

NOMOS OF THE EARTH

ORIGINAL
INSTRUCTIONS



YESTERDAY THE FUTURE WAS BUILT ON THE CERTAINTY OF OUR PRESENT'S TRIUMPHANT CONTINUATION, BUT TODAY THERE IS NOT A SOUL ALIVE THAT BELIEVES THIS.

Every vision of the future is one of catastrophe, of climate apocalypse or zombie hordes, of the digitalization of all life or the total breakdown of the self. These fantasies obsess us because they are not phenomenon to come, the great awaiting of *melancholia*; they are part and parcel of the devastation that we already inhabit, that muffled catastrophe we already feel, that already touches us so intimately. The desert as it deepens: Japanese 20-somethings who refuse to do anything except stay at home and stare into their screens, the Amazon rainforest becoming a savannah, Americans hiding their deep existential pain under the guise of 'not giving a fuck' while running from job to job to maintain the appearance of being as normal as the next guy, or Mexican farmers who once grew heirloom corn being driven into destitution and forced to buy genetically modified and nutritionally worthless *masa harina* from the store. All of us together, in our unique and locally embedded ways, living out the final scenes of the liberal nightmare in all its catastrophic permutations.

It was in the ice cores of glaciers that climate scientists first registered global warming, where the presence of CO₂ during historic habitable periods was at a level much lower than April 2014's 400ppm. Yes they are melting irreversibly as the ever-growing mass of water cyclically and inevitably creates more warming. Yes they will flood out every major coastal city. Yes they will drown out nearly half of the world's population. But they are so much more than that to

us. The glaciers are the archives of the earth, the memory of worlds lost: the very air of life that composed those worlds, made up of the exhalation of billions of life forms and the breath of primordial hominids as they took their first steps on two feet, carrying bodies composed of molecules forged in the stars. But the ice of remembering dissolves in an ocean of forgetting. The imprisoned past becomes a deluge, and like the sea levels it rises and climbs, uncontrollably. The past does not pass: the frozen barricades surrounding Ukraine's Maidan, made up of ice as much as burned out police vehicles. The failing ice wall around the persistently melting Fukushima Daiichi reactor cores. The 'Winter Is Coming' graffiti of Istanbul's Gezi commune, as much a declaration of the end as a declaration of war. The recognition all around that we're living in the end of an entire way of life, in the end of a civilization, that no one will mourn, that no one will light a candle for.

While melting ice is washing away the literal ground under our feet, a solidity that every civilization could formerly rely on, so too is it a sign of the falling away of all other grounds. The metaphysical bedrock upon which this civilization stands—its certainties, its claims to mastery, its idols, and its gods—is hemorrhaging: massive insurrectionary efforts to break through the age; selfies at Auschwitz and on lockdown during a school shooting; a mass experimental exodus from this way of life—hack, pickle, and make our way out; an explosion of neurosis, and its endless modulation via text alerts,

health apps, psychosedatives, and self-help manuals; the civilization's most honored scientists existentially freaking out, yet calmly, professionally replying, "the work is going well, but it looks like it might be the end of the world."

We are living through a catastrophe unprecedented in human history in which what we've lost is the world. We have to face that, but we have to face up to the reality that we have also been set free by this devastation that, with a thousand voices, declares itself an expired way of life, "the abandoned ruin of a dead civilization." There is nothing to cry for anymore. There is no use clinging to a future we were promised, which will never come anyway. There is, equally, nothing left to critique, to be outraged or indignant about. It is just our time, our epoch, and there is only us, here, and now. Only the decisions we make here, now. If we accept that, the question becomes acting in a way that is adequate to the situation we face. Adequate to history, to our shared, historical, revolutionary task.

The door is open. Walk through it.

