SPECIAL ISSUE ARTICLE

Gestures towards the Abolition Ecology Horizon

Notes on the (Unfinished) Stop Cop City Movement's Coalitional and Worldmaking Rhetorics

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Abstract

The ongoing movement to stop the construction of Cop City, a proposed police training center and movie studio in the Weelaunee Forest in Atlanta, Georgia, evokes imagination of coalitional solidarities and ecologically attuned worlds characterized by mutual aid and collective love that lay just beyond the horizon. This essay examines how the Stop Cop City movement's coalition-forming rhetoric and worldbuilding practices gesture towards this mode of politics, which I call abolition ecology. Inhabiting the tensions evoked by the movement's coalitions of abolitionist, decolonial, and radical environmental groups, I examine three of the movement's gestures towards new modes of global solidarity and emplaced worldmaking that exceeds the logic of place guiding the study of abolition ecology among geographers. I argue, then, for the importance of studying abolitionist projects for environmental communication as well as the potential for coalitional

praxis to help make accomplices against racial capitalism.

Introduction

The ongoing (at the time of this writing) development of "Cop City," a planned police training facility and movie studio in the South River, or Weelaunee, Forest, promises to intensify policing, colonial dispossession, gentrification, and ecological destruction in a majority-Black community in Atlanta, Georgia. Serving the interests of police and gentrifiers, the City of Atlanta and the surrounding DeKalb County authorized the Weelaunee development in partnership with the privately-funded Atlanta Police Foundation and Shadowbox (formerly Blackhall) Studios.[1] Construction will include clearcutting over 400 acres of forest, promising "devastating effects on the environment, including worsened air quality and flooding in the predominantly Black neighborhoods of Southeast Atlanta."[2] Alongside its ecological effects, the training facility will draw more police presence to the neighborhood, intensifying the policing of Black lives. More, the Weelaunee Forest is the historical land of the Muscogee (Creek) people that was stolen as part of their forced removal to a reservation in present day Oklahoma. The Weelaunee developments would extend Atlanta's legacies of slavery, settler colonialism, and racial capitalist violence while destroying a crucial biome in service of police and private interests.

Aiming to prevent construction of the Weelaunee developments, the ongoing, multi-pronged, leaderless, and decentralized Stop Cop City movement "has already won nearly two years of delay on the project and a sizable shift in the civic imagination in the United States and even internationally."[3] Composed of faith leaders, abolitionists, Indigenous peoples, radical environmentalists, as well as concerned Atlantans, the movement has deployed myriad tactics, including electoralism, pressuring the development's corporate funders and building contractors, and radical direct actions.[4] Drawing intense state repression, including the execution of activist Manuel "Tortuguita" Terán and the indictment of participants on terrorism and racketeering charges, the Stop Cop City movement highlights how the Weelaunee development is just the latest attempt to destroy ecosystems on which the poor and minorities depend in order to intensify carceral violence, colonial dispossession, and capitalist profiteering. In short, the movement points towards the possibilities for abolition ecology, a yet realized mode of politics that emphasizes opposition to how, as Nik Heynen and Megan Ybarra describe, "nature has always been unevenly socially produced through relations of empire, settler colonialism and racial capitalism." [5]

This essay reads the movement against Cop City as a coalitional moment that gestures towards the horizon of an abolition ecology, a yet unseen mode of global worldmaking and solidarity between radical environmental, abolitionist, and decolonial movements. For Karma Chavez, "A coalitional moment occurs when political issues coincide or merge in the public sphere in ways that create space to re-envision and potentially reconstruct rhetorical imaginaries."[6] Through activists' rhetorical labor, coalitional space-times "reveal and build alternative parameters for politics, belonging, and being."[7] The Stop Cop City movement, I argue, evokes imagination of broader solidarities between abolitionists, radical environmentalists, and decolonial movements in opposition to infrastructure projects that would intensify carceral, ecological, and settler-colonial violence. Built through the rhetorical crafting of movements with long histories of mutual distrust grounded in hierarchical ideologies, this coalition also evokes the im/possibility of ecologically attuned worlds grounded in collective love and mutual aid just over the horizon. My formulation both departs from and embellishes the work of geographers such as Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Heynen, Ybarra, and David Pellow, who understand abolition ecology as an already constituted politics characterized by anti-carceral modes of place-based environmental justice. Understanding abolition ecology as beyond the horizon that ongoing and unfinished *coalitional processes* gesture towards explains the Stop Cop City movement's use of tactics usually characteristic of radical environmentalism in abolitionist struggle, as well as how it has evoked imagination of global opposition to carceral infrastructures. Issuing from its practices centered on the Weelaunee, the Stop Cop City coalition circulates symbolic rhetorics and worldmaking practices that gesture towards *global* movements that oppose new carceral infrastructures and build ecologically attuned worlds of solidarity, mutual aid, and restoration in *every* place, evoking imagination of an abolition ecology that exceeds Gilmore's observation that "freedom is *a* place."[8]

