

A Spatial Imaginary of Care

If struggles and structures of exclusion and oppression are sometimes referred to as ‘slow violence,’¹ part of their undoing must be to reclaim the adjective ‘slow’ in service to radical care, resistance, and change. More just and inclusive infrastructures of living are attainable when they are designed by consensus, made stronger by our differences, and solidified through practice. Importantly, they require us to erect scaffoldings of imagination around them: temporary, yet robust support structures that not only facilitate the processes of building the new worlds we hope to inhabit, but also are key to dismantling the ones we no longer want.

This section looks at approaches to space saturated by what scholar and political ecologist María Puig de la Bellacasa calls ‘a thick visioning of caring.’² It conveys spatial imaginaries that gently embrace and are embraced by their context, that perform critical dissections (and sometimes protections) of histories and heritage, that help us to attune more deeply to one another as well as to a myriad of non-human others, and that remind us also to tend fiercely to the systems that sustain us. Contributors here write about projects and approaches with diverse physical, psychic, social, and emotional layers, chronicling spaces and paces of accountability, solidarity, and resilience. In and through their essays, we come to know care as witnessing, as porousness, as adaptability, and as a partner in co-creation.

Curator and researcher Ligia Nobre describes how, in the historically contested northeast of Brazil, a hole dug in the earth becomes a cosmopolitical invitation into the primordial womb, a healing and holding presence for transforming local histories of extraction and exploitation, and for wit(h)nessing the planet’s thin and vibrant crust. A poem by choreographer and artist Maria Hassabi draws a sensuous line of text that moves down through several pages of the book—both describing and mimicking one of her slow and spacious works of art. It is a minimal gesture that, like her choreographies, requires the reader to pay close attention, embracing each word as its own world. A line of a different sort is drawn by political scientist and feminist activist Françoise Vergès, who opens her essay by reflecting on those figures of resistance on her native island of Réunion, the maroons, who boldly carved out spaces of freedom in their bodies, the land, and the imagination. In the face of neoliberalism’s persistent subjugation of black and brown bodies, Vergès calls for resolute acts of care that ‘dare to imagine a post-racist, depatriarchalized, post-capitalist world.’ Alessandra Pomarico responds to that call in invoking the potency of group assemblies—the spaces we hold for and with each other—sharing strategies for co-creating common spaces of learning (and unlearning), as well as tools for re-imagining and performing them anew time after time. She is joined by two co-conspirators in the reimagining of pedagogy: native Hawaiian educator Kū Kahakalau and queer artist and activist Kate Morales, who share protocols and rituals through which a rich spectrum of identities and practices—a pluriverse of possibility—make/build a home, together. Educator and activist Cristine Takuá enlarges the imaginary of collective care in describing indigenous cosmologies of human relationship with the rest of the living world. She explains how nature models structures of spatial and relational engagement,

¹ See, among others, Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*.

² ‘A feminist inspired vision of caring cannot be grounded in the longing for a smooth harmonious world, but in vital ethico-affective everyday practical doings that engage with the inescapable troubles of interdependent existences.’ Puig de la Bellacasa, “Nothing Comes Without Its World,” 199.

and points to the revolutionary potential of applying these lessons from the forest to urban environments. And finally, in the contribution of artist Pia Lindman, personal, geographical, and temporal boundaries dissolve as readers accompany the artist into her dreams, on journeys through Lapland, and in encounters with Sámi folklore and ritual—zooming in and out between the textures of the human body and the slow movements of tectonic plates to locate spaces of caring connection.

Literature

Nixon, Rob. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013.

Puig de la Bellacasa, María. “‘Nothing Comes Without Its World’: Thinking with Care.’ *The Sociological Review* (2012), 197–216.