A FUTURE WITHOUT PRISONS?

FROM ECONOMIES TO ECOLOGIES OF INCARCERATION

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The postapocalyptic world as captured in the cinematic imaginary of the past fifty years is one in which the carceral features heavily. The carceral imagination can, of course, take multiple forms including, notably, the ad hoc warehousing of rogue bodies in barren landscapes as in films like *Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome* (1985) or, indeed, its more recent update *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015), decaying cityscapes like *Escape from New York* (1981), and the sterile, hi-tech quarantine of infected bodies found in the *Resident Evil* film series (2002–16). Read collectively such depictions appear to provide a general consensus that a future increasingly marked by the vicissitudes of climate change, and natural resource depletion, along with biological and chemical warfare will involve more and not less incarceration. Moreover, whether the apocalyptic moment is one defined by a breakdown of technology (as best embodied in the steampunk aesthetic of *Mad Max*) or the apotheosis of automation that sees humankind rendered obsolete by the machines it has created, for example in *The Terminator* film series (1984–) or subservient to their energy demands as depicted in *The Matrix* (1999), the carceral architecture or infrastructure that turns the landscape into a penalscape can be read as one of mass containment of human labor or energy rather than individual punishment.

Implied in such representations is the oft (mis)quoted statement by Fredric Jameson that *it is easier to imagine the end of the world, than the end of capitalism*. The penalscape that provides the backdrop to much postapocalyptic cinema does indeed seem to endorse this version of Jameson's statement not least in its presentation of imprisonment as rarely predicated on justice or morality, laying bare instead its development as universal response to crime, or more precisely illegalism, within the parallel development of capitalism. However, in order to explore more fully what is at stake in the imagining of the postapocalyptic as penalscape, we should return to the exact wording of Jameson's claim that, "Someone once said that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism. We can now revise that and witness the attempt to imagine capitalism by way of imagining the end of the world."[1] In this respect, the penalscapes that mark much postapocalyptic cinema can be seen as embodying the "single baleful tendency" Jameson regards as emerging from our collective imagining of the future as just more of the same. "The problem is then how to locate radical difference; how to jumpstart the sense of history so that it begins again to transmit feeble signals of time, of otherness, of change, of Utopia."[2]

Pursuing the call made by Jameson to *break back into History*, this article writes against the popular imaginary of the postapocalyptic penalscape, assuming as its starting point the possibility of a world without prison. For those who consider such a world inconceivable and indeed irresponsible, we might rephrase this slightly: a world in which incarceration or detention does not constitute the default response to criminal activity or forms of illegalism such as unauthorized border crossing or undocumented labor. The approach I want to take is not to argue why prison is obsolete as Angela Davis, Alain Brossat, and others have done but, rather, to consider the ways in which we *might better*

imagine prison as obsolete.[3] My main claim here is that we need to think through the problem of incarceration not according to the economic terms with which prison is most frequently posited and legitimated but as an ecology. Taking this approach thus involves an acknowledgment that contemporary forms of mass incarceration are underpinned by a racist, colonial logic that disproportionately privileges certain bodies and punishes others. At the same time, in proposing we read prison as an "ecology," I wish to guard against the reproduction of a scientific epistemology that obscures colonial violence through reference to universal histories of humankind. As Kathryn Yusoff makes clear in *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, such histories are always White histories, which render non-white bodies as non-human or not-quite human. Most recently, the challenge to define the Anthropocene, as our current geological age, identifies human activity as the main factor of environmental, planetary change thus erasing the specific role of colonialism in both extraction of mineral wealth and the forced migration and forced labor of millions of enslaved bodies.

To Have Done with Economy

Avoiding a straightforward association with the late capitalism we seem unable to imagine a way out of, Jean-Pierre Dupuy provides a useful critique of the notion of economy as an abstracted force that has come to govern our lives in the most banal of ways.[4] Where his specific critique of what he terms "economystification" is particularly useful in challenging existing critiques of prison in economic terms is in the links we can establish between a wider understanding of economy and Loïc Wacquant's critique of the prison industrial complex as predicated purely on money making. Taking to task those, including most notably David Harvey, who evoke the "bogeyman" of the prison industrial complex,

