

Grounded Futures Show

Episode 21: Sparks In-Between, with Scott Branson

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Transcript

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, anarchism, book, gender, feel, totally, trans, read, thinking, anarchist, called, talk, world, le guin, write, ideas, thriving, life, witches, teach

SPEAKERS

Scott, Uilliam, carla, Final Straw Podcast, Magneto

magneto 00:02

I know the kind of pain you're feeling Alex. I once had it myself. Are you some kind of doctor? No, Alex, I am Magneto and I have come to offer you sanctuary.

Uilliam 00:21

Welcome to season three of the Grounded Futures podcast. This is the show where we discuss topics that are important to our collective survival and thrival. We also dig into ways youth, and anyone really, can gain new skills to thrive amid current and ongoing disasters. The seasons meta theme is all about trust, trust in ourselves, trust in our work and art, and trusting each other. We are your hosts Uilliam and carla.

carla 00:48

Welcome to our show. We produce Grounded Futures on Squamish, Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh Lands, but our guests are from around the world. A big thank you to Zach Bergman for our show music and a big thank you to Robin Carrico for our show arts.

Uilliam 01:03

And before we start today's show, here's a short jingle from one of our pals over at Channel Zero network.

Final Straw Podcast 01:09

Where did you get this? Your friendly neighborhood anarchists. More of an anarchist, militant. People involved in social struggles, everybody else. People who've been waiting for some content. Radio, show, the Final Straw and I'm [unintelligible]. Members of goodness. thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org. If you're listening, you are the resistance.

Uilliam 01:34

Scott Branson is a Jewish transfemme anarchist writer, teacher, organizer, musician and artist. Scott is also a co-host on the anarchist radio show/podcast The Final Straw Radio. Their book, Practical Anarchism: A Daily Guide, just published by Pluto Press, offers ways to infuse everyday life with ideas of mutual responsibility and collective liberation. They translated Gay Liberation after May 68 (Duke University Press's Theory Q Series, spring 2022), and translated The Abolition of Prison (AK Press, 2021). Their edited volume, Surviving the Future will be published by PM Press in January 2023 . Welcome to the show!

Scott 02:19

Thank you. I'm so happy to be here. Yeah, really excited to talk with you. And I love this podcast.

Uilliam 02:24

Yay. So excited.

carla 02:26

Yeah. Thanks for joining. And here's your awesome book, Practical Anarchism. Not that people can see it out there. But we'll get to that in a bit. Yeah, thanks so much for being here. Just gonna get to my first question. Yeah? Okay, so I just spent some time digging in through some of your work. And it's just deeply intersectional in this really profound way. And I feel like there's the thread that runs through it all. Maybe I'm not right. But it has something to do with tending to a voice. Like tending to your voice, tending to the people you teach and mentor and work with and amplify through translation. There's something really powerful about voice that spans through all your work. And I read your beautiful and deeply raw essay, How I Became a Genre Bender and Found a Voice. Maybe this is why I feel this. It has so

many layers. I feel like we could do a whole episode on this essay alone. So, if it's all right with you, I want to start with that. Talking about that a bit. I want to hear more about Proust even, because it was so deep. But I was super struck by what you wrote here: "Why write the world back into its shackles, when the freedom of writing allows you to imagine the liberation of our people, the creation of new worlds, the destruction of forms and styles of oppression?" Can you talk about this "finding your voice" and how it is woven into all your work, in my opinion?

Scott 03:51

Yeah. Cool. Yeah, I'm glad you found that essay. It like pops up every once in a while. People are like, I like it. So I'm glad that it's out there. And also, that was a strange thing for me because I often don't write super personally. I mean, in the book, I think I do bring in things a little bit, but, and it's framed through my experience, of course, but that one's like one of the more personal things I've, like, put out there. I was teaching — y'know I teach creative writing, along with a lot of other things like gender studies and literature and stuff — and thinking about how to teach creative writing to people. I was really more interested in letting the people, the writers figure out what they want to write and what's bringing them to writing, than to tell them, like, rules about writing. Even you know, I mean, a lot of people will be like interested in publishing but I wasn't really teaching in an MFA program or anything like that. So, for me, the concern wasn't like, how are you going to make it in this career because it's unlike going anywhere, right? So, and you're not gonna get paid. So yeah, I kind of, you know, was thinking like, how can I help people who want to write just trust themselves and what they want to say, and find the way that they want to say it. And that comes from my own experiences writing because for a long time I wrote, you know, I, like, tried my hand at lots of different kinds of creative writing. When I was a teenager, I wrote, probably like this unreadable novel with no characters or plot, or, you know, I was like, I thought I was being really experimental. And then for a while tried to write, like, short stories that could be published in like literary journals. And I, like, tried to perfect that form. But it was never really, like, I think I learned things from it, but I was never really happy with that. And then finally, I was, like, you know, I'm just gonna write poetry, and, like, tell myself that I can be like, free to do whatever I want. And then I was, like, it felt very liberating to just, you know, not worry about the way that you're supposed to do a thing. In writing people tell you a lot that there's like, the right way to do it. And, and just like, yeah, just figure out what I want to do and not adhere necessarily to the right pathways. And this is something I'd love to do more in my life in general, I wish I could give myself more permission than I do to do things. It's a struggle, but yeah, so that's something I want

to help other people do. And, you know, it's also like, true for, like, you know, in terms of transness and queerness, to, like, you know, come to that. That's something I talk about in the essay is like, finding my voice also had to do with, like, embodying myself the way I want to be, and no longer trying to be what I was told I should be.

Uilliam 06:57

Yeah, it was a great answer. That was great. Yeah.

carla 06:59

I just love when folks who mentor or teach or whatever come from a place of trust and listening. That's beautiful.

Uilliam 07:07

Yeah, really good answer.

carla 07:08

I mean, y'all lead right into —

Uilliam 07:11

Great. Oh yeah, great thing about this. I resonated with the line where you talk about after moving, you said: "Here, I could live my gender, my nongender, my transgender — I made the conscious decision to try a new way of writing." I love nongender. When I was younger, I went through moments of wanting to be trans. I thought I wanted to be trans for a while. I mean, obviously I did, because I am now. But I wanted to be when I was like a really young kid. And when carla asked me: "Oh, well, okay, do you want to change your name?" My name at the time was very, quote, unquote, feminine, traditional feminine name. I was like: "No, my name is a boy's name." I just like blatantly was like: "No, it can work. It can work for all genders. It's fine." Never continued that, because, just the world that was in... whatever. But yeah, I just resonated with your work and stuff like that, and reminded me of whatnot, and stuff like that. And other things I've also had is like, my middle name is Joy. And I've had people, now being boy, and people ask me, like: "Why is your middle name a girl's name?" And it's like, joy isn't a name. It's like, a, it's a word. You know? Whatnot. Yeah. And I just yeah, I wanted to talk about what you know, all that stuff in your life means and what nongender means to you and a bit about names and stuff.