My reading of the Stop Cop City movement gestures towards the importance of examining the possibilities evoked by coalitional moments between abolitionist, environmental, and decolonial movements. Attention to these possibilities may spur similar imaginings of how we might un/remake rhetorical studies and grapple with different scholarly communities' sometimes disparate commitments.[9] Indeed, the Stop Cop City movement provides one opportunity to reimagine how we might un/remake the relationship, and form potential coalitions and alliances, between what Matthew Houdek calls an "abolitionist rhetorical studies"[10] and environmental communication scholarship. From Houdek and Ersula J. Ore's concern with environmental racism as a source of Black folks' suffocation,[11] to Darrel Wanzer-Serrano's description of the Young Lords' Garbage Offensive against the persistence of trash in predominantly Boricua neighborhoods,[12] to G.

Mitchell Reyes and Kundai Chirindo's imagination of race and gender rhetorics as the basis for a commons in the Anthropocene,[13] rhetorical abolitionism is already concerned with environmental destruction. Similarly, environmental rhetoric scholars including Tiara R. Na'puti, [14] Catalina de Onís,[15] Nicholas S. Palciewicz,[16] and Phaedra Pezzullo[17] have increasingly addressed resistance to the confluences of colonialism, racial capitalism, and ecological destruction. Attending to the im/possibilities and tensions evoked by the Stop Cop City movement's rhetorical *praxis*, as I do here, provides generative glimpses of new worlds, languages, and solidarities, scholarly or otherwise, that might assist in unmaking carceral, ecological, and settler colonial violences.

This essay proceeds by describing the tensions and possibilities that inhere within three of the Stop Cop City movements' rhetorical gestures towards the horizon of abolition ecology. It examines how the movement's coalition building, worldmaking, and circulatory practices evoke imagination of possible new worlds and solidarities. Along the way, I bring accounts from Stop Cop City participants, pamphlets circulated by Defend the Atlanta Forest (DTAF) and other movement organizations, as well as reports by the Atlanta Community Press Collective and similar local, activist-oriented news outlets into conversation with abolitionist, decolonial, and ecological thought. Despite tensions within the Stop Cop City movement's coalitional politics, this conversation shows that the movement's struggle against carceral, environmental, and colonial violence gestures towards the possibility of an ecologically attuned society characterized by communal love and justice.

Gesture One: Coalitional rhetorics can un/remake particular places to evoke imagined solidarities beyond tensions between anti-carceral, ecological, and decolonial movements

Through place-based rhetorics, shared strategy, and myriad tactics, Stop Cop City participants constituted a coalitional moment of cooperation between radical environmentalists, abolitionists, and Indigenous communities in resistance against ecologically destructive carceral projects. At first glance, ecological, abolitionist, and decolonial movements should make easy allies because of their shared interests. Many distinct theories understand that ecological, colonial, and racial violence are connected, however murkily, through combined histories of capitalism, settler colonialism, and slavery.[18] More, prisons, policing, and gentrification consistently target Black and Indigenous communities with dispossession, violence, and pollution. Yet, for Heynen, "too many of these moments and episodes remain absent from our collective geographical and political ecological imagina-

tion."[19] The movement's coalition building rhetorics subsequently sought to evoke collective attention to historical and ongoing colonial dispossession, racial violence, and ecological destruction in the Weelaunee. Through narrative, ceremony, as well as shared tactics and strategy, the movement sought to un/remake the Weelaunee as a place of both ongoing dispossession and coalitional possibility.

Radical environmental and abolition movements should also make easy allies insofar as the state imprisons animal liberation and ecological activists as "ecoterrorists," leading to prison solidarity, anti-grand jury, and anti-surveillance organizing by environmentalist groups.[20] Yet, the radical environmental movement's roots in anti-Indigenous and racist tropes of wilderness and the frontier, as well as its largely white composition, sometimes obscures connections between racial violence and ecological destruction. Indeed, radical environmentalism sometimes abandons potential alliances with abolitionist and decolonial movements in favor of only opposing the destruction of wilderness spaces considered separate from human society.[21] Yet, coalitional and worldmaking practices, which un/remake particular places and spread tactics between movements, gesture towards yet unknowable modes of solidarity that I am calling abolition ecology.