Wacquant argues for a more complex understanding of the relationship between penal and social policy.[5] There is no coordinated conspiracy at work in the "carceral" turn that emerged in the United States in the 1970s before being exported as a model elsewhere.[6] Instead of reading mass incarceration as directly linked to privatization and deregulation, it is, according to Wacquant, key to acknowledge the ongoing role of state intervention as it has shifted focus from welfare support to the growth of the penal administration. The legitimation of this move occurs via a widespread dissemination of fear, which Wacquant describes as a "thriving culture industry of fear of the poor" directed towards poor communities and crystallized, most notably, in the figure of the unemployed young black man.[7]

Within the context of a critique of prison economies, we should note the widespread use of prison labor and its critiques by both the right and the left either as stealing work from law-abiding citizens or as constituting a form of abuse in the form of underpaid, quasi-slave labor. A notable example is the use of prison labor (including juveniles) to fight forest fires in the US.[8] Prisonfare in countries including the United Kingdom and France is justified via the possibilities for rehabilitation it offers and the potential reduction of recidivism by providing convicts or inmates with a greater skill set and accumulated work experience. However, public showcasing of such programs often excludes forms of education and training that are not grounded in semi-skilled manual labor. Regardless of the programs actually on offer, which vary enormously from prison to prison, inmates are often presented as developing catering skills or assembling electronics. In Japan all prison sentences involve "time" and "labor," and work is presented as a form of discipline. Every prison has a shop outside its gates where the public can buy crafts and other goods manufactured inside the prison. Conversely, in privately run US prisons such as Attica,

opportunities for manufacturing work are limited and presented as a privileged to a small percentage of the population. The decline in manufacturing and a drive towards more "ethically" made products means despite a drive within for-profit prisons to develop the convict population into a well-organized, productive workforce, prison labor is increasingly unpopular. One notable exception to this unpopularity is in the culture industry that profits from the circulation of images of those incarcerated, required to "perform" their criminality for prison documentaries and other carceral entertainment. As Dennis Childs makes clear in his piercing analysis of the Louisiana State Penitentiary (commonly known as Angola) located on the site of a former slave plantation, this demand for performance currently embodied in Angola's crowd-pleasing convict rodeos, is nothing new.[9]

Thus while labor within prisons is co-opted to multiple ideologies of rehabilitation, privilege, and discipline within different contexts, these are all predicated on the idea of the "docile body" identified by Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*. In the context of late capitalism docility refers as much to one's capacity to consume as it does to one's ability to produce. Prison identifies the problem of what to do with labor that is not needed or wanted, thus justifying its own existence via its presentation of work as both privilege and responsibility. However, in identifying the problem of labor, prison also fails to see past it to the unsustainability of existing patterns of production and consumption especially in highly developed countries.

To expose the myth that shackles together poverty, criminality, and moral failing via the notion of the prison industrial complex is simply to reaffirm a larger myth. This is the myth that naturalizes an understanding of the economy, as suggested by Dupuy above, in terms of innate human greed and competition. Consequently, to accept the myth of the prison industrial complex is also to accept the myth of greed as human

nature. Against this, I want to propose the notion of ecology as a means of thinking outside the myths perpetuated by both the concept of the prison industrial complex and the wider concept of economy.

The role of the notion of "ecology" involves a twofold presentation of the term. Firstly, how might we define the space of the prison and the wider infrastructure and networks that support and maintain its operation in terms of a toxic ecology that is unsustainable at both a micro and macro level? Secondly, how might we propose a different understanding of the term "ecology" via the concept of an "ecology of care" proposed as an alternative to the toxic space of the prison? Here, it will be useful to draw upon a conception of ecology as tool (*clef*) found in Félix Guattari's *Three Ecologies*.

