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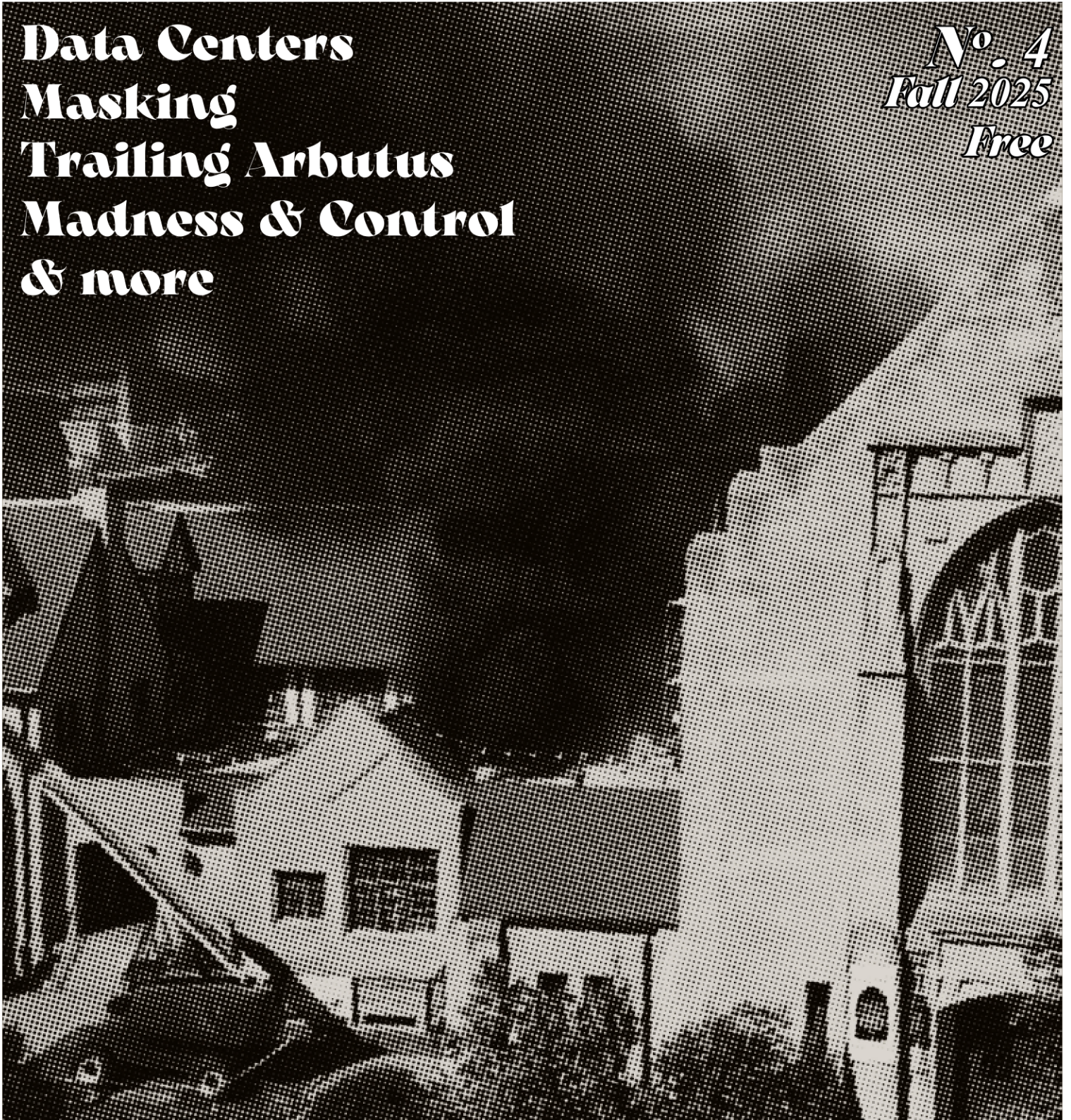
# in TENSION

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an anarchist agitation

**Data Centers  
Masking  
Trailing Arbutus  
Madness & Control  
& more**

**Nº. 4**  
*Fall 2025*  
*Free*





**In Tension** *is a journal acting as a place for anarchist analysis, dialogue, and reflection on activity that extends beyond single subcultures, issues, and social groups. Intended for people beginning to learn what anarchists are fighting and creating as well as people who have identified with anarchism for decades, In Tension is a way for us to talk to each other and report actions, issues, and initiatives that are otherwise under- or un-reported. We are interested in promoting the practice of doing things for ourselves and connecting our struggles locally, regionally, and internationally. In Tension also functions as an archive of sorts, a way to foster collective remembering.*

*In Tension is published in so-called Bloomington, Indiana each season. We welcome submissions of actions, events, and analysis from different perspectives that hold true to an anti-authoritarian, anti-state, and liberatory lens.*

*Please keep submissions to a length of ~1500 words or fewer. See [InTension.noblogs.org](http://InTension.noblogs.org) for instructions on how to submit anonymously and securely. For other correspondence, reach us at [InTension@riseup.net](mailto:InTension@riseup.net).*



*To us, to live life as anarchists is not about accepting a hollow title or stagnant ideology, but is about an active, intentional, and eternal becoming. It is not just about the ideas we have but how we put them into the world, and the strength we must cultivate to weather what unfolds when living against the dominant order of this society. We live in tension with this world every day: its jobs, prisons, ideals, social roles, and identities. We notice the ways others do too, and we refuse to avoid conflict in pursuit of comfort or for an illusion of safety. We chose “In Tension” as our title as a way to embrace the difficult balance of this beautiful and painful path. We accept the discomforts and challenges of being against so much of this world, and understand it as a reality of creating lives true to our values and hearts. We embrace our hostility for this world, and learn where to channel our time and energy to see ideas come to fruition. We notice and embrace ruptures small and large, where we can see through the facade of this world. It is neither complacency, nor an ascetic militancy, but a fostering of joy through the creation of our lives and a living-against. Rejecting a finality of destination, it is choosing to stretch beyond what is familiar, comfortable, or known, in a continual pursuit of freedom.*





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# Crawling Upon the Earth:

## my search for trailing arbutus

Most people, if they recognize it at all, will only vaguely remember the word “arbutus” from either something to do with the university or that street just south of campus that’s like one block long. I first discovered this plant while browsing the DNR’s list of endangered plants of Indiana<sup>1</sup>. Perhaps it was the distant name recognition that made it stand out to me. Perhaps it was the plant’s striking beauty when I first DuckDuckGo image searched it. Probably it was the result of cross referencing the endangered plant list with herbaria records of the region (more on that later). There I discovered that this rare plant was documented to have grown where Mother Bear’s Pizza is now on 3rd St. What a punch in the gut, a stark reminder of what we’ve lost, what priorities we’ve chosen. If the question was really that simple, would we choose Mother Bear’s over a patch of rare, sweet-smelling wildflowers?

I first said AR-but-tus but have since learned that botanists say arb-YOU-tis. And I have since learned that trailing arbutus has a very special history to our area but that its local cultural significance exists almost exclusively in association with the university at this point. The same university that drove (drives) the destruction of arbutus’s habitat. The same process is ongoing with IU’s bison mascot, and even the neighborhoods and streets named after native trees. The same forces that destroy wild creatures then claim their name and image as

a false reverence. I want to change that because arbutus, and the others, deserve better.

Trailing arbutus is the official flower of Indiana University. The IU yearbook, begun in 1894, is called Arbutus. A rendering of the flowers is used as the “jewel of office” of the president, whatever that is. What an insult to have that asshole Pamela Whitten wearing it. In this backwards-ass world, the title of Arbutus Society is given to people who dedicate a deferred monetary gift to IU, like when wealthy people choose where to send their money when they die. According to the IU foundation, this generosity is rewarded with an invitation to an exclusive annual event.<sup>2</sup> Imagine if the Arbutus Society was instead a group of us dedicated to protecting and working with this plant?

The latin name, *Epigaea repens*, roughly translates to “crawling upon the earth” referring to its growth pattern of sprawling and spreading low over the ground. It used to be in the *Arbutus* genus and kept the common name despite being moved into a separate genus, which it shares with only two other species, one from Japan and the other from Turkey. Its other common name is Mayflower, as it blooms in spring. This name, unfortunately, associates it with the pilgrims (colonizers) arriving at Plymouth Rock. There are stories of this beautiful flower giving them hope that spring is coming after a long, hard winter. Thus trailing arbutus is



the state flower of Massachusetts and provincial flower of Nova Scotia. This cultural association with colonization is another reputation from which we should recover arbutus.

