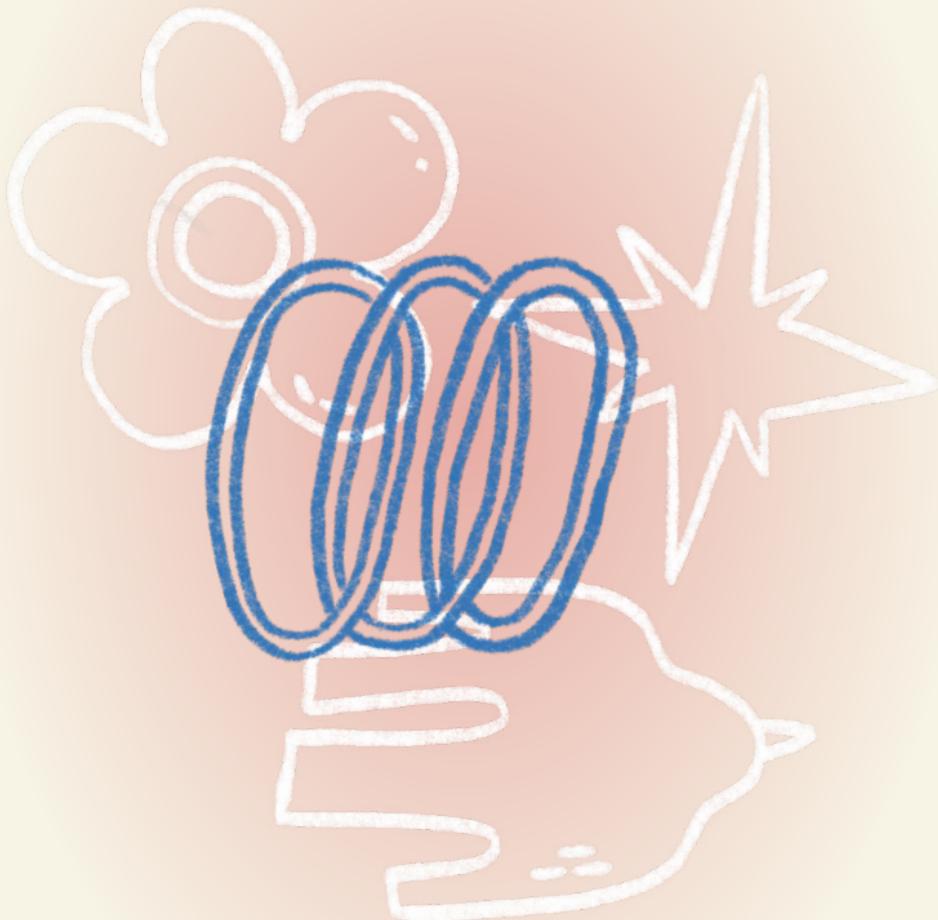
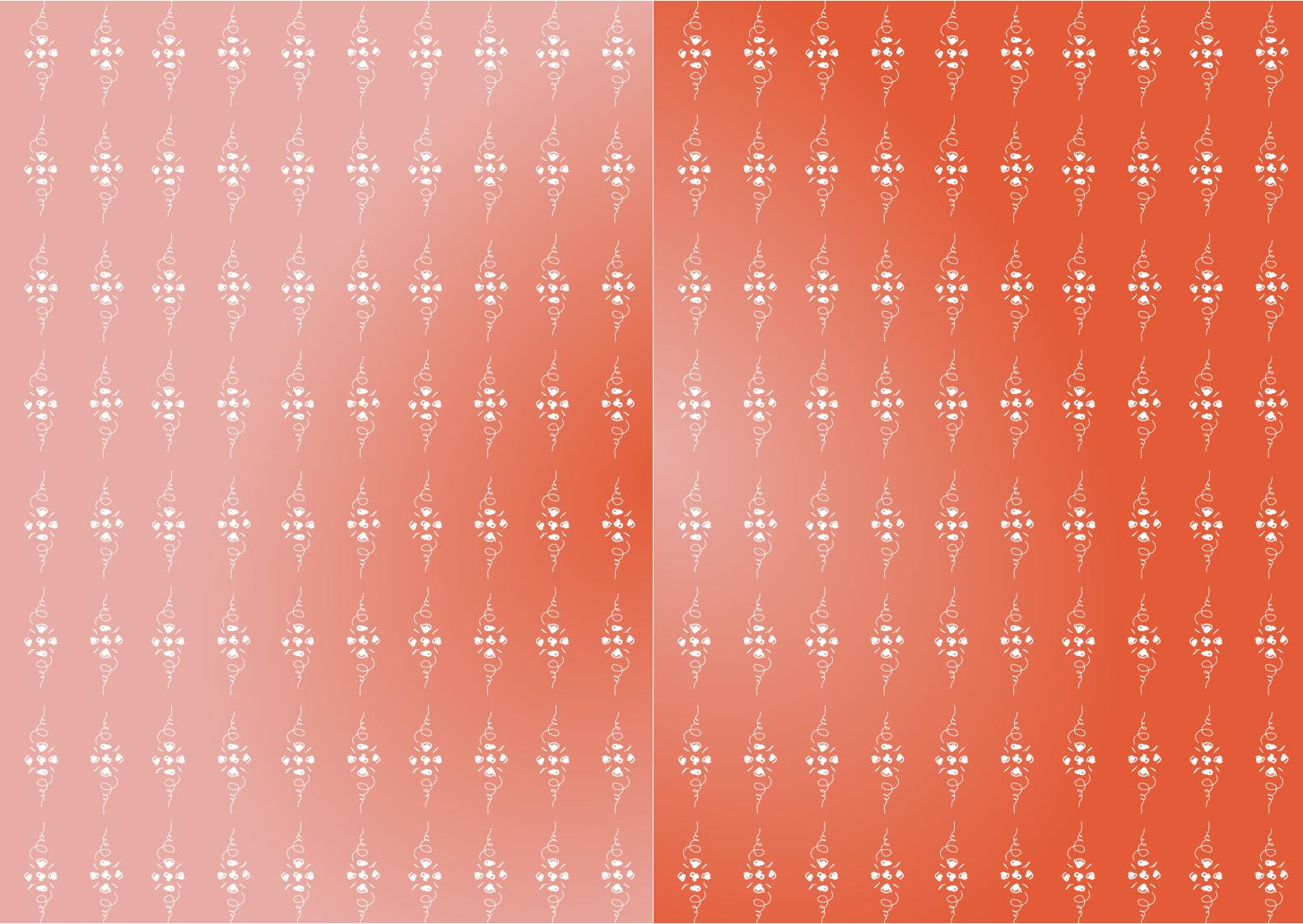


