

Down with Gargamel! The Science Fiction of Recent Insurrections

SERGIO DELGADO MOYA

University of Chicago
Wieboldt Hall 205, 1050 E. 59th Street
Chicago, IL 60637
sergiodm@uchicago.edu

SUMMARY *As fiction, as a work of the imagination, science fiction brings into consciousness objects, figures, and scenarios that do not yet exist. It builds whole, entire worlds that allow us to take distance from our own, worlds where we can start to conceive everything that seemed impossible only because the limitations of our world did not allow us to imagine them. Therein lies the force of science fiction and fiction in general: in its reverberations, its continued effects on the “real life” of both inner and material realities. My contribution to this special section traces the shape and impact of micropolitical tools of insurrection as imagined in Othoniel Rosa’s *Down with Gargamel!* It does so by exploring the implicit and explicit links between the fictive spaces of the novel and the uprisings that have emerged in Puerto Rico and elsewhere in the Americas in the twenty-first century. [science fiction; Latin American literature; protest anthropology; activism; micropolitics]*

Thought models, models for thought: this is how Alfredo Jaar and Raúl Zurita describe the power of the objects produced by artists and writers. The description emerged in conversation during a series of roundtables (Delgado Moya et al., 2022) between them and other leading figures of Chilean art: some friends, some former friends, all of them acquainted with each other in some shape or form. This image, this idea, is as simple as it is powerful. And though it isn’t exactly groundbreaking or especially original (see, for instance, Clifford Geertz’s discussion of Galanter and Gerstenhaber’s extrinsic theory of thought, in Geertz 1973, 77), it still dazzled when it emerged in the words of these artists, perhaps because it rose in the context of a conversation. The back-and-forth between the person who offered this image (Jaar) and the one who took it up (Zurita) is what brings out the potency of this image, activating it in a way that electrified the rest of the roundtable, the whole of the conversation.

Science fiction functions precisely as one such model for thought in literature as in the arts. As fiction, as a work of the imagination, it brings into consciousness objects, figures, and scenarios that do not yet exist. It builds whole, entire worlds that allow us to take distance from our own, worlds where we can start

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to conceive everything that seemed impossible only because the limitations of our own world did not allow us to imagine them. Therein lies the force of science fiction and fiction in general: in its reverberations, its continued effects on the “real life” of both inner and material realities. Words, sounds, feelings, and plots flow from life to fiction and back to life in an endless, vital cycle that keeps consciousness where it should be: at its most dynamic, at its very limit, in the threshold between the world as we know it and the designs we come up with to build the foundations of possible but yet to be actualized worlds: the worlds we want, the worlds we desire, the worlds where life—not just our lives but life itself—can persevere.

The way science fiction has looped into this cycle has conventionally drawn on a few features (imagined innovations in technology, for instance) and a series of displacements (in time and space) commonly employed in examples of this genre produced by the more dominant literary traditions of the Global North, in places like the United States. My purpose in the following few pages is to spend time with and further understand a different approach to this genre where technological gadgets (in the form of transportation devices, robotic technology, and so on) and the macrosocial structures usually latched onto them (interstellar governments, galactic empires) play a minor role in the conception of possible futures, as compared to the role played by another kind of device: a subjective, interpersonal, unconscious, micropolitical kind of device. It seems to me that these are the devices most powerfully deployed in Luis Othoniel Rosa's (2020) novella *Down with Gargamel!* as its characters attempt to resist social and political structures responsible for planetary disaster. Communal cooking, face-to-face conversations, books, book exchanges, and other low-tech networks recurrent in the story (together with the things that fuel those networks: foods, drinks, language, dreams, and drugs) are the “innovations,” the artifacts of differentiation introduced by the characters to imagine responses to a rotting world, and to conceive other worlds that will outlive that rot, feeding from it. These same “innovations” are mirrored both in the struggles for social justice the novel seems to draw from (Occupy Wall Street, for instance, and the wave of feminist movements that have emerged in Latin America throughout the twenty-first century) and also in the later, 2019 protests in Puerto Rico, some features of which the novel seems to anticipate.