The woody stems spread slowly over the ground, reaching only a few inches in height. The tough, leathery leaves are alternate, oval-shaped, and can remain green throughout winter. They are marked by a prominent vein down the middle and venation throughout that gives the appearance of lots of little irregular segments on the surface. The bottom of the leaf is hairy. The flower, emerging in April and May is white to pink, tubular opening up into 5 petals, and appears yellow and fuzzy in the center at close inspection. It offers nectar and is pollinated by bees and flies. The fruit is covered by a hairy sheath, which when it dries out, reveals a white fruit with seed stuck to the outside. Arbutus tends to grow in colonies. Separate plants have the stamens (male) and ovaries (female) parts and so cannot self-pollinate. The seeds are suspected to be assisted in dispersal by ants. It can be quite particular about its growing conditions. It needs moisture but also good drainage. It needs acidity but also humus, partial or dappled shade. It can tolerate different soil types, like sandy, rocky, or loamy, but does not tolerate disturbance. It grows



slowly and is difficult to cultivate. But perhaps its most famous quality is the scent of its flowers, described as sweet, spicy, pleasant, rose-milk, and heavenly. With its low stature, and the flowers sometimes obscured beneath the leaf litter or its own leaves, the scent is often noticed before it is spotted.

*E. repens* is in the Ericaceae or Heath family. One quality it shares with other Ericaceae plants is its ability to survive in acidic, infertile, and inhospitable growing conditions. A unique thing about the Ericaceae is that they have a relationship with a special type of fungi called Ericoid mycorrhiza that have evolved specifically with this family. Mycorrhiza are fungi that live in the soil and among the roots of plants that help them extract the nutrients they need. This family is the only one that has their own mycorrhiza and this relationship is part of what enables them to survive in such difficult environments. It also makes propagation difficult if their fungal associates are not present. Another family trait are the tough, evergreen leaves. More well-known members of the family are heaths, heathers, and rhododendrons. Local members are cranberry and blueberry (*Vaccinium*), bearberry (*Arctostaphylos*) and wintergreen (*Gaultheria*). Arbutus is more common in the Appalachian Mountains and Appalachian plateau that extends into Kentucky and Ohio. In these regions, arbutus is often found in an Oak-Heath ecosystem, a type of forest occurring most often in dry, upland sites. The canopy is dominated by oaks and the shrub layer by *Vaccinium*, *Rhododendron*, and laurels. The sub-shrub layer contains Ericaceae such as wintergreen, our arbutus, and ghost pipe. I don't know if we have any of these specific Oak-Heath forests here, but arbutus can be found in our somewhat similar dry-

mesic oak upland forests.

Trailing arbutus is ranked ST, state threatened, and S3, vulnerable in state. Although it is rare, we can look at the historical record to see where it used to grow and, in a few cases, public data for where it can still be found. Charles Deam's 1940 *Flora of Indiana* says, "In the southern part of the state it grows in slightly acid soil on shady slopes on or close to the sandstone outcrops, usually associated with black and white oaks."<sup>3</sup> IU lore describes an Arbutus Hill 4 miles outside of Bloomington, so named when a large patch was found by professor Herman Boisen in 1877. In 1923 an IDS article records



old photo of Arbutus Hill from IU Archives

one professor's failed attempt to get the senior class to buy Arbutus Hill in order to protect the population.<sup>4</sup> My guess is that Arbutus Hill is in the area around E Bender Rd, just south of State Road 46 and east of Stephens Creek. This area has three of the Monroe County herbaria records of arbutus, from 1912, 1927, and 1929. A 1913 record shows it in the Mother Bear's location, a 1901 specimen from Dunn Woods, and two from near what is now Bryan Park from 1924 and 1961.<sup>5</sup> More recently, an IDS article from 2022 tells of a small patch of arbutus near Lake Monroe. And iNaturalist data shows a couple found around the Morgan-Monroe State Forest, just north of Monroe

County, though the exact location has been obscured to protect this endangered plant.<sup>6</sup> This would be the data that gave me direction for trying to find arbutus in the wild.

But before that, there is more of its story to dig into. Trailing arbutus, or wabgon in their language, is the official flower of the Potawatomi. It is significant because an old story in which "a young girl named Mnokmé (Spring time) challenged an old man known as Pondésé (winter maker) to ensure that we would have Spring & Summer again. Everywhere she has been is where & only where this flower grows, & it is the first flower of Spring."<sup>7</sup> In addition to this understanding of its connection to divinity, we also get wisdom of its medicinal properties from Indigenous people of eastern "North America." Arbutus is drying and astringent, with an affinity for the urinary system. An infusion of the leaves is used for gravel and irritation with urination. It shares some similarities here with its cousin, uva-ursi, which is much more well known and common in herbal commerce.<sup>8,9</sup> I have more to explore with its signatures,<sup>10</sup> its personality, and its healing properties.

With all this research and after harboring an interest in this plant for about a year, I decided to try to find it in the wild. I have only seen it in person once, a cultivated one that was for sale. Fall is not the right time of year for it; it will be easier when it is fragrant and flowering in the spring. But I am hopeful the leaves would still be out and their size, shape, and texture would be recognizable enough. I head to an area of Morgan-Monroe indicated by the obscured iNaturalist observation. Trying to find a trail from the north, I drive through what appears to be private property with my fingers crossed before being<sup>3</sup>



stopped by a section of the road too washed out by the creek to be passable. I go back to find it from the south. After driving past it the first time, I park at a tiny slab of concrete. At first there doesn't appear to be much of a trail, but after several meters you can start to make it out, full of stilt grass. But I know I won't find arbutus on the trail anyway, I will have to go among the oak trees. I am looking for slopes thick with leaf litter. I am looking for areas that are sparsely covered at the ground level, more brown than green, because I've read that arbutus does not compete well. I expect there might be moss nearby from the photos I've seen. I look in the woods on the west and east sides of the trail. I'm looking for ovate leaves close to the ground. Anything too pointy or too round isn't right. Covered in spiderwebs, mosquitoes, and probably ticks, I call out its names. Does it want to be found? I follow the trail to the service road. I double back and this time take the fork through the patch of great blue lobelia. It feels close. I call for it. I hum to it, offering a song. Still, my first day is unsuccessful.

A week later, I go back. This time I have a companion, who stays on the trail while I wander deeper into

the woods. This way I don't have to worry about getting lost. We call to each other for me to find my way back. On the trail, so much more of the white snakeroot is in bloom than just a few days ago. This time we hike straight past the lobelia to the fallen log and this is where I start the ground search, squatting and hunching over. The understory is full of viburnum. I think its *V. acerifolium* as a few are still holding on deep purple-black berries. I take it as a good sign that there's much more wild yam in this forest than I expected, and old-looking bearcorn. The forest, the leaf litter, is more damp after a few days of rain. It makes crawling in and out of the deep ravines messier. Today I'm drawn to more dappled light areas rather than full shade. With remnants of spiderwebs in my hair and eyelashes, I walk through creek beds, scanning the hills on either side. As the trail becomes less clear and afternoon turns into evening, I call it off, for the day and for the season. I will try again in the spring, hoping to catch its scent or the white-pink of the flowers to catch my eye.

On the hike out, I think about how it's no surprise this plant is so rare here these days. In Simon Pokagon's *O-gî-*

his wife's belief that "those flowers came direct from the hands of Ki-je Man-i-towi-win (Divinity)." He recounts the Odawa story as told to him, similar to the Potawatomi one quoted above: wherever the maiden of Spring "stepped, and nowhere else, grows our tribal flower, the trailing arbutus." What is colonization if not the chasing away of Divinity from the land? May she one day return and spread the sweet-smelling flower over the hills.

1. [in.gov/dnr/nature-preserves/files/npe-trplants.pdf](http://in.gov/dnr/nature-preserves/files/npe-trplants.pdf)
2. [iufoundation.iu.edu/ways-give/planned-giving/donor-resources/arbutus-society.html](http://iufoundation.iu.edu/ways-give/planned-giving/donor-resources/arbutus-society.html)
3. [archive.org/details/floraofindiana00indi](http://archive.org/details/floraofindiana00indi)
4. [news.iu.edu/live/news/27945-history-nerd-tracks-down-rare-trailing-arbutus-in](http://news.iu.edu/live/news/27945-history-nerd-tracks-down-rare-trailing-arbutus-in)
5. An herbarium (plural herbaria) is a collection of preserved plant specimens. They are usually associated with a university, museum, or research garden but they can also exist privately. I pulled these records from the Consortium of Midwest Herbaria, which provides records of digitized specimens from several herbaria in the region. Visit [MidwestHerbaria.org](http://MidwestHerbaria.org), you won't regret it!
6. [inaturalist.org/observations?place\\_id=1672&taxon\\_id=83075](http://inaturalist.org/observations?place_id=1672&taxon_id=83075)
7. [wiwkwebthegen.com/dictionary-word/wabgon](http://wiwkwebthegen.com/dictionary-word/wabgon)
8. [survivorlibrary.com/library/ethnobotany-of-the-forest-indians.pdf](http://survivorlibrary.com/library/ethnobotany-of-the-forest-indians.pdf)
9. [henriettes-herb.com/eclectic/kings/epigea.html](http://henriettes-herb.com/eclectic/kings/epigea.html)
10. as in the Doctrine of Signatures, a framework in which observable things about a plant, the shape, color, texture, taste, smell, growth patterns, habitats, etc can be interpreted to teach you about its qualities such as how it can be used therapeutically.