Guattari maps out what he terms an "ecosophy" as a means of challenging what he perceives as a myopic and technocratic response to the global ecological crisis. The three ecologies of the essay's title pertain to the environment, social relations, and human subjectivity.[10] They offer a way out of what Guattari refers to as "the capitalist value system," offering the possibility of different forms of valorization to the "general equivalence" that reduces everything to wage labor and profit.[11] It is possible to see how the practice of incarceration can be understood as a problem to be thought through in relation to each of these ecologies and how these offer a more useful set of engagements than the concept of prison as an economy. Guattari urges us to think "transversally" not nostalgically, connecting these ecologies rather than considering them separately.[12] At the same time, he warns against a homogeneous response to the various practices involved at different levels. It is clear that challenging the global phenomenon of mass incarceration as embedded in contemporary forms of capitalism is a different task than closing individual prisons due to their toxic conditions or exploring alternatives ways to

respond to specific criminal activity, particularly violence.[13] Yet each of these levels cannot be thought independently of the others. Guattari defines the different practices to be developed in terms of "processes of *heterogenesis.*"[14]

Understanding what an ecology of care might entail and how it can engender a world without prisons requires various conceptual leaps. In addition to Jameson's call to "break back into History," my approach is indebted to Dupuy's notion of "time as a project" set out in *Pour un catastrophisme éclairé*. Dupuy developed the concept of "enlightened catastrophism" in the context of climate change and the widespread disasters it will continue to produce across the globe in coming decades. Despite accusations of fatalism, he insists that his philosophical approach is based on optimism rather than resignation to future catastrophes.[15] To conceive of time *as a project* means to imagine a given future, one in which a disaster or set of disasters has occurred, and work backwards from this future moment not with a view to preventing the disaster per se but, rather, preparing to encounter it. As such, at worst, the impact of a future disaster is radically reduced, ideally to the point where it ceases to be experienced as disaster: at best, the disaster never happens. Time as a project is thus focused on the future anterior, *what will have been*. It is an act of the imagination, a "metaphysical fiction," although as Dupuy reminds us, this is no more a fiction than our imagining of the past.[16] Time here is presented in terms of a loop (*boucle*) in which the future is posited as fixed precisely in order to resist this fixity.

However, where Dupuy is taken up with questions of how best to manage future catastrophes or disasters, my focus is on carceral spaces and practices. Moreover, it is worth noting that Dupuy's approach emphasizes the management or administration of the predictably unpredictable. Evoking Robert Marzec's analysis of climate change war games

in *Militarizing the Environment*, we might warn against an approach such as Dupuy's that may lend itself to military discourses on environmental risks that posit the predictably unpredictable as necessitating a singular militarized response. This type of response demands increased securitization at the same time as it shuts down discussions of alternative futures. Beyond the widespread use of increased border controls and camps to contain climate refugees, it is not difficult to envisage how a militarized approach to climate change and resource depletion framed in terms of "national security" necessarily involves both the increase in illegalisms and the use of incarceration against those found contravening regulations around movement and resources. From here it also becomes clear that it will be the poorest, most disenfranchised members of society who will suffer most at the hands of a securitized response.

Consequently, at stake in my adoption of Dupuy's notion of *time as a project* is the thinking through of an alternative future to a contemporary problem rather than a contemporary alternative to a future problem, again echoing Jameson's analysis of Utopia. In particular, the notion of a project loosens time from its conception in purely economic terms. Can we think of time other than as labor or as debt? In his classic exposition of time, E. P. Thompson laments that the hard-worn struggles by workers at different points in industrial history are always predicated on an understanding of time as labor that maintains the worker in a position of subservience to those who profit from this labor.[17] Likewise, the debates around prison sentencing, including recent calls (in the UK and in France) to abolish shorter sentences, are predicated on the myth that longer sentencing provides an effective means of transforming inmates into productive members of society.[18] Time as a project thus requires a complex rethinking that does not settle on prescribed, quantifiable definitions of time but identifies a need for alternative experiences

of time. In other words, to think of time as a project as part of an ecology of care means to take time to better understand time. Integral to this is a radical contestation of the way in which time is used as an economy of punishment via the prison system.

The rest of this article is structured according to three backwards steps that offer one possible way to articulate a future without prison in terms of a project. The first step focuses on an imagined future point in which today's prisons exist only as ruins. The second considers some of the complex work involved in dismantling the carceral architecture and infrastructure as it is embedded both within the wider present-day socioeconomic context and in terms of the future role it is perceived as playing in an increasingly securitized future. Finally, the last step looks at the conceptual impetus, or lever, required to set in motion such a process of decarceration.