Imagining what love, friendship, kinship, relationships, collectives, interpersonal networks, gifting, and exchange can be in a time and place different from our own has often been a feature of works of science fiction. The difference in Rosa's novel is that dreaming, gatherings, cooking, and conversation are more than accessories to the catastrophic effects of present and future dystopian worlds. Rather, in Rosa's novel, as in the contemporary insurrections the novel references, these acts, these micropolitical interventions, constitute the most substantive and ultimately the most consequential (psychically and affectively consequential, but also materially consequential) responses to a world in ruins.

Based on these acts—low-tech acts, micropolitical actions—and without letting go of the usual features of the sci-fi genre (global catastrophes, contact with alien species, entrainment with animal and plant species already living on the planet, views into the distant future, an occasional flying vehicle), Rosa presents us with a speculative fiction aligned with both the real-life insurrections

that have emerged throughout the world (particularly in the Americas; in New York in 2011 and Puerto Rico in 2019, for instance) and with the critical theories that grapple with these insurrections. In writing this novel, Rosa feeds from and amplifies the principles of intervention that have been emerging from the ground up, from the occupation of public spaces by multitudes of bodies mobilized against the disastrous living conditions afforded by the current capitalist regime in its globalized form. What we, as readers, end up with after reading this timely fiction is a wildly imaginative and organic extension of the ideas produced by these recent social movements: the present is and has been catastrophic, the time to build another world is now, that different world itself is already emerging, the tools to construct it have been in our hands for some time now. They are soft tools, flesh tools, intersubjective tools, tools of the unconscious, micropolitical tools: tools in the form of dreams, in the shape of friendship.

My contribution to this special section traces the shape and impact of micropolitical tools of insurrection as imagined in Rosa's *Down with Gargamel!* It does so by exploring the implicit and explicit links between the fictive spaces of the novel and the uprisings that have emerged in Puerto Rico and elsewhere in the Americas throughout the twenty-first century.

Science Fiction and the Anthropology of Insurrection

Recent contributions to protest anthropology, as well as the anthropological scholarship on the Occupy movement in New York and the recent protests in Puerto Rico, provide conceptual and theoretical frameworks for my reading of Rosa's novel and my assessment of its contributions to our understanding of social movements. The rise of large-scale mobilizations in cities across the world in the first decades of the twenty-first century has led to renewed interest in the theory and practice of protest anthropology: both the anthropological study of social movements and the intellectual and political implication of anthropologists in these kinds of movements. In the US and the English-speaking world more widely, much of the interest in this form of anthropology (see Maskovsky 2013, 126-129) was triggered by the Occupy movement in New York in 2011, which counted anthropologist David Graeber among its early participants. In the Americas and Spain, where contestatory mass mobilizations have been taking place on a much larger scale and with more consistency, the 15-M movement (García López 2013), mass contemporary feminist mobilizations in Argentina, Mexico, and elsewhere (Casalini 2017), the 2019–2021 protests in Chile (Márquez and Hoppe Guíñez 2021), and the 2019 protests in Puerto Rico (Bonilla 2020) have all yielded enriching contributions to the literature on protest, militant, and—to use a term better suited to describe the more transformational of these interventions—insurrectionary anthropology.

Most intriguing about these anthropological engagements with social movements are the possibilities for personal, professional, and intellectual transformation that can and often do emerge from the encounter between a given disciplinary standpoint—anthropology, for instance, but also fiction—and the concrete social, political, material, and micropolitical conditions that constitute a social movement integrally conceived. "It is already clear," writes Jeff

Maskovsky (2013, 129), “from what little has been published that many anthropologists who embrace a protest stance are reimagining anthropology at the same time that they reimagine the world through their protest efforts.” Fiction and creative nonfiction writers who have immersed themselves and their literary work in the kind of uprisings referenced above have also undergone the kind of singular, disciplinary, and political reconfiguration Maskovsky sees in anthropologists’ grappling with recent social movements.

