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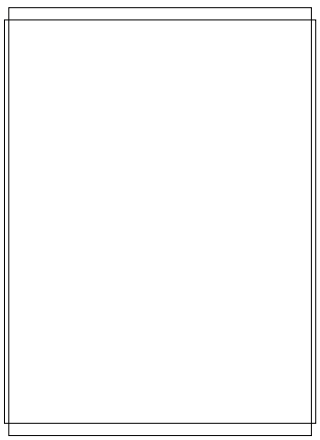

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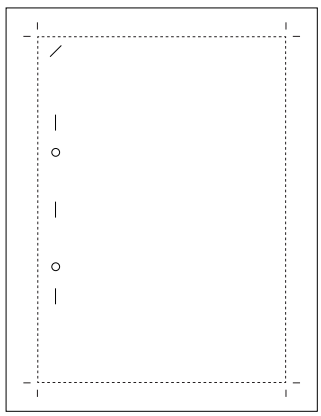

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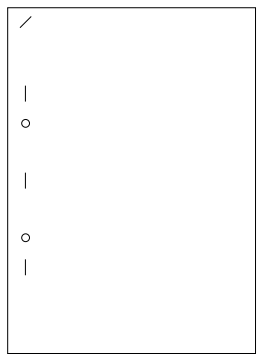

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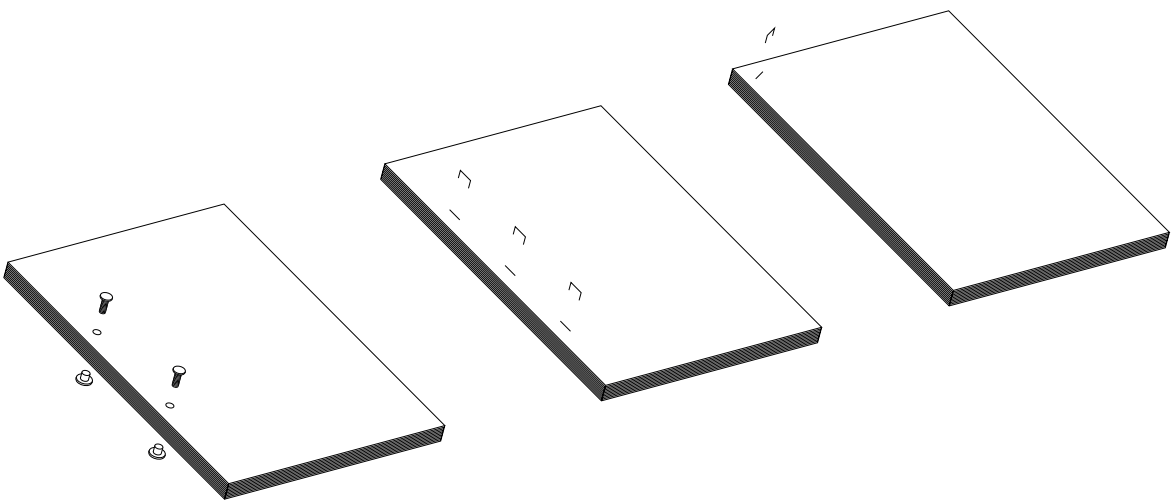

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| (1) PAPER SIZE | use A4 (210 x 297 mm) or US Letter (215.9 x 279.4 mm) |
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issue #000

ASHLEY DAWSON

# The Art of Articulation

DISPATCHES JOURNAL


Totem pole carved by House of Tears Carvers; an ever-growing stone altar initiated by members of the Ramapough Lenape Nation and added to by members of the public contributing stones and prayers for the water; and videos and graphics that map the fossil fuel ecosystem—encompassing land, energy, economics and culture.

