

Aisa Villarosa, she/her to Everyone 8:41 PM

AV

Love this. It is our birthright to hold one another and to be held [+across generations]



“laborers of love,”

# Weaponizing Care

*\*theories and histories of self- and communal care; right-wing co-option, including by the Asian American right wing; gendered Islamophobia, casteism, and Hindu fascism; normalized violence and pain; call out*

A 2x2 matrix diagram with a vertical axis and a horizontal axis. The vertical axis has 'care' at the top and 'violence' at the bottom. The horizontal axis has 'enacting' on the left and 'absorbing' on the right. The axes intersect at the center.

care

violence

enacting

absorbing

# Radical Care

*Survival Strategies for Uncertain Times*

Hi'ilei Julia Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart  
and Tamara Kneese

Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.

—Audre Lorde, *A Burst of Light*

Care has reentered the zeitgeist. In the immediate aftermath of the 2016 US presidential election, op-eds on #selfcare exploded across media platforms.<sup>1</sup> But for all the popular focus on self-care rituals, new collective movements have also emerged in which moral imperatives to act—to care—are a central driving force. In a recent interview, Angela Davis explicitly tied social change to care: “I think our notions of what counts as radical have changed over time. Self-care and healing and attention to the body and the spiritual dimension—all of this is now a part of radical social justice struggles. That wasn’t the case before.”<sup>2</sup> Davis points to a growing awareness that individual impulses and interior lives, the intimate and banal details of family histories and personal experiences, are directly connected to external forces. Care, then, is fundamental to social movements. For examples we might look to the way that Indigenous peoples and their allies have rearticulated their positions as protectors rather than protesters, emphasizing the importance of caring for and being good stewards of the earth, or how Occupy-style actions emerged at US Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention centers to denounce the separation of migrant children from their families in “tender age camps” at the US border, positioning parental care (both to give and to receive it) as a human right.<sup>3</sup> While the phenomenon of care as political warfare has a long genealogy (one that we outline below), it has taken on fresh signifi-

Within the larger passage where Lorde describes her fight against cancer, she conjures up images of Black activists coursing through her veins as they fight against colonial powers; she connects the anonymity of cancer to governmental neglect; and she jettisons the individualism of Foucault’s self-care in favor of coalitional survival.<sup>21</sup> The fact that this quote is often presented without its original context in its popular usage tells us much about the difference between radical and neoliberal self-care. Radical care is not, as Inna Michaeli explains, the kind of self-care that has been co-opted by neoliberal imperatives to “treat yourself” but is, instead, a way of understanding “a self which is grounded in particular histories and present situations of violence and vulnerability.”<sup>22</sup> A genealogy of radical care is thereby aligned with the emergence of self-care, but certainly not contained by it: within this formulation, the self is not a generic, philosophical self but a situated self engaged in complex sets of relations. Disabilities studies scholars dovetail with these arguments when they point to the importance of recognizing subjects as inherently networked and interdependent. When Laura Forlano, for example, describes the assemblages

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Finally, because care can be mobilized as a way to privilege some groups at the expense of others, the “radical” aspect of care can bleed into right-wing and white supremacist politics as much as it upholds leftist utopian visions. In describing her current book project on machine learning and segregation, *Discriminating Data: Neighborhoods, Individuals, Proxies*, media theorist Wendy Hui Kyong Chun argues that social networking platforms rely on a logic of homophily: birds of a feather flock together, so you will want to date, love, and be neighborly with those who are just like you, who share your fundamental values and interests.<sup>33</sup> The problem with care attached to fellow feeling or sympathy is that all too often it means that care is reserved for those deemed worthy. As Cotten Seiler’s article in this issue underscores, radical care is also potentially dangerous: affective feelings of compassion and empathy toward poor whites during the Great Depression, for instance, could be used as justification for caring for fellow whites over others, despite the state-backed care offered by the New Deal. What happens when images of suffering or violence

fare programs. By connecting a history of ideas to their ongoing and violent material effects, Seiler importantly foregrounds the inverse of a politically utopian form of radical care: a care that is “radical” in its alliance with right-wing, white supremacist forces. Seiler calls this “‘white care’: a surround of institutions and infrastructure dedicated to the education, health, security, mobility, and comfort of the white citizenry,” and in doing so shows how romanticizing radical care is dangerous, because it can be used to exclude and subject some groups to institutional neglect.