Scott 08:49

Yeah, yeah, thanks also for sharing your experience of that, around those things. I mean, it's interesting when, like, in terms of transness like, and also just like, currently in the trans world, I think there's a lot of, I'm gonna say "discourse" because I see it a lot on Twitter, and that's the word on Twitter around like, who's trans and not. I see like gatekeeping and so like, you know, the kind of, there's a lot of hate — I don't know if I want to use the word hate — but like, you know, suspicion around nonbinary people who aren't perceived to be trans in whatever kind of way or aren't doing the, like, medical or surgical route or not that yet there because transition is like an unending process. So, you know, I feel like there's different stages, is what I'm starting with, but personally for me, like, you know, gender really is something that you are in relation to other people, often. And so, or I mean, only really, I mean, there's was this, I think this line quoted that I saw from McKenzie Wark talking about, like gender being given to you as a gift like in relationship to other people. And I think that's true. We don't like exist in our genders by ourself. And a lot of people I talked to that during the pandemic, if they were isolated alone, they were like, I didn't really have to think about my gender in the home, alone. Right? And maybe we all have that experience. So I think there's that sort of, like, nongender for me also, like, I'm not a man. But I'm not sure I want to be, like, just a woman, either. That's why I use transfemme because, I mean, I'm more aligned with femininity than masculinity. But also in terms of my, like, desires I think about, like, in relationship to men I want to have some kind of masculinity and in relationship to women I want to have some femininity because I feel gay. In every instance, in my way. So yeah, that's one thing I'm thinking about there. I don't know how interesting all that is, but with the name stuff too, like, I really feel that. You know, like, I have this name Scott, which does really hold me up in terms of, I think, being perceived, like, it's just, you know, it's a boy's name, or whatever, I guess. For me, it's always been like, this alienated word to me that people have called me that I don't really identify with. I haven't met or known a lot of other Scotts, and not been close to any. So don't like associated with anything except for, like, what I've been called. And I have like other names, but I don't know, I also started publishing with this name, so I guess I'll just keep it. And a friend of mine who's also trans talked about, I think you'll like this, was talking about, you know, in Ursula Le Guin's *Earthsea*, how they have true names that only, like, certain people call you. And I think that is like a thing that you can have, right? Like you have your used name in the world that doesn't have the power to like, summon you and then you have your true name that you carry around. So you know, I have this name that I'm sort of burdened with in a way that I haven't gotten rid of yet, but I have other other names too that some people know, you know? Yeah.

Uilliam 12:30

Yeah, that was a great answer. I loved that you brought up that movie, or that book I mean, as a reference like that, that's really cool. Um, yeah, no, totally like I have many different versions of my name now. My full official name is Uilliam so I have many. That is the long version and origin name for Liam so that I have that and you know, a lot of people call me Uli and I have a lot of names. I have a lot of names online that people use for me. So I totally— I think a lot of people in my community would really resonate with that. So many of my internet friends, they have their online names and then they have their "name" that only a few people actually know. So that's actually that's a great answer to that.

Scott 13:15

When I was a kid I had, like, we had punk names too that like you have some last name. I would get mail to, like, I think, when I was really young, was Scott Sarcastic.

Uilliam 13:27

That's amazing. Yeah, no, I also really loved the way of you saying, like, names being just, you know, there's a bit of a title in there as well and it not being... I mean, we call dogs and cats— We'll call like a female cat like Bob or something, you know? Like, we ended up— To us humans we end up seeing animals as not the same when it comes to random naming and gender. So, why do we have to gender ourselves when it comes to names as well, you know? Like, yeah, totally right. I also wanted to talk about because you were talking about nonbinary and nongender and stuff like that. I'm, you know, I'm very, I know all of this stuff. And I sometimes feel like I might be more nonbinary than transmasc and stuff like that, and go through all that. But I want to ask kind of about, like, the difference between nonbinary and nongender because, I know there's a lot of people that I'll know that are, like, nonbinary but then they still are fitting it. They still having every other binary. They still use like he/him, and boy and they're "a boy", they say they're "a boy" and he/him and boyfriend, and whatnot. But then they say they're nonbinary when I'm wondering if like the term they're looking for is actually nongender, because they're still using the binaries in that situation. So, I just want to ask about your idea around that, because it's been a thought in my brain recently.

Scott 14:54

Yeah, totally. I mean, like, so like, I think some of the— In the trans world, I feel like there's certain trans people who are critical of nonbinary in sort of the ways that

you're talking about where it seems like it's not actually connected to other things, like an actual transition or something like that which I'm sort of the mind of, like, I go towards the trans nominalist. Or if you just like name yourself trans, like, I don't care. Like, that's great. I'm not going to stop you from doing that I don't, it doesn't matter to me. But nonbinary has become this word that, you know, like 10 years ago or something, it was genderqueer people would say more often, it was like, on the way to transitioning somewhere else. And I think nonbinary could be that, but it's just become a word that people know and use, and it might not actually be descriptive of whatever they're experiencing or trying to do. I think I like talking about more in terms of doing really then and then being. So but for me, you know, I am a gender abolitionist. So I'm less interested— like, nonbinary, like you said, Uli, is, like, still attached to a binary. And to be nonbinary, what does that mean? Like, you're usually trying to figure out ways to show that within reference to a binary. Not that like, you know, transitioning in itself is like destroying gender. I don't think that that happens just by itself. Like, I think that's an extra step we have to take to talk about gender abolition. But, so yeah, for me, like, the gender in itself — it's not liberation. Transitioning isn't liberation, it's doing something, it's changing things, it's possibly a threat to this world. People see it as a threat to this world. But you have to like go the extra step and, and gender for me is really just a disciplinary measure of like colonialism and capitalism that I would like to see gone. And so nongender for me is maybe more interesting. But again, it's a reference to gender. So it's not, you know, we don't have the words for it. Whatever it is.

Uilliam 17:02

Yeah, no, totally. No, I mean, yeah, that was a great answer. Like, that was fun to learn about all that stuff. For sure. Yeah, no, definitely like, because I know that there's a difference between pronouns and binary and stuff like that, and gender. So then I was like, yeah, just have that conversation about it and gender and pronouns, both being social constructs, and how, you know, like: Oh, is someone's gender just just based on their genitalia or something? And then it's like, well, what would you call, you know, intersex people? Because it's like, yeah, you know, it gets complicated in that situation where it's like, you can't really actually base it on that and it's just whatever someone obviously feels that they are and someone changing their binary or changing their gender is really not harming anyone so.

carla 17:49

Exactly.

Scott 17:51

Right. Yeah, yeah. That's what it comes down to, and at the end of the day, like, I don't care.

Uilliam 17:58

Exactly.

carla 17:59

You're not gonna gatekeep.

Uilliam 18:00

I don't really care what someone else does with their gender. Exactly. Yeah. Especially with xenogender and all that being now a thing and neopronouns. It's like, yeah.

carla 18:09

I remember, like, a decade, over a decade ago at The Thistle when people would start doing pronouns in a asking about each other or introducing themselves. And more and more people were adding the nonbinary. Like saying they/she or they/he or whatever, and it started getting a little gatekeep-y. I remember just being like, I don't think we want to move from a binary to a trinary. Like, "they" it's a lot like you said, it's a lack of language.

Uilliam 18:37

Yeah, I went through a while of not feeling like I want to use nonbinary because it started going into, started becoming a binary.

carla 18:45

Like the trinary?

Uilliam 18:46

I started more saying like, unlabeled. I use the word unlabeled a lot, for a lot of things. I don't have a sexuality, I just say I'm unlabeled, or gender, I just say I'm unlabeled a lot because I like it. So I don't want to fall into the... But then I also usually just say I'm trans because it's true that I've also been transitioning. I'm transitioning right now. So it's a technical term that's true.