The case of Cristina Rivera Garza—who followed closely the recent wave of feminist protests in Mexico against sexual harassment and violence by sexual means, as well as the mobilizations to denounce human rights abuses in Mexico’s so-called “war on drugs”—is a case in point. Immersion in these movements and direct participation in them provided the conditions necessary for a radical transformation of Rivera Garza’s praxis as a writer, inflected as it now is with principles (direct action, horizontality, collective creation) formulated in the heat of activism (Rivera Garza 2020). Cecilia Palmeiro, a scholar, critic, and activist with extensive involvement in the Ni Una Menos movement and other recent mass feminist movements in Argentina, gives signs of a comparable transformation in her writing practice, most recently expanded to include *Cat Power. La toma de la Tierra* (2015), a science-fiction-inflected account of her scholarly training, her transformative participation in these movements, and the interpersonal (and interspecies) transfigurations that resulted from this participation. Luis Othoniel Rosa, whose novel *Down with Gargamel!* is the principal object of study of my contribution to this special section, is another case in point. Both Palmeiro and Rosa are fiction writers with extensive experience as critical scholars: both hold terminal degrees in the humanities and appointments in academic institutions. Both use their scholarly areas of expertise as a matrix of knowledges and references for their respective fictions (Palmeiro 2015; Rosa 2016). Moreover, they tap into their years of academic training as the model for the social and political backgrounds of the stories they tell. The twenty-first-century uprisings that have transformed the public spaces and shared narratives of cities across the Americas—from Buenos Aires to New York to San Juan, Puerto Rico—thus feature prominently in the work of these two writers.

The plot of Rosa’s novel extends from 2017 to just about the farthest point in time that a shuffling of those numbers would allow: 2701. It needs that stretch of time to accomplish what this and other dense science fiction stories accomplish, a feat Marta Aponte Alsina attributes to great works of fiction in general. The resulting artifact is mythical and monstrous. As Aponte Alsina writes, it gives us eyes – dozens, hundreds, thousands of eyes – to see what’s always there, right in front of us, so rich and so expansive and so layered and interconnected that, for the most (and if not for devices such as literature), it goes unseen (Aponte Alsina, n.p.). Rosa imprints this image of a mystical, monstrous artifact in the Spanish-language title of *Down with Gargamel!, Caja de fractales*, which roughly translates to “box of fractals.” It’s a simple and effective image: the maddening promise of finding repetitions of the same (the same plots, the same characters, the same scenarios, the same promises, the same doom) no matter how small or expansive our inquiry is. This large expanse of time is just long enough, just fantastic enough, to allow readers to imagine the full impact

of what the novel proposes as science fiction: a universe where the most consequential responses to present worlds marked by disaster and future worlds marked by meaningful entrainment with other life forms (from this and other planets) are forged not on the basis of gadgets, objects, or technological forms but on the basis of the affective networks and the psychic forces that make up a micropolitical sphere.

Sci-fi has a long and rich history in Latin America, as the extant scholarship on the subject has shown (Kurlat Ares and Rosso 2021; Ginway Brown 2012; Haywood Ferreira 2011). Examples of the genre have emerged throughout the region since the nineteenth century in the work of authors as well-known as Jorge Luis Borges and Bioy Casares. The work of some of these writers has played a crucial role in the development of Rosa's literary imagination, as evinced by the attention he has devoted to them in his academic work. Fantasy, as the imagination in writing of new worlds, of worlds yet to come, has played a crucial role in the development of literary traditions in the region. As scholars working on the history of sci-fi in Latin America have commented, the rich traditions of fantastic literature that have blossomed all throughout the Americas have often produced literary works that may or not may not be classified under the genre of sci-fi (the work of Borges is a case in point) but that, like Rosa's novel, are still deeply attuned to some of the genre's key features.