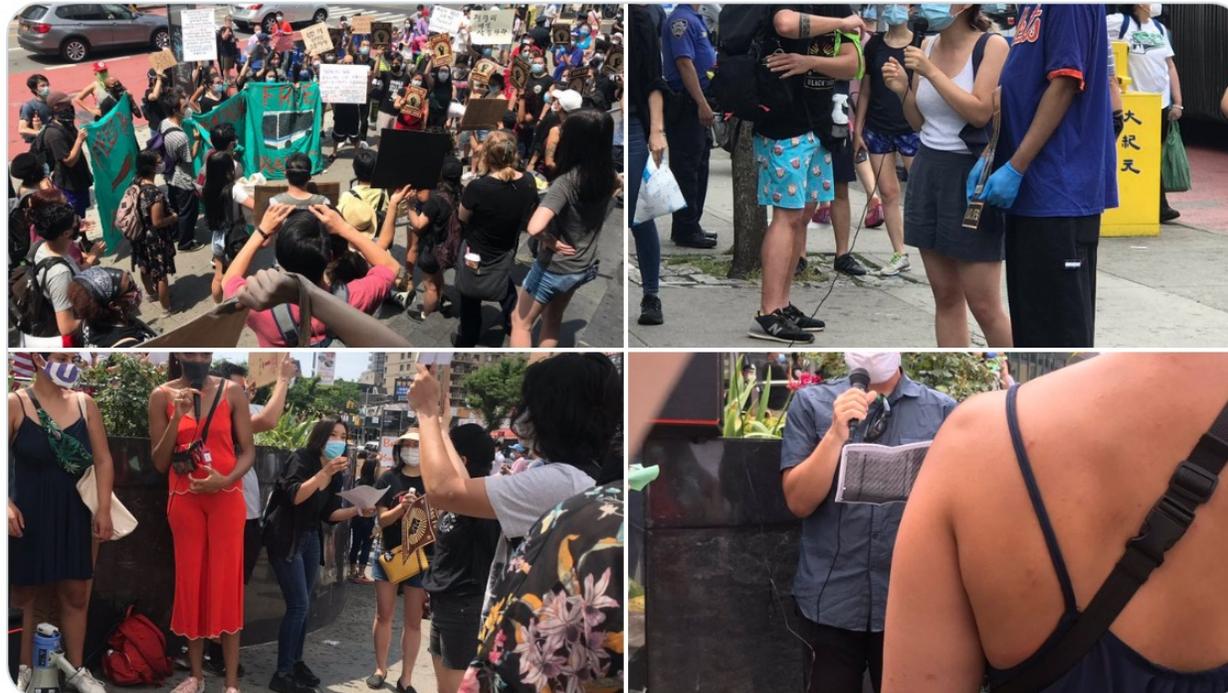
Red Canary Song

@RedCanarySong



Thank you so much to everyone who showed up today!

We were worried and expected 20-30 people, but instead, closer to 100 folks in our communities came out to support. Though we were still outnumbered by the pro-cop group, we ended up taking over the steps after they disbanded.



Asian American Feminist Collective and 5 others



# Asian America and the Politics of Guilt

Neither model nor monolithic, the Asian American community is wrestling with some complicated questions right now.

Samuel Kao

filed 02 February 2021 in UNCLASSIFIABLE

**I**F ELECTIONS WERE HELD TODAY FOR THE presidency of Asian America, the winner would probably be Jeff Yang. If you're not familiar with Yang, he's a prominent thought leader who can often be found giving his considered opinions on all things Asian American. He serves as a distinguished expert whose task is to explain Asian America not just to his fellow Asian Americans, but also to everyone else. In this capacity, he frequently writes for CNN and elsewhere. His work, however, is illustrative of a particular worldview that promotes a debilitating politics of guilt, with an emphasis on the authority of elite Asian American intellectuals like himself.

