#### **Queerness is not yet here, but a horizon we must always strive for - strategies of political pragmatism miss the ontological ambiguity with which queerness is imbued - we should not abandon the future, but instead reframe what futurity means.**

**Muñoz**, J. (**2009**). Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity. NYU Press. Retrieved February 22, 2020, from [www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qg4nr](http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qg4nr)

**The** **not**-**quite-conscious** **is** the realm of **potentiality** **that must be called on,** and insisted on, if we are ever **to look beyond the pragmatic sphere of the here and now**, the hollow nature of the present Thus, I wish to argue that queerness is not quite here; it is, in the language of Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, a potentiality.4 Alain Badiou refers to that which follows the event as the thing-that-is-not-yet-imagined and in my estimation queerness too should be understood to have a similar valence. But my turn to this notion of the not-quite-conscious is again indebted to Bloch and his massive three-volume text The Principle o f H ope.6 That treatise, both a continuation and an amplification of German idealist practices of thought, is a critical discourse— which is to say that it does not avert or turn away from the present. Rather, it critiques an autonaturalizing temporality that we might call straight tim e. **Straight time tells us that there is no future but the here and now of our everyday life**.7 **The only futurity promised is that of reproductive** majoritarian **heterosexuality**, the spectacle of the state refurbishing its ranks through overt and subsidized acts of reproduction. In No Future, Lee **Edelman advises queers that the future is “kid stuff**."8 Although I believe that there is a lot to like about Edelman’s polemic— mostly its disdain for the culture of the child— I ultimately want to speak for a notion of queer futurity by turning to Blochs critical notion of utopia. It is equally polemical to argue that we are not quite queer yet, that queerness, what we will really know as **queerness, does not yet exist** I suggest that **holding queerness in a sort of ontologically humble state**, under a conceptual grid in which we do not claim to always already know queerness in the world, potentially **staves off** theossifying effects of neoliberal ideology and the **degradation of politics** brought about by representations of queerness in contemporary popular culture.A posterior glance at different moments, objects, and spaces might offer us an anticipatory illumination of queerness. **We cannot trust in** the **manifestations of** what some people would call **queerness in the present,** especially as embodied in the pragmatic debates that dominate contemporary gay and lesbian politics. (Here, again, I most pointedly mean **U.S. queers clamoring** for **their right to participate in** the suspect institution of **marriage** **and**, maybe worse, to serve in **the military.)** None of this is to say that there are not avatars of a queer futurity, both in the past and the present, especially in sites of cultural production. What I am suggesting is that we gain a greater conceptual and theoretical leverage if we see queerness as something that is not yet here. In this sense it is useful to consider Edmund Husserl, phenomenology’s founder, and his invitation to look to horizons of being.9 Indeed **to access queer visuality** **we** may **need** to squint, **to** strain our vision and force it to **see** otherwise, **beyond** the limited vista of **the here and now**. To critique an overarching “here and now” is not to turn one’s free away from the everyday. Roland Barthes wrote that the mark of the utopian is the quotidian.10 Such an argument would stress that the utopian is an impulse that we see in everyday life. This impulse is to be glimpsed as something that is extra to the everyday transaction of heteronormative capitalism. This quotidian example of the **utopian can be glimpsed in utopian bonds, affiliations, designs, and gestures** that exist **within the present** moment**.** Turning to the New York School of poetry, a moment that is one of the cultural touchstones for my research, we can consider a poem by James Schuyler that speaks of a hope and desire that is clearly utopian. T he poem, like most of Schuyler s body of work, is clearly rooted in an observation o f the affective realm o f the present. Yet **there is an** excess that the poet also conveys, a type of **affective excess** that presents **the enabling force of** a forward-dawning **futurity that is queerness**. In the poem "A photograph," published in 1974 in the collection Hymn to L ife, a picture that resides on the speakers desk sparks a recollection of domestic bliss.