Here, I read *The City in the Forest*, an anonymously written pamphlet published by Crimethinc. Ex-Workers Collective, an anarchist propaganda outlet, alongside reports from local Atlanta press organizations and interviews with abolitionist organizers. DTAF circulates *The City in the Forest* on their website and during Mass Speaking Tour events held by Stop Cop City solidarity organizations across the United States.[22] Together, these texts show how narrative, ceremony, and *praxis* may help make coalitions against carceral infrastructure projects such as the Weelaunee development.

Through a narrative that blends past, present, and future, *The City in the Forest* situates struggles against the Weelaunee development within what Dylan Rodriguez calls "*the historical present tense*,"[23] un/remaking the forest as a site of historical and ongoing ecological destruction, Indigenous dispossession, and anti-Black violence. This narrative subsequently foregrounds disparate movements' mutual interests in opposing the project. The pamphlet describes how, with the new developments, Atlanta "will experience worse floods, higher temperatures, and smog-filled afternoons just as the world enters a century of climate crises and ecological collapse" because of the forest's crucial role in the local biome.[24] The forest, it continues, "was taken from the Muscogee (Creek) people, who call the area Weelaunee"[25] before being worked by enslaved people and subsequently serving as "the site of the Old Atlanta Prison Farm," where forced labor and lynchings were common. The Weelaunee developments continue "a historical continuum of dispossession and abuse" insofar as "the Blackhall development will exacerbate economic disparities and ecological collapse, while Cop City will

equip the police to preserve them."[26] Un/remaking the Weelaunee as a site of ongoing dispossession and struggle, this narrative enacts what Danielle Endres and Samantha Senda-Cook describe as "a fissure in meaning"[27] of place. The Weelaunee becomes simultaneously an ecologically important forest, symbol of past and ongoing racial capitalist violence, and a bell weather of shared futures, evoking the importance of coalitional action against Cop City.

To enact coalitional *praxis*, Stop Cop City participants have embraced tactical pluralism and emergent strategy, pointing to yet-unrealized possibilities of un/remaking relations between movements. "This campaign" notes *The City in the Forest*, "represents a crucial effort to chart new paths forward in the wake of the George Floyd Rebellion, linking the defense of the land that sustains us with the struggle against police."[28] The coalition's earliest efforts included marches against its funders, participation in Atlanta City Council meetings, and call-in campaigns. These actions were organized by Defund APD, Refund Communities, a broad abolitionist coalition, Black-lead organizations such as Community Movement Builders, as well as Sunrise Atlanta and similar climate justice groups.[29] The coalition eventually settled on using the "Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty" (SHAC) model, which aims to pressure projects' construction companies and financers by targeting their suppliers. This model emerged from a successful campaign to "take down the biggest animal testing corporation on the planet, Huntingdon Life Sciences"[30] in the United Kingdom and was later deployed by numerous environmentalist groups. DTAF and other organizations have held concerts, tours, and festivals, lead marches and protests around Atlanta, and used direct action tactics first popularized by radical environmentalist groups such as Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front. In the Weelaunee, construction machinery has been destroyed and locked down, trees have been spiked, and activists have erected tree houses and blockades.[31] The movement has also spurred a global campaign of banner drops, marches, and direct actions pressuring banks and contractors participating in the project to "Drop Cop City." While acknowledging "tensions in the movement" [32] along identity and ideological lines, *The City in the Forest* emphasizes the importance of approaching differences "in a spirit of mutual education and learning."[33] Making coalitions invites tactical, strategic, and interpersonal discussions from which mutual understandings might emerge. Black clergy members have even locked themselves to construction equipment being used to clear cut the forest alongside environmentalists and abolitionists, evoking imagination of a world where disparate groups unify through solidaristic action.[34]

Well-attended ceremonies organized by the Muscogee people held in Intrenchment Creek Park, adjacent to the Weelaunee, further crafted the Stop Cop City coalition while contributing to un/remaking the forest as a site of ongoing settler

colonial dispossession. *The City in the Forest* describes how "On November 27, 2021, 250–300 people gathered in Intrenchment Creek Park to observe and participate in a ceremonial stomp dance and service of the Muscogee (Creek) people."[35] After narrating the Muscogee people's forced removal from the Weelaunee to present day Oklahoma, the pamphlet notes that: "They [the Muscogee participants] encouraged the current residents of Atlanta to stop the destruction of the forest and halt the Cop City and Blackhall developments, understanding these as the latest chapters in a long story of destruction beginning with the European colonization."[36] Through explicit expressions of support and cultural exchange, this ceremony gestured towards yet-unrealized solidarities made possible by Indigenous communities' active participation in abolitionist and ecological struggles. As Mekko Chebon Kernell, a stomp dance ceremony participant who traveled from the Helvpe Ceremonial Grounds in Oklahoma, put it: "Our hope is to continue the work of education, the work of defending the Mother Earth, and educating marginalized communities of the greater City of Atlanta about the historical presence of Muscogee people and our common pursuit of justice for all people of color."[37] More than invoking abstract notions of settler-colonial violence, such coalitional actions emphasize that both the Weelaunee, and Atlanta *writ large*, remain the ancestral homeland of a living people who were forcefully removed and to whom it could be repatriated. While tensions evoked by discourses of settler innocence and unvarnished wilderness remain, such un/remakings and reimaginings of coalitional possibility emphasize the necessity of Indigenous communities' participation in projects moving towards the horizon of abolition ecology.