*m ä w - k w ě  
mit-i-gwä-kî  
(Queen of  
the Woods)  
he describes*



the best arbutus photos are from davidjhand.com



# Mask Up

*"Just give me a black mask."  
-- The (International) Noise  
Conspiracy*

Everyone has something to protect and we should all act like it. The more people who observe basic security protocols the less easily authorities can pinpoint those with something to hide based on those practices, alone. And when we reduce our criticisms to the lowest hanging fruit we often limit our arguments, and validate those same criticisms that are often baseless and frequently used against us – and this is why I felt urged to write this piece. When the public calls anyone/ everyone cowards for wearing masks, we risk increased scrutiny on ourselves. Just because an ICE agent, neo-nazi, conservative or liberal does it, doesn't necessarily make it a bad tactic.

Obviously we all learned about reducing disease transmission by wearing medical masks in 2020. When capitalism and other forces prevent us from staying home when we're sick, we can help protect others by wearing them, for instance. The reactionaries weren't wrong to say that criminals wear masks though – in fact, criminals should wear masks. Our *accomplices in the crime called freedom*, in particular, should consider wearing masks any time it's appropriate. That is to say, when we are breaking the law in pursuit of liberation (or even just for survival) it is usually in our best interest to conceal our identities. None of this is news.

Our presence on social media, too, is perpetually called into question as the tech giants and government forces find



themselves perpetually overlapping. While we should publicize our opinions and movements, the more we do so on corporate platforms the more susceptible we are to policing and doxxing initiatives. Filming ourselves doing crimes, while full of propaganda value, won't be advocated here for the vastly increased risk of repression it invites. We can also acknowledge that not all crime benefits our fight – after all, anarchism is more a legal than it is either legal or illegal – and we find ourselves protecting ourselves from identity theft and other types of thievery in both the physical and digital realms with this same mindset.

There is a lot more to concealing our identities than just covering our nose and mouths. Ears, eyebrows, and eyes are also helpful biometric markers for facial recognition. Of course passing as law abiding to any passer-by in your environment is also a useful consideration if you want to make it to your action. Disabling cameras ahead of time, or even while you're doing your action with different anti-camera technology, can obviously contribute too – and there can also be a culture promoting that.

In other aspects of our culture, black bloc has fallen out of favor as a tactic that might have previously prevented

being identified at actions. Technology has improved, and little aspects of our garb and exposed faces risk being traced back to us, but a black bloc can still be a useful symbol and tactic. I think particularly of large gatherings where that sort of uniformity is unifying and empowering, as well as intimidating to our enemies. A more diffuse style of bloc – gray block, if you will – is useful when you don't intend to intimidate a population and want to blend in more generally, but there are just as many risks there.

That said, we would do well to remember those histories of so-called comrades throwing insurrectionaries under the guillotine by dubbing them illegalists and not repeat those betrayals. Just because you don't understand or agree with an action doesn't justify resorting to those institutional or moral types of criticisms (or conspiracy theories for that matter). That's the crux really: we don't call each other criminals for acting outside of the law (invoking the state) the same way we don't call each other cowards for taking care to conceal our identities when committing crimes. After all, there's plenty of malice and misconduct that can be justified under the law, but that doesn't make it ethical to do.





# Beware the Hand That Heals : Madness and the Mechanisms of Social Control, Part I

“Insanity,” declared physician Edward Jarvis, “is part of the price which we pay for civilization” (*Mad in America*, Robert Whitaker).

In July 2025, President Trump issued an executive order entitled “Ending Crime and Disorder on America’s Streets.” This order claims that the overwhelming majority of houseless individuals are addicted to drugs, have a mental health issue, or both, and that the federal government has spent tens of billions of dollars in failed programs to try and address this. The order’s aim is to shift “homeless individuals into long-term institutional settings for humane treatment through the appropriate use of civil commitment [that] will restore public order.” While this order currently applies to federal funding, and does not override state-level laws, its vague language paves the way for varying interventions down the road. While this executive order is alarming, it is nothing new. America has a horrifying history of pathologizing vagrants, immigrants, Black people, drug users, women and many other ‘deviants,’ and we can see Trump’s order as merely a return to previous iterations of this society that lifts-up the Christian, white and wealthy while managing, controlling

and harming all others.

The history of asylums, the definition of disorders, and treatment for mental health conditions has been fraught from its very beginning. In *Madness in America*, Robert Whitaker outlines the treatment of mental illness going through a few distinct phases before arriving at modern psychiatry. How to classify mental illness, treat it, and what institutions or authorities should rule this domain has changed dramatically over a few hundred years, and like everything in this world, understandings and approaches are deeply rooted in the racist, sexist and ableist norms of their time. Both asylums and the field of psychiatry have faced a constant crisis of legitimacy, and abrupt changes or new approaches reflect the urgency with which those in power wished to improve society by isolating undesirables, alongside bolstering credibility, reifying an objective science, cultivating money and power, and creating impenetrable institutions of control.

While often associated with the poor, insane asylums were initially popularized by wealthy families in early eighteenth-century England, as a way to get rid of family members whom they thought misrepresented the family and complicated their social standing. The poor and wealthy were housed separately, and private madhouses became an excellent place to hide away annoying family members as well as exclude them from inheritances. Particularly common was a husband sending away his stubborn or unruly wife. This trade grew so pervasive that by 1774, a new law required a physician to certify a person as insane before they were permitted to be sent away. This does not mean that such a certification had been appropriately developed, but merely that institutions were reaching for legitimacy, as well as physicians reaching for their payout from a booming industry. The reigning belief around insanity and mental illness at the time was that a mad person had lost their ability to reason, relegating them away from humanness into the category of animal, and that the



only fit treatment was an immense amount of brutality, to be dominated and broken, to ensure their recovery, or at least their proper management. Torture was the treatment, and the terrorizing of asylum patients was the standard treatment for decades.

Physician Benjamin Rush became skilled in the practices of forced drowning, blood-letting and violently-spinning chairs to treat the insane in England, and brought these practices to the U.S, where in the early nineteenth century, most physicians were unskilled and considered mostly suspect. Rush, an abolitionist, prison reformer, and deeply influenced by scientific racism, was one of the “Founding Fathers,” and later considered the father of American psychiatry. Born to Quaker parents, he tried to make sense of torture as treatment and the Quaker practice of Moral Treatment, which saw patients as individuals and emphasized care and humanity, with restraint as a last resort. Philadelphia Quakers opened the first moral-treatment asylum in America in 1817, and others followed. These were all privately funded, catering to well-to-do families, but soon states began building similar asylums for the insane poor. Care focused on offering a variety of activities to keep patients busy, and large grounds where they could spend time gardening, playing games, and enjoying educational pursuits.

Many critics of asylums consider this to be the only humane period in their history, and while the idyllic setting of the madhouse on bucolic land, with caring attendants, warm baths and hearty food is positive when juxtaposed with the history of torture, they still revolve around an infantilizing of people, and an attempt to control, coerce and correct ‘undesirables’ of a society to make life easier for the ‘right’ citizens.

Mental illness is still a category that, despite unclear boundaries, is used to control and police. The idea that busy hands kept people from succumbing to their madness facilitated the use of unpaid labor as more and more asylums became farm colonies where asylum residents would often perform vigorous farm and domestic work, laboring to fix up asylums as well as produce products to be sold. The Moral Treatment model began to catch on, and state-run asylums grew, but their ability to successfully emulate the first iterations was complicated by how expensive it was to run them, despite all the unpaid labor they utilized. The list of committed began to expand to include those with old-age senility, old-age dementia, alcoholism, brain tumors and dementia from end-stage syphilis. While the boundaries of “mentally ill” were never very well-defined, the sheer spectrum of ailments for which people were sent to madhouses grew and grew and those with very objective physical issues were denied effective treatment. The sheer number of patients meant that measurable ‘positive outcomes’ dwindled, which helped send asylums into their next phase. The Moral Treatment model didn’t require the application of hard medicine, and was in fact critical of it, and so physicians saw that they were losing out, both financially as well as in the status of their role. The next period involved hard-science focused doctors and neurologists taking charge of the realm of the asylum, ready for more concrete approaches to curing the ill.