Down with Gargamel! begins in the year 2028 in a Puerto Rico devastated by climate catastrophe, planetary turmoil, and centuries of colonialist and neo-colonialist extraction. The three characters that open the novel emerge in a scene straightforwardly aligned with the genre of science fiction. "Wake up, Alice" is the first line of the story, a concise and effective bridge between worlds the novel wants to keep distinct but interconnected: the world of dreams and dream-like states, on the one hand, and the world of consciousness, of life awake. The background to this opening scene also feels like familiar territory for readers of science fiction. A drone-like "mechanical angel" flies menacingly over the stage of this first scene, a scene of devastation: barren and abandoned fields surrounding a fortified metropolitan area, a space with no power and no food supplies, and apparently no hope to be found anywhere outside the walls of the city. Echoes of Octavia Butler's work, particularly her *Parable of the Sower* (1993), are evident in these opening scenes of the novel, which also recall a more recent science fiction novel (*Tentacle*, 2019) by Dominican author Rita Indiana. In Rosa's novel, like in Butler's and Indiana's respective works, national borders are closed, and so are Puerto Rico's ports. The ensuing financial crisis on the island has rendered money useless. Scarcity abounds; everything is in short supply except drugs. All the cocaine, heroin, weed, and prescription drugs channeled through Puerto Rico from the drug producers in the Global South to the drug consumers in the Global North is now stuck on the island and available at very low cost. Chronic food shortages have driven people to a barter economy where a jar of pickled root vegetables or other food has substituted legal tender.

What quickly starts to feel unusual, or at least relatively unexpected given the dominant tropes of science fiction, is how the characters in this opening scene respond to disaster. Devastation and food scarcity paint a doomed picture in Rosa's novel, though not necessarily a gloomy one. The scene that opens

the novel quickly becomes a night out, a night of drinking, drugs, and conversation: a typical night, in many ways. What is different in this opening scene is that the convivial act of going out doesn't just take place against the background of global devastation. The activities the characters perform as part of their convivial gathering seem to be vitally connected to this background of doom. They constitute responses to this doom, active ways of resisting it, of building against it. The tone of these responses is directly aligned with Rosa's interests—scholarly, literary, and political—in both anarchism and anarchist thought.

“The Furious Tenderness of Our Insurgency”

Like other works of science fiction, Rosa's novel seems to creatively restage scenarios from the distant and recent past as much as it anticipates events after its publication. What the novel speculates, the speculations it presents that eventually turned into actualities, revolve around the 2019 protests in Puerto Rico, which took place two years after the novel was published in Spanish in 2017. In July 2019, hundreds of thousands of people mobilized in the streets of Puerto Rico. They were galvanized by the call to remove then-governor Ricardo Roselló from office, but the effects of the mobilization were much greater than the eventual achievement of this goal. What Rosa's novel anticipates—what the characters in his novel perform and what was also performed by the thousands of agents of Puerto Rico's 2019 mass revolt—was “the furious tenderness of our insurgency.” Those are the words Rosa (2019) uses in an essay where he summarizes his reflections on what took place in the hearts and streets of Puerto Rico during 2019.

What exactly is this insurgency, “our insurgency”? How is it “ours”? And wherein lies its “tenderness”? The “March of the People,” which took place in Puerto Rico on July 22, 2019, counted at least half a million participants, in an island with a population of just over three million people (Alvarado León 2019). And the massive Puerto Rican street protests of 2019 are, Rosa (2019, n.p.) reminds us, an extension of the “collective fury” embodied in other mass movements of the twenty-first century: Occupy in New York and elsewhere, 15-M in Spain, the *Passe Livre* demonstrations in Brazil in 2013. It is also the continuation of local uprisings spearheaded by women, uprisings against the military and for the environment, uprisings informed by feminism. These uprisings have in common that they have been organized as a response to the increasingly untenable life conditions faced by people, especially women, in Puerto Rico and elsewhere on the planet. An ethnographic study by Víctor M. Torres-Vélez of early 2000s feminist demonstrations against toxic missile tests conducted in the island of Vieques (part of the Puerto Rico archipelago) by the US Navy sheds light on the needs, the demands that fuel these and other contemporary insurgencies (Torres-Vélez 2021). “Not wanting to die ... not wanting any more of our women to die” (*ibid.*, 187): this is the intent, this is the desire worded by Jéssica, one of the women Torres-Vélez interviewed, when asked about the emergence of the movements she participated in. “Not wanting to die”: this is an example of what Suely Rolnik (2023) theorizes as a vital demand, a demand for life, a demand for an absolute right, *the* absolute right,