What's Love\* Got To Do With

# INTIMACY



A REFLECTION ON





SEPTEMBER 2024

To those who dare to see themselves,  
thus, allow themselves to be seen, and  
see others.

What's Love\* Got To Do With \_\_\_\_\_  
is a monthly zine series published on Project Theory Probe, discovering the many ways that love has been overlooked and undercooked in our daily lives, then proposing alternatives to our intimacy-deprived, love-confused existence.

WHAT'S LOVE\* GOT TO DO WITH

# INTIMACY

what's inside

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Together we will create brave space  
Because there is no such thing as a  
“safe space”

We exist in the  
real world

We all carry scars and we  
have all caused wounds.

In this space  
We seek to turn down the volume of the  
outside world

We amplify voices that  
fight to be heard elsewhere

We call  
each other to more truth and love

We have the right to start  
somewhere and  
continue to grow.

We have the  
responsibility to examine what we think  
we know.

We will not be perfect.  
This space will not be perfect.  
It will not always be what we  
wish it to be  
But it will be our brave space  
together and we will work on it side  
by side.

– Micky ScottBey Jones (copied from  
[kaalo101.org](http://kaalo101.org))



03

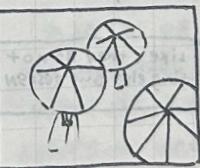
Photo: a page from my notebook →

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31



This is my room at ka alo.  
in the early morning, i woke up to sounds of bells, barks,  
objects dangling together,  
roosters, and birds. usually,  
i decided to be up at 6-some  
-thing, going to the kitchen  
space downstairs and made  
myself a houjicha latte.  
why? to avoid running into  
another person.

idk how to verbalize it in a beautiful stream of  
meaningful words yet. But those words, those  
images are living within my body. and i can  
catch them, with my mind's eyes and emotional  
web.