#### **Discourses of space travel and appropriation have been co-opted by narrow forms of futurity used to foreclose alternative world-building and questions like the resolution operate on the wrong level. Regardless of if it’s just or not, private appropriation of space is just a symptom of neoliberalism’s appropriation of the future.**

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In fashioning the future, **sci**ence **fic**tion **as** both a literary tradition and **an industry, is a** primary **site of future-control and its reproduction**. This also makes it a primary site for power. **When we look to the future we see only** more of **the present**, more of **the same capitalist values and sites of invisibility**, while the actual present pales in comparison to the techno-product-saturated future to which we aspire, (Vint 2016). When **this future is** routinely **invoked to obscure the present** in all its anxiety and exploitation, **the power of falsification, the drive to rewrite reality, and the will to produce all plausible alternatives becomes fundamental, not trivial,** (Eshun 2003). Given this context, it would be naïve to understand science fiction, located within the expanded field of the futures industry, as merely a projection into the far future, or as a utopian project for imagining alternative social realities. As Liu (2016) observes, across the spectrum of popular science fiction, **the future** **no longer** functions to prompt us to **imagine something other than the present but simply** **exists as** the spectre of **its intensification**. As a mode of future-production, Fisher (2009) terms this kind of thinking science fiction capital or ‘SF capital’. Under the conditions of SF Capital, **we seek simply to survive, to endure, and** are **no longer** capable of **imagin**ing that **there is an outside or alternative**. By distancing the economic, social, and political conditions of the now-here and no-where, the world is rendered by capital as simply ‘the world’, not one social alternative among many, but an indeterminacy that defuses anything unstable that might explode (Hoffman 2016). This synergy — **a utopian feedback** of future oriented media and capital — **encourages us to place** our **material investment in only** a **narrow** range of **futures that are produced by corporations** as the chief mechanism by **which** we are **encouraged** affectively **to invest in** the possibilities of **capitalism**. The triumphant ‘end of history’ in the West, as considered by Brown (2015), has culminated in a COSMIC SLOP Lina Nasr El Hag Ali, A.T. Kingsmith 3 loss of conviction about the capacity to craft and steer our existence or even to secure our future. As Vint (2016) reiterates, this is the most profound and devastating sense in which modernity is ‘over’. Ceding all power to craft the future to cybernetic algorithms, SF Capital insists that markets ‘know best’, even if, in the age of financialisation, markets do not and must not know it all, and the hidden hand has gone permanently missing. This lost present is stretching, slipping for many into yesterday, reaching for a privileged few into tomorrow. 2.1 Futures Made of Silicon (Valley) SF capital works by giving expression to a futurity that is already implicit within the present moment. And while **science fiction** does not claim to actually predict the future, what it **projects** or extrapolates is a kind of **virtual future**. That is to say, as Shaviro (2010) points out, it explicates (literally unfolds) the anticipations — or the shards of futurity — that are lurking within our actual social experience. Since the 1980s, this actual **social experience of the future** has been **dominated by a global orthodoxy** that serves **to naturalise** a **libertarian science-fantasy that** actively **forecloses** all possible **alternative futures**. As early as 1995, Barbrook and Cameron characterised this orthodoxy as ‘the Californian Ideology’ — in honour of the U.S. state where it originated — an assertion that social and political debates about the future have now become meaningless. By arguing that only the cybernetic flows and chaotic eddies of free markets and global communications will determine the future, these Californian ideologues underpin the de-politicising forces of SF Capital. **Alternative** economic and political imaginations are **seen as a waste of resources**. As libertarians, they **assert** that the **will of the people**, mediated by participatory **and diverse imaginaries of the future, is** a **dangerous** heresy that interferes with the natural and efficient freedom to accumulate property. As technological determinists, they believe that human social and emotional ties obstruct the efficient evolution of the machine (Barbrook and Cameron 2015). As Kriss (2017) points out, when situated in the context of industries that actively over-determine which futures are possible, Elon **Musk’s project of Martian colonisation is** symptomatic of **this silicon future**. **Musk’s corporate practices are not utopian**, nor are they world-building. As is indicative of **the longstanding relationship between science, capital and power**, the work of **Space X and other ‘private’ research** endeavours are **made possible** largely **by government contracts** (Sassower 2015). But what is seemingly never asked are those questions that ultimately expose the future as the subjugation of present realities. Who is going to go to Mars? Is it Musk? Philanthro-capitalists like Musk? **What historical, ideological, patriarchal, and colonial visions of society will they take with them**? As Albanese (1996, 59) observes, we must not only consider science, fiction and capital as isomorphic modes of power, but also the role of colonial violence as mutually constitutive and interdependent, “given [its] intermittent re-articulation within successive cultural formations”. Considering the relationship between the silicon future, imperialism and colonialism, Kern (2003, 92) notes how the “**annexation of the space of others**” and the “outward movement of people and goods” **has amounted to** “**spatial expressions of the active appropriation of the future**”. That colonialism, SF capital and power are fellow-travellers is indicated **by a casual reflection on** the popular **tropes of science: to seek new vistas, explore new fields, go where no ‘man’ has gone before.**