1. BEGIN FROM THE REAL.

We have been born into a devastated life, where we live at a great distance from what is so near and in such a way that everything—our stomachs, hearts, eyes, and ears—is checked at the door. Beings without worlds. Politics is the crystallization of this formula, the alienated meeting place of eviscerated bodies, and its various solutions always take the form of some rule, law, or idea of the ‘good’ applied onto our lives. As if life itself, in its own living and elaboration, was not always already its own end, its own law. As if we were incapable of determining for ourselves how to live. In reality, living as if we were not in the world is the disaster, just one amongst the infinite ways this civilization expresses itself.

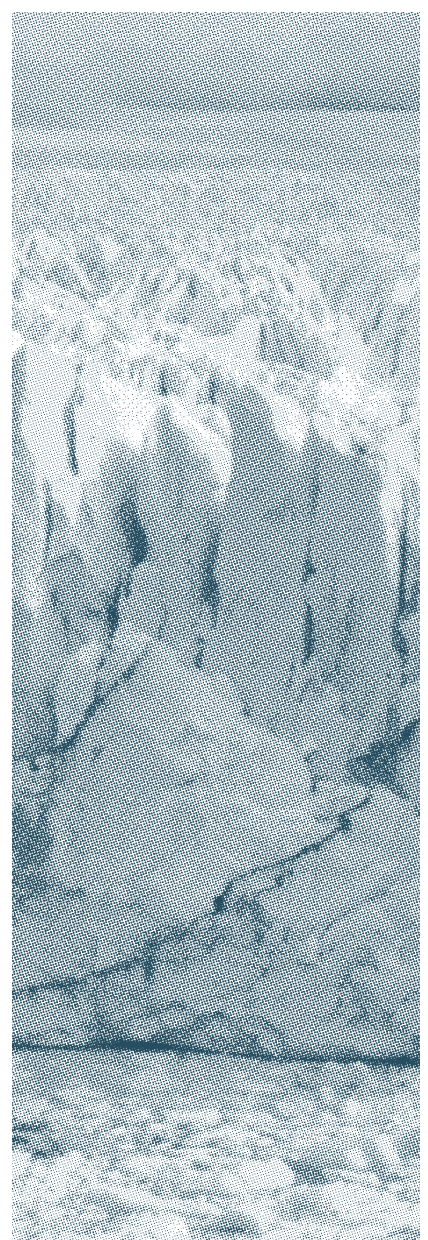
That we have lost the world is attested to most painfully by the actions of those who, in their desperate search for ways of fighting and of organizing themselves, only end up reproducing the same devastation they seek to overcome: splitting reality into discrete thoughts and actions, removing themselves from every situation to stand aside ‘objectively,’ denying our various determinations as if

the world and our lives were a flat, equivalent space to be ordered, redistributed, whatever. It is a delirium, and in the end it only replicates the basic structure of government, which works by separating life from its many forms, its potential, parsing out the two so as to manage every last thing, carrying out a violence so deep that we’ve already experienced lifetimes of PTSD by our teenage years.

For us the first revolutionary measure is a return to the world, regaining our ability to be here. This does not mean going back in time, or recovering some kind of ‘authentic.’ It means to start from what is right before our eyes, right in front of our faces, not from some fantastical projection.

The word *nomos*, which we’re normally told means law, comes from *nemein*, which means to dwell. To dwell is to inhabit the world, to be faithful to our determinations. The only law is being itself.

The world prints its trace everywhere, we just have to follow the tracks..



2. BE STRATEGIC.

FIRST REVOLUTIONARY MEASURE: RETURN TO THE WORLD.



Second revolutionary measure: retake the ability to *think* our situation and work out a strategy. Strategy, from the Greek for a general, meaning to think in the manner, modes, and dispositions of war. Not merely in terms of tactics, because after all many of us are already tacticians, responding to this or that need or crisis, planning and making decisions in an entirely reactive way. Instead strategy is the elaboration of a series of lines that head in a particular direction—no matter how fluid or mobile—and that fundamentally engage the present. Without any kind of strategy we are like this world, just floating along, flailing, or melting like the ice.