I wish to turn to a CNN column of Yang's from this summer, because it's a perfect example of what I mean. Titled "It's time for Asian Americans to unite in solidarity with black Americans," [Yang's op-ed](#)

belonging." Asian American intellectuals have often fallen into the error of founding their politics on the ground of Asian American identity. They fail to comprehend the complexity of Asian-American politics because they "reduce people to particular aspects of their belonging." The mere fact that some people have been deemed "Asian American" is an insufficient basis for any sort of collective political project. While a

common assumption holds that one's identity tends to correspond with certain politics, identity is not a guarantee of how people will think and feel. There is no authentic Asian American "nature" with an intrinsic orientation towards progressive politics. Being Asian American doesn't mean someone will necessarily oppose racism, as the existence of right-wing Asian Americans shows. This assumption is a damaging form of essentialism.

*content alert: mention of specific violence*

# HISTORIES

## ANCESTRY & FREEDOM

FEATURING ARTICLES ON

A VISUAL HISTORY OF THE SA DIASPORA

GENDERED IMPACT OF PARTITION

CASTE & DATING

HISTORY OF MIGRATION IN THE U.K.

"WE ARE OUR ANCESTOR'S WILDEST DREAMS"

In the patriarchal setup of society and dynamics within the family unit, women were, and still are, seen as the main site of honour [5]. The iron fist of patriarchy combined with the mix of religious sentiments fueled this tragedy. Fears of brutal Islamic conversions also circulated within Hindu communities, and arguably drove this practice. **The thinking was, that it was better to die than be raped and abducted by Muslims [8].**

Even today, re-imagined partition thinking has seen a comeback with distorted ideas of 'love-jihad' being propagated as a way to denounce consensual interfaith relationships between Muslim men and Hindu women. Women in modern day India continue to be the site of communal violence, be it gang-rape, kidnapping, or murder.