This essay discusses the exhibit *Kwel' Hoy!: Many Struggles, One Front*, a collaborative art installation featuring a sixteen-foot totem pole created by the House of Tears Carvers of the Lummi Nation in northern Washington State and southern British Columbia. The exhibit was the product of a collaboration between the Lummi and The Natural History Museum, a mobile and pop-up museum founded by composed of a collective of radical artist-activists. *Kwel' Hoy!* appeared in different forms in two natural history museums in the eastern US during the 2017–18 year, helping uplift Indigenous leadership and movements whose activities center around protecting land, water, and our collective future. The exhibition focused on connecting communities on the frontlines of the environmental crisis with movements fighting fossil fuel expansion projects. In this essay I argue that the collaboration between members of the Lummi Nation, The Natural History Museum, and museums and conservation organizations in Pennsylvania and New Jersey intersects with broader struggles to mobilize cultural institutions in the fight against extreme extraction. Museums are a key site in this regard: they see more visitors annually than sporting events and theme parks combined. Although museums have historically served to legitimate racist colonial classifications of the world and its peoples, today they are far from monolithic, and are being placed under increasing pressure by current events and by climate justice activists, who push them to serve the public interest rather than the ecocidal perspectives and policies of the oligarchs who all too often populate their boards. *Kwel' Hoy!* offers an instance of what I term the art of articulation: artist-activists using ideological fissures within dominant institutions to crack open and realign them, thereby forging connections among cultural institutions, front-line communities fighting for climate justice, and activist scientists seeking to mobilize natural science for the public good. The *Kwel' Hoy!* exhibit is exemplary in its strategic effort to create rhizomatic links between diverse constituencies who can be mobilized to fight fossil capitalism, and in its determination to alert large segments of the public that a just transition beyond extractivism is possible.

## Capitalism's Organic Crisis and Populist Extractivism

Contemporary capitalism is in the throes of a deep crisis. In order to make sense of the horrors of the present, we can turn back to another period of extreme counterrevolution. Writing after the Fascist seizure of power in Italy during the 1920s and 1930s, the revolutionary Antonio Gramsci argued that his society had experienced an organic crisis, a comprehensive convulsion wherein the various parts of the social order refused to cohere, which generated a breakdown of social consensus. For

Gramsci, this organic crisis encompassed not only the economic and political elements of society, but also the entirety of the social and cultural terrain. Capitalist societies, Gramsci argued, are prone to such periodic crises of hegemony. Indeed, writing about the clashes of the 1970s that led to the rise of neoliberalism, British radical Stuart Hall described the way in which an organic crisis ramifies across society, sparking what he called "debates about fundamental sexual, moral and intellectual questions ... a whole range of issues which do not necessarily appear ... to be articulated with politics."[1]

Since the ruling classes are unable to resolve the multiple contradictions that provoke an organic crisis, such a breakdown is also—and above all—an opportunity to assert a new set of values and orientations for society. These new values are not always progressive, let alone revolutionary. Indeed, the contemporary rise of authoritarian populist movements around the world, from Trumpism in the US to the constitutional coup against Dilma Rousseff in Brazil, is an expression of the contemporary organic crisis of capitalism: the economic and social orthodoxies that have held sway for years are bankrupt. After nearly four decades of neoliberalism unchained, years during which dominant political parties of all stripes accepted the necessity of austerity, global deregulation, and flagrant giveaways to multinational corporations, popular discontent has flared, unseating members of the political establishment and leading to a right-wing surge that is grounded in the ginning up of overt white supremacy, sexism, and homophobia. This naked bigotry is combined with a fresh round of tax cuts for the plutocrats, producing an unwieldy assemblage that will generate neither the economic nor ideological stability longed for by its adherents.

The scapegoating of immigrants and other marginalized social groups is a tried-and-true tactic of popular authoritarianism, a strategy employed since the beginning of the conservative counterrevolution in the 1970s to galvanize public support for administrations ruled by and for the one percent.[2] The rhetoric of figures like Reagan and Thatcher, for example, suggested that the economic and social crises roiling people's lives in this period were not the product of a dysfunctional capitalist system, but rather the result of lawless ethnic and sexual minorities and the liberal permissiveness that abetted their disruptive behavior. Over the last four decades, bigotry, law and order rhetoric, and heavy-handed repression have gone hand in hand with the dismantling of the redistributive elements of the post-1945 welfare state and a massive upward redistribution of wealth. Contemporary figures such as Trump and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil have revived and intensified this toxic stew of tactical scapegoating

and class warfare. To it they have fatefully added an ecocidal populist extractivism. Bolsonaro has, for example, promised to mow down much of the Amazon in the name of national development.[3] Trump, for his part, has pledged to "bring back coal" and to promote American energy dominance, promises that have resonated with not only the coal bosses and oiligarchs but also with sectors of the US labor movement, which has supported his greenlighting of the Keystone XL pipeline.[4]