Fr 27 Sep 24

Rainy day. we hop  
From 1 place to  
another, getting  
wet in the cold!

**Step 1: Draw a rectangle.**



Hey, feel encouraged to draw onto these pages.  
In fact, all pages.

**Step 2: This rectangle is the  
community. When you felt  
rejected, where are you  
compared to this rectangle?**

**Step 3: Where are you compared  
to the rectangle when you feel  
belonged and comfortable?**

I am making this zine from Kathmandu, hopping from one cafe to another. For one week, I stayed at an artivistic residence called Kaalo 101. The name kaalo (कालो) means black in Nepali.

My table at Kaalo.



Every year since 2019, I have wanted to revisit Nepal. Back then, I was trained in a landscape architecture project that used participatory design while in my spare time, hanging out with Nepali artists to create an ethnographic film.

It was mysterious to me at that time, but I was already investigating love and intimacy. The quest continually deepens throughout my life. Nepal was where I specifically was trained to build intimacy before every design and creation, to detect intimate threads through mundane facets of life.

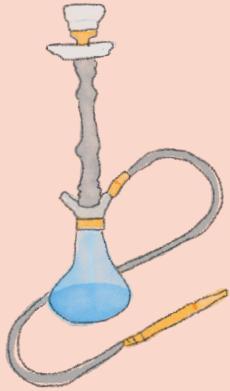
We spent weeks dialoging with the 16 households of Bhangal community, learning about their favorite colors, struggles, and dreams.

Photo: the participatory, landscape design I was a part of in 2019. From Christy Liao website. →



With a hookah in hands,  
Sabin Ninglekhu, who  
was one of my university  
instructors, said to me in  
an evening hangout,

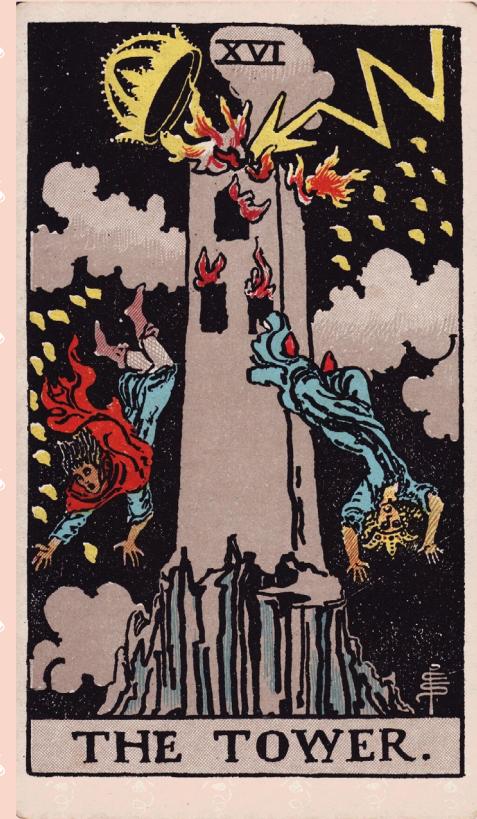
09



Do all revolutions contain  
its own seeds of  
destruction, like the god  
Shiva, perpetually  
destroying their own  
creations to allow for  
renewal and rebirth?



Why is it that we  
become the very thing  
we try to fight against?  
He was referring to the  
Communist Party of  
Nepal. After coming to  
power, they became the  
corruption they raged a  
war against.

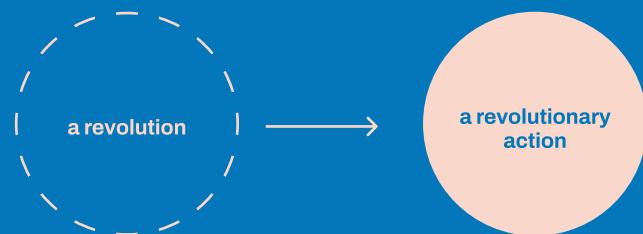


No, I refuse to think so.

To begin, recalling history in the shapes of Revolutions, like the Agricultural Revolution, Digital Revolution and so forth, implies that there will be the next Big Revolution which shakes up everything. Such perspective also implies that changes are brought by a momentous breakthrough, usually by white men or those who fit white men's fantasies, instead of a continual process by gazillion contributors.