Step 1. The Ruins of the Future

Working backwards, the first problem we encounter is what to make of prison reduced to a pile of rubble, rusted metal, dust? The prison as ruins of the future. Is it possible to imagine exploring or walking through a set of carceral ruins that attest not to a former, less humane, more barbaric time but, rather, to something completely incomprehensible? Can we imagine encountering these ruins as representing something incommensurate to human or, if one prefers, post-human existence?

The incomprehensibility of prison is explored in Ursula K. Le Guin's 1974 novel *The Dispossessed*. Growing up on the socialist planet Anarres, where life is defined according to the teachings of Odo, the young Shevek and his friends are fascinated by the notion of prison, which is alien to their world but employed extensively by the neighboring capitalist planet of Urras. The boys "play" at prison but have difficulty embracing the hierarchical

relationship of guard and prisoner. To survive a night in their makeshift prison seems more of a test of individual will than a punishment imposed by others. They are all to some extent traumatized by the physically humiliating scene in which twelve-year-old Kadagv is discovered to have defecated on himself during his imprisonment under the learning center. The experience causes Shevek to vomit. They are now aware of what prison is, and this is enough to stem their curiosity. Thus when Shevek visits Urras and asks to see the Fort where Odo was held, it is not in search of prison but, rather, of the political and intellectual origins of his own society, a world without prison, since it was during her imprisonment that Odo wrote various key works. Initially his guides claim the Fort has been razed. When it nevertheless appears on the skyline, a building described as "heavy, ruinous, implacable, with broken towers of black stone,"[19] Shevek is offered the chance to look inside. He declines:

> He had seen what he wanted to see. There was still a Fort in Drio. He did not need to enter it and seek down ruined halls for the cell in which Odo had spent nine years. He knew what a prison cell was like.
>
> He looked up, his face still set and cold, at the ponderous dark walls that now loomed almost above the car. I have been here for a long time, the Fort said, and I am still here.[20]

During the period that has come to be known as the Anthropocene, the landscape has been reshaped as a penalscape. Frequently, it is the vestiges of the carceral that remain as ruins when all else has been destroyed. The dungeon is often the part of a medieval castle or chateau that remains most structurally intact. Frequently, the ruin of a former prison is staged in the same way that the restored building offers a reconstruction. Thus presented, the ruin attests to the longevity of prison as a mode of dealing with society's criminals and undesirables. A repurposed prison as museum, art gallery, or hotel celebrates the space of the former prison as subversive and transgressive.[21] As such it is

marketed as an interesting and exciting place to visit. The prison and those kept within in it are presented in terms of a carefully framed aura. The prison becomes a fetish object, or better, fetish container into which society can put its dark fantasies and anxieties. Both types of site—ruin and restoration—emphasize to a greater or lesser degree the reformist discourse that maintains the prison as degree zero regardless of whether the claim is to make this more humane, more secure, more economic, or more sustainable.[22] Consequently, we might argue for a new understanding of the ruined prison that decouples it from preservation and conservation initiatives, themselves predicated on an uncritical assumption that all "heritage" possesses intrinsic value and the ethical obligation to preserve. Instead I propose we leave the now-empty prison to its ruination, to the reclamation of its materials and site by different human and non-human actors in non-prescribed ways.

Step 2. Dismantling the Prison

The second problem or step backwards is the painful, difficult process of decarceration necessary to move from a historical period of mass incarceration to one that strongly limits the use of secure units. Thus far I have drawn upon Jameson's reading of utopian desire as a means of adding clarity to Dupuy's notion of *time as a project*. The prison as ruins of the future is, of course, a utopian desire. However, in coming to consider the complex tasks required in the dismantling of the prison both in its totality as a system but equally on a case-by-case basis, it is useful to invoke Isabelle Stenger's critique of utopia in *In Catastrophic Times*, proposing in its place the idea of the hard, collective work involved in producing an alternative world. It is worth reproducing her warning in full:

> There is but one certainty: that the process of creation of possibility must be very careful of the utopian mode, which appeals to the surpassing of conflicts and

> proposes a remedy the interest of which must be respected by everyone. And there is but one generality that holds: that *every creation must incorporate the knowledge that it is not venturing into a friendly world but into an unhealthy milieu,* that it will have to deal with protagonists—the State, capitalism, professionals, etc.—who will profit from any weakness and who will activate all the processes likely to empoison ("recuperate") it. For example, by recognizing users in a mode that transforms them into stakeholders, by setting up situations that divide those who seek to cooperate, by demanding inappropriate guarantees, or by fabricating infernal alternatives that dismember that which was seeking to create its own position.[23]