The next period saw the reintroduction of intense and torturous treatment models, this time bolstered and legitimized by science and physicians. In the beginning of the 20th century, the previously generous attitude toward mental illness disappeared, replaced by the idea that the mentally ill were

simply carriers of a defective “germ plasm” and the only way to protect was to isolate such unfit members from general, “normal” society, or to sterilize and kill them to inhibit the spread of insanity. And thus, the seed for eugenics in the United States was planted. The U.S. was the first country to develop laws for compulsory sterilization of the mentally ill and other “unfit” members of society. The U.S. eugenics movement was funded by the industrial titans of America: Andrew Carnegie, John D Rockefeller Jr., and Mary Harriman, a widow of the railroad magnate Edward Harriman--and eugenics was championed, to a remarkable extent, by graduates of Harvard, Yale, and other Ivy League universities.

Initially a fringe idea being spread by a few wealthy individuals, eugenics found fertile ground in the United States. The sheer number of immigrants coming to America from Ireland and Germany, and then a second wave of Jewish, Italian and Slavic immigrants meant that the ruling class (white Anglo-Saxon Protestant) felt their power slipping. Immigrants were having more children, on average, than WASP families and the well-to-do believed they were unfairly shouldering “costly social programs for immigrants and misfits--public schools, almshouses, and innumerable insane asylums” (Whitaker, 46). For many in power, the only reasonable solution was to bar these types from marrying and procreating, and to keep them isolated from the general population. This solution, however, was at odds with democratic principles that the country claims to be founded on, so in order to advance this approach, eugenics advocates needed to wrap eugenics in the facade of “neutral science.” When Andrew Carnegie read the writings of English eugenicist Herbert Spencer, who railed against social programs<sup>7</sup>

for the unfit, the light bulb went on for him. It was, he said, as though he had finally “found the truth of evolution” (Whitaker, 46). In 1904, Andrew Carnegie gave Harvard-educated biologist Charles Davenport the money to bolster eugenics with a hard-science backing to make it socially palatable enough to spread. Davenport was particularly intent on proving that immigrants and societal misfits were genetically inferior, and soon he was confidently writing that people could inherit genes for “nomadism,” “shiftlessness,” and “insincerity.” Immigrants from Italy, Greece, Hungary, and other Southeastern European countries had germ plasm that made them “more given to crimes of larceny, kidnapping, assault, murder, rape and sex-immorality.” Jews inherited genes for “thieving and prostitution” (Whitaker, 47).

Various other ways to diagnose someone as mentally ill range from being “high-strung, excitable, dictatorial, abnormally selfish” or having an “awful temper, [drinking] periodically” or having “severe blue spells” or being “cranky, stubborn, nervous, queer [or] restless.” Also being “suspicious of friends and relatives,” those who “worry over nothing” or act like “religious cranks”. While these are all incredibly dubious, the criteria of being “suspicious of friends and relatives” hits particularly ironic if we revisit the rise of asylums as an outlet for wealthy families to deal with undesirable members.

In 1907, Indiana became the first state to pass a compulsory sterilization law (which was not removed until 1974). It did so in the name of science, the bill stating that heredity had been shown to play a dominant role in the “transmission of crime, idiocy, and imbecility.” Over the next two decades, thirty state legislatures

approved sterilization bills, and repeatedly they did so based on the argument that science had proven that defectives breed defectives. Their list of degenerate hereditary types were often long. In its 1913 bill, Iowa said that those in need of sterilization included “criminals, rapists, idiots, feeble-minded, imbeciles, lunatics, drunkards, drug fiends, epileptics, syphilitics, moral and sexual perverts, and diseased and degenerate persons” (Whitaker, 58). Full on castration was viewed as a bit extreme by the general population, however sterilization became an acceptable way to deal with the spread of “mental illness.”



In 1925, The Rockefeller foundation gave \$2.5 million to the Psychiatric Institute in Munich, which quickly became Germany’s leading center for eugenics research (Whitaker, 63). Hitler was deeply inspired with the American eugenics movement. Just two years after the supreme court deemed it constitutional, Denmark passed a sterilization law, with Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland to follow suit. Sterilization limited the spreading of “bad genes,” however there was still the issue of how to treat mentally ill people, here and now. Once the horrors of Nazi Germany and the logical outcome of eugenics was revealed, America still viewed itself as too moral to outright

gas people, so they opted for treatment that would render people inept while avoiding outright murder. Insulin coma therapy, inducing seizures with Metrazol, and electroshock therapy became common treatments during the next wave of treatment. Success was marked by patients reduction to a child-like state, being agreeable and more dependent on hospital staff, or having some of their inhibitions lowered. These ‘therapies’ were intense, and often killed patients. They worked because they caused brain trauma, and often removed or limited people’s more complex cognitive abilities as the body fought to stay alive. Their ability to be precisely administered proved tricky, and the need to hone precision led to the introduction of prefrontal lobotomy as a precise...and more permanent fix.

Lobotomies reigned for awhile in the 1950s, until the introduction and spread of Chlorpromazine made incapacitating patients easier, without the negative baggage the lobotomy carried. Chlorpromazine was initially developed under an umbrella of drugs for use as a synthetic dye, and later as an insecticide and antiparasitic for pigs. It transitioned to use on humans after its ability to incapacitate people without putting them to sleep was realized, and it functions by shutting down vital dopaminergic nerve pathways which alters a person’s behavior and thinking (Whitaker, 162). This class of drugs was refashioned by American psychiatrists for widespread use on people by renaming them neuroleptics.

Schizophrenia became the new boogeyman in the 60s and 70s. A wide range of states of emotional distress began to be grouped under the diagnosis of schizophrenia, and neuroleptics became the most popular solution among psychiatrists. Traits that have come to be associated with



schizophrenia, an “awkward gait, gaping facial expression, the jerking arm movements, the vacant facial expression, the sleepiness, the lack of initiative” or the contrary state of agitated pacing are all mostly side-effects of neuroleptic use and not symptoms of a specific disorder (Whitaker, 164). Survivors of neuroleptic administration describe immense mental and physical anguish that manifest outwardly in a zombie-like state. Withdrawal symptoms are as bad or worse, and cause people to become trapped in the cycle of taking this medication, if they even get an option. Poor and Black people became those most frequently diagnosed with schizophrenia, with Black patients having their behavior chronically over-categorized as violent, suspicious or dangerous compared to their white peers (Whitaker, 164-165). Schizophrenia became a new catch-all term to control black people, the diagnosis a more palatable update from a few diagnoses popular during slavery and Reconstruction; drapetomania, diagnosed when a slave sought to run away, and dysaesthesia aethiopis, characterized by idleness and improper respect for a master’s property, were commonly applied (Whitaker, 171).

Psychiatry enjoyed a brief flirtation with Psychoactive drugs for treatment, after LSD was synthesized and distributed beginning in 1947 under the name “Delysid.” Research into its usability was fashionable, until it was made illegal, and psychiatrists focused on investigating LSD abuse to pursue psychiatric fame and fortune. Psychiatry pivoted again, as it explored and expanded pharmacological dependence alongside the ongoing development of publications and journals, groups like NAMI (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) and the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of

Mental Illness), all meant to reify the illusion of legitimacy for the field of psychiatry.

The rise of pharmaceutical use and the intricacies of corruption behind the pharmaceutical industry are beyond the scope of the article, but like most things it usually comes back to money and power. The advancement of medication continues to this day, and alongside ECT (Electroconvulsive Treatment), are the most common treatments used in mental institutions. ECT, formerly called Electroshock Therapy, was developed in the late 1930s, and its popularity has waxed and waned, experiencing a tarnished image in the 1960s before reemerging in the 80s and 90s as a preferred treatment for depression. ECT sends currents through the brain to induce seizure, alleged to produce chemical changes that help with depression.

D. Ewen Cameron, a physician and first head of the World Psychiatric Association was a celebrated pioneer in the somatic treatment of mental illness, and well-regarded as humane and “progressive.” Cameron popularized the use of ECT, and 30 years after his death, it was revealed that he was performing CIA-funded experiments using ECT to explore mind control. His success lay in administering ECT several times a day in order to produce severe enough amnesia to make the patients forget his abuse (Szasz, 136). ECT is not a therapy of the past, but is still administered today.

Since its very beginning, Psychiatry, the insane asylum and various treatments for mental illness have been a mechanism for coercion and control in pursuit of money, power and the management of ‘undesirables’ in our society. The constantly shifting terrain of diagnosis and preferred treatment model illuminates the utter

illegitimacy of these fields, and the mostly nefarious motivations of those in power. A realm often regarded as hard science and a fixture of help and care for those struggling in our society is revealed to be another resource with which to violently change or manage difference in individuals, all in pursuit of a more ‘successful’ society. Fluctuating between the kind hand and the harsh blow, the end goal is the same, and serves as a stark reminder to distrust the insinuations born of this legacy, as well as the individuals that carry out treatment in its service. Trump’s executive order can then be viewed as a continuation of this history, rather than a disturbing outlier. Part II will explore how this is unfolding in our modern, technologically-advanced era, and what might be done about subverting society’s attempts to violate and imprison under the guise of ‘mental health treatment.’