#### **The impact is chrononormativity – capitalism and its appropriation of the future reinforces the binding nature of straight time where systems of power link temporality, change, and identity together into a neat little package to maximize productivity and legitimize state violence in a way that is inherently antiqueer, rendering any alternative modes of being killable at the earliest convenience Thus the role of the ballot is to endorse the debater that best addresses the violence of straight time.**

Elizabeth **Freeman**, **2010** (Elizabeth Freeman is Professor of English at the University of California, Davis. “Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories” Pages 3-6 Duke University Press, 2010 Wally)

By portraying the reciprocal derangement of bodies and sequences, k.i.p. offers a through-the-looking-glass view of how time binds a socius. By ‘‘binds,’’ I mean to invoke the way that human energy is collated so that it can sustain itself.Π By **‘‘time binds**,’’ I mean something beyond the obvious point that people find themselves with less time than they need. Instead, I mean that naked **flesh is bound into socially meaningful** embodiment **through** **temporal regulation**: binding is what turns mere existence into a form of mastery in a process I’ll refer to as **chrononormativity**, or **the use of time to organize** **individual** human **bodies toward maximum productivity**. And I mean that **people are bound to one another**, engrouped, **made to feel coherently collective, through** particular **orchestrations of time**: Dana Luciano has termed this chronobiopolitics, or ‘‘the sexual arrangement of the time of life’’ of entire populations.π Chrononormativity is a mode of implantation, a technique by which institutional forces come to seem like somatic facts. Schedules, calendars, time zones, and even wristwatches inculcate what the sociologist Evitar Zerubavel calls ‘‘hidden rhythms,’’ forms of **temporal experience** that **seem natural to those whom** they **privilege**.∫ **Manipulations** of time **convert** historically specific **regimes of asymmetrical power into** seemingly **ordinary bodily tempos** and routines, which in turn **organize the** value and **meaning of time**. The advent of **wage work**, for example, **entailed a violent retemporalization of bodies** once tuned to the seasonal rhythms of agricultural labor.Ω An even broader description of chrononormativity appears in Pierre Bourdieu’s discussion of habitus—a social group’s cultivated set of gestural and attitudinal dispositions. Bourdieu argues that ‘‘the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations’’ structuring the norms of embodiment, personhood, and activity in a culture takes shape within the rhythms of gift exchange.∞≠ For Bourdieu, cultural competence and thus belonging itself are matters of timing, of coming to inhabit a culture’s expectations about the temporal lapses between getting and giving such that they seem inborn. More recently, Judith Butler has shown how the rhythms of gendered performance— specifically, repetitions—accrete to ‘‘freeze’’ masculinity and femininity into timeless truths of being.∞∞ Zerubavel’s ‘‘hidden rhythms,’’ Bourdieu’s ‘‘habitus,’’ and Butler’s ‘‘gender performativity’’ all describe how repetition engenders identity, situating the body’s supposed truth in what Nietzsche calls ‘‘monumental time,’’ or static existence outside of historical movement.∞≤ But Bourdieu alone allows us to see that subjectivity emerges in part through mastering the cultural norms of withholding, delay, surprise, pause, and knowing when to stop—through mastery over certain forms of time. In **temporal manipulations** that go beyond pure repetition, his work suggests, institutionally and culturally **enforced** rhythms, or **timings, shape flesh into legible, acceptable embodiment**. In **chronobiopolitics**, this process **extends beyond individual** anatomies **to encompass** the management of **entire populations**: people **whose individual bodies are synchronized** not only **with** one another but also with **larger temporal schemae** experience belonging itself as natural. In a chronobiological society, **the state and** other **institutions**, **including** representational apparatuses, **link** properly **temporalized bodies to narratives of** movement and **change**. **These are** teleological schemes of events or **strategies for living such as marriage,** accumulation of **health** and **wealth** for the future, **reproduction,** childrearing**, and death** and its attendant rituals. Indeed, as the anthropologist John Borneman’s work clarifies, so-called personal **histories become legible only within** a **state-sponsored timeline**.