But Trump's America First Energy Plan dooms the planet. Even the notoriously pro-fossil fuel International Energy Agency (IEA) has concluded that "the world has so many existing fossil fuel projects that it cannot afford to build any more polluting infrastructure without busting international climate change goals."[5] As Fatih Birol, director of the IEA, bluntly put it during the launch of the think tank's *World Energy Outlook 2018,* "We have no room to build anything that emits CO2." Today's organic crisis thus has an ecological dimension. Vast swaths of our planet are becoming literally too hot and dry for human beings to endure. Weather- and climate-related disasters are intensifying, with typhoons and hurricanes killing scores of people and inflicting unprecedented economic damage. Last October, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's *Global Warming of 1.5° C* report issued a clarion call for rapid transition: "Pathways limiting global warming to 1.5°C with no or limited overshoot would require rapid and far-reaching transitions in energy, land, urban and infrastructure (including transport and buildings), and industrial systems."[6] The IPCC report made it clear that contemporary capitalism will experience an intensifying breakdown of the environmental systems upon which it depends unless dramatic political action of the kind that elites have refused to engage in is taken very soon.

## The Art of Articulation

What would it be like to think about winning? What strategies can movements fighting against capitalism's pillaging of society and the planet adopt in order to overcome popular authoritarianism and win power? For far too long, the Left has ducked such questions.[7] But in order to reverse capital's headlong sprint towards planetary ecocide, radicals will have to knit the diverse movements resisting popular authoritarianism together into a force capable of vying for power at various political scales. They will also have to forge solidarities between committed cadres of activists and those broad swaths of the population that are increasingly disaffected with the status quo. In order to do so, radicals must challenge longstanding traditions of elitism on the Left and among artist-activists. Take Situationism, for example. One of the major inspirations

for the Global Justice Movement and affiliated efforts in the art world in the 1990s and after, Situationism, as theorized by figures like Guy Debord and Raoul Vaneigem, consisted of creative and often hilarious but nonetheless piecemeal assaults on what was perceived as the passivity and tedium of life in post-1945 capitalist societies.[8] Underlying these tactical assaults was a wholesale denunciation of consumer society, which was represented in totalizing terms as homogeneous and utterly alienating. Postwar social democracy and the Keynesian welfare state were accordingly seen not so much as hard-fought victories to be built on but as forms of co-optation that helped consolidate a stultifying consumerism. This left little room for any kind of political transformation short of a full-scale proletarian revolution. Until the revolution, all that one could do was engage in isolated acts of symbolic dissent.

In contrast with the work of the Situationists, many thinkers of the New Left saw society not as a totality but rather as an amalgam constituted by complex and contingent configurations of elements. The key was to figure out how to break apart the current consensus and reimagine a more just arrangement. From Deleuze and Guattari to Foucault, Laclau and Mouffe, and Stuart Hall, a broad array of thinkers conceived of capitalist social and cultural formations as the outcome of relatively contingent processes of *articulation* and *assemblage*. For example, in *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, Ernesto Laclau described Plato's allegory of the cave in terms of a theory of articulation: "Common sense discourse, doxa" Laclau wrote, "is presented as a system of misleading articulations in which concepts do not appear linked by inherent logical relations, but are bound together simply by connotative or evocative links which custom and opinion have established between them.... Knowledge presupposes, then, an operation of rupture: a disarticulation of ideas from those connotative domains to which they appear linked in the form of a misleading necessity, which enables us subsequently to reconstruct their true articulations."[9] The task of anti-capitalists, then, is to rupture or disarticulate the existing common sense (or figure out where the contradictions of the system have already produced such ruptures), and then reconstruct ideas in a manner that serves the political struggle for social justice.

