bible.



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"The apocalypse seems to be, at this point in time, the only reasonable political demand."