∞≥ This timeline tends to serve a nation’s economic interests, too. In the United States, for instance, states now license, register, or certify birth (and thus citizenship, eventually encrypted in a Social Security id for taxpaying purposes), marriage or domestic partnership (which privatizes caretaking and regulates the distribution of privatized property), and death (which terminates the identities linked to state benefits, redistributing these benefits through familial channels), along with sundry privileges like driving (to jobs and commercial venues) and serving in the military (thus incurring state expenditures that often serve corporate interests). **In the eyes of the state**, this **sequence of socioeconomically ‘‘productive’’ moments is** what it means to have a **life** at all. And in zones not fully reducible to the state—in, say, psychiatry, medicine, and law—having a life entails the ability to narrate it not only in these state-sanctioned terms but also in a novelistic framework: as event-centered, goal-oriented, intentional, and culminating in epiphanies or major transformations.∞∂ The logic of **time-as-productive** thereby **becomes** one of serial **cause-and effect**: **the past seems useless unless it predicts** and becomes **material for a future**. **These teleologies of living**, in turn, **structure** the **logic of** a **‘‘people’s’’ inheritance**: rather than just the transfer of private property along heteroreproductive lines, inheritance becomes **the familial** **and collective legacy** from which **a group will draw a properly political future**—be it national, ethnic, or something else. **Chronobiopolitics harnesses** not only **sequence** but **also cycle**, the dialectical companion to sequence, for the idea of **time as cyclical stabilizes its forward movement, promising renewal rather than rupture**. And as Julia Kristeva argues, the gender binary organizes the meaning of this and other times conceived as outside of—but symbiotic with—linear time.∞Σ Kristeva claims that Woman, as a cultural symbol, comes to be correlated with the endless returns of cyclical time, as well as the stasis of monumental time: the figure of Woman supplements the historically specific nation-state with appeals to nature and eternity. Luciano dates a particularly Anglo-American version of this arrangement to the early nineteenth century, when ‘‘separate spheres’’ were above all temporal: the repetitions and routines of domestic life supposedly restored working men to their status as human beings responding to a ‘‘natural’’ environment, renewing their bodies for reentry into the time of mechanized production and collective national destiny.∞Π In the wake of industrialization in the United States, she writes, mourning was newly reconceptualized as an experience outside of ordinary time, as eternal, recurrent, even sacred—and so, I would argue, were any number of other affective modes. Mid-nineteenth-century writers figured maternal love, domestic bliss, romantic attachments, and eventually even bachelorhood as havens from a heartless world and, more importantly, as sensations that moved according to their own beat. **The emerging discourse of domesticity**, especially, inculcated and validated a set of feelings—love, security, harmony, peace, romance, sexual satisfaction, motherly instincts—**in part by figuring them as timeless**, as primal, as **a human condition** located in and emanating from the psyche’s interior. In this sense, the nineteenth century’s celebrated ‘‘heart,’’ experienced by its owner as the bearer of archaic or recalcitrant sensations, was the laboring body’s double, the flip side of the same coin of industrialization. **The** fact that the **wage system privatized domestic activities** also meant that they could be experienced as taking place in a different time zone. In the home, **time bound persons ‘‘back’’ to ‘‘nature,’’ a state of innocence** that could be **understood** as restorative **only if women’s domestic labor** were **fully effaced**. If time becomes history through its organization into a series of discrete units linked by **cause and effect,** this **organization** in turn retrospectively **constructs** an **imagined** plenitude of **‘‘timeless’’ time to which history can return and regroup**.