In developing their theories of articulation and disarticulation, Laclau and other New Left thinkers were drawing on the work of Antonio Gramsci. Indeed, Gramsci's theory of organic crisis is an effort to understand how the dominant order cracks apart under the weight of capitalism's contradictions. After the failure of proletarian movements in Italy and other Western European capitalist nations, Gramsci rethought the reductive

social theories of leaders like Lenin, giving future revolutionaries a toolbox for building counterpower. In *Two Tactics of Social Democracy*, Lenin emphasized the need to create a "single will" between the peasantry and the proletariat but paid little attention to how these connections might be generated from within the groups in question. Seeing "the masses" as "backward and ignorant," Lenin argued that a vanguard party needed to forge alliances between groups whose identities remained fixed and static.[10] By contrast, writing in 1926 following the dissolution of factory council movements in industrial cities like Turin, Milan, and Genova in Northern Italy, Gramsci sought to understand how these movements might have built connections with the peasantry in Southern Italy, who at the time were occupying large estates and uncultivated lands.[11] Key to Gramsci's assessment was the refusal of soldiers recruited from rural Sardinia to attack the workers occupying factories in Turin. For Gramsci, this subaltern solidarity—forged in the face of immense geographical and cultural differences—was produced by a recognition of common oppression. The alliance Gramsci witnessed unfolding in Turin suggested broader possibilities for articulating a common front between the peasantry of Southern Italy and the industrial workers of the North, one that might challenge the nationalist rhetoric of the Fascists by emphasizing solidarities born out of a shared fight against exploitative elites.

Gramsci's astute analysis of the challenges of political mobilization in a time of conservative counterrevolution has much to say to radicals today. The key question of our time is how to defeat a popular authoritarianism whose lineage traces directly back to the Fascist forces Gramsci confronted. Moreover, the questions he addressed concerning the building of solidarities among political groups with very different geographical and cultural backgrounds are remarkably relevant to the present. How can we link diverse frontline communities, such as Indigenous groups who have taken the lead in protecting land and water in rural areas, with urban environmental justice groups that are challenging the disproportionate presence of toxic facilities in communities of color? Further, what stories can we tell and which institutions can we mobilize in order to generate solidarities between those on the frontlines of climate crisis (in both the Global North and South) and the broader publics in wealthy countries, most of whom are not yet deeply impacted by the climate crisis but are nonetheless aware of the hair-raising scientific assessments of it? How can we generate solidarities between people across national borders at a time of rampant xenophobia and racism? And, informing all of the previous questions, how can we rearticulate dominant neoliberal narratives that have inculcated a gloomy sense that the default

state of human relations is a war of everyone against everyone else?[12] For many decades, the Left has had its own version of this nihilistic perspective, championing subaltern and fugitive knowledge but holding little hope of overcoming neoliberal hegemony. The insight that the dominance of reactionary forces does not obliterate cultures and acts of resistance is certainly a valuable one, but history has returned us with the greatest urgency to the question of how to articulate these counter-knowledges into a bloc that can take on and defeat popular authoritarianism. Since we are faced with the prospect of planetary ecocide, all of our thinking must center on cracking open vulnerable institutions, exploiting and even producing crises of hegemony, and articulating new, unexpected, and potent solidarities to revive our capacity to shut down fossil capitalism in order to care for one another and the planet.

## *Kwel' Hoy!: Many Struggles, One Front*

For the last seven years, members of the Lummi Nation have been traveling on Totem Pole Journeys to unite communities on the frontlines of the environmental crises generated by unsustainable fossil fuel projects. The totem poles, which are created by master carver Jewell Praying Wolf James and the House of Tears carvers, are part of a Lummi tradition of carving and delivering totem poles to areas struck by disaster or in need of hope and healing. Seven years ago, the Lummi Nation faced its own potential disaster: the proposed Gateway Pacific Terminal, the largest coal export facility in North America, was slated to open on tribal lands at Cherry Point, known in the Lummi tongue as Xwe'chi'eXen. Rail lines running from Wyoming and Montana through Idaho, eastern Washington, along the Columbia River Gorge, and then up the coast of Puget Sound would connect to the coal port, where bulk cargo carriers would arrive to ship the coal through the Salish Sea and across the Pacific to Asia. In 2012, the Lummi Nation formally declared their opposition to the project, which they concluded would result in "significant, unavoidable, and unacceptable interference" with treaty rights and "irreversible and irretrievable damage" to Lummi spiritual values. As Lummi Councilman Jay Julius put it, in opposing the proposed coal port, "'*Kwel hoy'*: 'We draw the line.'"[13]