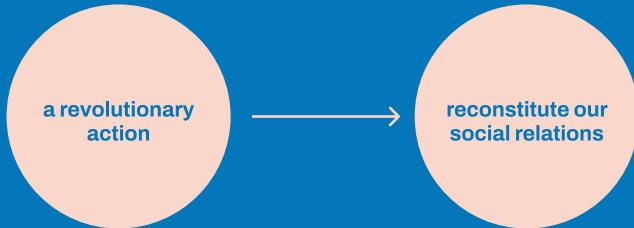
Attributing the Revolution to some key dominant figures and tell the world's narrative in terms of Western thinking depress the voices of many.

Instead, empowerment and awareness can arise naturally when we shift cataclysmic thinking to "becoming ontology":



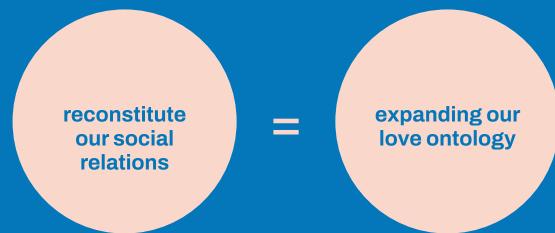
**A revolutionary action**, Graeber wrote in the wonderful and tiny book, Fragments of An Anarchist Anthropology,

"is any collective action which rejects, and therefore confronts, some form of power or domination and in doing so, reconstitutes social relations--even within the collectivity--in that light."



When we think in terms of process, the means is the goal in itself. We no longer coerce people in the name of freedom, but freedom comes from an accumulation of liberating actions.

To maintain a continuation of liberating actions, we are required to honestly reconstitute the way we relate to each other in ways that are different from the domination in which we oppose. I call such a process **the expansion of love ontology**.



In Graeber's determination that a revolutionary action must reconstitute our social relations in the light of the kindness that we are trying to realize, I found the language to express my quest for love and intimacy.



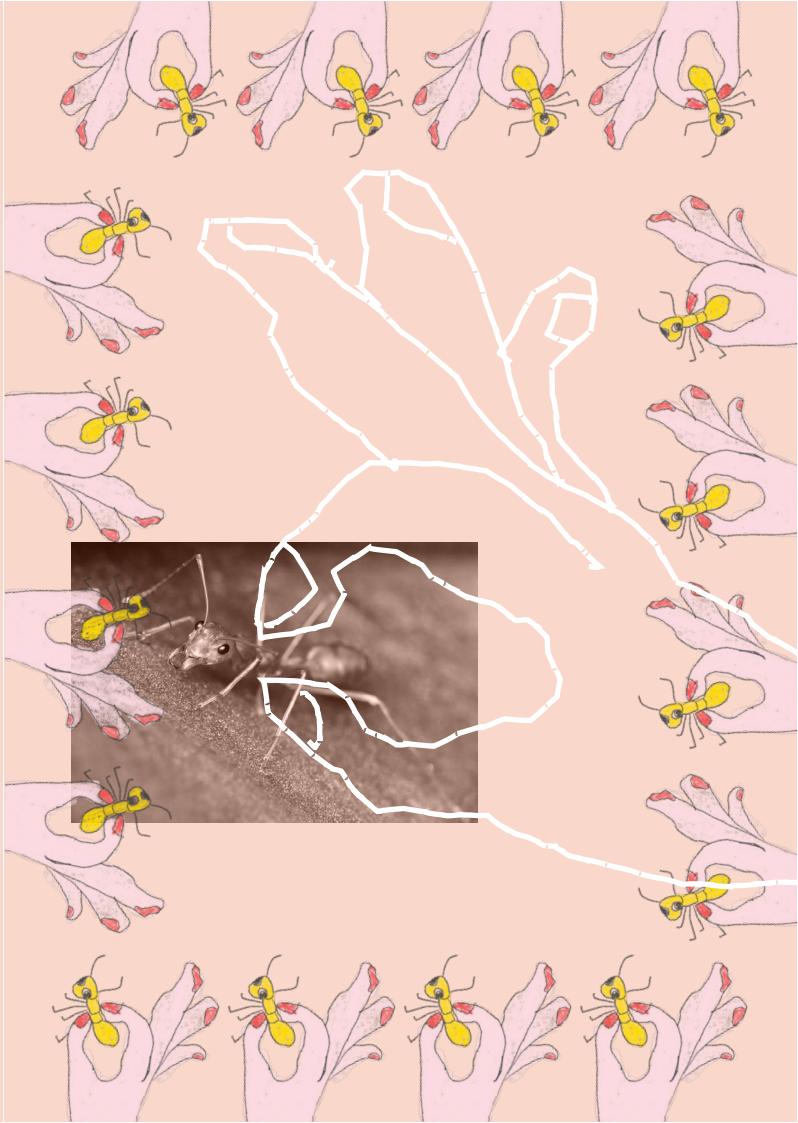
→ Photo: Kids playing in Patan area, 2024