Some friends once said, to any moral preoccupation, to any concern for purity, we substitute the collective working out of a strategy. To do so, we must start from our situation, where we are and how we are, following the lines of power that present themselves, that in each particular place lend us a different sense. Strategy is the effective use of what we have. There is no ‘ideal world.’ There is no recipe, no right answer. We can only ask a few simple questions: what increases our power? What diminishes it? What is good for us?

What is appropriate to our situation? The question is no longer this or that particular act, this or that particular kind of person, but what can be between them. Equally the question is no longer individuality, good or bad, self vs. collective, but how, together and apart, we can open up these possibilities and, obstacle by obstacle, overcome the limitations that decrease our power to act in and with the world.

Having a strategic outlook is a constant source of determination and intelligence. This must be sustained, in the same way we kindle a fire, nurture a relationship, or replant a forest. Patience and confidence help us maintain our presence of mind and not lose sight of what we are doing, whether amidst the turmoil of events or the general dulling distraction of the everyday. Our strategies will be enormously complex, but remember they are not those of the military or advertising. They are an attempt at bottom to get back the world and put an end to a civilization that is beyond exhaustion. Everything is to be reinvented, everything is to be gained.

3. DEVELOP TECHNIQUES.

From pickling workshops and biointensive farms to hack spaces and reoccupied native territories, we have opened a vast wave of experimentation with skills and techniques. It is not hard to see why. These experiments proliferate in direct proportion to our deskilling, disempowerment, and absolute dependence: food comes from the grocery, water comes from the tap, and in the meantime we slip further away from any possibility of being in the world except as a tourist. Finding ourselves tethered to a civilization that

is on its way out only adds to the urgency of our experimentation. Inhabiting our epoch requires facing up to two simple facts 1) most of us know next to nothing about what it means to actually make up a life, and 2) our power and our autonomy is dependent on our material ability to make another form of life actually live.

How then? In urban centers, designers experiment with signal blocking, counter-surveillance clothing and stealth apps to take us on and off the communications grid. In Missouri, Open Source

Ecology maniacally builds a ‘civilization starter kit’ of the most essential tools and machines for a relocalized, self-organized way of life. On the Great Plains, the Ponca plant ceremonial corn alongside their former enemies both in opposition to the KeystoneXL. Whether “removing the dust” from things such as wildcrafting and pit house construction or hacking and modding the functional ruins that surround us, there is an ethical thread that binds our experiments to each other.

Techniques allow us to give form

to our lives, and form connects us to the world, to what we are made of. They come from life, they address life, they overturn life, and open up the possibility of a new one. In the same moment that they illuminate the impoverishment of the one we live and the separation it demands. They also tell us something about materiality, how worlds are revealed and built, and how much experimentation is going to be necessary. Again, we should not search for the 'right' form, in order to apply it to our lives. 'Computers, good or bad?' Our forms will come from our lives, from our collective situation, as we discover what corresponds to it, its expression and expansion. *It is by carpentering that one becomes a carpenter. It's by doing whatever that we can become whatever.*

Picture a living, breathing revolution: the construction and defense of barricades, occupied buildings, overturned police cars, the expropriation of grain stores, supermarkets, and land, cooking and care for thousands; the seizure of the means of communication and the destruction of those of our enemies; the erection of health clinics and autonomous power supply; the mobilization of thousands for a million tasks. Experimenting with

techniques immediately and practically elaborates the means and measures of the revolutionary process, our generalized, diffuse, global attempt to break free of the age. As such what is carried in these gestures is not *qualitatively* different from what happens to us in an insurrection, but perhaps there is a certain slowness to them, which tells us much about the different revolutionary cadences it is possible to inhabit. Our taking up of the question of *how*—no longer the question of what or who—speaks to our threshold moment wherein what is to be decided is everything; where everything is up for grabs and where everything is at stake. That this civilization can only repeat that nothing else is possible—today shouting it all the more vehemently—is only proof of the exact opposite.