Scott 19:09

Yeah. No, yeah, totally that. I think, yeah, there was this phenomenon of people using "they", in a way to like, I think they meant to be, like, allies, maybe to trans people too. Which, you know, again, I don't know anyone could be on the precipice of transition too, right? Like you might start by feeling it out and be like: "What's this mean, what does it feel like to not, like, use "she" or "he" anymore?" You know, and, like, I use "they" a lot mostly I guess, because I think of it as something that could, that's not binary. But then, you know, I started putting, using "she" because I'm like, I just don't want to be "he" really and "she" is more accurate. And "they" is like... you know, it doesn't feel as satisfying and some way because it can default, right, to the, you know, the perceived cisness. And then on the other hand, I've just noticed a lot with my trans friends that there's like, maybe this is something you've experienced and I think maybe this is sort of what you're talking about. Like you transition and then you have a little bit more freedom to play with things. So like, yeah, I know a lot of trans women who are like, now I'm nonbinary, you know?

Uilliam 20:28

Yeah, exactly.

Scott 20:30

Or trans men who, like, have gotten to a place where they feel comfortable in their body, and then they like, really femme it up, you know?

Uilliam 20:39

Yeah, no, I've definitely gone through different phases in my life. I got really masculine, and then I started now being more comfortable in myself to just dress however I want and look however I want and change however I look and whatnot. So yeah, no, totally. Yeah, that's exactly what it is.

carla 20:55

Yeah, I don't know. I noticed this lately and, you know, I do a lot of administration work for artists and stuff, and solidarity and writing grants and stuff. And I've noticed that a lot of the institutions I don't know if, if you've encountered this, Scott, but they have a distinction between like, nonbinary that's separate from LGBTQ+. So like, nonbinary does fit into that one as well. But they've pulled it out as a like, you can be heteronormative and nonbinary, and you don't get to claim that you're part of the queer community. And I thought that was an interesting step. It's one of the arts, called BC arts.

Uilliam 21:37

Yeah.

carla 21:38

And it's in their distinction. I don't know if you've encountered that. But I thought that was an interesting step.

Uilliam 21:42

Yeah. Like there's nonbinary: queer, and then nonbinary.

carla 21:47

Interesting, yeah.

Uilliam 21:48

There's trans people who are heteronormative, like, heteronormative. They're in a very cishet relationship, but then they're trans. And, you know, it's like, are they still, would they still be, when they're very, very full on trans and are, like, if you're in my situation, if I was not queer in any other way, but I was transmasculine, and I was a man, I had top surgery, bottom surgery and just full on was like, male and in a cishet relationship, then would I still be queer? You know, like, would that still be a part of the LGBTQ? Like, it would be, but there would still be that context of how my only experience is that I've transitioned to a different gender, so and pronouns so.

carla 22:30

Right. I think this distinction was definitely cis. Yeah, it was the meaning. Yeah.

Scott 22:35

That's interesting. I haven't, I haven't seen it. You know, that is, yeah, I'm, like, curious who, who likes that? You know, like, who's choosing that? Because, I mean, one of the things I've seen a lot of people talking about and thinking about recently is that we don't have language for cis people who don't feel comfortable in their gender, but who aren't trying to transition or don't want to transition, aren't there yet, or whatever. And we don't have a lot of ways of talking about like, yeah, like feminine men who don't have sex with men or women who don't have sex with women or whatever. Because I guess like, that's how things get defined right through sexual partners. And so yeah, there's not a lot of complexity. So maybe that's, that's where it's going. The other thing that, yeah, like, within queer community, and talking to what you were saying Uli, like there's, you know, there's people who want all kinds of

different things. And we get, we fall into a sort of trap, I guess, if we just assume that all queer people don't like share our politics or something. I mean, queer first was coined to be a kind of radical reaction to a mainstream gay movement that was maybe leaving behind some of the roots of liberation. But even then, like, you have to have,, like talk about what you want, right? It's not a default, you have to be like, these are the things that we want. And I think this is sort of, for me, this is like, what intersectionality really means it's not that you are in a position, and therefore you have the right analysis, but that, like we take on an analysis of the world that is like, I'm queer, and I want trans liberation. And what that means for me, is the end of capitalism, racial capitalism and of colonialism. Everything for everyone, right? It doesn't mean anything. It means like everything. It's all those things, they are all connected.

Uilliam 24:43

Yeah, no, totally. That's a great answer. Yeah, like that was a great conversation we had.

carla 24:50

Yeah, thanks.

Uilliam 24:51

Thank you.

carla 24:53

I'm just worried about time and I want to pick up later, but these are really big conversations to have though, and I think it's important and I really appreciate it.

Scott 25:01

I love these. I love this conversation.

carla 25:03

Yeah, I really appreciate you both sharing some of your stories as well. Before we get into some of your current work... Since finding your voice and that piece I mentioned at the top here, and it led you to poetry, as you mentioned, I'm wondering if you could read a piece for us?

Scott 25:23

Oh, yeah.

carla 25:24

I know I asked beforehand, so we wouldn't have to sit here awkwardly. I've asked people by surprise before and it's—

Uilliam 25:31

Bad. They get up like, I gotta find something.

Scott 25:36

Well, I was, the one thing I'm torn between is like, do I read you the most recent poem I've written that I have not read anywhere or like something older?

Uilliam 25:47

Whatever you feel is right.

carla 25:48

Yeah, I love both ideas equally.

Scott 25:53

Yeah, cuz I was like, I'm gonna read, like, something that's clearly political and like utopian or something. But actually, this does have it. It's just the new one. It's just, it's like maybe a little bit more subtle, but I'll read the new one. Just because that's fun. That's new.

carla 26:06

That's really exciting. We can, yeah, we get to say first heard here.

Scott 26:13

a long necked white creature

bobbing in the distance

on the lake

it was clear we had overlooked

the mysteries of the world

so white i wondered how it kept clean

in polluted waters
i can't wear white pants without staining
the sun doesn't cause waves but lets us see them
and the lake ripples into this white protuberance
a child's drawing of a sea dinosaur smiling
so happy to be here
where had we left you?
but that's the best we could have done
on the pier no one sees
she swims unnoticed
except by me, in my quick glance,
and i decide to avert my eyes
and let her be

Uilliam 26:52

That was beautiful.

carla 26:53

I love that. Yeah, you're right. It has everything in there.

Uilliam 26:56

Yeah.

carla 26:57

Yeah I'll have to listen to that more closely when I'm not in the host seat.

Scott 27:02

Yeah, you know, I had a phase of like, all my poetry was like these kind of dystopian scenarios where people, like, are coming together. It felt like it was, like, often overtly political. I think maybe this was maybe a little bit more subtle. It was just also like, I

wrote it the other day, I was like, on the way— I moved to Cleveland recently and I was on Lake Erie and just — or, like, not on it, but by it — and I just had a weird imagination of what I could be seeing. This is where my poetry has been coming lately. I see things that aren't the things that I'm seeing.

carla 27:38

I love that.

Uilliam 27:38

Going deep.

Scott 27:39

Yeah. It's just like, yeah, that's where my inspiration is.

carla 27:44

Oh, I love that. I love when, like, yeah, landscapes inspire and affect our words, right? Because it's a relationship that we have.