In September 2013, the Lummi Nation launched the *Kwel hoy'* Totem Pole Journey to oppose the Gateway Pacific Terminal project. The journey began in the Powder River Basin, a region which supplies roughly forty percent of the coal consumed in the US. The totem pole followed the coal train route through Indian country up to Xwe'chi'eXen and then continued on to British Columbia, where it was placed in the

homeland of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, demonstrating unity with the Canadian First Nations' position opposing the transport of tar sands by pipelines across their territories. There, the totem pole was met by members of First Nations who had traveled from all directions to reinforce the message of *Kwel hoy'*. As the Lummi Nation states, one primary goal of the 1,700-mile long Totem Pole Journey was "to connect tribal nations along the coal corridor."[14] But the Lummi are clear that the coal port proposal had dire implications not only for the sacred landscapes and treaty rights of Tribal Nations, but for all of the communities in the region. The rallying cry of *Kwel hoy'*, they argue, brings together the Peoples of the West, whose "communities, commerce, livelihoods, public health, tourism, agriculture, fisheries, air and water safety, natural resources, quality of life would all be adversely impacted." The journey of the totem pole thus helps forge precisely the kinds of solidarities that Gramsci argued for, linking groups separated not just by geography but also by longstanding cultural traditions of settler colonialism and racism. By bringing "cowboys and Indians" together, *Kwel hoy'* generated a new collectivity—the Peoples of the West—who stood together in opposition to the environmental despoliation of fossil capitalism.

Produced by Freddie Lane, a member of the Lummi Nation Tribal Council and a videographer, and Jason Jones of The Natural History Museum, *From the Ancestors to the Grandchildren* insists that in addition to linking disparate communities in a common struggle, the totem pole journey also identifies connections across time. The video documents a process of temporal articulation that links the Lummi activists of today to their ancestors, who have bequeathed important knowledge about how to maintain sustainable relations with the natural world. These connections across time in turn link the ancestors and warriors of today to future generations, whose fate will be determined by actions in the present. This rearticulation of temporality ruptures the time-order of contemporary capitalism, which is organized around a homogeneous, empty, and eternal present in which the sole claim to meaning is derived from feckless accumulation through various forms of extreme extraction.[15] Rearticulating time challenges the neoliberal dictum that "there is no alternative" (to the present state of affairs). In addition, the totem pole journey and the Indigenous traditions that animate it also make connections between humans and other living creatures visible in what artist-activist Subhankar Banerjee calls "a struggle for multi-species justice."[16] As Freddie Lane puts it in his voiceover to the video, "The road that leads to death is not an option. The world is not made up of dead objects, resources to be burned. From the

ancestors to our grandchildren, we draw the line."

This line has come to extend across the North American continent. In the spring of 2018, the Lummi Nation and their allies brought a totem pole to New Jersey, where communities faced threats related to those that catalyzed the original *Kwel Hoy'* journey. The Marcellus Shale formation, which stretches through western New York and Pennsylvania down to West Virginia, is the biggest natural gas field in the US, and one of the largest in the world.[17] With the advent of hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," in the late 1990s, massive quantities of "natural gas" or methane became relatively easy to exploit. The US is now awash in fracked gas, but all that fossil gas has to be shipped out of rural areas like western Pennsylvania to cities along the coast and to Europe and Asia, where prices for fossil gas are far higher. This has led to a frenzy of fossil infrastructure construction in states such as Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York, whose governor signed a ban on fracking but has been more than willing to greenlight pipeline projects. Though the oil industry has assured the public that the pipelines are safe, abundant evidence suggests the opposite. In addition to their frequently leaking and exploding,[18] the pipelines also feature "compressor stations" that belch endocrine-disrupting and cancer-causing chemicals like formaldehyde into the air.[19] In reaction to the massive buildout of fossil infrastructure in the Northeast, communities across states such as New York and New Jersey have mobilized in opposition to these toxic projects.[20]

