

*In urgent times, many of us are tempted to address trouble in terms of making an imagined future safe, of stopping something from happening that looms in the future, of clearing away the present and the past in order to make futures for coming generations. Staying with the trouble does not require such relationship to times called the future. In fact, staying with the trouble requires learning to be truly present, not as a vanishing pivot between awful or endemic pasts and apocalyptic or salvic futures, but as mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings.*

**Donna J. Haraway - 'Staying with the Trouble'**

## **introduction**

This text is being written in a fraction of time where spaces and places of alternative world weaving are violently attacked by 'the state' and its armed forces. I'm talking about 'La ZAD de Notre-Dame-des-Landes', 'la loi anti-squat' that has been implemented in Belgium and many more.

Its not only an attack on lives, space, place and territory, but a direct assault on the imagination by an oppressive state. The tentacles of this being penetrating deeper and deeper into what could be sensed as ways out of living in this sickness named neo-liberalism, capitalism, fascism, patriarchy, white supremacy or any other name you have for it. I feel it sucking on my desire and fantasies. My resistance lies in re-imagining alone and with others. Searching for spaces that in them carry a potential for flourishing weeds that can overgrow existing structures, suffocating them slowly.

Here I found the cemetery. These odd spaces where the death come together and at the same time much more is surfacing. A physical place where everybody has the right to a piece of space after death. Organized by local authorities and at the same time neglected. Still without camera surveillance, due to a lack of electricity. I feel their potential in my search for new strategies and places of alternative world weaving. Looking for the unexpected, the complexity, the personal, the emotional as a way to destroy the current world order.

I need air between my bones, skin and muscles.

My search for space of praxis goes hand in hand with weaving a net of relationships. Thank you for nourishing me in boredom, intensity, sensuality, struggle, anger ... Luce, Antonine, Arthur, Lizanne, Kees.

This text is aimed at looking at life after death on the cemetery from an poetic libertarian perspective. If you haven't experienced the organization of today's daily life as dreadful, boring, slowly killing us, ... then this text might not be for you. It for sure is not going to attempt at convincing you of this state of affairs. If you have this experience, then this text might speak to you.

Poetics overcame me in the context of academia.

## **there are many ways to die**

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Death is something inevitable. One day it will enter into my life. I can choose it, it can overcome me or it can be done to me. I feel its presence next to me. Its appearance in the streets, through family life, herstory.

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He went for a run to find out his heart would stop there.  
Forms of cancer slowly cultivating inside your skin, bones, tongue, prostate, breasts.  
Brain tumors are nasty ones.  
Eating an accidental peanut while being allergic.  
Slitting your own wrists and hoping the cuts will be deep enough.  
Taking loads of different pills in combination with alcohol.  
Being hit by a car, because you crossed a road.  
A truck who didn't see you cycling. There you disappeared underneath its wheels, leaving a red trace behind.  
Being shot seven times in a what would later be called a drug deal gone wrong.  
Freezing to death on a park bench.  
Racing on your motor, losing control to find your body pierced by a tree.  
Being burned alive.

Killed for resisting.

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As a woman in prison told us: 'Putting the blade in and watching the blood come down is the only time I can control something that's happening in here and stop the pain'.<sup>1</sup>

'The government has annihilated all traces for my survival, which was based on a very dignified pension that I alone paid for 35 years with no help from the state. And since my advanced age does not allow me a way of dynamically reacting (although if a fellow Greek were to grab a Kalashnikov, I would be right behind him), I see no other solution than this dignified end to my life, so I don't find myself fishing through garbage cans for my sustenance.'<sup>2</sup>

'Our blood is finished, our tears have dried. We will not say another word. We will not eat.'<sup>3</sup>

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1. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2012/feb/11/women-prisoners-suffering-mental-health>

2. <https://www.academia.edu/35156642/>

A\_Life\_Not\_Worth\_Living\_On\_the\_Economy\_of\_Vulnerability\_and\_Powerlessness\_in\_Politica  
I\_Suicide

3. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/29/world/asia/afghan-helmand-hunger-strike.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FHunger%20Strikes>

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*< Malaise invades me as the crowds around me grows. The compromises I have made with stupidity under the pressure of circumstances rush to meet me, swimming towards me in hallucinating waves of faceless heads. Edvard Munch's famous painting, The Cry, evokes for me something I feel ten times a day. A man carried along by a crowd, which only he can see, suddenly screams out in an attempt to break the spell, to call himself back to himself, to get back inside his own skin. ><sup>4</sup>*

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If I would have to signify one way in which social tissues are being made porous, I would say precarity. I see the necessities of life (food, housing, ... ) all around me, they are not absent, they are available. Its in withholding them that control is being imposed. Insecurity pours its way into the veins of webs of interbeings. Flooding nervous systems with anxiety.