It is in the exposition of this stage of the project that the critique of prison as economy comes to the fore. Critics of the prison industrial complex point out the high costs of mass incarceration and private prisons to taxpayers while also highlighting the unsustainable economic model that relies upon locking up more and more of the general population.[24] However, I want to suggest that there are at least two fundamental limitations to a purely economic critique of the carceral state and its increased privatization. Both limitations—spatial and temporal—act as impediments to an abolitionist project. My focus here is mainly on the United States carceral model not simply as the most widely documented example, but equally as a model being exported or adopted, in one form or another, by countries such as the United Kingdom.[25] The spatial limitation refers to the different territories of the prison town and the groups of inmates transferred and held there. The temporal limitation pertains to the short- and long-term stakes of mass incarceration and those who seek to profit from it.

How is it possible that a town or city should be dependent upon the functioning and indeed growth of its prison for economic well-being? Moreover, the common disjuncture between a local community and the inmates bused in from afar means that there are no personal stakes in seeing inmates released back into the community. The alternatives proposed to mass incarceration, such as better education programs at all levels, increased access to mental health support, early intervention strategies, and so on, are rarely

located in the same spaces as those chosen as prison sites or aimed at the same groups or communities. Indeed there is the expectation that inmates will return to wherever they are from, leaving no possibility of fostering links with the local community. Also after release many are banned from multiple locations and forced to inhabit a no-man's-land rather than achieve reintegration into the community from which they had been expelled. The logic of the "prison town" is rooted in the utopian, colonial idea of the penal colony, yet there is no longer any anticipation that the released convict will subsequently contribute to the future development of the local economy and community.

What becomes apparent is not merely the gap between the local and global effects of incarceration—and who benefits and suffers directly and indirectly—but how this gap is precisely the work of the prison industrial complex. In this respect, while incarceration is predicated on the existence and persistence of social inequality, it often works to mask this by embedding itself into local economies and infrastructures where high unemployment and a lack of opportunities prevail.

A process of decarceration requires a different relationship between offender and community in which it is in everyone's interest to see the offender effectively reintegrate into the community. Such an interest cannot be posited simply in economic terms to the extent that this is predicated on competition and wealth accumulation rather than labor and resource sharing. Pursuing a line of argument set out most forcibly by Wacquant, if prison punishes one set of poor and disenfranchised people, the closure of the prison punishes another set. In the same vein, I want to argue that this is not a regrettable side effect to incarceration resulting from the need for human labor in the form of architects, guards, catering, and so on to operate. Rather, it is integral to the functioning of incarceration to play the well-being and economic success and survival of different groups

off one another. Incarceration is the open acknowledgment that the success of some is necessarily predicated on the suffering of others. This is why a straightforward economic critique of incarceration misses the point of incarceration. We might instead consider, as suggested above, the extent to which logic of the prison is aligned with the processes of "economystification" that continue to legitimate the notion of the market or markets as a self-regulating abstract force. The arbitrary sentencing of individuals, often along racial and class lines, reflects this abstract force at the same time as it allows society recourse to an ethicomoral framework used to judge and condemn certain members of society. Incarceration as universal regulation of criminal bodies functions as a form of infrastructure working to support the social inequalities repeatedly produced and exacerbated by unregulated or self-regulated global financial markets. Considered in this context, the hardest task that emerges is not convincing a population that prison is a toxic, unhealthy space that fails to rehabilitate or deter but, rather, to engage prison towns in the task of dismantling their infrastructure and economies. Key here is the understanding of this task as one of care for one another rather than an act of abandonment by a defunct economic model and industry.

Secondly, thinking about the temporal limitations of an economic critique requires deeper consideration of what is really at stake in the prison industrial complex beyond the obvious smash and grab capitalism it appears to embody. Instead of simply condemning private contractors for their short-term greed and political lobbying, we should look at their long-term strategies in developing technologies of incarceration and security. Such technologies have considerable application beyond an individual prison site or the current carceral requirements of a specific nation-state.