In 2014, the aptly named Pilgrim Pipeline Holdings development company announced plans to construct a pair of pipelines that would stretch from Albany, New York to Linden, New Jersey, running straight through the territory of the Ramapough Lenape Nation, a group of Munsee-speaking Indigenous people native to the highlands around Mahwah, New Jersey. Two-hundred thousand barrels of crude Bakken shale oil were projected to flow through the pipelines each day, endangering water supplies for one of the most populous regions in the US. Inspired by protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline, which drew thousands of people to Standing Rock, North Dakota, in 2016, the Ramapough mobilized in reaction to this threat to their land and ancestral sacred sites, organizing the Split Rock Sweetwater Prayer Camp along the Ramapo River to resist the Pilgrim Pipeline. Although the Ramapough Nation's stand against the pipeline was embattled—with the local township penalizing the tribe for raising tepees that allegedly violated zoning regulations—their fight has drawn the support of activists in the area as

well as coverage in the national press.[21]

In late April of 2018, leaders from Lummi Nation joined members of the Ramapough Lenape Nation to support the latter's tribe's efforts to stop the proposed Pilgrim Pipeline from threatening water and sacred sites.[22] Alongside them were local residents, activists, and scientists from the New York and New Jersey area who are also fighting local pipelines. The protests included the placement of a totem pole and a blessing ceremony on Ramapough land, both of which were also part of *Kwel' Hoy: Many Struggles, One Front*, a traveling exhibition organized by the Lummi Nation and The Natural History Museum that drew attention to the efforts of communities across the country to fight the buildout of fossil fuel infrastructure. Following the blessing ceremony on Ramapough land, the *Kwel' Hoy* exhibition opened at the Watershed Institute, an organization located just south of Princeton, New Jersey, that is devoted to conservation, education, scientific research, and environmental policy advocacy. According to the institution, the totem pole helped "connect the scientific community's efforts to protect local watersheds from the proposed PennEast Pipeline to the Ramapough Lenape Nation's efforts to stop the Pilgrim Pipeline, and to the Lummi's struggles to protect the waters of the Pacific Northwest from oil tankers and pipelines."[23]

## Liberating Institutions

Speaking about the impact of museums on public consciousness, author and activist Winona LaDuke states that "Most Americans know little about Native people: what they know comes mainly from some history books, a lot from Westerns [movies], and some from a museum. And when we are always frozen in the past, they are surprised when they see us walking someplace and we are still here."[24] Museums of natural history thus participate in and reinforce what the anthropologist Johannes Fabian called "the denial of coevalness," the idea that anthropologists are "here and now" while their objects are "there and then," that non-European people exist in a time not contemporary with that of the West.[25] Cloaking themselves in the mantle of scientific knowledge, anthropologists and the natural history museums that exhibit their findings participate in an inherently violent erasure of the enduring presence and struggles of the people they represent. In depicting Native Americans and other groups as "frozen in the past"—for all intents and purposes as collectively dead—museums participate in ongoing acts of colonial genocide.

The naked oppressiveness of such depictions is obscured, in part, by the aura of objectivity and neutrality cultivated by museums and by science in general. In the wake of the notorious 1996 Sokal affair, in which the cultural studies journal *Social Text* published a hoax article wherein physicist Alan Sokal purported to show that quantum gravity is a social and linguistic construct, critic Stanley Aronowitz wrote, "So the issue is not whether reality exists, but whether knowledge of it is 'transparent.' Herein lies Sokal's confusion. He believes that reason, logic, and truth are entirely unproblematic. He has an abiding faith that through the rigorous application of scientific method nature will yield its unmediated truth."[26] Against Sokal's insistence on "objective truth," Aronowitz argued that "The point is not to debunk science or to 'deconstruct' it in order to show it is merely a fiction ... The point is to show science as a social process, to bring it down to earth, to remove the halo from its head.... If science reflects on the social and cultural influences, on its visions, revisions and its practices, and perhaps more to the point, on its *commitments*, then there is hope for a liberatory science."[27] Aronowitz's points about the need for science to reflect on its influences and its commitments remains salient today. In fact, in the same issue of *Social Text* in which Sokal's hoax article was published, eco-socialist scholar Joel Kovel argued in a remarkably prescient essay that the ecological crisis had generated a new conjuncture in which science needs to be reevaluated:

*Science can never more be taken at face value. The record of its violations must be held before it: the reduction of the universe to brute, mechanically driven matter, the adjunctive role toward domination. In the present conjuncture, certain aspects of so-called normal science must continue: how, after all, are we to contend with the damage that is being done, or devise appropriate technology for an ecological society, if we reject the collective intelligence embedded in the scientific project? But science has to be reworked for an abnormal conjuncture. The myth of its autonomy from society is gone, perhaps forever. What remains must be refashioned according to the revealed crisis of ecology – science now seen in the light of what it has so far largely expelled. What has been reduced away must be restored: respect for the integrity of complex wholes rather than atomized parts; the primacy of dialectical becoming over static, mechanical being; the recognition of our embeddedness in nature and hence nature's immanent consciousness and vitality.*[28]

Against the naïve belief in scientific neutrality and objective truth that Sokal espoused, Kovel reminds readers of science's history of ontological reduction and complicity with imperial domination of the natural world and colonized peoples. Yet for Kovel, despite

this record of violations, scientific traditions cannot be abandoned, rather they must be remade in light of and in order to address an age of overlapping crises of capital and the environment. Science must be "reworked' for what Kovel calls "an abnormal conjuncture."[29] This injunction to transformation applies not simply to science, which must be rearticulated around ideas of commitment and the public good, but also to museums of natural history, where scientific knowledge of the natural world and the West's (colonized) Others is displayed.

As the group's name suggests, The Natural History Museum is engaged in precisely such a rearticulation of science and its institutions of representation. As Beka Economopoulos, a member of the group, puts it, The Natural History Museum's work is animated by a central question: "How can institutions and disciplines that have had fraught histories with Indigenous communities and have been hamstrung from playing a meaningful role in environment and social movements because of the myth of neutrality—how can they reevaluate their roles in the current moment of crisis, perform science and perform solidarity with communities who are most impacted and also showing the greatest leadership in contemporary struggles?"[30] The group's determination to reorient museums is facilitated by the fact that such institutions are not monolithic entities. Natural history museums are tugged, Jodi Dean argues, between competing imperatives to truth and collective good in the face of opposing political and economic demands.[31] The work of The Natural History Museum exploits and animates potential splits in the museum by challenging museum professionals and scientists to stand up against fossil fuel greenwashing.

The Natural History Museum is not alone in this enterprise. It is part of an upsurge of insurgent movements acting in and against museums around the world, including groups such as Art Not Oil, BP or Not BP, Gulf Labor, Liberate Tate, Occupy Museums, and Decolonize This Place.[32] For many activists working in this terrain, museums are, in the words of the Not An Alternative collective, a "cultural commons."[33] Along with related institutions such as libraries, universities, and even parliaments, museums are public institutions that "supply an infrastructure for creating and communicating common understandings of the world." For Not An Alternative, neoliberalism has become hegemonic in part by seizing and repurposing these public institutions: "the capitalist class relies on ideological apparatuses like museums to produce and reproduce the subjects it needs."[34] As public support for these institutions has dwindled, they have become increasingly dependent on donations from corporations

and one percenters that always come with strings attached. The time has come, Not An Alternative argues, to take these institutions back from the oligarchs. To occupy and ultimately liberate an institution is to exploit the fissures within that institution: "When art activists commandeer a museum, they split it from within. The already existent divisions within the institution are activated. Anyone affiliated with the museum is forced to take a side: few or many, rich or poor, past or future?" Efforts to liberate institutions are certainly not carried out in unanimity; indeed, some of the art activist groups mentioned above have a far more hostile attitude towards the institutions they seek to occupy than The Natural History Museum does, and in fact, some institutions are far more resistant to transformation than others. Nonetheless, while attitudes and tactics may vary, Not An Alternative convincingly argues that the Left's abandoning of the struggle to liberate institutions in recent decades is a strategic failure: "Refusal and subtraction have been disastrous as Left political tactics. They have surrendered the power aggregated in institutions to capital and the state. The tactics of institutional liberation treat institutions as tools, weapons, and bases of political struggle. They take on and over the institution's radical premise: the collectivity and futurity that underpins any collection."[35]