Reminders of the necessity of active cooperation with the Muscogee people persist through the movement's land acknowledgement and commitment circulated on its websites and on banners hanging in the forest. In contrast to many land acknowledgements that merely recognize settler-colonial dispossession, this one connects meaning-making and decolonial action in cooperation with Indigenous communities:

> In the 1820s, Muskogee people were forcibly removed from their ancestral homelands in so-called Atlanta. We acknowledge the sustained erasure, oppression, land dispossession, and harm of Muskogee people on these lands. The movement to protect Weelaunee Forest and stop cop city commits to healing, reparations, and building relationships of trust and reciprocity with Muskogee communities.[38]

Because land acknowledgements "can never be more than a move to innocence if it is not combined with concrete actions embedded in relationships of solidarity,"[39] this statement emphasizes that *praxis* must always include relations with

the Muscogee people. This commitment does not, however, imply the fulfillment of the movement's obligations or an escape from settler complicity. Instead, it gestures towards modes of solidarity which may seem impossible from our current vista, whereby coalitional action might disrupt and offer recompense for past and ongoing settler colonial violence. Moving towards the horizon of collective solidarity without occluding, or even intensifying, ongoing settler colonialism requires constantly renewing cooperation and rendering visible histories of dispossession.

Because frontier and wilderness discourses persist among some radical environmentalists, and direct action is often coded as masculine and heroic, movements aiming to fulfill abolition ecology's promise of new solidarities need to remain vigilant against the re-assertion of whiteness. In their reading of the abolitionist and class-centric magazine *Race Traitor*, Dreama Moon and Lisa A. Flores show how merely opposing whiteness risks recentering white resistance such that "the opportunity for abolitionists to benefit from other discourses of struggle is lost."[40] Because merely opposing a common threat or ideology does not do the difficult work of collective transformation, images of white heroes taking risky actions may still emerge from struggles in the Weelaunee. Indeed, even sharing tactics invites notions of expertise and experience that may foreclose the Stop Cop City movement's radical potential. Although the promise of collective transformations remains over the horizon, the movement's worldmaking practices enact the process of learning to live together and with the forest, gesturing towards new modes of relationality and community.

Gesture Two: Emplaced worldmaking practices in coalition point towards the horizon of a society characterized by mutual aid, collective love, and freedom

The Stop Cop City coalition's un/remaking of the Weelaunee spurs insurgent direct action and emplaced worldmaking. The movement subsequently deploys radical environmentalism's tactics for opposing ecological destruction and germinating new worlds through tree sits, encampments, and blockades, while aiming to embody Rodriguez's reminder that "abolition is not merely a practice of negation . . . but also a radically imaginative, generative, and socially productive communal (and community-building) practice."[41] Through encampments, ecological restoration practices, festivals, and direct actions in the Weelaunee, the movement aims, as Houdek and Ore put it, to "create relationships, forge future imaginaries, and reassemble relationality, temporality, and ontology otherwise."[42] Such actions gesture towards new worlds of ecologically attuned communal love

and mutual aid despite persistent logistical problems and tensions evoked by coalitional partners' histories of hierarchical attitudes. Moreover, practicing resistance and community building amidst local ecologies provides the movement with both tactical advantages and resources for further remaking the Weelaunee as a site of ongoing experiments in collective modes of loves in relation to people, place, and the planet. Although incomplete, I argue that such un/remakings point towards modes of interpersonal labor and trust-building necessary for moving towards the horizon of abolition ecology.