which is not just the right to have rights, but the right to live, to persevere, the right for life as a whole to persevere.

This vital demand and the ethics that follow from this demand are the subject of the most incisive reflection on contemporary insurgencies: Rolnik's *Spheres of Insurrection* (2023). Rolnik's work, originally published in Portuguese, is closely aligned with the affective and political coordinates of Rosa's creative writing, as well as with his more academic work. The affirmation of this vital demand, Rolnik suggests, is what gives contemporary insurgencies their resonance, their expansiveness: what makes them feel as if they were our own, even when they take place far away from us. And as Rosa reminds us, echoing Rolnik and countless other thinkers and activists who came before her, the affirmation of this vital demand is a direct contribution of feminist, trans-feminist, and queer movements. "The fundamental change that trans-feminism gives to us in this struggle," writes Rosa (2019, n.p.), "is that it brings back life to our bodies: it makes our struggle a struggle for life."

On the other hand, the "tenderness" of this struggle is a function of its commitment to vital demands, its commitment not just to life but to collective, planetary life: to life itself and not just to the life of a few beings. The tenderness of this struggle and the commitment to vital demands that gives rise to this tenderness manifest themselves negatively, in terms of what the struggle in Puerto Rico and elsewhere is not: it is not a leader-led movement (Romero et al. 2019), and it does not exhaust itself in institutional demands. The impact and legacy of the mass mobilizations in Puerto Rico and other contemporary insurgencies cannot be reduced to intentions formulated or results achieved on a macropolitical dimension (though important results of this nature, such as the destitution of Governor Roselló, were, in fact, achieved). What is most consequential about these mobilizations, the source of their potency, lies in aspects of the mobilizations that can seem "colorful," distracting but banal, "merely creative." Fierce dancing in the form *perreo*; joyful and collective gatherings of thousands of bodies marching together through the streets of Puerto Rico; finding nourishment, finding care for bodies bruised by police brutality; articulating and sharing language—slogans, posters, chants—that give shape and soul to the unfolding events; forming new bonds, new bridges, new collectivities, new intimacies, both public and private: here lie the sources of both the tenderness of the movement and its political strength, its micropolitical potency. The circumstances leading up to the protests in Puerto Rico (the devastation of the island by both "natural" disasters and a centuries-long process of capitalist and imperialist extraction) painted a gruesome picture for those living on the island. And yet somehow, in the days and weeks that the protest took place, the collective joyfulness of the insurrection managed to pierce through this gruesome picture, opening vistas onto a possible world, a world that began to take shape thanks to the embodied, imaginative forces unleashed by those protests.

Creative Care, Conversation, and Writing as a Matter of Insurrection

In much the same way as it happened in 2019 in Puerto Rico, two years after the novel was written, the grim background of *Down with Gargamel!* gets visibly lightened, softened, by the resolute but lively disposition the characters

show in the face of calamity, their obstinate partying and drinking, their cooking, their mutual caring, their intimacy. Most of all, in the eyes of readers and of the characters themselves, the grim atmosphere where the characters find themselves begins to clear thanks to how their in-person gatherings and affective networks are constructed and lived: as modes of insurrection against the crisis that unfolds around them. What's crucial here, what the novel makes clear throughout its chapters, is that get-togethers, recreational drug use in social settings, meal preparation, meal sharing, conversations, festive assemblies, and so on, are neither frivolous nor escapist nor disconnected from the grim environment where they take place. Quite the contrary: they constitute the essence of the kind of resistance, the kind of insurgency that can effectively bring about change in a world doomed by a capitalist, extractivist, capitalistic ethos. The self-organized, voluntarily formed, mutually caring principles at the heart of this mode of resistance are anarchist in nature. Understanding the novel's mode of resistance as such—as anarchist insurrection and not just drugged and dazed reverie—allows us to measure the novel for what it is: a work of anarchist science fiction, a model for thought useful as we try to assess both the promise and the limitations of an anarchist response to the impending catastrophes looming over life on our planet.