#### **In response to the call of modern politics to engage in these violent temporalities, I advocate for a shift to alien time as a method of resistance, a form of chrono politics that rewrites history to change the narrative of futurism. The advocacy is an epistemological project that rewrites collective memory to reveal the violence of current modes of social organization – by rewriting the past, we are able to reshape future potentialities for Queer organization**

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As we move from a discussion of the normalisation of Haraway’s cyborg embodiment of hybridity to a focus on chronopolitics as a dissipation from the outside in, we conclude by probing processes in which the alien, taken as a force existing, or coming from somewhere beyond, functions as a temporal vector for unsettling what we take bodies, communication, fiction, music and politics to be in the here and now. After all, as anyone who has been deemed ‘unhuman’ or ‘unnatural’ in the face of reigning biological norms, anyone who has experienced injustices wrought in the name of the particular technological futures of SF capital, will realise the valorisation of the cyborg today has less and less to do with ‘us’ — queer, non-white, and trans bodies among us, the differently-abled — and everything to do with repackaging the possibilities of other worlds as an intensification of the same heteronormative, neo-colonial and technocratic presents regenerated by SF capital. **Centring the choronopolitics of alien time,** we **probe** these **other future-worlds through discourses** of the “future as indifferent towards the human” (Ferrara 2012). As an **alternative to the limitations of** the **linear** **past-present-futures** terrain, **chronopolitics** — meaning the politics of time — **emerges** not only **as a** **critique of** **the** **whitewashing** **of the past**, but as **an active generator of future narratives**. As **alienation and temporality are entangled** with one another, it is **through chronology and causality**, duration and frequency, continuity and discontinuity, that alien histories produce temporal meaning. **Alienation** always **works through** both **retrospection** and anticipation, uniting the three elements of the time continuum (past-future-present). Simply put**, a vision of the future is filtered by past experiences**; our **understanding of the past is constituted through that** very **future** vision. In this regard, chronopolitics enables us to mark **the present**, that point in time that **has** always **already passed or not yet come**, through delimitating it from a retrospective past and an anticipated future. As a political vector for recovering and generating new temporalities, van Veen (2015, 80) describes this process of enacting **Chronopolitics as**: (i) **Intervening in** the production of **collective memory** — **institutional, pedagogical, epistemic** and museological **histories**, oral traditions and myths — and also schematic COSMIC SLOP Lina Nasr El Hag Ali, A.T. Kingsmith 6 projections of the future. This collective memory is **inscribed in texts**, cultural practices, **and technological objects**. (ii) Temporally **producing counter-memories and counter-realities to combat corporate**, techno-capitalist **futures of dystopia-**asutopia. A **historical recovery operation**, in which **erasures** and evacuations **of the unwanted**, insurrectionary, or traumatic **past** — **the** life of the **alien-on-earth — are uncovered and put to use**, in the responsibility **towards the not-yet**. What might these alien temporalities look like? In contrast to the silicon futures that impose a spatiotemporal consciousness of time as the now of inevitable progress and growth — metrics that depend on some specific clock time or calendar date — Phillips (2016) points to what Mbiti (1990) calls ‘potential time’, where **time itself depends on the quality** of the event **and the bodies and spaces experiencing it**. Once **the future event is experienced**, **it** instantaneously **moves backward into the present and past dimensions, destabilising** the **mechanical**, progressive, unidirectional **order of temporality**. Importantly, this chronopolitical sense of potential time is **already** being **mobilised to revise hegemonic accounts of slavery, colonialism, and capitalist modes of production**, rewriting these traumas by seeding not only **alternate futures but recursive pasts for alienated subjects** who have been overdetermined by what Sun Ra terms ‘the manufactured past’ (Eshun 2003). We offer two prominent examples. First, **the Kurdish liberation struggle** (i.e. the People’s Protection Union or ‘YPG’ in Rojava, also known as the ‘Democratic Confederation of Northern Syria’) can be **understood in terms of alien time** through its **refashioning**, cutting, pasting and synthesizing of elements of Bookchin’s (2005) **ecological anarchism to generate its** own historical **narrative**. In marking the struggle for Kurdish independence as decentralised, anti-statist and feminist, this vision of their society **takes aim at the** **past** in order **to** **insert** in it the **tools needed for the present-future**. Second, the ‘degrowth’ movement in political ecology can be understood as an alien praxis for producing knowledge critical of the ideology and costs of growth-based development. In this way, as Bollier (2009) points out, ‘degrowth’ signals a radical political and economic re-organisation that aims to destabilise linear notions of progress underpinning increasing resource and energy use. By dislodging the