Stop Cop City participants have, with different degrees of intensity since 2021, remade the Weelaunee Forest into a site of social reproduction and collective life sustained by mutual aid practices. In addition to providing the coalition a tactical base, the encampments offer what Mariame Kaba describes as "a vision of a different society, built on cooperation instead of individualism, on mutual aid instead of self-preservation."[43] *Balance Sheet: Two Years against Cop City*, another anonymous article and pamphlet circulated alongside *The City in the Forest*, describes how the encampments "drew on specific preexisting strengths within radical environmental networks"[44] and gestured towards forming new relationalities rendered necessary by the difficulties of living with strangers. The encampments provided "free shelter, sustenance, and community" [45] while simultaneously requiring intense interpersonal and socially reproductive labor to sustain themselves and maintain the coalition. While fostering communities that might resist carceral logics is often uncharted territory, mutual aid provides one way of building relationships of care and sustaining social reproduction. Dean Spade describes mutual aid as "a form of political participation in which people take responsibility for caring for one another and changing political conditions."[46] As one participant puts it, moreover, collectively sheltering and feeding each other constitutes "a labor expressing faith in abundance, creating a free meal, a free show, a free experience."[47] Mutual aid labor points towards possibilities for community beyond false scarcity and monetary capture, ideologies that often discipline anti-racist and anti-capitalist forces. Yet, sustaining such modes of life requires significant effort. Un/remaking social relations characterized by the learned habits of anti-Blackness, settler-colonialism, and capitalism that inhere in all members of society demands constant labor and vigilance. Despite such difficulties, the Weelaunee encampments offer fleeting glimpses of nascent modes of collective organizing that might germinate new worlds.

Importantly, Stop Cop City's encampments were embedded in the forest, a living network or ecology and place that resists policing, broadening the range of potential relationalities enacted through worldbuilding labor. Consider resonances between one encampment member's account and "The language of breathing and suffocation"[48] that Houdek situates as crucial to abolitionist *praxis*:

> The forest is a breathing barricade. Like any breathing mechanism, the boundaries continuously undo themselves. Inputs and outputs collide—between the city and the woods, the feral and the tame, the safe and the dangerous. . . . Violence as negation manifests itself in the form of the state, helicopters flying overhead and cops on the edge of the barricade to arrest the forest dwellers, sometimes they dare to enter, with their machines and their armor.[49]

Constituting the literal terrain of struggle against racial capitalism and carceral infrastructures while simultaneously providing Atlantans with oxygen, the forest *qua* breathing territory scaffolds the movement's "embodied, world-breaking/making praxis."[50] Amidst the forest, the movement gestures towards remaking what Houdek calls "the living and breathing relations at the core of the 'modern' world"[51] as participants work to resist, and un/remake social relations away from, suffocating state surveillance and violence. Sabotaging construction equipment, barricading footpaths, and performing mutual aid are all enabled by the Weelaunee. Resistance and worldmaking outside of complete police control subsequently become parts of the forest's potential meanings. No longer state or corporate property ready for development, the forest may come to embody both histories of oppression and the potential for more breathable forms of ecologically inflected communal life.

Blurring lines between humans and non-humans, woodland worldmaking offers glimpses of radical ecological-abolitionist love, an overwhelming feeling of belonging with and amidst ecologies that shelter participants from state violence. For one participant: "Everywhere you look, the police are trying to shrink our worlds, shrink our lives. . . . Falling in love with these woods has meant falling in love with one another and with the possibilities of this world—a love that the police will never understand, and therefore cannot crush."[52] Echoing resonances between abolitionist, decolonial, and ecological writings about love, this passage points to yet unrealized modes of community beyond the state's suffocating violence and grids of intelligibility. bell hooks famously theorized love as a practice "exemplified by the combined forces of care, respect, knowledge, and responsibility"[53] that might empower Black communal life in the face of racism, capitalism, and heteropatriarchy. While perhaps constituting more ephemeral communal forms than those hooks addressed, encampment participants point towards their cultivation of care, respect for the forest, and responsibility to resist Cop City, practices from which such modes of love as refuge may emerge. As participants' descriptions suggest, the possibilities for communal modes of love were modulated by the encampment's embeddedness in the breathing forest. Describing "world-disclosing" environmental rhetorics, such as *Silent Spring*, Lida Maxwell argues that non-human worlds' vibrancy creates interspecies love that

gestures "beyond the instrumental value of non-human nature to the meaningful forms of life they help to constitute."[54] The encampment's care and socialization practices amidst the vibrant and unruly Weelaunee gesture towards possible breathable relationalities that exceed capture by, or escape, state violence. These relationalities' promise both relies on, and might become sustainable through, humans' appreciation of life-providing and sociality-enabling ecologies in particular places. Such a love, which persists in the possibilities of an abolition ecology beyond the horizon, might sustain collective resistance to the violence of the present and germinate new worlds.