The Natural History Museum works in a particularly fraught—and consequential—conjuncture. The group's activities materialize the links among museums, science, and environmental movements during a time of corporate climate change denial and greenwashing, the Trump administration's efforts to quash critical research and environmental regulation, and the resurgence of militant Indigenous resistance to planet-annihilating extractivism. This explosive conjuncture shows that the possibilities for cracking open and reorienting particular institutions is a product of the immense pressure such institutions have been placed under by the organic crisis of capitalism. As existing hegemonic alignments have recently come under increasing strain, The Natural History Museum has been able to build coalitions that have won startling victories against fossil capitalism. For example, by helping orchestrate an open letter in which dozens of the world's top scientists urged museums of science and natural history to cut all ties to the fossil fuel industry, The Natural History Museum successfully persuaded a group of such museums to divest. The group then played a pivotal role in removing climate change denier David Koch from the board of the American Museum of Natural History.[36] The extent to which The Natural History Museum has reoriented discourse within museums of science and natural history was apparent when the Carnegie Museum of Natural History—located in Pittsburgh, the

heart of fracking country—welcomed the *Kwel' Hoy: We Draw the Line* exhibit on the occasion of the International Council of Museums conference on the Anthropocene.

Carnegie Museum director Eric Dorfman's declaration of his institution's determination to be an ally to Native Americans—notwithstanding the open challenge the exhibition posed to the fossil capitalist interests that bankroll his institution—testifies to the success that The Natural History Museum has had in turning the museum into a "base of political struggle." Equally if not more striking is the perception of exhibition visitor Kayah George of the Tsleil-Waututh/Tulalip Tribes that "our voices are being heard, like they should be for the first time in a long time. I believe the message of this totem pole is very clear. It's the message that we are rising."[37]

When *Kwel' Hoy: Many Struggles, One Front* opened at the Watershed Institute, the rearticulation of museums and conservation institutions, science, and the struggles of frontline communities against ecocide reached a powerful zenith. For Jim Waltman, the executive director of the Watershed Institute, *Kwel' Hoy* had a phenomenal impact by bringing the issues on which the organization works to life in the most visceral way and giving everyone connected to the institution a strong sense of solidarity with Indigenous people and people across the world who are fighting the same fossil capitalist foes.[38] The exhibition was laid out in a manner that dramatized this active forging of solidarity. A red line winding across the museum's walls tracked various examples of the deadly ecologies of fossil capitalism, and then linked these examples to sites of struggle against fossil capitalism, including the Ramapough Lenape Nation's fight against the Pilgrim Pipeline, the Lummi Nation's struggle against the Gateway Pacific Terminal project, and the Watershed Institute's fight against the PennEast Pipeline.

Introducing the Watershed Institute's mission, Waltman boldly declares that "scientists have an obligation to deploy the tools of science in protection of the environment." This, he argues, means that "scientists have an obligation to stand up and speak truth to power."

Included in the exhibit was footage that showed the important role of scientists in documenting the damaging impact of fossil fuel infrastructure on local ecosystems.

This includes citizen scientists, among them the thousands of children who attend science camps at the Watershed Institute every summer. Their efforts in discovering and documenting endangered species whose habitats are threatened by fossil fuel infrastructure have been key to fighting back against pipeline projects in the area.

The fate of the PennEast and Pilgrim Pipelines is not yet determined, but construction of fossil fuel infrastructure continues around the country and the world. The US alone is set to drive nearly sixty percent of global growth in oil and gas supply between now and 2030—with plans to expand production by four times the amount of any other country in the world.[39] Upwards of ninety percent of this expansion would depend on fracking, which would bring with it tremendous threats not only of near- and long-term climate change but also air pollution, health risks, and growing competition for water. Meanwhile, the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's *Special Report on 1.5°C of Global Warming* warns that the world needs to cut carbon emissions nearly in half by 2030 to keep warming within that limit. In the face of this deathly prospect, we need, as Lummi Nation activist Freddie Lane puts it, "to summon all the forces of life that run through everything to come together in a common collective fight." The collaboration among Lummi Nation carvers and activists, The Natural History Museum, and institutions like the Carnegie Museum and the Watershed Institute offers a powerful challenge to the fossil fuel industry. We must build on such hopeful alignments if we are to reroute the road to death that fossil capitalism has put us all on.

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