**"Women are the currency in an honour-based economy." [9]**

Paulomi Chakraborty

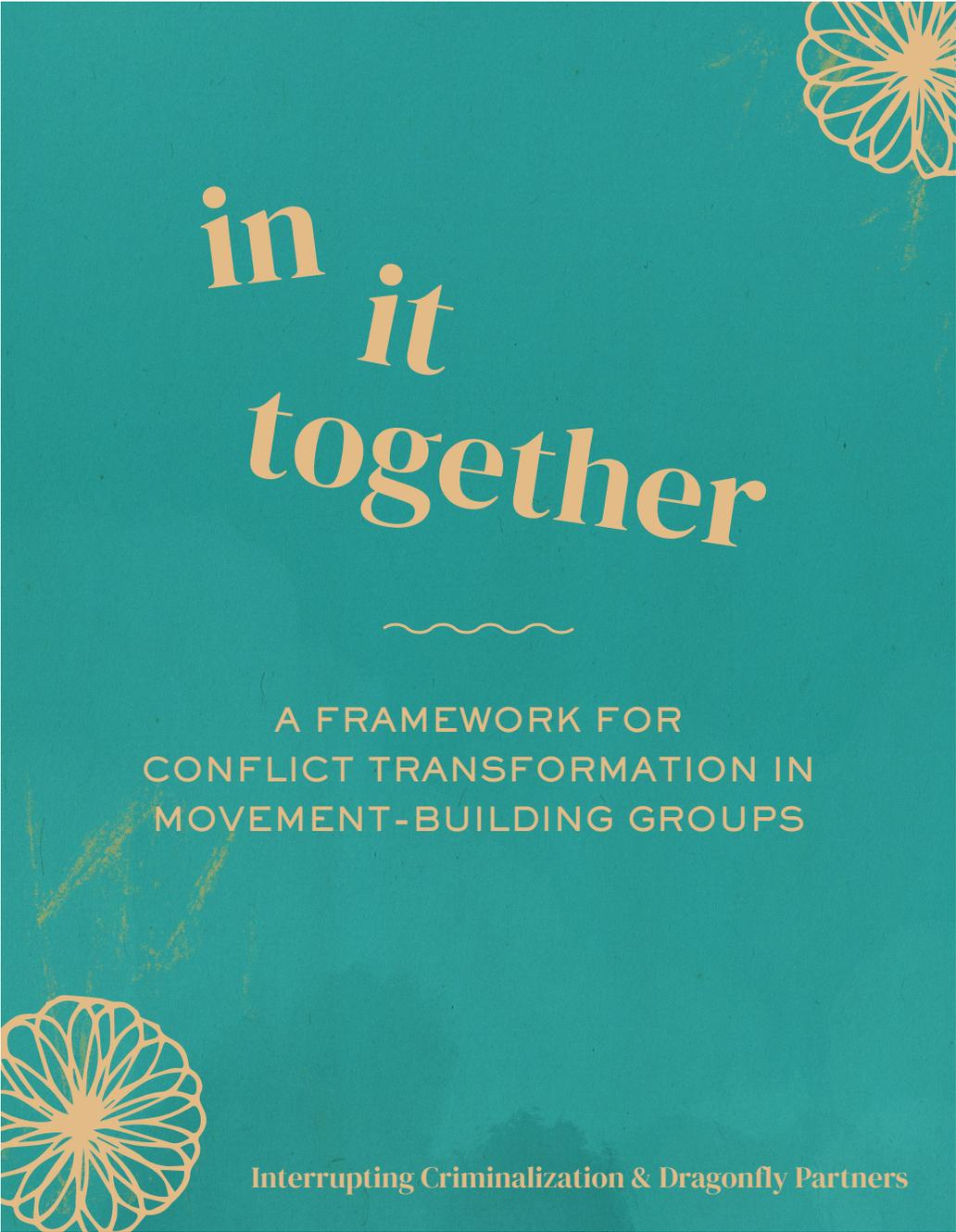
# in it together

A FRAMEWORK FOR  
CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION IN  
MOVEMENT-BUILDING GROUPS

Interrupting Criminalization & Dragonfly Partners

Powerful actors and institutions have successfully built, maintained and strengthened a system in which:

- The racial hierarchy is kept in place, white supremacist cultural norms are the dominant norms in most spaces, and the racial wealth divide is growing.
- Patriarchal gender norms effectively police human behavior and maintain power in the hands of those who uphold these norms.
- Most people struggle to access good quality affordable housing, healthcare, nutritious food, education, air, water, and nature.
- Individuals, families and groups who have been targets of oppression often internalize the harmful messages about the inferiority of target group members.
- Individuals, families and groups who have benefited from systems of oppression often internalize the harmful messages about the superiority of dominant group members.



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## We Protect Ourselves By Punishing Other People

Living in an unjust society leaves people feeling wounded, separated from one another, burnt out and angry. As a result, people can lash out in ways that are disproportionate or misdirected. Some conflicts emerge around people or groups using their power in abusive ways. We need to stop abuse in its tracks. For years, grassroots activists and cultural workers have started creative models of transformational justice to deal with this type of oppressive conduct. Or they have organized; organizing is our highly developed, principled tool for holding an unwilling person or group accountable. As in public space, we want to move away from buying into the inhumanity of punishment while using strategic and principled tools to hold harmdoers accountable for what they've done and what they will do.

Not all hurt and harm are the result of abuses of power. Hurt and harm are also present in conflict—that is, in disputes among people or groups who share an interest in moving toward right relationship. When faced with conflict, we often overreact, believing the other is abusing power, or that they are motivated by an intent to harm, when our unmet need or desire is in the way of our ability to resolve the dispute cooperatively. In this circumstance, transformation is not possible.

## We Advocate for Our Position

As people who battle systems of oppression, we are predisposed to approaching situations in fight mode. Everyone comes with an agenda they want to push forward in the group. We behave as if the people around us are holding power over us and the things we care about. There is limited time devoted to building trust and solidarity inside organizations and movement formations. Different strategies for making change or political frameworks are seen as undermining one another when they may be complementary. We view ordinary tensions and polarities—such as the tension between the needs of the coalition with the needs of individual organizations—as intractable problems. We become stuck in our positions, unable to make meaning and transform conflict.



*in  
it  
together*

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PRACTICE ACCOUNTABILITY THAT BUILDS  
COMMUNITY AND HONORS HUMANITY

Systems of punishment have severed relationships, decimated our communities and perpetuated cycles of harm. In our principled community of care and struggle, we resist responses to harm that are designed to blame, shame, retaliate, isolate or punish. When we call attention to harm, we focus on behaviors. Our accountability practices shift power internally while nurturing healthy relationships and building community.