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# Defined by Action

## National Guard Office Attacked Bloomington, IN

from [unravel.noblogs.org](http://unravel.noblogs.org)

June 13 -- The night before the "no kings" spectacle we smashed the windows of an Army National Guard recruiting office. It is easy and fun to attack, and usually accomplishes more than standing on a street corner.

US authorities built militias capable of quelling riots or breaking up strikes after the civil war. The state militias were reconstituted into the modern National Guard. Military training was imposed and matters of discipline rigidly enforced, including inspections by regular Army officers. In addition, more emphasis was placed on recruitment, and armories were built throughout the North.

The National Guard Association came into being in St. Louis, and between 1881 and 1892 every single state revised its military code to provide for an organized militia which most states called the National Guard. The Indiana National Guard has actively been a part of policing the US border. [The National Guard] is always

available to suppress liberatory revolt through violently firing indiscriminately into crowds, or dispersing crowds though theatrical/coercive threats of violence. We see their actions in LA today, and in historical massacres of striking workers and attacks on Katrina survivors. They were deployed during the George Floyd and Ferguson Uprisings. Of course in Ferguson it wasn't the police or even the National Guard who succeeded in putting an end to the rioting, but professional activists.

It is important to remember that, in this cycle of social upheaval, riots can be experienced as celebration, as joyous and cathartic releases of emotion: police and politicians who enter riot zones often cite this atmosphere as the thing that terrifies them the most. But riots are also driven by anger and loss. They emerge as an alternative form of care and remembrance for those the state's patriarchal violence has destroyed: rising up in mourning for lost children and in outrage at the domination of daily life. They can be ugly, bloody, and frightening.

Riots are communicative, but unlike protest, they do not aim their speech at those in power, at leaders or the state; instead, they are a form of direct communication and knowledge transfer among those outside the traditional avenues of power.

Solidarity with the LA fighters!  
Solidarity with anarchist fighters!

## Cybertruck Vandalism Bloomington, Indiana

from [unravel.noblogs.org](http://unravel.noblogs.org)

October 10 -- We slashed the tires of a Tesla Cybertruck, and covered its front windshield and sides in red paint. We hope this inspired fury in its owner, and a lingering sense of frustration. It brought us great joy. For more anarchy!





# Defined by Action



# How To: Break Glass

A brick through a window. It's an old cliché and a pejorative for anarchists. Yet those millions of particles of sand pressed under extreme heat into a clear substance become valuable and fragile. When you want to increase the cost of a business' business, it is a vulnerable facet – but not always as easy as you might think, so here's some insight.

Wear gloves. Fingerprints go through nitrile gloves, but nitrile-dipped work gloves are good (the knit part prevents print transfer). Alcohol can be used to clean prints off tools, but only bleach can clean off DNA if that feels necessary. A change of clothes is a good idea – something different than what you wear when you leave and return to your home – ideally something without logos or reflective material, and that you can throw away if you need to. Tattoos are more easily identifiable than fingerprints so keep them covered. The more of your skin that's covered the less likely to get cut, but looking like you belong in the locale you're acting in has its benefits too.

Emergency escape hammers often don't work. The point is too dull. The glass breaker on tactical pens work better, but the tip can fall out through use.

Real hammers are great – ball-peen hammers or the claw end of framing hammers are the best among those commonly available. Face away from the window swinging downward. This allows you to use gravity and keep the shattering glass away from (and well below) your eyes.

rigid and are less able to absorb the shock of the strike that the center can. Hit the corners. If at first you don't succeed, keep hitting it.

Some glass is more reinforced, particularly on doors (since they move and get slammed). They require more force and sharper points.

Rocks and bricks can work, but are heavy if you're trying to throw them. Broken up bits of ceramic are better, like insulators on power lines. They look like bigger versions of the same part on a spark plug, which you can also allegedly use. Sometimes you can find broken/discarded insulators (or replacements) underneath those powerlines and along train tracks. A big enough chunk to still carry some momentum is good, broken (with a hammer) to make as many sharp edges as possible. In addition to the risk of finger prints and DNA, wearing gloves will also prevent being cut by their sharp edges.

Projectiles are good for distance. If you can walk up to the window then a hammer is usually faster and easier. Breaking glass is always noisy, but unless you're being chased or followed by a witness it's in your best interest to walk calmly away rather than run.

If you're trying to be more stealthy glass etch is a good solution, but it is nasty stuff. It's commonly available at art supply stores for creating a frosted effect on glass. Same rules for keeping it below eye level. Mixing it with some water in a shoe polish mop can ease application, but the more watered down, the less severe the application. Make sure you dump out the polish and remove the regulator





beneath the foam beforehand. It can be buffed out by property owners to some degree, unfortunately.

If you want to get deep into secure and effective actions, websites like NoTrace.How and Warrior Up! are great resources (always accessed with a Tor browser, if not a Tails operating system).

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No single action is the revolution. A liberatory revolution is made up by many actions – big and small,

caring and building and destructive – by many concerned individuals and affinity groups. A broken window is a small cost to a large business, but it is always the way in which we act together that builds the basis for a liberatory force. Not through coercion, guilt, or shame. Not through lies and manipulation. Through the understanding of the stakes and consequences, and by taking responsibility with and for our actions are we anarchists. By that we don't mean turning yourself in to authorities, but by being accountable

to your loved ones and comrades.

When destructive actions can happen collectively in a public setting we better grow our tactics and strategies. Alone under cover of night we still build confidence and ability, and attempt to hold the powerful to account. In both circumstances we begin. In both circumstances we carry on. In both circumstances we spread a means of organizing ourselves into a threat that proliferates autonomy, and doesn't counteract our principles or negate anyone's fight for liberation.

# Collapse Features

## Hot Fashion

In this current era, fashion, in all senses of the word, is defined by consumption. Not only by our incessant need for more garments, or the planetarily destructive ways we produce the fabrics and “finished” garments, but in their very design and expected use conditions as well. Our clothes have become shorter, tighter, and smaller in every dimension since industrialization began. Enabled by widespread access to sunscreen, AC, and private automobiles, our fashion necessitates our dependence upon these modern conveniences and again those conveniences enable our fashion. This is not a call for modesty, however. I, too, enjoy not looking like shit and feeling comfortable on a warm day. Though as our climate careens towards a fiery apocalypse, the global system of trade breaks down due to tariffs and waves of revolution abroad, the empire's domestic infrastructure deteriorates, and weather events become ever more extreme, what we wear on an average 70 degree day in

December will have to be different from a 100 degree day in July. There is no guarantee that the AC will run the day after a super-storm tears through town or that stores will be able to stock sunscreen and cars will be able to move when the ports don't have any new shipments or wildfires split the continent in half. Sitting outside in the shade and near water to cool down on potentially deadly summer days is going to become a reality even if it's a long ways away until those conditions are the norm. Learning how to protect ourselves from sunburn, heat-stroke, and skin cancer without the luxuries we've grown to depend on will become a part of our lives whether we want it to or not.

All over the world, peoples have converged upon a handful of methods to deal with the sun, heat, and humidity. By taking notes we might be able to find tools to address this crisis for ourselves. Traveling to the

south, in so called “Mexico” and the south west of the empire, settlers adapted traditional garments as they steadily colonized northwards. Hats were a necessity less than a century ago. More than just fashion, they provide shade for the face and neck. While a kind of convergent evolution has meant that hats all over the world sport a wide brim and a high insulating crown, the cowboys on both sides of the still very fluid border developed two sibling forms we still see today: the sombrero jarano and the cowboy hat. Both feature a wide brim, although the sides of the cowboy hat tend to be turned up, and a round high brim, with the sombrero often having a higher, more conical crown. The Serape and Rebozo are a long cloaks / shawls worn over the shoulders and meant for protection from hot weather. Local varieties have emerged all across the region, woven with beautiful bright patterns. They were possibly developed from the garments worn by the Mexich

and other indigenous peoples of what is now central “Mexico.” A simple long-sleeved button up shirt, made of a fine cotton weave and dyed a light color is still to this day a common solution and is found across this hemisphere and abroad.

In the Middle East, the Keffiyeh is a common head dress often wrapped on top of the head or worn similar to a veil. It serves both to block the sun and to wick moisture from the head, cooling the fabric as it evaporates. The Thawb or Thobe is a traditional tunic worn by women in Palestine and men in the rest of the Arab world. Historically they were woven from sheep’s wool, and could be dyed any number of colors. Because of the loose nature of the garment, it rarely

rests tightly against the body and so the choice of fabric and color have little effect on the wearer. The air between the fabric and skin served as an insulating layer, preventing heat from transferring to the body.