central analytical category of the Anthropocene, degrowth explores present-futures in the absence of growth. In doing so, their project **calls not for the implementation of** better, ‘**more progressive’, futures**-based development, **but** the **decolonisation of the social and temporal imaginary from economic growth altogether** (Latouche 2010). Against the growth-driven orientation of naturalised, silicon futures, which are underpinned by the cyclical re-inscription of class, poverty, oppression, racism, violence against women and the legacy of slavery, the chrono-politics of the YPG, the degrowth movement, and elsewhere reminds us of the political importance of presentism over futurism. As Philips (2016) reiterates, such potentials can be operationalised against a myriad of communal trauma under conditions of class warfare and racial oppression by reengaging with the alternative temporal-spatial consciousness of alien time. 4.1 We Are All Made of Stars The inevitable consequence of the silicon futures illustrated by SF Capital are what Toffler (1970, 11) called ‘Future Shock’: the “shattering stress and disorientation that we induce in individuals by subjecting them to too much change in too short a time”. For Toffler, the greatly accelerated rate of social and technological change in our society has undoubtedly produced negative personal and psychological consequences by way of the superimposition of future-control over all other possible futures. As we have emphasised throughout this paper, such future-shocks are not only a problem for the alien-on-earth, the marginalised Black, queer, differently-abled bodies most vulnerable to the affects of future-control. Apart from a few elites (i.e. Musk and company) we are all alienated from access to the supposed leisure, luxury and fulfilment of the future, stuck planning for a permanently disjointed present while the society around us speeds forward towards illusory, linear progress. In this sense, the silicon-elites in our world hold a monopoly over the future, drawing power from the particular ‘utopias’ they promote as a kind of currency to induce a psychosomatic investment in a specific future of society. We have argued that this displaces the material and temporal content of actually lived exploitation today. As futureenterprises like Space X sabotage alternative futures, responding to future shocks by drawing the unforeseeable back into tangible realities, in which one can invest in and ‘bank on — very much in the spirit of stock market ‘futures’ — **we call forth** the **possibilities of the alien for a future-now**, a **reengineering** of **the past** brought about **by a** creative **expansion of** the scope of **temporality**. COSMIC SLOP Lina Nasr El Hag Ali, A.T. Kingsmith 7 Jameson (2005, 228) echoes Benjamin’s (1936) notorious observation that ‘not even the past will be safe’ from the manufacturers of history, adding: “the future is not safe either” from “the elimination of historicity, its neutralization by way of progress and technological evolution”. The urgent **need** for **a genuine re-imagining** **of** the **manufactured past** so as **to unlock alternate futures**, the need to **reclaim the power** to **imagine the future outside of industryproduced** advertising images and experiences — that is what the practice of alien theory is about. For those of us who consider ourselves to be politically invested in the project of the future, recovering alternative futures of potential temporalities is a necessary task. Crucially, such a **chronopolitics** is a process of **repurpos**ing**, not** an **outright** **rejection of the** motifs of the **past.** We are not saying we simply need more stories, more fictions. What **we need** is the **conjuring of other worlds**. This work is being done. In this regard, ‘Cosmic Slop’ is the messy entanglements cutting across all the different vectors presently working to transplant the cultural, political and technological spaces of the future into the past so as to be able to access them in the present. What **we need** are **frameworks of reference to actualise our potential futures**. Such work is being done in fields and spaces that are not typically understood to generate explicit political projects. This includes non-Western science fiction, Afro-diasporic design and creation, critical engineering, art and aesthetics. We began this paper by asking: when is the future? By moving from SF capital’s silicon futures through the cyborg, the alien, and finally, the politics of the chronos we have attempted to show that this ‘**when’ is an endlessly postponed future**-control that continues to produce unequal, predictable futures set against a forward moving time-line — one **that will eventually come to a** climactic, **chaotic end**. In speaking to the ways in which we can begin to decolonise this future, we have emphasised the collective effort required in unearthing different histories, mapping alternative spatio-temporalities and understanding our present conditions in the now of time. By actively adopting alternative alienating orientations and frameworks, saturating our praxis in the cosmic slop provides a perpetual bridge between the past, future and present that can be used as liberation technologies to build future worlds. To this end, what we are advocating for is the integration of aesthetics, politics, and technology towards re-envisioning and refashioning the past and the future — potential temporalities that are transgressive largely because they allow us to think and experience beyond the current limitations of thought, imagination and their materialising.