Scott 27:55

Yeah.

carla 27:57

Cool. Oh, yeah. You're next, yeah.

Uilliam 27:59

You touched on some of this already but when did you first become active in organizing and connected? How have your ideas changed? How have your ideas changed, transformed, shifted over the years? And what ideas are kinetic?

Scott 28:13

Hmm. Yeah. I mean, so I grew up with a political mom, although, by the time I was like, around, she was sort of more like within Democrat, you know, Liberal Democrat world. She had, like, you know, come up in the 60s and dumb war protests. And she always talked about how she, like, was outside of Nixon's Secretary of State's office doing like this protest and whatever, I don't know. And so, you know, I grew up within that. She would organize, do campaigns, and I was part of this kind of, like, political world, and I worked for a state senator, at one point, all that stuff made me be like, this is, this is garbage, you know. And I got into, I guess, sort of got into anarchism via

punk as a teenager. I saw Johnny Rotten or something. And like, I mean, this is weird I guess, I'm a Jewish person and I saw them with like, swastikas and like, all, like, evil looking and I was like, I need to know about this. Like, I must find out what this is. And then, you know, discovered anarchism. And then very soon after that, for me, it was like, a kind of moment of real pessimism and nihilism because it was the election where George— The first election that I could have, like, voted in was when George Bush got named president. And then September 11 happened pretty soon after that. And I was just like, I don't care and I'm gonna play music and, you know, I got into literary studies and gigged around New York a lot. And I was like, just ,like, kind of out of it for a while. And then once I fell into academia, because I didn't know what else to do with myself and people kind of like, were like, you should keep doing this. I was like— It repoliticize me because of how bad it is, and how much I hated, like, dealing, like, just that, I felt, like, hoodwinked because I was like: "Oh, I'll go into grad school, and everyone will just want to talk about great ideas and have really, like, good politics" And it wasn't like that. It's like a hierarchy, and people are competitive and no one says anything real. And, like, you can't actually have cool, interesting conversations with most people, not everyone, obviously. And everyone's just identifying with the power structure. So that kind of got me back into, you know, thinking about politics. But I also had to, like, you know, I talk about this in my essay, kind of uproot my life and make a lot of changes to sort of be where I really want to be. So I think, my, like, most recent phases, my best phase, but I would say. Yeah, I don't know if... is that a good answer?

Uilliam 31:14

That was a great answer.

carla 31:15

I love it. I mean, it shows, you know, we're always becoming, right?

Uilliam 31:21

It's also great to... I was just thinking about how we've had so many different generations and people on the podcast talk about different ways that they have discovered anarchism and stuff. So it's really cool to learn more about that stuff.

Scott 31:37

One thing I think about a lot, and maybe this is why sort of, like, my book came out, is, you know, I'm someone who has a chronic illness that's really affected a lot of my life and like, the decisions I've made, because I, like, have medicine and, you know,

like, I have to be concerned about that. I feel like it narrowed me in certain ways, but also, I think, for me, there was like this focus in my life on, like, connecting people. And so like, there's organizing work, that's like, we're gonna, we're organizing mutual aid, or we're getting money for someone who needs a thing, or we're, you know, going to resist something. There's all that kind of organizing work, which is really important, but I think there's like, one of the things I want to think about a lot is the organizing work of like relationships and care, that we, like, and creating spaces for each other in our lives. That I think is also anarchism. It's just, it doesn't look political the way that the mainstream world calls, what it calls politics, but that's, like, been when I've tried to find out at some point in my life, I'm like, What do I have to offer the world? What is it that I'm, like, good at? And like, it's, like, facilitating spaces and bringing people together.

carla 32:56

Yeah, yeah. Here, here.

Uilliam 33:01

That's just what you do as well.

carla 33:02

Yeah, I love getting down to the everyday, right? Like, how to take care of each other. I also came, I guess, like, when my, I guess my anarchism really took hold was at the same time I got diagnosed with lupus. It was just like this. So it's always had to be—and I had little kids as well. So I always had to think about it in a way of like, bringing people together. And webs of care, concrete care and amplifying voices. You know, those two things always went together. A multigenerational focus so I really, really resonate with that.

Scott 33:44

Yeah. And caring for kids can really teach you about anarchism.

carla 33:50

At nighttime, too.

Scott 33:53

Yeah, well, there's the chaos and then, but also, like, you're faced with your authoritarian impulses. So, like, baldly you have to really question yourself.

Uilliam 34:07

Yeah. Me and carla talk about that all the time. Yeah, like, especially with me, since I'm still, like, 18. So we still have the power of stuff that even if you don't realize that you do it.

carla 34:18

The persuasion powers.

Uilliam 34:20

Yeah. Even if you don't realize, you still have that power that will be like: "Well, you told me to do this!" And you're like: "Oh, no, I'd never did!"

carla 34:26

I'm like, wait, oh, yeah, I did that subtle thing.

Uilliam 34:30

You could do this. So then I take that as: "Oh, my mom wants me to do this. I have to do it." You know, even though that's not what it actually is.

Scott 34:37

Totally.

carla 34:38

Everyday praxis.

Uilliam 34:39

Yeah. Yeah.

Scott 34:41

It's interesting because I think a lot about how when you're a kid, or a grown up child of a family, there's like a narrative of like who you are often that is hard to escape and gets put on you whenever you return home. And I guess that happens with parents too. You know, because I have my story of my mom. And I'm like, the things that she says that she doesn't mean to be saying the way that I take them, but I take them in a certain way. So I was giving a little love to the moms who aren't trying to guilt trip you into something, but like they still do it maybe beyond their control. Yeah. I don't know, that might be an intergenerational trauma too.

carla 35:23

Yeah. And also, it's getting to that, like, relationships, right? Like, how do we have generative, like, beautiful relationships with each other? It's like the work.

Uilliam 35:33

And then there'll be like power stuff even between friends?

carla 35:37

Oh, yeah!

Uilliam 35:38

There'll be social power and all that, even between friends. So it's not just even a kid and parent. It can happen at all ages.

carla 35:44

Yeah, exactly.

Uilliam 35:46

Yeah.

carla 35:47

And how, because of training and internalized stuff, like how, like, I've always worked with young people and how hierarchies often get pushed onto me, even though I'm like, wait, like, I'm really working hard to be horizontal here, what's happening? And it's like, oh, I guess we have to have the power conversation, because there's some stuff going on that is unspoken, that I'm not noticing, I'm not tuning into clearly. Right.

Uilliam 36:16

Yeah.

Scott 36:16

Yeah, that goes back to your first question. It's like, it's still a hurdle when I'm teaching. I try to do all these things to empower students. But they're not used to often being given that much leeway to do things. And they want to be told, so you can't just like, show up and be like, here. Here's your empowerment. And I'm just facilitating, there's some guidance and like, something that needs to be done to, kind of, create that.

Uilliam 36:46

I talked about that in your book.

carla 36:47

Yeah.

Uilliam 36:48

I talked about that, about how kids are still kids, and they still need to be guided by...

carla 36:51

I still need guidance.

Uilliam 36:52

Yeah, they need guidance by mentors and stuff. Yeah.

Scott 36:55

I liked that piece in the book. I remember your piece. Yeah, it was really interesting to read your thoughts on that, too. Yeah.

carla 36:55

I love that. That's good.