If state-run prisons, at least in purportedly democratic states, have a duty of care to both the public and those locked up, private prisons are charged with the management of carceral populations. While this management does not automatically preclude the use of therapeutic and rehabilitative techniques, the underlying remit is the effective (i.e., secure) and efficient (i.e., cheap) containment of bodies. In this respect, we might resituate the short-term economic growth experienced by private prisons and their subcontractors within a longer-term widespread process of securitization. Here, the threat of the unproductive, difficult human body is problematized alongside that of a larger environmental threat brought about by accelerated climate change and the accompanying irreversible damage caused by the Anthropocene. Although climate change has been used here and elsewhere as a shorthand for the damage caused by industrial capitalism, it is worth citing, following Déborah Danowski and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro in *The Ends of the World*, the nine key biophysical processes identified by a group of scientists coordinated by Johan Rockström in 2009: climate change, ocean acidification, stratospheric ozone depletion, global freshwater use, biodiversity loss, interference with the nitrogen and phosphorous cycles, changes in land use, chemical pollution, and atmospheric aerosol loading. For each of these processes, limits were established that if exceeded would render living conditions impossible for a number of species including humans.[26]

The technologies of incarceration being developed today are both framed within and contribute to a form of what Robert Marzec terms "environmentality," a form of governmentality defined in terms of an increasingly militarized environment that privileges fear and security above other forms of being-in-the-world. Environmentality is less taken up with circumventing environmental disaster and loss of human and other forms of life

than it is with managing this so as to continue to privilege a minority elite.[27] As such it both assumes and perpetuates global social inequality as a means of justifying a whole plethora of security and containment measures of which incarceration cannot but play a key role. What this means is that any attempt to counter the strategies underpinning environmentality such as the radical changes to human production and consumption patterns posited by Naomi Klein, Adrian Parr, and others must include widespread closure of prisons and detention centers.[28] Thus, in response to these spatial and temporal disjunctures identified above, two distinct tasks emerge. The first is the specific localized work required to close the prison in its present-day incarnation. The second involves the work required to contest the ongoing, changing role of prison as it becomes further co-opted alongside the camp network to intensified processes of securitization via the further criminalization of those unable to live on their own wage-labor.

Step 3. The Epistemic Shift

The final step pursuing Dupuy's *time of a project* brings us back to the present moment. Dupuy proposes we imagine time as a loop, which means we arrive at a present parallel but distinct from the one we are living. It is here that an epistemic shift is required. At this point this is less taken up with the question of prison closure or what prison might become in an increasing militarized society than the question of prison per se. The disjuncture here is between our understanding of what prisons *are for* and our acknowledgment of what prisons *actually do*. Might it be reasonable to affirm the role of prison in protecting vulnerable members of society and rehabilitating those who have offended? And, by the same token, might it be possible to recognize the systemic failure of the prison to achieve those aims due to overcrowding, budget cuts, job shortages, legal

loopholes, the changing nature of crime (online crime, for example) and so on? A shift from a carceral economy to an ecology of care can provide the conceptual tools to deconstruct the disjuncture between what prisons are for and what they do in a way that lays the theoretical groundwork for future abolition.

As Foucault suggests, prison legitimates itself via its failures as much if not more than via its successes.[29] If prison once constituted the degree zero of capitalism in its insistence on the productive labor and drive to consume all human bodies, it has come to assume the neoliberal myth of meritocracy in its insistence on employment as a privilege reserved for a deserving few. Furthermore, it lends itself to an emerging environmentality in its ability to reinforce its very mechanisms of security and control under the guise of reforms put forward as more humane, more economic, more sustainable, and so on.

Consequently, a sustainable critique of incarceration needs to move beyond the economic terms and conditions that ensure its continued functioning even when an individual prison is deemed to be failing. To think about prison as a form of ecology emphasizes instead the toxicity of its operation at a local level and its embodiment of toxic capitalism at a macro level rather than, as is the case with an economy of the prison, keeping these apart. To understand an alternative response to incarceration in terms of an ecology of care and repair also posits a world without prisons as something that involves an entire community and society as well as the environment they inhabit.