I blame.  
Not you...

Neo-liberal configurations are violent.

I wonder if there can be resistance through death.  
Not only by the ones who die or chose it as a form of protest.  
Self-immolation as one of the most known examples, maybe.  
The narrative has been written just into death.  
I'm curious about what comes after.  
The image, the ceremony, the story, the memory that lives on in the absence of a presence.

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Le souvenir c'est la presence dans l'absence  
La parole dans le silence  
Le retour sans fin

flinterdun ligt de herinnering op mij  
een laag waarmee ik in het duister tast  
zoekend naar een vorm die liefde heet  
haar wil ik kennen, omarmen en uitnodigen  
de aanwezigheid trekt aan mij  
ik richt mijn reflecties op de ontrafeling  
subject, vorm, wat er leeft tussenin

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Silences who get heard, surviving time.

Silences who go unheard, forbidden, forcefully forgotten.  
Even to be remembered at first.

Embodying themselves in many ways  
in the voices  
in the narratives

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4. Raoul Vaneigem - 'The revolution of Everyday Life'

in the memories  
in the understandings  
that go unheard in the absence of people, buildings, ruins, traces, skins, songs,

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Lets consider dying for a moment.  
Lets imagine how it could be;  
its smell, its sound, its touch.  
See its performative quality.

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I saw myself in nature surrounded by generations of beings.  
Air in my clothing, space for being me.  
Carried out of this life.  
I jumped of that cliff.  
Falling, hearing their smiles inside me.

When I fell states had long ago collapsed as did their supporting structures.  
I was among weeds that had overgrown those institutions.

Imagining death became a place of hope for me.  
A time travel experiment to sense the directions of alternative world weaving that  
whirls around.

## **a grief that never should have existed**

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My tears run, they ran and keep on running. I lost something without ever having known it. There I stood filling trams with salty drops streaming from my eyes. Going to work became impossible. Bricks carefully placed on my horizontal body. Their weight too heavy to get up, to get moving. Stuck in that room, on that mattress, underneath those sheets.

Voices whispering through the walls 'get over it'. It has lasted long enough. It was your choice. You have no right to mourn. This loss does not exist. Dry your eyes its making you unattractive. I will leave you if you don't stop your sadness.

Focus on what makes life worth living.

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Under current neo-liberal circumstances loss is not supposed to affect everyday life. I see an emphasize on quick processes that focus on 'getting over it', for sure not on giving it a place in daily rituals. Mourning makes less desirable productive humans for devouring capitalist structures. Lingering on the negativity of losing someone we are related to, someone our lives were intimately bound up with, doesn't suit this organization of life. Life is framed is expandable and therefor letting the death of someone shape into our being would disrupt the productivity demanded under neo-liberalism.

If we are not supposed to be interrupted by the loss of someone close, then we should feel no responsibility to linger on impact of anyone's death. For sure not the ones neo-liberalism<sup>5</sup> can be hold accountable for. In this light grieving is not free, but imposed by ruling structures that benefit from looking away from sources of discomfort and negativity.

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Your death was violently imposed on you.  
A white supremacist system killed you.  
That cop pulling its trigger.  
Silence was imposed through deflection.  
Outrage repressed.  
Narratives written dehumanizing you, a child of two years old.

A ripple of public mourning.  
Nothing compared to what I wanted to see.  
1000 people came together to mourn you publicly.  
Creating an image with lines of child clothing. Just the clothing being present in the absence of a body to fill them.

I wanted to see police stations get burned down.  
A public outcry of this is enough.

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5.This is not a narrow definition of neo-liberalism. When I use this term I'm also referring to its racist, sexist, ... institutional structures. Or you can insert bell hooks definition : 'imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy' when reading the definition neo-liberalism.