Uilliam 37:04

What about ...

carla 37:06

Yeah, that was amazing. I want to move to your book, your new book Practical Anarchism: A Guide — speaking of guides — for Daily Life. Just for transparency, I had the privilege of reading an advanced copy. And I came right at a time when it was exactly what I needed. Thank you for reaching out to me. That was in the summer. Incredible book.

Scott 37:32

I'm glad that was the right moment.

carla 37:34

Yeah. And if I had \$1 for every time — I'd maybe have \$1,000 but — for every time somebody said that my politics weren't practical. Like, you know, people who I

thought I shared an affinity with too, like, it just, that would... So, I really love the title and really want to talk here about why you wrote the book, and let me find my question. Like, what, what really brought you to it? And I just want to say like, I really loved how you just really boiled down the big questions that often are seen as not practical. You know, and, like your framing, just for our listeners don't know the book, "Isn't art a waste of time?" you challenge that, you bring up that. "Would anything get done if we weren't made to work?" I love the whole chapter on can I relearn that as someone who tries to deinstitutionalize everywhere I go. And as a professional, I really tuned into this one. And Liam also chose that one to focus on.

Uilliam 38:42

I was pretty much unschooled my whole life.

carla 38:44

Yeah, I really liked how you frame that. And I also just before I get you to talk about it, I think I mentioned this to you in an email, but I love that you weaved through Ursula K. Le Guin and Marge Piercy throughout it, because they're two of my favorite books that you really pointed to. And then, as someone who like, does some writing, I tend to put quotes at the head of my stuff and people never ask me about the quotes and I'm always like: "Ask me about the quotes." That's, like, why I did it. So in that section you have Marge Piercy: "We study with any person who can teach us." I just wanted to say that, ask about that, ask about the book and maybe unpack it for our listeners.

Scott 39:29

Yeah. Well, I'm glad that all of that resonated. You know, I wrote this... you know it's so weird writing a book about anarchism. Like, I never thought I was gonna write a book about anarchism, that was never my goal in life. And didn't think I was the authority on anarchism, the authority on anti authoritarianism, but it sort of came by chance that there was someone, an editor, interested in someone writing a book about anarchism that was not focused specifically on, you know, confrontation in the streets, direct action, blackbox stuff. And I was like, I think I have some ideas for that. And I proposed it. And they liked it. And I still was like, Do I really have, like, What am I... You know, I was in a phase of my life where I was just like, I'm gonna try everything that I can do. I'd, like, lost a job. And I was like, I just want to write and translate and whatever. So I was throwing a lot of things out there. But yeah, when I wrote the book, I was like, Oh, yes, I have been thinking about things for years, about anarchism, and like, organizing and life, then, like, the ways that my anarchist

organizing informs my life. And I was, like, I have a lot to say, I had been writing various things that didn't have places. And it sort of cohered. This basically boils down a lot of the ways that I was trying to bring things together, through my experience. So it turned out for me to be very important book that I had no idea that I had in me, although, like, I've had people tell me, like, Oh, this is definitely the book that you were gonna write. And then I was so interested in like — you know, curious what the people who I admire, like, you know, Joyful Militancy was a book that was inspiring to me — I'm, like, interested in what the people I admire were gonna think. So it's really nice to hear that the people who I learned from, like, also resonate with my take on things. Yeah, and I mean, I can say more about... So the epigraphs of the chapters, the little quotes on the head, I mean, that one from March Piercey just stood out to me. I teach *Woman on the Edge of Time* a lot. And with that education chapter I actually had a lot of conversation with, I think, someone you know, Eli Meyerhoff, who wrote *Beyond Education* was a friend. And he read that chapter. And we talked a lot about it. And I rewrote it a few times. Also this book is, like, I wrote, maybe two versions of it. There was a longer version of this book that got cut down. So yeah, I rewrote that chapter. And, you know, to go back to the other question. One of the major ways that I'm approaching anarchism is through what I'm calling the breakup theory of anarchism, but it's like, it's also this, like, letting go of things too. Letting people go to do their things. So there's like a connection. But that's, like, you know, a coincidence and a chance that something sparks and being able to be open to that spark, is a potential of anarchism. But then also, like, knowing when there isn't a spark. Or not holding on to something that's not working anymore. And then letting it go. It doesn't mean it's not going to work forever. It's just like, not right now. You know, I need to go do something else. So I think those two things would be kind of held together. And then, I think I was just like, teaching *Woman on the Edge of Time* again and that line just stuck out to me. I think she just threw it off there. Like it's not like a big deal it's not made about, like how we learned things. Like, what's the structure of like, learning in school, or whatever, it's just like, that's what we do. Like, which is also really true for us, too. We learn from everyone around us. So that was helpful to me. And also, just to think about the kind of the version of anarchism that I'm trying to portray here is one that is not — again, it's like doing. It's in the doing and it's in, like, sparks in between us that happen. Any instance of like any, like, day can be infused with anarchism, I think. And so, like, that idea that we learn with anyone, right, like, is a kind of anarchism to me.

carla 44:09

Thank you. I love that it came from the ether. It was beyond you.

Uilliam 44:18

Yeah, totally. Yeah, I'm excited to definitely read the book, eventually, as well, because I've definitely in my life had some experiences with anarchists that were more rigid anarchists as you can call it. So other than, you know, I've had so many great people in my life that were anarchists and my parents, whatever, like, a lot of great people, but I've also been around a lot of people that were very rigid with it and made me feels almost like scared of like: "Oh God, is this what it's like?" And stuff like that so I'm excited to read the book to see more different sides of it.

Scott 45:01

Yeah. You know, speaking about trust again too, like, I feel like we never should trust people who think they know how things need to get done. And being in anarchist spaces there's definitely I mean... I think I was also trying to write a book that wasn't like the "man-archist" quote unquote, book of like, the people who know better than anyone else, how everything has to be done. And you know, no one knows because we aren't there, right? Like, on the one hand. And then everyone sort of knows, because we're doing all these things all the time that get overlooked that we, like, don't pull from and we don't realize and we exhausted ourselves looking for something else. So I think that's like really important. I was talking about this the other day, at a talk I was doing with Cindy Milstein. I was thinking about like, the, what's it called? Impostor syndrome, right? People have impostor syndrome all the time. I had a student once, like, tell me that she's, like, had such horrible impostor syndrome. And like, let me let you into a little secret. Everyone, no one knows what they're doing. Everyone's just filling these roles, right, like trying their best. I mean, some people are abusing the powers that they have, but no one really knows. And, like, 90% of it is showing up. So like, if we take away that kind of idea that anyone actually knows better, I don't know, I think we can like, free ourselves and let ourselves go a lot more. Give ourselves that permission that I was talking about earlier.

Uilliam 46:43

That's a great answer. That was amazing.

carla 46:46

Yeah. Like uncertainty... or even just showing up and listening and being together and figuring shit out together is what it's about. Right?

Uilliam 46:57

Yeah, coming to the conclusion that Oh, I actually don't know anything, will actually open it up for you to learn more things.

Scott 47:03

Yes.

carla 47:04

I find that impostor syndrome gets stoked when I've somehow found myself on some kind of, like, path where I have some knowledge, like, that's when I'm like, I'm so uncomfortable. You know?

Uilliam 47:20

Yeah, totally.

carla 47:21

Yeah. I think there's a connection there between pedagogy, the institutions, colonialism, authority.