In “India”, a variety of different garments are worn all across the subcontinent, but many share similar features. Often these are based on squares of light, finely woven cotton wrapped around the head, torso, or legs. Another option is a loose fitting tunic (Kameez for women and Kurta for men) and a pair of Churidars, or tight-fitting pants similarly made from light cotton. The Lungi, worn by men, and the closely related unisex sarung from Southeast Asia, are tubes of fabric worn as skirts tied at the

waist, or dresses tied above the chest. Such a simple garment is obviously not limited to the region and has equivalents all across the planet, with the Maxi-skirt being a familiar example.

As the climate continues to heat up and our current solutions become less reliable, being informed by the ways people both past and present have addressed these issues can prepare us to keep ourselves safe from the very real dangers of the sun: sunburn, heat stroke, and skin cancer. Intentionally engaging with our fashion, we must begin to prepare for a less hospitable world and imagine how it might look.





# Enemy Territories

## Data Centers

Like most technology that exists physically outside of our daily lives, data centers feel sort of incomprehensible. You might think of a long, dull warehouse full of wires and blinking lights. You wouldn't be that wrong. Perhaps easier to imagine is what it's like to live in the shadow of a data center: Noise pollution. Monthly electricity bills doubling in price. Being unable to flush the toilet because the water pressure is too low. Or water use is rationed during a drought. Opening a window to let in the breeze also lets in the smell of diesel exhaust and the hum of constant whirring. Going outside makes it hard to breathe. Most of the kids you know are starting to get asthma attacks. This is what awaits more of us if toxic infrastructure like data centers continue to be built around us.

### The physical backbone of digital life

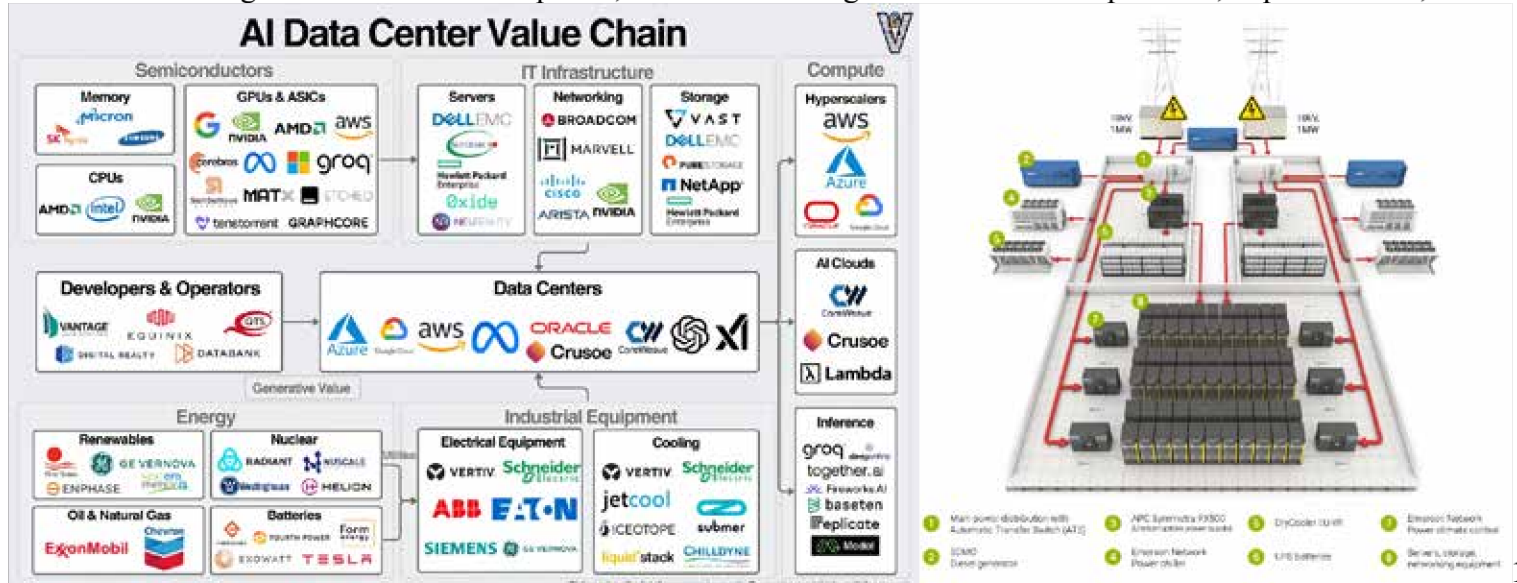
Large data centers tend to be in long, low, windowless buildings surrounded by concrete. Inside are metal racks holding columns of server

computers, rows and rows of server racks. Other components include switches, routers, wires, and cables to connect various machines. HVAC/cooling systems are an essential part. They often look like huge fans on the roof of the building. Large collections of batteries and diesel generators, meant to guarantee the machines keep running even in the event of a black out, are lined up alongside. Security systems, like metal detectors and biometrics at the entrances, protect the campus. The largest centers are up to 60,000 sq. ft. and most campuses exist on at least 10 acres.

There are four basic types of data center: Enterprise centers are owned and operated by a single company for their own needs. Internet ones are operated by internet and telecom providers for their customers' data. Colocation data centers are facilities that host or lease space to multiple users. Hyperscale centers are just really big ones with high processing volume. The corporations that build, operate, and lease a large share of

data centers are not the ones we hear about the most – Google, Amazon, Microsoft – but one you've probably never heard of. Equinix is the global leader in data center operation. The AI Data Center Value Chain chart shows the leading manufacturers of the essential components, including semiconductors/microchips, HVAC systems, the servers themselves and networking equipment, as well as the operators and users of data centers.

This sprawling infrastructure exists to store, process, compute, and transmit data. Every single action you do on your phone, computer, smartwatch, smart fridge, in front of a digital camera, all your medical and financial records, all of this is collecting and storing data on you. They've gotta have somewhere to put it, retrieve it, and analyze it. That's where data centers come in. It is all of our personal data, but also storage for music and video streaming platforms. It's language learning models and AI. It's all the cloud storage services for personal, professional, and



government use. The big players here are Google Cloud, Amazon Web Services, and Microsoft Azure. Cloud storage does have a physical reality. Unfortunately, this is not like the old days, when a county court house could be burned down, taking all the property documents, criminal records, and debt ledgers going with it. These companies use redundancy and distributed storage techniques to mitigate risk of data loss. Every cat picture that your phone automatically stores in the cloud is there, digitally distributed across the world. Artificial intelligence is certainly a strong driver in the need for more data storage and processing capability, but data centers and AI are not synonymous. All the other ways that digital information records and controls our lives, in the ways that have already been normalized and those just emerging, also require this kind of infrastructure. AI should not be taking all the blame.

Unsurprisingly, data centers tend to be built in marginalized communities: Black, brown, poor, and rural. These are often places where environmental racism and classism have already been at work for decades and levels of pollution and subsequent health outcomes are already worse. These are often known as sacrifice zones. This happens on both a national and global scale. Within the U.S., the South and Appalachia have more data centers. The world's highest concentration, four counties in northern Virginia called Data Center Alley, has over 300 operational centers and 13% of the global data storage capacity. Other colonized locations like Ireland and the Asia-Pacific are also hotspots. There is a tug-of-war of interests here: the convenience of being located near urban centers and hubs of industry vs the affordability and lack of regulation and concern in sacrifice zones.

**“This is another example of the country’s tendencies to externalize the costs of their relentless wealth hoarding to southeastern United States. They have chosen the south as an area of sacrifice, that is, a place to deposit the most unpleasant industries and their waste. For them, our home is barely available within such parameters, as it can still be used as a landfill. Thus, the people who acted insist that those who try to steal our water, air and land must at least endure loss and embarrassment on their way to hell.”<sup>1</sup>**

There is a motivation and desperation for data centers that goes beyond the IT needs of a few corporations. They are necessary for the all-encompassing techno-surveillance dystopia that the state is evolving into in service of capital. The rhetoric used by developers, operators, businessmen, and the government officials kissing their rings tells us how important this infrastructure is to their project. “The physical embodiment of their mission,” some Microsoft asshole said. Their mission – of knowing, controlling, analyzing, processing, predicting, limiting, and manipulating – is antithetical to ours, one of feeling, expansion, uncontrollability, and unmediated relating. These data centers are necessary for the smooth and continued functioning of digital systems, services, and programs. We cannot be bought by consumer convenience. We do not want the smooth functioning of the digital empire.

