

Grounded Futures Show

Episode 17

Feeling and Building More, with Eleanor Goldfield

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Transcript

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people , thriving , eleanor , nietzsche , censorship , mutual aid , human , feel , carla , rights , empire , world , fucking , book , state , written , language , exist , build , folks.

Speakers

Uilliam, carla, Eleanor, Time Talks podcast jingle

magneto 00:02

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

Uilliam 00:22

Welcome to the second season of Grounded Futures podcast. This is the show where we discuss topics ranging from climate change to identity to how youth can gain new skills to thrive amid current and ongoing disasters that we are collectively facing. We are your hosts, Uilliam and carla.

carla 00:41

Hello, everyone. I'm carla. And thanks for tuning in to Grounded Futures. We produce the show on Squamish, Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh lands, but our guests are from around the world. The music for our show is by Sour Gout , also known as Zach Bergman. And before we get started today, here's the jingle from our fellow friends over at Channel Zero network.

TIME TALKS PODCAST 01:07

I'm going to make those pompous academics regret kicking out such a genius deciding to build my lab and do my research. The Time Talks Podcast. Have you ever stared at a 500 page book and wish you could just talk to the author about their ideas instead? If so, the time

talks podcast part of the Channel Zero network is for you. Where we discuss history, politics, music, and art within antiauthoritarian and anarchist perspective.

Uilliam 01:45

Eleanor Goldfield is a queer creative radical, journalist and filmmaker. She works with a variety of independent outlets in both written and photojournalism. She is the co-founder of the independent media aggregate RadIndieMedia.com. One of the 2020 recipients of the "Women and Media Award" presented by The Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, and is currently a board member of the Media Freedom Foundation. Her first documentary, "Hard Road of Hope," has garnered international praise as well as laurels from a dozen film festivals. Alongside this work and co hosting popular podcasts, she is also a musician, storyteller, poet, mom, and an organizer around front line actions and mutual aid, you can find more of her work over at ArtKillingApathy.com. Welcome to the show, Eleanor

Eleanor 02:39

Thanks so much for having me y'all.

carla 02:41

Yay. Thanks for being here to the kind of Silver Threads. Grounded Futures mashup just for listeners. If you don't know, Eleanor and I launched the show that's on hiatus right now called Silver Threads at the same time as this show on the same platform. So you can head over there. And there's 30 Amazing episodes with awesome rad people. And the song that was playing is floodlight by rooftop revolutionaries, which is sung by Eleanor and it was our show song will play the entire song at the end of the episode. So anyway, hi. I also wanted to say that I wouldn't be doing this work without you, your mentorship was fundamental for me to be even showing up and doing this work. So endless gratitude and love for you for that.

Eleanor 03:31

Well, I can I just say that I wouldn't. I mean, when you when we first when we talked on the phone, and you first floated the idea of Silver Threads. I think I got off the phone, I threw my phone into the couch. And then I yelled at Lee and I was like, oh my god, I'm doing a show with carla. And it was like, and he was like, Wait, the person who wrote the book that you're always like talking about constantly, YES that person. So yeah.

carla 04:02

Aw. mutual love and admiration. Okay, so given the breadth of your work, and how rad you are, we can have many, many conversations, obviously, and be on here forever. So in respect for your time our listeners, we'll just have you back. And we'll try to stay focused. And like I said, head over Silver Threads. There's lots there between the two of us if you've been craving more, and also Eleanor shows which we'll get into. So, the first thing I wanted to actually talk to you about was the idea of censorship really it seems to be significant and circles and is around all your work. I mean, you have your podcast with Lee camp called Common Censored, which is amazing. And then you also do that radio show called Project Censored and I think also the RAD indie media's all wrapped up in that as well. So I'm hoping that maybe you could touch on or talk about why it's important, the concept of censorship, how it relates to journalism, radical dissemination of ideas. And specifically, maybe within with the US, but under Empire more generally.