Scott 47:30

Yeah, that's interesting. Cuz you're concerned that you will, like, get too much deference, because of the knowledge that you have.

carla 47:39

I think for me it's connected to people's desire to have answers and leaders or a cult of personalities. And I really issue all that stuff, personally. So sometimes there is time to show up and offer some information. Scott Crow and I had a conversation, it was actually hours, but then we ended up turning it into a pamphlet called Just Anarchy. And it was about ageing and anarchy. This idea of like, where's the line between always meeting people where they're at, and then maybe having something to offer in terms of mentorship. And so it's at that spot where I'm always, like, becoming and evolving and changing. But I do have some core stuff to share at 56 years old.

Uilliam 48:30

Yeah, exactly.

carla 48:31

At this point in my life, right.

Uilliam 48:32

And I mean, like, as I've learnt from people, like my brother who has actually talked about this, of how if you reach a point with learning about things, where you're like: "Oh, I know everything now!" Then it's like, oh, you don't know anything.

carla 48:45

You're just beginning.

Uilliam 48:47

You might be just beginning. If you've reached that cocky point where you're like: "I'm amazing at this!" Then it's like, you still have a ways to go.

Scott 48:57

Yeah, maybe that moment is the moment where you are, like, about to just enter the zone where you know nothing anymore.

Uilliam 49:04

Yeah, exactly. You realize, oh, I actually have no knowledge about this at all.

carla 49:10

Or I might have some knowledge, but I certainly don't.

Uilliam 49:13

I haven't I haven't mastered this thing.

Uilliam 49:15

Yeah, yeah.

carla 49:16

There's more to know.

Uilliam 49:16

Yeah.

Scott 49:17

Yeah. That makes me think about the experience I had going through grad school was, I got to a point... It wasn't content based, "I know everything." It was, like, I've read enough now that I can make all these connections in my head, that make things make sense to me in a way that I find, like, exciting and interesting. And that's sort of, like, also, I think, a thing I want to impart to people when I'm, like, you know, in the role of an educator, because, like, you know, you can teach these difficult texts, right, like, that's something I do in classes, and I always try to, like tell people when they're reading these things, I'm like these are hard. I read them over and over again and get new things each time. Like, if you can take one thing from it, that's great, and also only care about these things to the extent that they do anything for you, right, that you can do something interesting with them. Because if they're not serving you in that way, it doesn't really matter. So I mean, just kind of the things I guess I'm talking about, like, getting outside of this purity or piousness that we have in relationship to like knowledge, or what people think they know. And just being able to, like, play around and mess up, you know, like, I'm more interested in like, kind of getting things wrong. Because if we get them wrong, like, everything that's supposedly right, I don't like, you know? Maybe this is the way to go.

Uilliam 50:45

Yeah. Exactly.

carla 50:47

Yeah. And it's about like, I don't know, breaking it up a bit. And like, obviously, western thought is a problem, right? It's created these institutions and systems that aren't so great. And not that each individual philosopher, thinker or writer is the problem in and of themselves, but their stuff within their texts and lineages and genealogies that reinscribe this, like, these problems that we're up against. So to, like, grab parts from it and weave it together is beautiful. I mean, I always talked about how I read Spinoza in 2000 in a philosophy class, and it is the seeds for Joyful Militancy in lots of ways. But actually, way more is Ursula K. Le Guin's Dispossessed. Like, way more. But, you know, there's a whole... I mean, we don't need to get into philosophy, but there's a whole pile of issues with Spinoza. That's, you know, not what I want to carry forward. But I do love his stuff about joy and common notions. And I don't know if that's what you mean by like, pulling, composing, composing the world, and using the texts and the ideas that are already here, but also bringing in your own.

Uilliam 51:57

Yeah, totally.

Scott 51:59

Yeah. Like, the academic expectation is that you like cite your sources and interpret them, like correctly, or whatever the agreed upon way as, but it's much more interesting to... it's like sampling something. Like, here's a little bit of Spinoza. And then I'm gonna mash that up with some Le Guin. Yeah, that's way more interesting to me. And I don't know, like, as a writer too, I like that. It's more fun to play around with things. And not just dedicate yourself to understanding like one person's thought or something.

carla 52:38

Yeah, that's so cool. I'm glad you're out there doing that work.

Uilliam 52:43

You mentioned, yeah, you mentioned while talking, trust and all that. And we love to hear how folks on our show grow trust in themselves in how they make art, create and how they connect with others, et cetera. So with that, how does trust animate your life?

carla 53:03

Seems to be a lot.

Scott 53:03

Yeah, I mean, okay, so on the one hand, I trust everyone, to the point of like gullibility, and I don't understand when people are, like, lying to me, or like being mean to me, like, often I'll be taken advantage of. That's the way I've always done and I, like, don't get it, I'm, like, missing some social thing. And yet, on the other hand, I, like, cannot trust myself. Like, I'm constantly undercutting everything I do. So like, that's something I'm working on is cultivating my trust in myself, which I think of also. Like, I was talking about, like, giving myself permission to just like... Because nothing—the decisions that upset me or like, whatever, don't really... nothing really matters, right? They don't really matter. Like, they're these miniscule things that maybe an aggregate will, like, become some thing, but in every instance you know what you're doing, but I get stuck. So, you know, that is where, like, other practices come in for me to like... I make visual art or play music because my brain works differently when I'm doing that than when I'm, like, trying to think through a problem. If I get stuck trying to think of or reason through a problem, like it's a math problem,

like, I gotta go do something else, you know? And my best time with writing actually, it's funny, it's like the opposite of like, finding my voice in a way. I feel like absent during these things, like when I'm like painting, or playing guitar or writing, I'm, like, not there. It's that thing of like, bringing things together. I feel like the conduit of things in that. That's where I can experience this feeling that I know what I'm doing that I want to infuse in the rest of my life. Because and I see other people and I'm like, they know what they're doing, you know? Like, I love that for them. So yeah, that's my trust.

Uilliam 55:01

Wow, that was a cool answer.

carla 55:03

Yeah, it also reminds me of my other son Zach. The best part, the gullible part.

Uilliam 55:09

Yeah.

Scott 55:09

Oh, really?

carla 55:10

Yeah, really similar. And definitely moving from, like, doing heavy theory work to, like, composing music. Yeah, it's similar. That really resonates. Well, I hope that your trust for yourself grows because you do really important work. And I would say all those people that seem to be knowing what they're doing, they don't either.

Scott 55:37

Yeah, projection, of course.

Uilliam 55:39

Yeah.

carla 55:41

Totally. And I kinda like you going in the in- between of where anarchism lies and then the spark. I mean, I kind of have always played around with the idea of thriving in that same way, like that's just something that can happen in the everyday. And our whole platform of Grounded Futures is based on this notion of Thrivistance. Like

how to. And I learned it mostly from young people, like where to find thriving through the acts of resisting dominant order. And so we like to ask guests, how they cultivate thriving in their every day? In the smallest little ways.

Uilliam 56:24

Even amidst all the chaos.

carla 56:26

Yeah, amidst horrors that we are collectively facing.