In 2016, I chose to become vegan. It was not a dietary choice. To me, being vegan is a decision to reconstitute my relations with other non-human species and the earth.

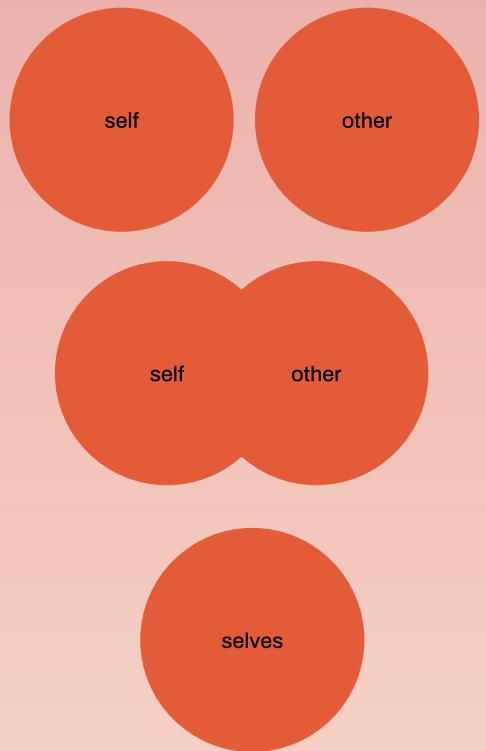
Nowadays, it's not that I cannot kill an ant. I do occasionally by rashness, and I feel immense sorrow and remorse, acknowledging that I have oppressed another living being for my own comfort.

When people encounter kindness in previously unimaginable ways, their lives forever changed. And if they continue to live with that unimaginable kindness, the lives around them also change.

Replace the word kindness with freedom, care, creativity, autonomy, and so forth, the rule still applies.

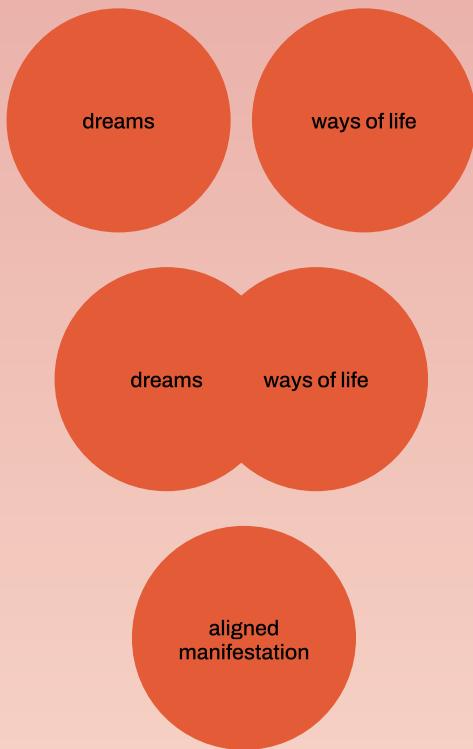


The deepening of revolutionary actions bring about the closure between self and other:



The state of “oneness” mentioned in many spiritual discourses.

Our private lives must change in accordance to the change we wish to bring in the world:



Such an alignment is the deeper meaning of the so-called “manifestation”. The construct of our relations is the clearest manifestation of the world we are creating.

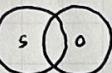
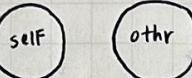


• Donna Haraway

• Eva Dongul

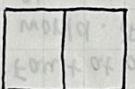
• Leaders

humBLE



the state called  
oneness in spiritual  
discourses

revolution is



SABIN asked me in 2019,  
why is it that they/we become  
the very thing we try to fight  
against? he was referring to  
Nepali's communist party.