The encampments' gestures towards communal love likely exceed, if only momentarily, the boundaries of racial capitalism's entrapment, commodification, and intelligibility. Insofar as they persist beyond unintelligibility for the police, these intimacies may escape the state's languages and violence. Reports from a music festival held after the Fourth Week of Action, a period of intense coalitional protest, further exemplifies this unintelligibility: "We spent whole days and nights dancing, grooving, moshing to the rhythms of the free forest. My body is filled with an energy that . . . comes from a more diffuse and mystical power. A power that only emerges in the connection between many bodies engaged in freely creating a shared world."[55] Drawing on Roland Barthes, Chela Sandoval similarly describes decolonial love as a process that punctures "through . . . the descriptions, recitals, and plots that dull and order our senses insofar as such social narratives are tied to the law."[56] Unruly woodland worldmaking, as the participant attests, offers glimmers of the "extra, uncategorizable, unnamable meaning haunting all human need to name, classify, order, and control."[57] The encampments' relational practices offer momentary glimpses of a becoming-otherwise beyond the grammar of Western subject-making and the state's stultifying determination. Because the state cannot grapple with communities made through care practices amidst the forest, as an opaque terrain, breathing network, and specific place, the Stop Cop City movement evokes possibilities for a communal love that inheres in the promise of an abolition ecology.

While pointing towards new modes of relationality, the encampments embody the tensions in coalitional organizing between predominantly white environmentalists and abolitionist and decolonial groups. As *Balance Sheet* points out, the encampments had a "subcultural feel" and "The majority of those living in the camps were white."[58] This is likely partially attributable to the difficulties in convincing local residents, including the Black working class, to leave their homes and camp in tree houses, rather than "overtly discriminatory behaviors."[59] However, the problem may run deeper than the pamphlet describes. Despite decades of intra-movement struggle, radical environmentalism still attracts transphobic, patriarchical, and racist elements.[60] Hierarchical and transphobic

organizations such as Deep Green Resistance, misanthropic Kaczynskites, and self-styled androcentric leaders still pervade some portions of the movement. Such tendencies' presence in coalition spaces risks amplifying myriad modes of exclusion and violence, rendering communal love impossible.

Moving towards the horizon of abolition ecology requires, then, interpersonal labor and constant vigilance to guard against the re-assertion of hierarchical tendencies. Chavez catalogs myriad techniques, such as confronting exclusionary speech and political education, that organizers within queer and migrant coalitions use to harmonize the "dissonance"[61] of coalitional conflict. Perhaps radical environmentalism's tendency to attract reactionaries is unlikely to be overcome in the short-term. The movement's wilderness rhetorics and histories of racism and cis-hetero-misogyny run deep, creating significant distrust with groups with common interests. Nevertheless, the educational practices and interpersonal labor described by Chavez show possible avenues for maintaining coalitional action and potentially transforming well-meaning participants without rendering them disposable. Yet, from our current vista, such collective un/remakings may seem impossible. Stop Cop City's woodland worldmaking thus gestures towards an abolition ecology that remains over the horizon. Mutual aid, interpersonal engagement, and collective action practices amidst the forest contain the unfinished promise of a more breathable world of solidarity and collective, ecologically attuned, love. Such worlds might provide germinal ground for making new ways of living beyond racial capitalism.

Gesture Three: Coalitional un/remaking and reimagining of place and collective worlds may circulate further, evoking the possibility of global modes of resistance

Emerging from the movement's un/remaking and reimagining of the Weelaunee and worldmaking tactics, Stop Cop City, and "Cop City," have circulated as synecdoches and metaphors for global policing networks and carceral infrastructure projects alongside instructions for encampments and ecological renewal practices. In addition to potentially expanding the coalition, these circulation practices evoke imagination of a solidaristic movement against all carceral infrastructure that constitutes geographically dispersed worlds of collective love. The movement's circulation practices subsequently help embellish Heynen and Ybarra's emphasis on "place-based solidarity"[62] as an avenue towards abolition ecology futures. Following Gilmore's observation that "environmental-justice activism can be a sturdy bridge between grassroots activists stuck in urban and rural landscapes of disaccumulation,"[63] Heynen, Ybarra, and others show how

different places can become connected through fights against dispossession and violence. In the Stop Cop City movement, such connections operate through synecdoche and metaphor or the substitution of one place as symbolic for the broader network of relations and the use of the place name to evoke imagination of multiple places' analogic importance and function. Calling for resistance to cop cities everywhere and propagating worldmaking practices, the coalition gestures towards the horizon of global struggle by making the Weelaunee as symbolic of all places. Despite this promise, I contend that such circulation practices risk both replicating tactics specific to the Weelaunee's location and abandoning attention to specific land relations crucial to struggles against settler colonialism.

The Stop Cop City movement has become a global *cause célèbre*, spurring solidarity marches, speaking events, and actions to pressure the project's tertiary suppliers elsewhere. While spreading the Weelaunee coalition globally, such actions also substitute "Stop Cop City" as a synecdoche for broader struggles against proliferating carceral infrastructures and policing networks. An anonymous report on a solidarity march in Oakland, California on May 30, 2023, for example, describes how "The flyers passed out explained how what is taking place in Atlanta is not just a local struggle happening 'over there,' but interconnected with drives to expand the U.S. police state everywhere in reaction to several successive months of anti-policing revolt."[64] The report notes further that Cop City's supporters "want it to become a hub for the proliferation of state violence, facilitating inter-regional and even international exchanges between policing agencies."[65] The Weelaunee development becomes the most visible instance of, and therefore synecdochical for, global intensifications of policing. Cop City is not one place alone, or even a few contingently linked places. It becomes both an intensifier of, and symbolically substituted for, broader policing networks.