Your parents asked crucial questions:

'Tegelijkertijd willen we de Belgische bevolking vragen hoe ze zouden reageren als dit een Belgisch kind was geweest? Zou die agent dan ook nog vrij rondlopen? Of zou hij onmiddellijk voor een rechter gebracht worden? Zouden die ouders ook in een cel vliegen? Door alles wat er gebeurd is, hebben we het gevoel dat *Mawda* helemaal niets waard is. Voor alle duidelijkheid: we willen geen geld. We willen gerechtigheid.'<sup>6</sup>

Stating you will not be forgotten.

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*< An ungrievable life is one cannot be mourned because it has never lived, that is, it has never counted as a life at all. >*

*< Grieving openly has an enormous political potential, because its bound up with outrage in the face of injustice. It is one of the reasons Plato wanted to ban the poets from the Republic. He thought that if the citizens went too often to watch tragedy, they would weep over the losses they saw, and that such open and public mourning, in disrupting the order and hierarchy of the soul, would disrupt the order and hierarchy of political authority as well. ><sup>7</sup>*

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Lets not get over it!

Lets embrace the intense sadness, madness about injustice.

Mourn publicly to express and make visible the pain that's being inflicted.

Cultivate our outrage . Generate that energy and direct it to suffocate and overcome murderous structures that have been put in place.

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6.<http://www.dewereldmorgen.be/artikel/2018/05/18/bizarre-communicatie-vol-onwaarheden-van-parket-over-dood-mawda-roept-vragen-op>

7. Butler, Judith 'frames of war' when is life grievable.

## where to go after death

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Death is not supposed to be part of our daily conscious thought. A focus is being pushed towards what makes life worth living to keep productivity going. In my mourning I'm encouraged not to offend others by reminding them of their sorrow, forcing grieving out of public spaces like the cemetery and into the home sphere.

The symbolic language to show grief has slowly faded into the background. Turning cemeteries into tourist attractions instead of placing for mourning processes and rituals.

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If we see death not as an endpoint. Lets think of it less linear in terms of time. No beginnings, or endings, continuation of time. The cemetery as one of the material manifestations in space of these passages. A grave as a portal for remembering, grieving, mourning and as a possibility for interaction without a necessary previous connection. Engaging with an unfamiliar memory through its materialization in the form of the grave and the objects present.

recreating  
re-appropriating

resolving  
reasserting

recomposing  
rewriting

◦ ◦ ◦

Here I see the potential of reclaiming the cemetery as a public space for alternative world weaving practices. The space, in Northern Europe, has mostly lost its symbolic place in mourning processes. Many graves are abandoned, but because local authorities gave concessions forever these graves cannot (yet) be repurposed. An interesting breaking point with neo-liberalism where everything is expandable and nothing lasts forever.

Then there are the graves paid for by local authorities, because everybody has the right to a place after death. The state will pay for your funeral if you have no relatives who can. Creating graves that will last 5 years. Often neglected, because there is no one to care about expressing grief in that particular place.

Visiting many cemeteries in Brussels and other places in Northern Europe. They represented themselves to me as one of the few public spaces I feel the state is not that present. Mostly in the sense of surveillance and interest. Mourning has been made hollow by neo-liberalism, so there seems to be a decline of interest in the cemetery as a space to push its structures. Therefore I think there is a possibility to physically practice with deconstructing norms that these ruling structures impose at the cemetery.

## **guerilla death scores for alternative world weaving structures**

In the following pages you find a collection of 9 movement scores.

- o a score for unfamiliar red threads
- o a score for mort pour la patrie
- o a score for the unclaimed
- o a score for everybody loves the sea
- o a score for letting grief disrupt your daily life
- o a score for kids without parents
- o a score for rats and pigeons
- o a score for buurtfeest

I see these scores as propositions based on movement and playfulness to train interfering and disrupting normative narratives by using the cemetery as a site for praxis. For me it's important to choose a space that I can use to move with the imaginary, to take risks and find myself at the edge of the universe. The cemetery to me is that place and relating to grief a pathway out of the current world order.

Go out, use them, rip them up, play them, remove them, reclaim them, make them yours.

I'm curious to hear your experience!