"manifestation"

MEANS = END

DREAMS = REALITY

where means become ends,  
dreams are reality. this is  
the deeper meaning of the  
so-called "manifestation".

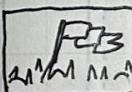
By reconstituting our rela-  
tions, we become the clear  
est manifestation of the  
world we want to live in.

in a way, we are working on revolutions.

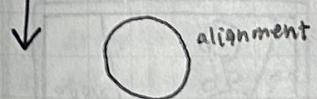
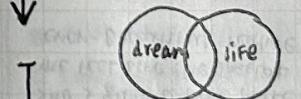
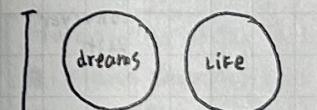
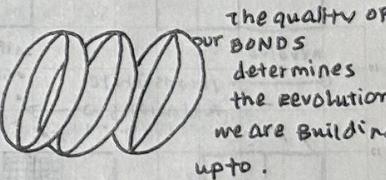
But do not fool ourselves with thinking revolutions  
are momentous, catalytic events. their deconstr-  
ucting revolutions, we have the humbling, down  
-to-earth perspective, that each action counts:

a revolutionary action

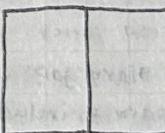
- like building a new neural pathway
- if there's a shock → path made instantly
- But life lasting changes → day-in-day-out



means = end goal

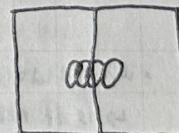


PAO "less alienating  
ways of organizing life"



diary: meeting  
Helena'

- hug
- everyone loves Helena



we have to  
have eradicated  
much fear within  
ourselves to  
be at the point

When I came to Nepal 5 years ago, that was the first time I could join a protest and was surrounded by a web of people who cared about other species so profoundly. Such engagement with life expanded the possibilities of care for me. It forever expanded my love ontology.



Environmental activism against the construction of an airport in Nijgadh, 2019.

Being within spaces of activism,  
regardless of the field (science, art,  
technology, education, urban design...),

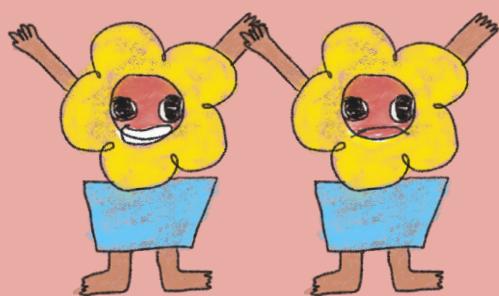
I see so closely the link between  
our commitment to revolutionary actions  
and the capacity for intimacy.

- Intimacy is simply to make ourselves be known by the other: Transparency is its nature.
- But our capacity for transparency or intimacy depends on the depth of which we see and understand ourselves.
- Such clarity and transparency of our inner self is only achieved through hard dialogues, continual observation, and brave introspection.
- From that wealth of self-knowledge, we offer that to another person, revealing ourselves meaningfully, thus, a moment of intimate closure is brought about.
- When this moment stretches into continuations, we form a self-actualizing intimate relationship.



Kitty, Abish, and Ly dancing  
to imaginary music at  
Namlo Music school ...

When you go through a shock,  
a struggle, or pain, do you  
have someone to go to and  
process it with you?



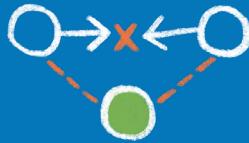
The quality of closeness and natural care that are achieved by intimacy, I dare say, is a clearest sign of revolutionary actions taking place.

From a psychological perspective, intimacy is imperative to life and death. And our science is catching up.

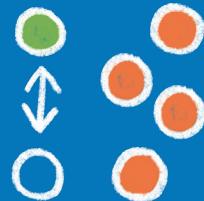
For but an example, a study of 2000 women over 10 years showed that women that were unhappily married but didn't express their emotions were 4 times likely to die as those women who were also unhappily married but did talk about their emotions.

The issue wasn't a lack of happiness, it was a devoid of self expression.