All three of the novel's main characters—Alice, Alfred, and Trilcinea—cultivate ways to fend off dystopian horror primarily rooted in embodied, affective experience. All three of them respond to disaster in a way that can, from a certain perspective, seem escapist and deliriously distracting, but that, from another perspective (the one slowly built by the narrator), can begin to dawn as effective positions vis-a-vis the death and doom of planetary crisis. “Alfred hears voices. Alice cooks. Trilcinea smokes weed. These are all,” the narrator adds, “ways to keep the horror outside the perimeter—forms of survival, some more admirable than others” (Rosa 2020, 13). As the story moves forward, it becomes clear that these actions are more than strategies of survival; they function rather as stages of, or incubators for, new forms of imagination.

Crucial to the molding of this new mode of imagination in Rosa's novel is conversation, a tool for resistance, in the context of the story and in the context of social mobilizations like the ones that emerged in the wake of Occupy Wall Street and the Marea Verde feminist mobilizations that have taken place in Puerto Rico, in Argentina, and elsewhere in the Americas. Conversation is what the characters use, what they do, most powerfully throughout the novel. It is also the basis of their contact with the forms of extra-planetary life. Conversations here emerge as scaffoldings, as frameworks: nascent buildings, social and symbolic but also political and material edifices, to the extent that conversations are always, in a sense, social and symbolic as much as they are political and material. Words and phrases, interventions, and conversations in the novel function very much like the elements in a building's framework. In the novel, as in the social movements it brings to mind, words and phrases work like beams that anticipate and provide support for the next structural element that goes into the edifice, supporting other elements to come.

Like conversation, writing in this novel is a forceful act. It is more than an exercise in “creativity,” in narcissistic originality. It is also more than a tool for agitation, for raising awareness. In the novel, the model for this notion of

writing—at once spontaneous and programmatic, serial but vitally dynamic—is *La dignidad*, a mysterious book that one day appears on the office floor of a character named Professor O. Its cover is made of cardboard, simply designed, and doesn't list an author. Its contents are even more enigmatic: they're schematically chosen and aligned with "classical anti-capitalist doctrines that argue against the alienation of the modern world" (Rosa 2020, 37) but also personalized. The obituaries in the version Professor O receives are "mostly about people with whom [he] was more-or-less acquainted" (ibid., 37).

The mysterious book's production is both singular and collective. It is apparently tailor-made (again, the contents seem personalized), but, as Professor O discovers, it is also made with prefabricated texts authored by a great many. The day he receives his copy, Professor O goes online and learns that hundreds of others have also received the book. After comparing their books, people who have received them realize that each "copy" is really a version of the same book: same cover, same title, but different contents. All the versions, these recipients conclude, share the same structure, with three parts: obituaries of people killed by forms of structural violence (people close or known to the recipient); brief manifestos with calls for modes of social organization that dissolve these forms of structural violence; and a series of reviews (which are also invitations and calls for support) of insurrections taking place all over the globe. Lastly, all the versions of the book include a loose, typewritten leaf with an invitation and instructions to "write" a personalized version of this same book and send it anonymously to a small group of recipients.