#### **The AC functions as a call for a melancholic utopia - things aren’t perfect and likely never will be, but engaging in forms of queer worldmaking allows a break from modern ideas of what utopia ought to be, and creates a rupture in modern temporalities**

**Jakobsen 20**, Janet R.. The Sex Obsession: Perversity and Possibility in American Politics, New York, USA: New York University Press, 2020.<https://doi.org/10.18574/9781479839421> XTC

The idea that a different type of universalism might be possible comes from a number of different sources, bringing together the religious stud- ies critique of secularism with the queer critique of normativity. If we take seriously historian Ann Braude’s idea (discussed in chapter 1) of recognizing “religion” in unexpected places, we do, indeed, find it in very queer sites.19 Take, for example, the conclusion of José Esteban Muñoz’s book Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity, titled “Take Ecstasy with Me,” an allusion to the song of the same title.20 As performed by the indie pop group The Magnetic Fields—whose lead singer, Stephin Merritt, Muñoz describes as “wonderfully languid”—the song offers possibilities that Muñoz names as “pleasures both phar- maceutical and carnal” and evokes utopian possibilities. The song is, however, quite melancholy, invoking both lost childhood pleasures and violence directed against its narrator and a friend or lover for “just hold- ing hands.” From this melancholy starting point, Muñoz is able to draw upon a number of sources for the queer world-making embodied in the invitation to “take ecstasy with me”: the Christian ascetic ecstasy of St. Teresa of Ávila, the science fiction and life writing of Samuel Delany and Delany’s imaginative intertwining with the poetry of Hart Crane, and Muñoz’s own reading of poet Elizabeth Bishop. **This world is not** really religious or **secular**—**it** does, however, call upon a carnal ecstasy that **is about more than sex**. **And** it **is** most decidedly **queer**.

In responding to Muñoz’s invitation to take ecstasy, I hear the possi- bility that queer melancholy could move toward a perverse affirmation of both hardship and political solidarity with others outcast from the normative world. The practice of **pursuing melancholic ecstasy** so as to **produce** a **perverse solidarity** is **in** its combination of **hope and impos- sibility a utopian undertaking**. In the common sense understanding of melancholy, the emotion hardly seems like the feeling that one would like for one’s utopia. Utopia is no-place, after all, ours to imagine. So why imagine a queer utopia overcast with melancholy?