Learn to make fire. Build structures. Cultivate plants. Raise animals. Cook. Cook for a thousand. Jailbreak phones. Jailbreak friends. Infect networks. Build networks. Sing. Drum. War Songs. Read tracks. Fix cars. Fix bikes. Design print. Design furniture. Design circuits. Spin metal. Weld. Smithing. Bees. Train. Learn to fight. To think. To love. To heal wounds. To heal the world.



EVERYTHING IS UP FOR GRABS, AND EVERYTHING IS AT STAKE.

4. BUILD POWER. BUILD AUTONOMY.



MAY THE ODDS BE EVER IN YOUR FAVOR.

In facing up to the reality of what it means to make a revolution today, it is clear that practical experimentation with techniques is only a starting point, and that there's a necessary thickness our lives have to take on in order to adequately follow our line of power.

Power, the question no one really wants to talk about but that we confront everywhere. Not just when we are fighting, whether that's the police, a regime, or a pipeline, but in the everyday, in how the environment we inhabit is structured by laws and norms, roadways and smart devices, discourses and economies. They do not just surveil or repress us, they foster, shape, and produce particular possibilities and outcomes, which create our entire way of life—how and what we eat, how, where and with whom we live, and nearly everything else. The mechanisms that compose our environment produce the kind of life we find ourselves in, separate from everything that actually makes up our existence. *May the odds be ever in your favor*, followed by a wink, a smile, and a gun to the head.

In short, what we lack is power: the power to live, to determine our existence, as much as the power to put an end to this civilization. To become powerful, we do not just need techniques, we need whole autonomous territories. But autonomy is not self-sufficiency—hypochondriacs guarding their private kingdom of canned corn and toilet paper, rifles ready—and territory is not just a place on a map. One, everyone knows you cannot survive alone and two, we are not talking about surviving because that is what we have been doing since the day we were born.

Autonomy speaks to our becoming powerful through the weaving together of the necessary links between us, building up and in fact becoming the territory. Territory emerges out of a col-

lective acting together, and disappears when that ceases. As such it requires care, attention, creation, and organization. Like love, territory is not a state. It is not something that is just there. Territory is an act, it is to be built.

The ZAD, Northwestern France: From an airport protest into an autonomous zone where, after 40,000 inhabitants and friends defended it in 2012, the police will no longer enter. Peach trees, blackberries, projectiles; barricades and cabins—demolished by police and incessantly re-constructed, vineyards, the organization of supplies across blockades; harvest festivals, pigs, ducks; radio stations, operas, markets; barns, sheds, treehouses; old farmers squatting their own land, weird hippies living in trees, young militants whose lives were changed irrevocably: what makes the ZAD rich, what makes it powerful, is not just the people or things that populate it but the collective intelligence and determination that weaves them together.

Ganienkeh, Northern New York: After an armed occupation of an abandoned summer camp for the rich in the 1970s, the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) of Ganienkeh have built up their own sovereign territory with buffalo herds, solar panels, maple syrup harvesting, hot houses, traditional medicines, and language programs. A strategic reweaving of an entire form of life with old and new side by side.

Fukuoka and Western Honshu, Japan: Those Who Go West have fled the toxicity of the Tokyo-Fukushima radioactive metropolis, discovering in the process the possibility of getting organized to live differently. Some are taking up farming and hunting as an escape from their civil service jobs, others are setting up radiation measurements of food and public spaces or markets for



HONOR, FAITH, LOYALTY. THIS IS A WAR.

5. DON'T AFRAID, GO AHEAD.

It is only in light of autonomy that we can adequately think revolution today, that the sensibilities of the blockades, occupations, and insurrections that we are articulating everywhere can be carried forward.