Situating the Weelaunee development as synecdoche for intensifying policing networks allows the struggle against Cop City to become symbolic of broader anti-carceral infrastructure movements. Another report from the Oakland march describes how "this struggle represents a multi-sectoral fight" [66] against ecological destruction, coloniality, and intensified policing. Comparing the Stop Cop City movement to successful opposition to Urban Shield, a yearly police training event held in Oakland until 2018, the report proclaims that "By building upon each other's contributions to the struggle for a Cop City-free Weelaunee Forest, we can collectively grow our power towards a cop-free world."[67] Struggles against Cop City represent a visible opportunity to build abolitionist power, while the Atlanta and Oakland movements become imagined as connected gestures towards the horizon of broader struggle.

"Cop City" has also become a metaphor for police training and carceral infrastructures elsewhere, further evoking imagination of global struggle towards

abolition ecology futures. One anonymous communiqué circulated by *Scenes from the Atlanta Forest* predicts that "Cop City is a testing ground for other law enforcement agencies across the country to construct similar facilities" before proclaiming: "Cop City is everywhere, so our resistance will be everywhere."[68] Here, synecdoche becomes metaphor as other policed places are not only represented by, but become remade and imagined as, cop cities. Cop City's metaphoricity becomes, in the second instance, a gesture towards broader struggles against carceral infrastructures. Another anonymous communique initially posted on the blog *Jersey Counter-Info* and recirculated elsewhere further concretizes this metaphor.[69] It describes plans for a new New Jersey State Police training center before proclaiming: "The U.S. white power establishment wants to build cop city everywhere. You are encouraged to heed the call and example from the Welaunee [*sic*] Forest: give them hell, everywhere."[70] Naming the proposed training center cop city, regardless of whether it contains a mock city, evokes imagination of a movement modeled after, and connected to, the Weelaunee opposition. Such metaphors intensify gestures towards struggle centered on the similarity of *all* places under racial capitalism and settler colonialism.

Uses of the Weelaunee development as synecdoche and metaphor invite the movement's propagation of worldmaking practices, as participants share tactics for experimenting with ecological regeneration. To wit, the Weelaunee Food Autonomy Festival held after the movement's fifth Week of Action, between March 10 and 13, 2023, sought to spread knowledge about developing ecologically attuned and community-controlled food systems.[71] The festival's invitation imagines the movement's worldmaking as part of a network of collective social reproduction practices emerging across North America:

> Across the continent, diverse collectives, farms, and mutual aid hubs have organized themselves, especially since 2020, and have been busy creating autonomous food systems, developing grassroots crop breeding, building food production and distribution systems for collective resilience and communal luxury—outside of the market or USDA management. These efforts at mutual aid and horizontal experimentation challenge state violence, racist dispossession, and the myth of scarcity.[72]

The invitation subsequently frames these networked practices as ecologically restorative: "Restoring this forest, scarred with a history of indigenous dispossession and prison slave labor, is a complicated task."[73] While practices that work in the Weelaunee may be inappropriate for other biomes, the event sought to propagate worldbuilding networks in addition to providing information. The festival's workshops, discussions, and forest walks subsequently offered opportunities to strengthen connections between participants building food autonomy across

North America. Such connections gesture towards the global promise of ecologically attuned worldbuilding projects that support sustained movements against racial capitalism.

Figural circulations of "Cop City" and movement networking practices nevertheless carry substantial risks. Imagining struggles as represented by other places may obscure the necessity of coalitions with Black and Indigenous communities crucial to abolition ecology's promise. The Weelaunee's location in Atlanta, a global city with a large Black population, also provides the movement with crucial resources potentially unavailable elsewhere. Stop Cop City's capacity to center Black communities in coalition, mobilize publics to risk arrest, and rely on bail funds and other protest infrastructure is attributable to Atlanta's status as a major metropolitan area with a long history of civil rights organizing. Such resources may be unavailable to struggles against metaphorical cop cities, rendering the tactics authorized by the Weelaunee Development's specific location potentially ineffective.