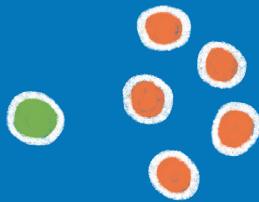
But in reality, fears pervade in so many nooks and spaces wherever I look; hostility and distrust as a norm in many supposedly communities:



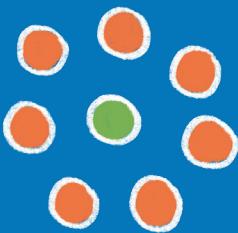
Having to choose  
a side and  
discriminate the  
other.



Being targeted for  
affiliating with the  
“wrong” side.



Rejection.  
Outcasted.



Discrimination.  
Suffocation.

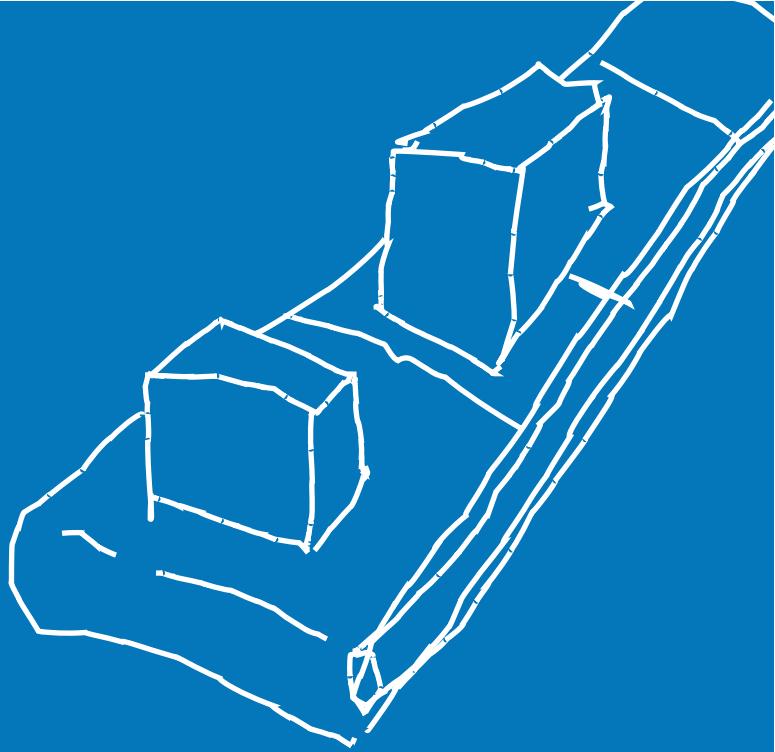
Perhaps my yearnings for change in the sphere of human relationships are in the margin because of my high sensitivity --

and perhaps such a more loving world where we can feel safer, naturally kinder, is not possible.

But since we cannot know a radically different world is not possible, Graeber wrote,

"are we not betraying everyone by insisting on continuing to justify, and reproduce, the mess we have today?"