#### **At what cost?**

Probably the most well-known

consequence of data centers is their drain on energy infrastructure and the subsequent rise in price of electricity. They require a lot of energy not just for running the servers and networking equipment 24/7, but also the cooling systems. They can use as much power in a year as thousands of local households. It is estimated that by 2028 data centers will use 12% of all energy in the U.S. This estimate is highest for the country of Ireland, a breathtaking 30%. The increasing demand on energy companies and local utilities causes them to raise prices on everyone, not just in the immediate area, but everyone on the same grid. Because of the way grids are divided up and the way energy trading works, all of us will feel the strain to some degree. Energy customers are also on the hook for the upgrade in equipment and transmission capacity necessary for some areas to accommodate these energy-intensive projects.

About 56% of the energy for data centers comes from fossil fuels. It would be unbelievable if it wasn't so normal that tech companies would want to build out enormous energy-intensive infrastructure at a time when burning fossil fuels is literally ruining the world. Pretending to hear these concerns, places like Google and AWS are talking about expanding wind and solar production and being ‘carbon neutral’ in a few years’ time. Critiques of wind and solar energy are for another time, but this does contribute to the question of land use, which we’ll cover below. If nothing else, it demonstrates adherence to the very wrong assessment of climate change that says we can keep (and even expand) our energy requirements and just change where it comes from, instead of making the changes necessary to use less energy.

Another consequence of the burning



of fossil fuels to power the center is the air quality in the surrounding areas. This largely comes from the generators that run on diesel fuel. While it seems like they should only be running occasionally, during a black out, they also run monthly tests and can be used to supplement during times of high energy use. While this is an emerging phenomenon, residents near data centers report difficulty breathing and increased rates of asthma diagnoses and asthma attacks. The burning of diesel releases nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter under 2.5 microns (PM2.5) into the air. In addition to environmental damage, long-term exposure to PM2.5 increases risks of lung and heart disease and lowers overall life expectancy.

In addition to massive amounts of energy, many data centers use massive amounts of water. The water is used to cool the computer components that get overheated doing all their little calculations. There are alternative cooling methods, like in-room air conditioning, that use less water, but they're expensive. There are some centers that use water only on really hot days. Regardless, the overall demand for water is high. A large center can use up to 5 million gallons a year, equivalent to the amount used by tens of thousands of people. As of 2021, it was estimated that the 5000+ data centers in the U.S. used 163 billion gallons of water. This water can come from groundwater, surface water, municipal water, or gray water (recycled water, basically, not fit for drinking). Data centers in different locations are taking from different sources. Using municipal water directly competes with local households, potentially raising prices. Use of aquifers risks depleting them, which can take thousands of years to refill. Use of surface water threatens local supply, which could result in

rationing orders especially during times of drought, and affects the health of water systems and the life it sustains.

There is also the question of what happens with the water when the centers are done with it. There are concerns with overwhelming municipal wastewater facilities. If it is released directly back into the environment, there is the risk of thermal pollution, which is the ecological damage done by releasing unnaturally warm or hot water into the landscape. Warmer water holds less oxygen. The oxygen level in a given body of water is a delicate balance; changing it dramatically will change the composition of organisms living in it. Many organisms live in narrow windows of water temperature and releasing millions of gallons of hot water can make it impossible for them to survive.

Finally, the construction of new and bigger data centers raises the question of land use. Data centers are buying/leasing an average of 40 acres per site, with AI-focused centers averaging 200 acres. This area is for not just the buildings full of servers, but accessory equipment, generators, roads, parking lots, and laying cables coming in and out. In addition, some large data centers also build renewable energy facilities on-site. The increased demand for wind and solar farms, whether on- or off-site, takes over even more land, as these are land-intensive infrastructure. One study showed that data centers are 2/3 of the corporate renewables market, showing that they are really driving development. Farmland, forest, grassland, and wetlands are all being destroyed in the construction of new centers. Here in Indiana, it seems that farmland is the most common. After all, most of the wetlands have already been destroyed to make create the

farmland. The destruction can extend even beyond the boundaries of the centers themselves as large fiber network cables can be laid through wild spaces and even conservation land if it's convenient.

### **Data Centers in Indiana**

There are currently 28 data centers in Indiana. Most are in the Indianapolis area (17), followed by South Bend (5), and 1 each in Fort Wayne, Jeffersonville, Evansville, Carmel, Lafayette, and Columbus. There are an additional 40 or so proposed centers, though some have been delayed or withdrawn. The proposals include several more around Indianapolis, South Bend, and Fort Wayne and a handful in Gary. These include centers from tech giants such as Meta in the LEAP tech park,<sup>2</sup> Google, Microsoft, and Amazon's AI-focused center in New Carlisle, which is the largest capital investment in our state's history: \$11 billion.<sup>3,4</sup>

While we are still behind Ohio in number of data centers, Indiana's lawmakers are trying their best to attract more capital investment from tech companies at the expense of residents. They do this mostly by offering tax cuts (with some agreements lasting up to 50 years!) and accommodating them with whatever they need in terms of local utilities and infrastructure, with taxpayers footing the bill. Politicians promote these policies by touting the economic benefits. For Meta's LEAP site, business leaders bragged that it would bring "dozens of high-paying tech jobs." While there may be plentiful contractor jobs during the construction phase, those do not last long. Data centers do not require many long-term employees.

The costs clearly outweigh the benefits and most residents know it. They have objected to data centers on 17

the grounds of destruction of farmland – over 460 acres at a site in south-east Indianapolis that Google wanted to buy. They object to the energy use, which Indiana Michigan Power estimates will, by 2030, be more than all households in Indiana combined. And by 2032, data centers could use up to 36% of all retail electric sales. Residents are also concerned about water use. People living near the Amazon site in New Carlisle are already reporting their wells drying up. Because of this, several proposals have already been defeated by public pressure, including one in Ellettsville.

### **“I exist and I will keep moving!”**

#### **The fight against data centers**

Data centers are unpopular. Everywhere they are proposed, some sort of resistance emerges. Residents, nonprofits, activists, saboteurs and sometimes even politicians join the fight. Usually what this looks like is a pretty traditional lobbying campaign: going to city, county, commission, or zoning meetings and using public comment to speak against the project; calling local representatives; and finding neighbors through Facebook groups, canvassing, or outreach events. Sometimes there are signs made and protests held at government sites or tech company offices. In Ireland, Extinction Rebellion held theatrical, vampire-themed protests. A data center fight in Ypsilanti, MI even has a theme song. Sometimes, larger and more resourced environmental organizations get involved and can help bring lawsuits against the corporations. Public support is usually built by talking about the financial consequences such as sky-rocketing energy bills and environmental consequences like water use and farmland or habitat destruction.

These campaigns are having some success. Including the five already  
18defeated in Indiana, \$64 billion

in projects have been delayed or withdrawn in the U.S. This success is true in other places as well. Ireland and the Netherlands both have instituted moratoria on new data centers. Though, for Ireland, it's hard to call it a success, as this came only after many data centers have been built and people are experiencing the consequences first hand. Activists are trying to share methods and resources so that other communities don't have to learn the hard way. And so that companies that get chased out of one town cannot just set up somewhere else. We don't want to make it other people's problem. Perhaps this can knit together activity and organizers across many small towns.

Just as important as the financial repercussions are the degradation of digital privacy and the increased capacity for surveillance that data centers enable. We see some activists addressing this as well. Scholar Anne Pasek says in her zine on data centers: “It's a statement not just about how this is irresponsible and expensive, but a rejection of the imposition of digital life, of gathering and saving and processing data on every single person, of the economy of information, of the insistence that we don't have to change energy habits, only be more renewable.” She also points out that data centers challenge the idea of climate-conscious living being a question of personal choice and habit. And, yes, we should absolutely reject using AI in any form. But this misunderstands that most harmful impacts are coming from networks and systems larger than personal action. “We can be over-invested in the morality of individual actions, completely missing how larger industrial factors have a far bigger impact.”<sup>5</sup>

Less common than the advocacy campaigns in the fight against data

centers is direct sabotage. But it does happen. Act for Free reports the arson of server-data cabins in Italy. Network cables have been sabotaged in Germany and France. Construction vehicles at a data center site in Georgia were torched.<sup>6</sup> Relevant here is what we know about the physical vulnerabilities of data centers. The cooling and ventilation systems are essential as overheating will ruin the servers. There is also a cybersecurity issue here as hacking into the system has happened and is known as a “thermal attack.” The fiber and network cables going in and out of a center may not have the same level of security as the equipment that is within the center itself. And there are supply-chain concerns for some components. This is especially true for the semi-conductors that comprise the servers themselves. They have to be manufactured in extremely specific conditions and so are only made at a limited number of sites. See Tinderbox<sup>7</sup> for more on this process.