Scott 56:30

Yeah, I mean, you know, I've had, as many have, a hard last number of years. And I've like, had bad habits come in terms of coping and some good things. And then good things that can become bad things. Like, I run pretty obsessively now, but I get a lot of joy out of running. It's just also kind of, like, obsessive about that I need to run. But that feels good to me. It was not something I really ever did before. Or thought I wouldn't care about. But, and then, you know, like, I don't know, I'm trying to, like, I'm trying to snuggle my cat. And just like be there with her. Like, because that is soothing. And I have a very loving cat. You know, she really wants to be petted. So like, that's something that, you know, it's these little things that I'm finding right now. Like, lately, I've been really enjoying like, my tea in the morning. And just being like, this is so good. It tastes so good. And I'm gonna just enjoy this on my long drive to work. It's like, yeah, stuff like that. And the voices of the people I love, you know, that's a big thing for me. It's, like, hearing people's voices is really nice. Is this, like, sort of getting at what you're asking?

Uilliam 58:01

No. Yeah, totally. That is, that is actually perfect. I especially love hearing the thriving in small things that you do. Not just one big crazy one. I mean, it's all good. But...

carla 58:13

I realized when I asked this question that really what I'm asking is, how do you get present?

Uilliam 58:19

Oh, yeah.

carla 58:20

That's probably what I'm actually asking.

Uilliam 58:21

Yeah, those answers were pretty good.

carla 58:24

That's what I mean. That's what I'm hearing. I'm hearing you in moments of presence, where you're not in thought, you're not in worry. And you're feeling... And I think that's when thriving flows the best. Yeah, even in the struggle moment.

Uilliam 58:38

Yeah.

Scott 58:39

Yeah, totally. I mean, this is something I'm working on, eternally working on. You know, like inserting into my life 10 minutes of sitting, like meditating, which I used to do a lot and lost that practice. Because I'm like, I really need to remind myself to be present, because I'm doing too many things all the time. But also, just like, the best thing I've experienced about publishing a book is getting to talk to people. You know, it's been really just an excuse to go around and talk to people, like, and get into conversations. And that has also just been... Like, that is a place where it's maybe a little bit bigger thriving, but I'm just really excited that I get to have conversations with people because thinking alone is, I mean, not as exciting as thinking together.

Uilliam 59:34

No, totally.

carla 59:36

Beautiful!

Uilliam 59:37

Collaboration, community... That's a great answer.

carla 59:41

I love that. Do you wanna?

Uilliam 59:46

This is one of our last questions.

carla 59:48

I also just—I know that we've talked briefly about maybe doing something with collaborating together around Le Guin, but do you have a favorite Le Guin? I mean, do you have a favorite Le Guin quote? I feel like if I would, this would change daily for me. No pressure.

Scott 1:00:04

Yeah. I mean, the end of *The Dispossessed* makes me cry. Um, which is weird because, like, I don't... There's people that don't get *The Dispossessed*. And the first time I read it, I was like, it didn't, like, grab me in that way. But I've read it so many times now and I just feel like Le Guin is like, my grandmother or something, you know? But yeah, the end I don't remember, but it's like his hands are empty, right? He's like, it's like... I don't remember.

carla 1:00:37

Is it the, "I come with empty hands to unbuild walls." That one?

Scott 1:00:41

No, I think it's a reference to that at the end of the book. I don't know. I'm like, can I find the book?

carla 1:00:48

Yeah, do it. Do it. And we'll, we'll edit this part out, Chris.

Scott 1:00:52

I don't think I have the hardcopy here in Cleveland. I left it in North Carolina. It's like, it actually reminds me of... There's a line also in another one of my favorite books, *Mrs. Dalloway*.

carla 1:01:13

Oh, I love *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Scott 1:01:15

There's a line that makes me cry everytime I read it and this one does, too.

carla 1:01:19

I have a signed copy of The Dispossessed.

Scott 1:01:21

You do?

carla 1:01:22

I do. I have like four copies of The Dispossessed.

Scott 1:01:28

So you met her and she signed it?

carla 1:01:49

I didn't, what happened was because of my lupus, I was planning to go and I got too sick the day before and couldn't go, but my friend got it signed. But I did talk to her once over email about her doing an EMMA Talks, which was a feminist, radical kind of TED talks that I did for a few years. And she was like, I don't do public stuff anymore, but thank you I love what you're doing. And then she passed away like, a year later or something. Yeah. I always heard that she was kind to people. And, like, Margaret Killjoy got to interview her. Yeah, I remember. Yeah, totally.

Scott 1:02:11

And she sounded really cool. Okay, so I found it. And it's the very last line of the book, but it refers back to what you were talking about like, "I come here empty handed to unbuild walls." It just is, "But he had not brought anything. His hands are empty, as they had always been." I like that.

carla 1:02:29

Right. There it is.

Uilliam 1:02:32

It's a great quote.

carla 1:02:33

I know. When I was on social media I did a post of, like, 20 of her quotes from books of like, how she has influenced everything I've done. Like, to prove a point to everyone. The seeds that were planted over the years was like... And I always, anytime that terrible person gets brought up online around transphobia, I always

would tweet: "You know who is a really good writer about wizards and creating new worlds?"

Uilliam 1:03:04

Yeah, I've made a tweet before about her.

carla 1:03:07

A Wizard of Earthsea, please.

Scott 1:03:10

She wrote something about how Rowling;s book was not very interesting.

carla 1:03:16

No, I have a funny story about that around trusting kids. My youngest really loved Harry Potter. So he's 28. So right around when it was at its prime. And he was six or seven years old and he had asked me to read the first book to him. And I got through the first chapter and I said: "Sorry, dude, I can't."

Uilliam 1:03:31

You threw it across the room.

carla 1:03:33

"I actually can't read that. You are on your own." He was like, okay. Then he read them all.

Uilliam 1:03:42

Yeah, well, I mean my relation, I watched the movies as a kid, which I did like, because I loved the acting. And yeah, it does have really good acting and good directing. So now when I rewatched it, I realized, oh, shit, this is bad. But like, as a kid, you're watching this. You're seeing these fun things happening. You don't even realize it. But later when my dad Chris Bergman was reading me the books. We got to I feel like maybe the fifth book and reading it we were just like: "God, this writing is bad!"

Scott 1:04:17

Yeah, and it's just like, chock full of horrible cultural stereotypes. Like the first time I saw the movies, and I was like, are you kidding me with these bankers? Like this is just antisemitism.

Uilliam 1:04:32

It's so bad

carla 1:04:33

The layers of... It's so bad.

Uilliam 1:04:36

I always recommend Ursula K. Le Guin's book. And another one I always recommend is, it's a manga series actually. That's Witch Hat Atelier, which is really good. Also another really good one.

Scott 1:04:40

I think that my kid just was reading that.

carla 1:04:48

Oh cool.

Scott 1:04:48

But I haven't read it.

Uilliam 1:04:53

Yeah, it's really good. Witch Hat. Yeah, yeah, it's a manga series and Mushishi that's also good. That's an anime but that's not about witches.

carla 1:05:03

It's a manga as well.

Uilliam 1:05:04

It is a manga but that one's not—

carla 1:05:05

It is about magic!

Uilliam 1:05:05

It is about magic.

carla 1:05:06

And mutual aid.

Uilliam 1:05:07

But Witch Hat Atelier has I mean, it has the... everyone are just... Yeah, it doesn't have the witches and wizards thing. Everyone is witches,

carla 1:05:17

They don't gender it. I like that you're calling her "they". Probably making her really upset.