There is a growing body of work being carried out by criminologists on the toxicity of the prison environment both in terms of the waste and emissions produced by the prison and its impact on the physical and mental health of both inmates and prison staff.[30] Perhaps the most obvious example of the toxicity of the prison environment evoked in such studies relates to the issue of light. There is a lack of natural light in most prison

architecture. Moreover, for security reasons, there is a requirement to have lights on throughout the prison twenty-four hours a day. We might supplement these critiques on prison architecture with parallel studies being carried out on the effects of increased journey times for those travelling to visit family members in prisons located a significant distances from their hometown.[31]

However, much of the critical work being done around the prison "environment" and its ecology is predicated on the economic benefits of "greening" the prison. In their oft-cited case for smaller prisons, Mary Stohr and John Wozniak decry the prison as a "toxic environmental hog" yet go on to posit the requirement for more sustainable forms of incarceration in largely economic terms. Cost savings are listed as the primary incentive for a prison to "go green."[32]

As Jewkes and Moran have pointed out, a green prison *is still a prison*.[33] Moreover, the reinvention of the prison in terms of its sustainable architecture, emissions reduction, and environmental best practice simply paves the way for more private contracts, allowing architecture firms and other contractors to promote themselves as "green," thus excusing themselves from the ethical conundrum of contributing to the toxicity, suffering, and social inequalities of mass incarceration. It is not without a certain irony that Stohr and Wozniak inadvertently make the clearest case for prison abolition when they identify the hierarchical space of the prison as incommensurate with the type of flattened, egalitarian social formations required to deal with the onset of climate change and resource depletion.

The epistemic realignment I am proposing towards an ecology of care enables the move from understanding the prison as a container for that which threatens society's well-being to viewing prison itself as the threat. First, it is clear that the material and human

structures and systems operating within prisons, as well as their wider impact on families and communities, are inimical to the alternative modes of existence required to both circumvent and survive an ever-hotter global climate. Second, in understanding prison in terms of a warehouse or container for managing unproductive or difficult bodies, it should become clear that increasingly it will function as an essential tool for those opting for a militarized response to the threats posed by climate change. What this also means, as suggested above, is the introduction of new illegalisms restricting movement and the distribution of resources among the poorer classes, preventing collective organization and ensuring, in turn, that a limited, diminishing stock of resources is reserved for a wealthy few.

Conclusion

The reactionary fear with which we are programmed to respond to those that the justice system sentences to prison time must be countered by a more comprehensive understanding of both illegality and human violence. In this essay the focus has been on the unsustainability of incarceration not as an economy that will recuperate its own failures but, instead, as an ecology or set of ecologies that can be mapped in the first instance onto Guattari's three ecologies—environment, social relations, human subjectivity. Likewise, we should attend to his call for gentleness: a future without prison should not entail other forms of exclusion or the reinstatement of more direct forms of retributive violence.

Returning to Jameson via Dupuy, it may be that endless catastrophe is easier to imagine than the end of the prison system. To posit a future without prisons is a necessarily utopian project. Yet, it attests also to the impossibility of nostalgia for some

earlier, simpler time, since a return to any part of the history of punishment is both implausible and undesirable. Here instead, the expanded intent of Jameson's phrase might guide an ecology of care and repair by offering a way to think the end of capitalism and the end of incarceration together. Perhaps that we can only with difficulty think of the end of prisons registers the immense effort required to avoid a despairing and catastrophic incarceration within Capital forever.

Abstract
Pursuing the call made by Fredric Jameson, in his writing on utopia, to *break back into History*, this article writes against a popular imaginary which presents the postapocalyptic world as heavily marked by varying forms of incarceration. It assumes as its starting point the possibility of a world without prison, focusing on the conceptual leaps required to more effectively imagine such a world. Drawing on Félix Guattari's *The Three Ecologies*, the article suggests how the notion of ecology as mapped out by Guattari provides a more useful approach to contesting the role of incarceration than existing critiques focused on prison as economy. Adapting Jean-Pierre Dupuy's notion of *time as a project*, the article goes on to explore the conceptual steps required to work backwards from a future moment in which today's prisons are rendered incomprehensible ruins.

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[1] Jameson, "Future City," 76. Jameson repeats this statement in his subsequent *Archaeologies of the Future*, 199.

[2] Jameson, "Future City," 76.

[3] Davis's *Are Prisons Obsolete?* continues to make the most direct case for prison abolition within a largely US context. Brossat's *Pour en finir avec la prison* offers a similar critique from a French perspective.