From the Marcellus Shale to the Coast Salish territories the blockades movement has shown our power to put a halt to the construction of fracking wells, pipelines, airports, and smart grids. None of these infrastructures have ever been just a 'bad' or environmentally destructive technological choice; they materially impose the continuation of the disaster of this civilization into the future, the instantiation of an inevitability with the weight of concrete, steel, and fiber optic cables. So, block everything everywhere has become the call, and with each step, blockades have become a practical expression of our power to interrupt the flows, manifesting a new political will and sensibility that can no longer wait idly. That we have seen the blockades circulate from rural Pennsylvania and Oklahoma

6. START NOW.

Our starting point is clear. This is the end of a world, and if we are to raise ourselves up to the height of the disaster, to truly confront the devastation in progress, it is up to us, everywhere, to build the new worlds that will replace this one. Not worlds like the old worlds, not worlds like this world, but —beginning from where we are, using all our available means— new, sensible worlds that will take on their own particular shapes.

trading produce, game and other wares, while others are taking on the project of organizing all of this into a new insurgent territory that can perhaps overcome the power of Tokyo itself. While Fukushima may have provided the impetus for the exodus in Japan, it is clear that many of the thousands who have left the Tokyo-Fukushima region are trying to define for themselves the course of their futures.

Chiapas, the Mexican Southeast:

Twenty years of autonomous power in the face of both counterinsurgency and development, beginning with an armed takeover of six towns. Now there are nearly 40, sustained by town councils, peasant farmers, and an armed apparatus. Smuggled coffee and chocolate cross the fictions called borders, making their way to friendly territories far and wide. And with the end of the Mayan calendar in 2012, the Zapatistas declared the beginning not of a new era of consciousness but of an entirely new time. It remains the case that in the languages of the true people, there is still no word for surrender.

Everywhere: Organize for our own needs. Organize to welcome those who will come to join us. Make it materially possible for those who want to desert.

to Los Angeles and New York during protests of the Trayvon Martin verdict should come as no surprise. The blockade is of our moment and opens us out onto a wider question, because after all, what is it other than an occupation of time and space, the generation of a new territory?

From Istanbul and Oakland to Kiev and São Paulo we have occupied. We have seized space in metropolitan centers that was made for only passing through, creating a material force of kitchens, camps, and barricades strong enough to disrupt the rhythms of daily life in places as seemingly unassailable as New York. We blocked and occupied. Some of these new territories pushed even further, with some like Gezi becoming full-on insurgent communes while others completely dismantled the regimes they faced. A question we have been forced to face over and over is what to do once government is undone, when it vacates the premises? In the Ukraine, the fighters of the Maidan invaded the presidential palace only to find

We have accepted a state of frantic isolation and dependence because it seems inevitable. It's not. Sometimes the magnitude of the devastation we face seems insurmountable. It's not. Remember: this way of life is a mind-boggling anomaly in the history of humanity. Then turn everything around: human beings are and have always been capable of so much more than this. We can organize ourselves.

Organize with other territories. There is no life without the organization of its means, materially, concretely. Shelter, water, fire, food, as much as the ability to fight, to defend that way of life, to defeat our enemies; music, beauty, meaning; medicine, health; cooking; knowledge, transmission of historical experience, training, education; travel. We're talking about building worlds more worth living, habitable worlds. This is no small feat.

it empty, the game of thrones having been over now for decades. Tunisia's People of the Molotov burned down police stations and mayor's offices in small towns across the country; governmental authority remains completely deposed, but according to them things remain the same. Power is not buffoons in suits sitting in the White House or the United Nations. Power is in the organization of the world, in the *ability* to organize worlds —and to defend them.

When Anonymous called on the rioters in Ferguson to "*occupy every square inch of your city*" they had the right idea. The territories, the collective life that we are able to sustain now, everyday, will give us the means to overcome the impasses upon which the movements and revolutions of the last years have foundered. The techniques that will build and sustain our autonomy from this civilization will also be necessary to destitute it.

Honor, faith, loyalty.

This is a war.

We simply have to give ourselves the means to do so, to live otherwise, to put an end to this civilization. There is, literally, nothing to wait for. Revolution is not a moment in the future; it's a line we trace in the present.

Faced with the catastrophe, there are those who get indignant, those who take note, and those who get organized. History depends on those who get organized.