Uilliam 1:05:19

It's just witches since— I mean, this is my biggest problem with Harry Potter is they just got their mythology lore wrong. Witches and wizards are not from the same mythology so they just got that wrong anyways, so that's one of my big issues. If you're gonna— You don't think it's a group of people that worked on it? But yeah, no totally.

Scott 1:05:48

Unwoman Rowling. Her biggest fear.

carla 1:05:49

So bad.

Uilliam 1:05:51

But yeah, I always recommend those two because they're way better stories that actually showcase—

carla 1:06:04

Do you want to talk about Bella at all?

Scott 1:06:06

Bella? Yeah, I mean, Bella's cool. You know, about to turn eight, I'm gonna miss their birthday. Because I'm up here. And I'm doing, I'm actually doing a talk, which is a little bit of a bummer. But I sent them some stuff. I sent them — Bella wants to make graphic novels — so I sent some blank graphic novels and markers, and also some stuff to do tagging with some like graffiti markers, because I thought that might be fun.

carla 1:06:35

Excellent, aw.

Scott 1:06:35

But Bella's like an amazing, amazing artists and painter, like—

Uilliam 1:06:40

Amazing.

Scott 1:06:40

So good. Yeah, really funny.

carla 1:06:45

They sound amazing.

Uilliam 1:06:46

Yeah.

Scott 1:06:47

Yeah. Yeah, you know, and I think I said it in the book that, like becoming a parent, like, I'm not, you know? Also not like a biological parent, or whatever. So like, I came into it from a different position than some people do, which helped me, I think, get outside of some of the mythologies that you take on. But learning that and also, my partner, Carrie, just like the way that Carrie talked about, relating to Bella's needs was like, just very instructive to me in terms of anarchism, and also like, making me realize, where— Just like the arbitrariness of being like no, you know, like, I don't want to do this. So you can't do this. Like I mean, that's real. Then there's a negotiation between, like, whose threshold is, like, at the lowest right now. Because like, people break at some point.

carla 1:07:47

Totally. Yeah.

Scott 1:07:49

But Bella's really funny and sweet and also knows like, Fuck cops. That was something that—

carla 1:07:57

Nice.

Scott 1:07:58

Early when they met new people they'd say: "Do you say fuck cops, too?"

Uilliam 1:07:58

Amazing.

carla 1:08:03

Amazing,

Uilliam 1:08:04

Amazing. Yeah, that was me as a kid. Yeah, that's great.

carla 1:08:08

I love it. Aw, well I hope to meet them one day.

Scott 1:08:12

Also, the other wizard and witch book, though, that I think is cool. I think there's a new one. I just need to plug in my computer but Nandy Nnedi Okorafor has the Akata Witch series and those are cool. They're worth checking out. They're like, she's a Nigerian American sci fi author and I really like her stuff. And she has I think it's maybe a trilogy now? I've only read two of the books, but they're really fun. They're like setting Nigeria at a witch school.

Uilliam 1:08:43

sounds really cool. Yeah. Oh, thanks for that recommendation. We were just gonna get into recommendation. Yeah, we're gonna ask about recommendation. So we will keep that in our brains. I asked the recommendations, but we've already asked it pretty much.

carla 1:08:59

Yeah, kinda recommending books about everything we talked about here.

Uilliam 1:09:04

like podcasts or shows or music?

Scott 1:09:07

Yeah. Well, okay, so one of my favorite books ever that I like to recommend to people. It's a novel called *I, Tituba Black Witch of Salem*, by Maryse Condé. And it's like, it's just such a good counter history. She takes the historical figure of Tituba who is there during, you know, during the Salem witch trials and imagines her as, you know, an enslaved person from I think it's Trinidad. And yeah, I mean, that novel is just amazing. Like, it goes from, you know, the island to the colonies and then back to like Jamaica and the maroon cultures, it is like it's just such a good book and everyone I tell it to read that likes it too. So, that's one of my favorites. Also, just because I really like counter histories like on the other side of sci fi, alternative futures I think like, like, resistant historical novels are really good. So that's what came to mind just now.

William 1:10:18

Awesome. That's so cool. I love history stuff like,

carla 1:10:21

I love getting recommended books I haven't read. Yeah, thank you.

Scott 1:10:27

Yeah. Yeah, she's cool. Maryse Condé. She's a Dominican writer. I think she's still I have to admit she's probably getting enough there.

carla 1:10:38

Right. Cool. Sounds cool. Yeah. Do you have any other recommendations? Or is that?

Scott 1:10:43

I mean, yeah, I mean, yeah.

William 1:10:45

You go on a whole long list of really cool books.

Scott 1:10:48

Yeah. I mean, so okay, the, there's another thinking about what I love about *Woman on the Edge of Time*, the way that I'm reading the book that I read the book is that, you know, it's a book that goes in between, oh, really horrible 1970s where this Chicana woman is, like, incarcerated in a mental hospital, and then this like anarchist federated like future. And at the end of the book, I feel like the purpose of

the kind of interaction between these two worlds is that the character Connie gets to the point of taking action. It's like a violent action, but she takes action. And that's something I'm really interested in like books kind of getting you to the point of thinking action is possible. And there's this other book. It's part of a trilogy, so you, I think by one by Haitian writer, Marie Vieux-Chauvet, and it's called Love, Anger, Madness, the trilogy, and Love the first novella in that is just so good. It's like, it's told by the unmarried virgin sister of, I think, a family of three sisters and she's like, the dark skinned one. And the family had kind of had a, I think a coffee plantation and like fallen in bad times. And it's set in like Haiti, where there's like political turmoil, and some people like violent paramilitary kind of coming into the city, it is a really it's a really good book, too.

carla 1:11:05
those sound cool

Uilliam 1:11:55
so cool.

carla 1:12:36

Was that love, anger, madness?

Scott 1:12:38

Love, Anger, Madness. Yeah. And all of them are good, but I really especially love that first one. Yeah, right. Just like, go for it. Let's get Love. The second book is angry, the last one is madness, like, cover it all.

carla 1:12:54

Yeah, that's wonderful. Okay, was there besides letting our listeners know where to find you and your work? Is there anything else you wanted to say? Or feel like we've missed? Or?

Scott 1:13:08

No, I mean, I'm super grateful to be invited to talk with you. I've loved having all these, like this conversation and where it's gone. And yeah, and then like anyone who's listening to this, if you want to find me, and ask me anything, or talking about stuff, feel free to reach out. Yeah, I guess you'll probably link to my social media stuff. So you can get me there. I like to engage with people, you know, and know what they're thinking about.

carla 1:13:36

Yeah, that's awesome. For sure. We will put everything in the links, including that essay I brought up at the beginning and anything else you want to put it in. Yeah, thanks so much for being here. I love the way we just, like we went on a nice walk together, which has always been my goal with this show.

Uilliam 1:13:50

Yeah. Yes. It's nice being able to talk about our experiences and other things.

Scott 1:13:55

The pacing of the conversation felt really good to me, like there was time to think and generate ideas too. So yeah, thank you.

Uilliam 1:14:03

Yeah, totally. Thanks for listening to our show. Grounded Futures is media production and mentorship collaborative. And this podcast is produced by carla Bergman. Uilliam Joy, Jamie Lee Gonzalez and Melissa Sharp, and our sound tech is by Chris Bergman.

carla 1:14:20

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