[4] Dupuy, *L'avenir de l'économie*, 9.

[5] Wacquant, *Punishing the Poor*, 310. Wacquant's critique against Harvey targets his claim that "the prison-industrial complex is a thriving sector (alongside personal security

services) in the US economy" (Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 165; cited in Wacquant, *Punishing the Poor*, 310n).

[6] By "model" I am referring to an ideology more than a clearly defined set of practices.

[7] Wacquant, *Punishing the Poor*, 131–32.

[8] See, for example, Megan Cassidy, "Plum Gig or Slave Labor?"

[9] Childs, *Slaves of the State*, 94–140.

[10] Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, 27–28.

[11] Guattari, 65.

[12] Guattari, 43.

[13] It is not without a certain irony that towards the end of his essay, Guattari announces "I am not so naïve and utopian as to maintain that there exists a reliable, analytic methodology that would be able to fundamentally eradicate all of the fantasies leading to the objectification of women, immigrants, the insane, etc., or that might allow us to have done with prisons and psychiatric institutions, etc." (59).

[14] Guattari, 51.

[15] Dupuy, *Pour un catastrophism éclairé*, 193. Dupuy reiterates this in *L'avenir de l'économie*, 228.

[16] Dupuy, *Pour un catastrophisme éclairé*, 194.

[17] Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," 86.

[18] In 2017, David Strang, chief inspector for prisons in Scotland, called for sentences of less than twelve months to be abolished, a move that subsequently received backing from the Scottish National Party and Liberal Democrats. Since 2010, Scottish courts have presumed against sentences of three months or less ("Prison Chief's Call to End Shorter Sentences," *BBC News*, July 30, 2017, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-

40768115). In March 2018, French president Emmanuel Macron abolished prison terms of less than a month to deal with the problem of overcrowding in French prisons (Charles Bremner, "Macron to Scrap Short Prison Terms," *The Times* [London], March 8, 2018, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/macron-to-scrap-short-prison-terms-t597wfhqc). In his extensive account of prison and sentencing, *L'ombre du monde*, sociologist Didier Fassin offers an in-depth discussion of the impact of custodial sentencing (generally for shorter periods) as a penalty for traffic and road offences as part of the "Loppsi 2" law that Nicolas Sarkozy introduced in 2010.

[19] Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*, 74.

[20] Le Guin, 75.

[21] A number of recent scholarly works focus on the rise in prison tourism globally. See, for example, Michael Welch, *Escape to Prison*, and Jacqueline Z. Wilson et al., *The Palgrave Handbook of Prison Tourism*.

[22] For a sustained critique of the colonial "ruin" whose presence is not simply a leftover but rather a mark of ongoing violence and exclusion, see Ann Laura Stoler, *Duress*.

[23] Stengers, *In Catastrophic Times*, 104.

[24] For a useful introduction to "The Prison Industrial Complex," see Eve Goldberg and Linda Evans, *The Prison-Industrial Complex and the Global Economy*.

[25] See, for example, Baz Dreisinger, *Incarceration Nations*.

[26] The original findings of Johan Rockström and his team were published in Rockström et al., "A Safe Operating Space for Humanity," 474; referenced in Danowski and Viveiros de Castro, *The Ends of the World*, 9.

[27] Marzec, *Militarizing the Environment*, 43.

[28] Klein, *This Changes Everything*; Adrian Parr, *The Wrath of Capital*.

[29] Foucault, *Discipline and* Punish, 276.

[30] See, for example, Mary K. Stohr and John F. Wozniak, "The Green Prison"; Sander van der Linder, "Green Prison Programmes, Recidivism and Mental Health"; Yvonne Jewkes and Dominique Moran, "The Paradox of the 'Green' Prison."

[31] Moran has published extensively on prison visiting as a key component of carceral geography. See, for example, "Carceral Geography and the Spatialities of Prison Visiting." Photography projects recently produced around prison visiting include Jacobia Dahm's *In Transit*, https://www.jacobiadahm.com/in-transit. Dahm spent four months photographing families taking buses from New York City to visit family members serving sentences upstate.

[32] Stohr and Wozniak, "The Green Prison."

[33] Jewkes and Moran, "The Paradox of the 'Green' Prison," 466.

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