Tropological substitutions of "Cop City" for other infrastructure projects also evokes tensions between the necessity of foregrounding Indigenous communities' land relations and the impulse towards the horizon of a global abolition ecology. Stop Cop City participants actively engaged the Muskogee people, to whom the Weelaunee may be repatriated. Movements elsewhere, however, may not, or may not be able to, explicitly engage with the land's rightful inhabitants. Because, as Michael Lechuga notes, rhetoric plays a crucial role in "settler colonial governance" as it works to arrange occupation of land, such risks are dire.[74] Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang similarly warn that figuration may turn "decolonization into an empty signifier to be filled by any track towards liberation,"[75] distracting from land repatriation to Indigenous peoples. While for Tapji Gabra and Sara-Maria Sorentino, abandoning rhetorical struggle for "positivist investments in land"[76] may preclude both Indigenous cultural relations that make land meaningful and abolitionist struggles that attend to the displacement of slavery within colonial discourse, decolonization requires centering Indigenous communities. Calls to "stop cop cities everywhere" risk ignoring building relationships with Indigenous communities with land relations where new carceral infrastructures are constructed. Moving towards the horizon of abolition ecology requires consistent and careful engagement with ongoing settler colonial dispossession in these places. Despite the tensions and potential tactical difficulties posed by different organizing contexts, Stop Cop City gestures towards global solidarities that exceed the logic of place-based struggles. Circulating synechdoches, metaphors, and worldmaking practices evoke unfinished possibilities of an abolition ecology as global modes of relationality that challenge the complex knot of colonialism, racial capitalism, and ecological destruction.

Conclusion

The Stop Cop City movement, at the time of writing, remains both unfinished and unlikely to resolve the myriad tensions evoked by coalitional action between radical environmentalists, abolitionists, and decolonial movements. Nevertheless, its participants' rhetorical labor gestures towards the horizon of an abolition ecology. Through its coalition crafting place re/making and reimagining rhetorics, its worldmaking practices and direct actions, as well as circulation of food autonomy practices and "Cop City" as synecdoche and metaphor, the Stop Cop City movement evokes imagination of global struggle against carceral infrastructures and concomitant networks of ecologically attuned worlds characterized by collective love and mutual aid. Attention to these three gestures, then, evokes a capacious imagination of possible abolition ecology futures that exceeds the logic of place. More than un/remaking and reimagining the Weelaunee as a site of past and present destruction, as well as undetermined shared futures, the Stop Cop City movement points to the possibility of connecting myriad struggles and new worlds.

The Stop Cop City movement also evokes imagination of another environmental rhetoric scholarship oriented towards the abolitionist horizon. In some sense mirroring the tensions inherent in many ecology movements, environmental rhetoric scholarship, including my own, has not always attended to linkages between racial capitalism, colonial dispossession, and environmental destruction. Perhaps owing to the persistent power of tropes of unvarnished wilderness, it can be easy to participate, however unknowingly, in carceral and colonial discourses. This, despite long struggles against both hierarchical tendencies in the environmental movement and prisons propelled by state repression of radical environmentalism. My attention to the Stop Cop Movement's rhetorical *praxis*, its bottom-up practices that form coalition amidst tensions, offers glimpses of how environmental communication can better address the linkages between ecological destruction, racial capitalism, and settler colonialism. Learning from emergent movements and building initially uncomfortable alliances with abolitionist rhetorical studies can provide new ways of un/remaking modes of scholarship that sometimes persists in reenforcing colonial and carceral violence.

The movement also gestures towards the horizon of accompliceship, where making common cause across movements and perspectives opens onto undetermined futures. Although sometimes imagined as a pre-formed mode of politics, we can only glimpse an abolition ecology that effectively resists racial capitalism and state violence through the rhetorical crafting of coalitions. Such coalitional moments, as Chavez and the Stop Cop City movement both show, spur visions of exciting new worlds and relationalities worth propagating into an undetermined future. By bringing different, but not necessarily incompatible, core commitments

and tactical repertoires to the table, coalitional partners may mutually enrich each other's worldviews and suasory capacities while evoking imagination of different modes of cooperation and relationality. Each successive coalitional moment provides opportunities to examine these transformations, potentially enriching our scholarship and *praxis*, showing the way towards yet unknowable futures.

While the movement against Cop City remains ongoing, and contractors have started clear cutting of parts of the Weelaunee forest, the movement has already managed to evoke imagination of the possibilities for a global abolition ecology. Following global opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline on the Standing Rock Sioux reservation, opposition to Cop City represents the latest struggle against the ecologically destructive infrastructure of colonial dispossession and racial violence. It certainly will not be the last struggle as the state, capital, and white supremacy collude to destroy the Earth and control its people. Scholars and would-be activists alike would do well to orient themselves towards the horizon of an ecologically attuned society grounded in mutual aid and collective love. While it is struggling to be born, such a world nevertheless represents the immanent *telos* of any meaningful fight to save each other and the planet.

Notes

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