**“AI not only uses more water than other computer processes, but is quickly becoming a way for the state to increase its intrusion in our personal life. And more and more are used by police and state forces to monitor those who oppose them. The people who burned these machines do not believe that our thoughts and movements should be used for profit or incarceration.”<sup>1</sup>**

Data centers are just the latest manifestation of digital life to be forced upon us. But there is momentum here to stop their proliferation. It is possible that each successful local fight will push them further and further into



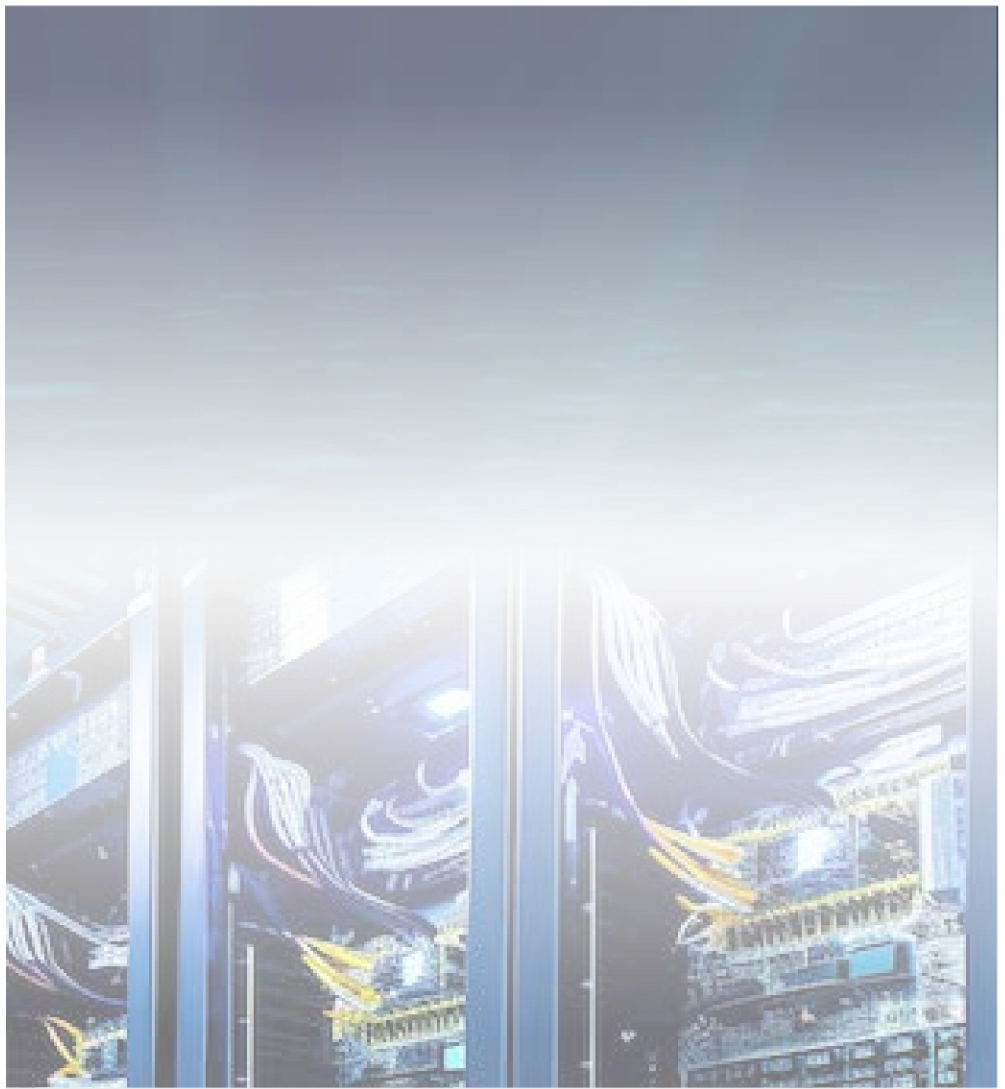
the margins, into communities whose voices lawmakers do not care about. The hyper-wealthy owners of tech companies and politicians cannot give up so easily on a project necessary to feed the ever-expanding appetite of capital. I suspect that government-owned land may also become more common for becoming data center campuses. Not land owned by local government, who can be more easily pressured, but state and federal land. We know they do not give a shit what we want or what is good for us. We must stop the spread of data centers here and everywhere, for us, for each other, for the land and the air and the water. Down with digital empire!

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7. Tinderbox is not available on the internet. Find an anarchist's zine table.
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“We cannot exist without this river, sacred, our watershed, life blood. Trace the Huron Eastward, we are connected by this water, by the choices we make in this moment, how long the river lives, it keeps going, our decisions, their consequences for generations, keeps going in the bodies of our children, and then your finger is submerged in Lake Erie’s wide embrace. You become that water.

Water would reject a business deal with death, water says, “I exist and will keep moving.” Water is within you right now, creating the conditions for life, the present and the future, to emerge and continue.

This poem is about you and us, about the water inside us all.”

*from “A Poem For Ypsi Township On Behalf Of The Water” from the Stop the Data Center campaign in Ypsilanti, Michigan:*

## A Column of Art and Culture

Preschoolers in Indiana like cars too much, but they're not to blame for their interest. Sprawl has buckled them into their car seats for much of their waking and some of their napping hours. The block centers in their classrooms feature Hot Wheels, encouraging them to build – of all that their imaginations could conjure! – roads. Once a year, hundreds of thousands of people gather at a big track in the middle of the state to watch the cars below go round and round. Car culture is the air children breathe, polluted as it may be. What can inspire kids to reconsider cars?

Preschoolers also like animals. In dramatic play they often embody a nonhuman animal, attempting not only to sound and move like their species of choice but also to meet that animal's needs, whether by finding water, hunting, or resting. Kids are interested in animals' well-being, and so, when prompted to think about it, they care about habitat conservation. *Miss Leoparda*, a lovely picture book written and illustrated by Natalia Shaloshvili and translated from Russian by Lena Traer, connects car infrastructure to habitat loss.

The titular character, we learn in the first page, “slept in a tree.” Shaloshvili’s acrylic and crayon illustration shows a cozy leopard: eyes closed, legs dangling between branches, vulnerable from the beginning. During the day, Miss Leoparda drives a bus, taking other animals “around on their animal business” – until each of these animals starts traveling in a private car. She loses both her role in the community and her home to car culture, her tree cut down so that cars can drive where it stood. With such a pitiable situation, it’s easy to root for her, and she and her friends do get a happy, car-free ending. Anti-civ parents of young kids, *Miss Leoparda* could be one of your favorite bedtime stories.





# “I Must Become a Menace to my Enemies”

*June Jordan*

1

I will no longer lightly walk behind  
a one of you who fear me:

Be afraid.

I plan to give you reasons for your jumpy fits  
and facial tics

I will not walk politely on the pavements anymore  
and this is dedicated in particular  
to those who hear my footsteps  
or the insubstantial rattling of my grocery  
cart

then turn around

see me

and hurry on

away from this impressive terror I must be:

I plan to blossom bloody on an afternoon  
surrounded by my comrades singing  
terrible revenge in merciless

accelerating

rhythms

But

I have watched a blind man studying his face.

I have set the table in the evening and sat down  
to eat the news.

Regularly

I have gone to sleep.

There is no one to forgive me.

The dead do not give a damn.

I live like a lover

who drops her dime into the phone

just as the subway shakes into the station

wasting her message

canceling the question of her call:

fulminating or forgetful but late

and always after the fact that could save or  
condemn me

I must become the action of my fate.

2

How many of my brothers and my sisters  
will they kill

before I teach myself  
retaliation?

Shall we pick a number?

South Africa for instance:

do we agree that more than ten thousand  
in less than a year but that less than  
five thousand slaughtered in more than six  
months will

WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH ME?

I must become a menace to my enemies.

3

And if I

if I ever let you slide

who should be extirpated from my universe  
who should be cauterized from earth  
completely

(lawandorder jerkoffs of the first the  
terrorist degree)

then let my body fail my soul  
in its bedeviled lecheries

And if I

if I ever let love go

because the hatred and the whisperings  
become a phantom dictate I o-  
bey in lieu of impulse and realities  
(the blossoming flamingos of my  
wild mimosa trees)

then let love freeze me  
out.

I must become

I must become a menace to my enemies.



*In Tension aspires to be a place-based project, and as such, we must state that “Bloomington” and “Indiana” should not exist. At the deepest fulfillment of our liberatory project, these entities would be dissolved. The devastating impact of European colonization, settlement, and industrialization on the land, its human and nonhuman inhabitants, and the way in which we relate to it cannot be overstated. This land is unceded territory of the Myaamia, Kaskaskia, Kiikaapoi, šaawanwaki, Neshnabek, Wandat, Waayaahatanwa, Peeyankihšiaki, Peewaareewa, Lenape, and others.  
Toward the end of the U.S. and every empire.*