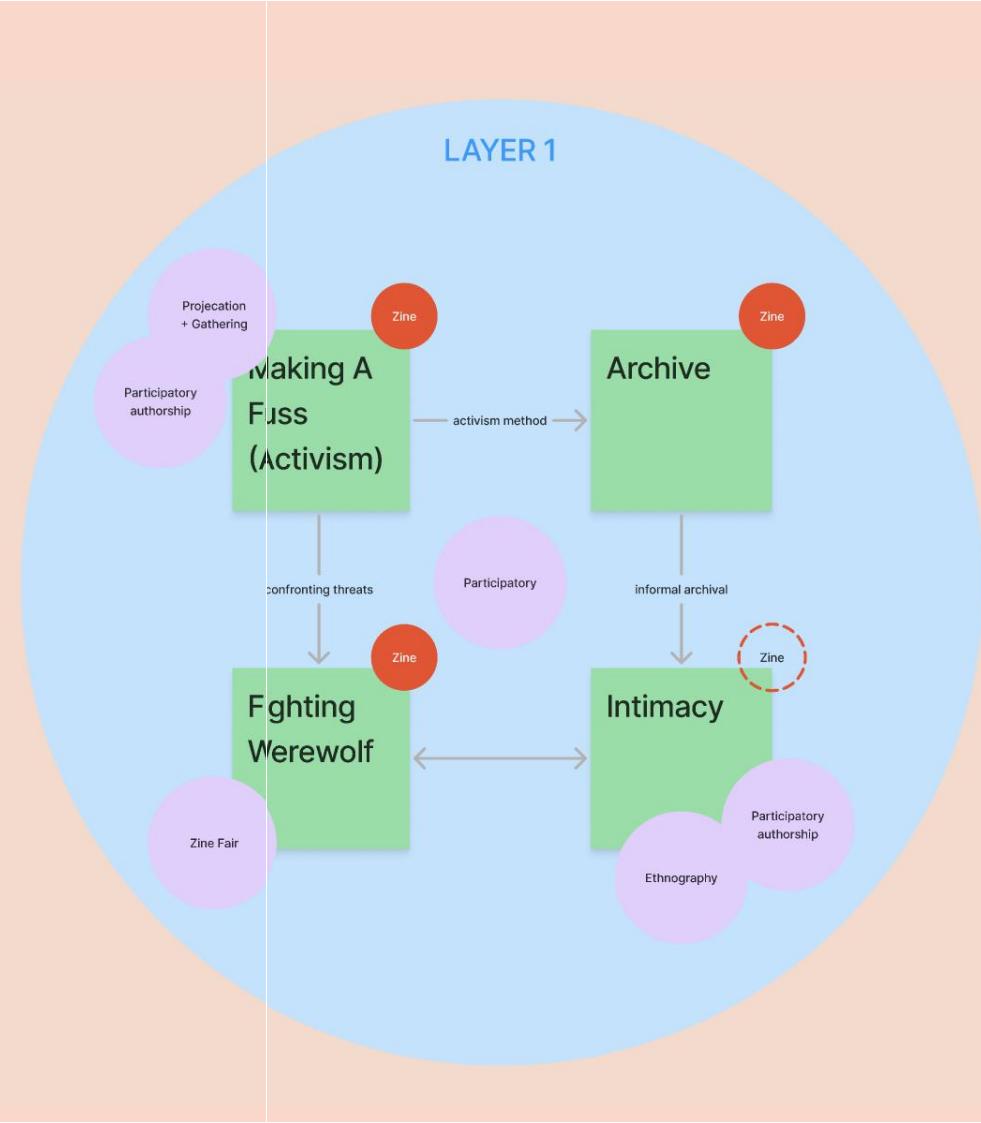
When we are living on a conveyor belt of violence (a love-deprived and intimacy-deprived reality), where silence and disengagement means condoning the violence that is taking place, a commitment to optimism becomes a moral imperative.

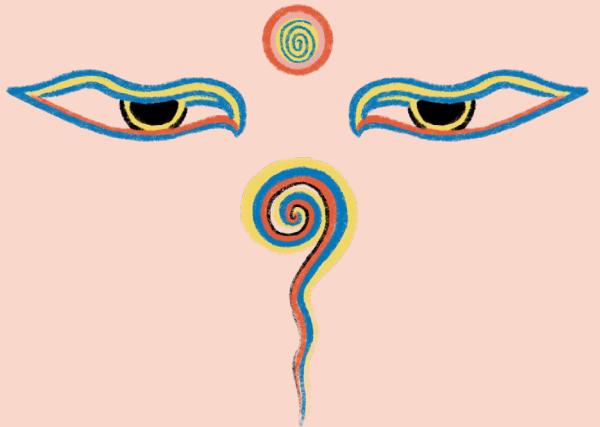


**A commitment to optimism is a moral imperative.**

In the previous zine issues — Making A Fuss, Daring To Archive, Knowing The Werewolf, we were building the foundation for a shared language of intimate participatory projects.

To be truthful, I don't know if people would care or if our efforts amount to anything. Such an endeavor is but a hopeful lunge into the unknown out of care, curiosity, companionship, and compassion.





Yet, we will keep on forging forward, and this space is only possible because somewhere in our history, the miraculous feeling of love and shared intimacy have touched upon us, and we are perseverant on including as many as possible in such a world. Let that warmth live on in ourselves so we have enough light to continue digging our tunnels, now coalescing, converging, widening.



See you in season 2 of Project Theory Probe.



What's on my shelf in the process of writing this zine:

Books:

- Fragments of An Anarchist Anthropology by David Graeber
- The Public Life of Women: A Feminist Memory Project by Photo Circle, Nepal

Journal:

- Self-Silencing and the Risk of Heart Disease and Death in Women: The Framingham Offspring Study

Visits:

- Kaalo.101
- Ecoversities
- Photo Circle
- 