The instructions lead Professor O through a complex series of online and offline steps that confirm his identity and grant him access to a huge database of obituaries, manifestos, and reviews that he can use, along with his additions, to compose future versions of the book. Echoes of Ricardo Piglia—the renowned Argentinian writer, a teacher to Rosa, and a theorist of the collectivity of writing in his own right—emerge from the detailed and fascinating description of the strangely paranoid series of steps necessary to access a database that, as the author notes, is made up mostly of documents readily accessible online. Echoes of Borges—another (anarchist) theorist of collectivity in writing—emerge from a different part of *La dignidad*, from the wondrously chaotic immensity of its database and from the very concept of a book that is nothing but a possible version, both wholly random and entirely intentional, of a supreme book, Borges's (1977) book of sand: a book containing the totality of writing, composed of every combination afforded by language.

Professor O decides to "write" his "own" version of *Dignity* (he sends it anonymously to his grieving sister) using the template provided in the project's database and adhering to its three "hard-and-fast rules": no two exact versions can be printed, each version must be exactly one-hundred pages long, and no one who receives a version can find out who made the book for them. Completing these instructions allows recipients of the book to become living pistons in the engine of collective consciousness: the consciousness that creates and that is constituted by *La dignidad*. The defining feature of the writing modelled in Rosa's story by *La dignidad* is collectivity. Writing and imagination, like consciousness, are collective by nature, despite our best efforts to recast writing as a lonesome and solitary mode of production. This is a point the novel

emphasizes. Writing in the novel, as in life, takes place between friends and for friends, between colleagues, between comrades, between lovers, between humans and the plants and animals they live with, the objects that people their life. Writing takes place in an environment and helps build that environment. Writing, in the novel as in life, is not just a window to the world or a bridge to it; it makes that world, and to the extent that worlds are always collective, writing, too, must be so.

Conclusion: Sites of Extraction Are Also Sites of Insurrection

It's noteworthy that *Down with Gargamel!*, which places so much emphasis on friends and interpersonal networks, does not refer to online social networks. The characters who talk and plan with each other in the novel, their actions, their contact and communication, their networking, all take place offline, in person, in face-to-face meetings. Even their contact with extra-planetary life forms is conceived to be just that: nothing more and nothing less than a cross-galactic, time-stretched conversation with other forms of intelligent life, for the sake of nothing but conversation. These two facts—the potency of friendship and the exercise of this potency offline in the novel—are revealing. They shed light on one important resource (interpersonal connection, perhaps the most important one, together with projection and narcissism) that drives the overwhelming success of online social networks of the twenty-first century. They also remind us of the power unleashed when a resource (friendship, in this case) that has been appropriated for profit making gets reappropriated for other purposes, for community-affirming purposes, for vital purposes.

This novel models for us that friendships (and interpersonal relationships, more generally), like the ability to care for ourselves and others, *are* resources in the full sense of the term. Nothing could feel truer now, especially to those of us who were around before the rise of online social networks and who are now present for (and very much engaged in) the transformation of relationships brought about by social media. No single resource, no single source of extraction, can explain the wild popularity and ensuing profitability of the social media industry. The ability to cull interpersonal networks and the affective weight of those networks is, of course, a crucial wellspring for this industry, but so is the range of psychic forces (fear, rage, desire, creativity) expertly and actively mined by social media. Recognizing the power and profits social media empires derive from their extraction of these interpersonal networks and these psychic forces (and their transformation of these networks and forces into resources to be quantified and monetized) allows us, I think, to measure more accurately the impact of the world Rosa presents to us, an imagined world but far from an impossible one: a world where the force of friendships and the potentialized psychic forces that emerge from friendships can be channeled towards the construction of a common good.

This is, of course, exactly what has happened in Puerto Rico, in Chile, in Brazil, in New York, and in every site where insurrections have recently taken place. Online social networks, we know, are technologies of contact and friendship designed to extract what Rolnik (2023) theorizes as the latest frontier of exploitation: desire itself, in all its micropolitical force. Contemporary uprisings have systematically turned this model on its head: instead of working as sites

of extraction, social media have served as both organizing tools (they've helped coordinate thousands of people who can converge on the same physical space thanks to communications that take place online) and as sites of creative collectivity (allowing people who are physically removed from the physical sites of insurrection to take part in them).

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