# in it together

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“I picture ‘calling in’ as a practice of pulling folks back in who have strayed from us. It means extending to ourselves the reality that we will and do fuck up, we stray, and there will always be a chance for us to return.”

NGOC LOAN TRAN



To Red Tendons

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By Peter Kim George

the mile high cameras hover,  
they zoom in, dub it:  
war of blacks & koreans  
then watch us rip  
each other to red tendons for scraps  
in the city they abandoned,  
a silence white as white silence  
-Ishle Park

To Red Tendons

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By Peter Kim George

The merchant Soon Ja Du, was convicted of voluntary manslaughter. Her sentence: 5 years probation, no jail time. 'I'm not surprised that the Koreans got targeted, their prices are high their attitude is wrong and they seem to have no respect for the black community.' 'You know how it all got started? When that little black girl was killed by that oriental.'

PAUL

Does someone want to double that?

PEARL

The news reporter is saying that Koreans are savages and that black life is not equal to that of a dog.

YOLIE

Can I double too? Am I still Soon?

PAUL

Go ahead.

YOLIE

The white establishment gets to have it both ways. They defend Soon when it's about avoiding responsibility for black death, because they need to keep up the lie that black death is no one's fault but black people's, because white wealth depends on black people's immiseration through incarceration or federal redlining policies. At the same time, you compare a Korean man getting jailtime for beating his dog to Soon Ja Du getting no jailtime for killing a black girl to stoke Black people's anger, which is productively redirects black anger away from white people. It's directed at those savage immigrants.

To Red Tendons

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By Peter Kim George

The noise from the 110 freeway, the big diesel trucks that drive down Broadway at all hours, the fucking helicopters, the noise and lights when they fly low at night. The bare, hot concrete. There are no trees here. Why doesn't anyone plant trees here? Do white people on the west side know how fucking hot and noisy and tiring it is to live here. The smell of burnt asphalt. Do construction trucks go blaring and spewing smoke down Sunset Boulevard?

#### YOLIE AS SOON JA DU

There's very little people know about me and that's on purpose. I live somewhere in the San Fernando Valley now. What little I reveal after killing Latasha is, my husband and I have degrees from Korea but when we came here the degrees didn't mean anything. I put together couches. My husband did little repair jobs, here and there, mostly he drank. I could have worked in a textile factory in LA, maybe. Lots of other Korean women did that. Asian labor was cheap labor was feminized labor. For Korean men like my husband, there were no opportunities. It was either drink or run a liquor store.

#### DOUGLAS AS NEWS REPORTER

Sociologists say that perhaps the Black-Korean conflict are due to cultural differences. With their Confucius, tradition-oriented culture, Koreans are trained not to make eye contact or put change directly in a person's hands, which offend black customers.

#### PAUL AS SOON'S ANGER

That's the same old orientalist, west is rational and cartesian and the east is mystical and Confucian, bullshit that Liberals lap up because they think good on me, I'm tolerating different cultures. They want to know about my "culture" so they can demonstrate how it "clashes" with American culture. I don't know what my culture is. I can only describe what growing up in Korea in the 40s and 50s was like, which I don't, especially not to my own kids. What do you want to know about my past? That the Japanese military conscripted Korean women into brothels that the American military then used? Do you want to hear how we shit in outhouses? That our stoves were buried in the ground? That we were fucking poor?

To Red Tendons

---

By Peter Kim George

PAUL

Remember the thing. What I said to you, or you to me, when we first met. When we were in college.

PEARL

Yees.

PAUL

You knew what you were supposed to say, when I asked you. When I asked you why you don't date asian men. You said the reason you don't date asian men is,

PEARL

I said, the reason *I* don't date asian men is because they remind me of my abusive asian father. (Pause) Then I asked you why you don't date asian women,

PAUL

Yes, you asked me why I don't date asian women, and then I said, the reason I don't date asian women is because they remind me of my abusive asian mother.

Longer Pause

Then they both laugh. A joyful, motherfucking  
laugh.