But Muñoz’s book engages an understanding of utopia that does not represent Elysian fields stretching unproblematically to the horizon. Muñoz reminds us to be critical and think queerly about how utopia might be imagined. One scholar who has done this is Angelika Bam- mer, who wrote a very persuasive book about feminist utopian literature and how its **imagined utopian worlds—in which** everything works well and **everyone is happy**—seemed to always **depend on** first **removing** any **people who threaten the** holistically idealized **realm**—such as the removal of all men from Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s Herland (echoed by Gilman’s commitment to racial “disappearances,” as documented by Tracy Fessenden).21

Bammer’s **critique focuses on** the ways in **which** Gilman’s and other feminist **utopias create happiness for “everyone” by removing** from “**ev- eryone” people who might be disruptive or simply different**, a line of thought that connects to later queer work, such as Sara Ahmed’s ques- tioning of the familial imperative, “**I just want you to be happy**.” Such a wish can be positively **oppressive in its assumption** that the family already knows what will make one happy. As Simone de Beauvoir ob- served, “There is no possibility of measuring the happiness of others, and it is always easy to describe as happy the situation in which one wishes to place them.” This logic is made vivid by Jeanette Winterson’s amazingly titled memoir, Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?, which is the urgent question her mother asks of her queer daughter as she heads out the door.22 Both Ahmed and Winterson know that **the** familial **imperative to be happy** actually **confuses happiness with nor- malcy**, something **that** **queer children** havealready **act**ed **against**.

In contrast with a utopian happiness dependent upon disappearances, **Muñoz’s affectively charged,** melancholic cruising of **utopia affirms** that **happiness need not be** the most cherished **goal of queer world-making**. **Queer utopias are** open to **ambivalence and disjunction**, are off-kilter, **even perverse**.23 Refusing to give up on parts of oneself and one’s life in order to join a world, no matter how utopian, in which everyone is “happy” means embracing negative affects that have been the subject of much recent work on public feelings. For instance, David L. Eng and David Kazanjian’s important book on grief, Loss: The Politics of Mourn- ing, brings together queer scholarship, critical race studies, and post- colonial work. These fields all necessarily engage loss. In none is grief a simply individual event, for individuals are always already part of collec- tivities that—given the punitive powers of sexism, homophobia, trans- phobia, racism, and colonialism—have suffered loss.

Grieving therefore requires a “politics of mourning,” collective work necessary to address loss and turn toward a sense of fractured possibil- ity.24 A sense of the future as far from determined, as needing to be created, loosens the hold of a traditional utopian universalism. Utopia is far from assured, and belonging may be quite tentative, which saves utopian possibility from the violence necessary to secure the borders of a holistic world that is also supposed to secure happiness for those who remain inside. An affectively queer utopia is open to crosscutting differences, including those of race, nation, and sex. Not everybody has to be contained within this bounded universal, nor does such a utopia require everybody to share in the same feelings, whether of happiness or of grief. In this sense, norms would no longer be sutured to modern power (as we saw in chapter 1), no longer would the statistically average also represent what everyone should do and be. There is no projection of a common course of life progressing from one stage to the next, child- hood to adulthood.

#### **The AC is not fundamentally difficult to understand - we say that normative statements of how linear time and pragmatic politics ought to function create violence against the Queer bodies that reject such practices: The only strategy that remains for bodies marked for death is to step out of the here and now of straight time, and instead embrace queer utopianism as a horizon for new modes of being**

#### **For this space, this means rejecting the static norms of debate that bind us to temporality and its violence - arguments that make normative statements like “you must defend the resolution” entrench violence against those who relate to debate as something more than a place to read homophobic philosophers from the 18th century or a game where we just read “independent voting issues” until one of them is dropped - the 4 minute 1AR is a good example of how rigid time is used to exclude radical positions like the AC that need to dedicate more speaking to breaking the molds of debate instead of a random Locke case**