Eleanor 05:18

Yeah, sure. So I think... I should start by saying that I don't apply the definition of censorship, it has no connection to me to the, to the Constitution of the United States. First of all, I don't apply any of my life's work or my life's direction around a document that was written by a bunch of old, dead white dudes who owned human beings. That's just like, to me, not a good standard. And so, in terms of censorship, I'm not talking specifically about the First Amendment. I know a lot of people do. But even if you were to take it to the First Amendment, the concept of free speech and free press does not exist. Not in the United States, not in Europe. I assume not in Canada, although I've not really. I haven't dived into it. But for me,

carla 06:15

the most over rated country in the world, Canada.

Eleanor 06:17

I don't know, I think Sweden's probably Yeah, right. We're in competition. But our PR companies definitely are using the same storylines. But yeah, so I think in terms of defining censorship, I'd say basically, like anything that goes against not just US Empire, but also, you know, white supremacy, fascism, however you define that because I know there are a lot of definitions of it. But things that are genuinely about the freedom and justice for the vast majority of human beings and also ecosystems. And so the censorship of those who speak out for that, who fight for that is, I think, at an all time high in the United States. And so the access to media that speaks to those issues, and also the ability for that media to reach people has never been more constricted, particularly in a time when people talk about the internet being like, Oh, you can just post anything and it and it's like, yeah, you can post rape threats, but you can't post something that has to do with what the US Empire is doing to children in Yemen or something. So I think that the the concept of censorship gets kind of twisted, you know, like, oh, well, this person is being cancelled, because they said that, you know, they'd like to, you know, like, they're, they, they refuse to recognize, you know, someone's pronouns, and now they're getting cancelled. It's like, that's not censorship, that's accountability. And, also, people will point out, like, certain, you know, celebrities like, oh, this celebrity got cancelled, it's like, they have a special on Netflix, that's not getting cancelled, you have the largest platform in the world, okay. Censored is when the US government, like shuts down a TV show, like happened to my partner. Censorship is when you try to access your comedy albums on Spotify, and they've disappeared, like, also happened to my partner. Um, censorship is when you try to publish something that's affecting Indigenous peoples in Louisiana, and then you can't do it like has happened to me when you get stopped at the airport, and they just happen to take your SD card. And they're like, I didn't even know there wasn't an SD card in your camera. Censorship is something that happens to people who go against US Empire, and really any form of media. And that could be art. That could be investigative journalism. And so I think for me, the concept of uplifting, censorship is very important. Because without that conversation, we can't access the many conversations that need to happen. It's kind of like why media literacy is so important, because it's the lens through which we see the world. So if you're only watching CNN, then you're really like, your understanding of the world is so constricted, and I'm not saying that as somebody who thinks I have a perfect understanding of the world. I know that it's imperfect. But I also know that I'm trying to widen it, I'm trying to push the boundaries. And that means that you have to push down censorship continuously. And I think that therefore, that's that that's something

that is very important for me and, and my work, not just in terms of media, but also in terms of art and, and the like.

carla 09:45

Yeah.

Uilliam 09:46

that's amazing.

carla 09:47

Thank you. It's such a like, we are all platforms about amplifying stories and conversations that are unheard or pushed to the side, but we don't really talk about censorship. So I'm really glad you're doing that. And that's why we wanted to start off the conversation, because it's so, so important and been watching what's happening to Lee Camp and people wanting to support Lee and Eleanor and their work, check them out. And we'll have that in the show notes.

Uilliam 10:14

Yeah. really good. Um, so yeah, kind of building off that question. We're keen to hear some of the ways your organizing has shifted over time. And specifically, how have your ideas changed or shifted over the years? What ideas remain? Or are kinetic and connected? What are some of the threads that run through all of your work?

Eleanor 10:36

I love this question. And I love that it's a shared question between y'all show and Silver Threads. I love that. Because I think it was carla and I's mutual beau Nietzsche that pointed out, that one is not being, one is always becoming. And that you can't actually be the same person that you were, you know, five years ago, or even like, 10 minutes ago, if we want to go to the micro level, but gosh, I mean, I started, I started out, kind of strictly with environmental issues and caring very much about environmentalism, partially because I got like this World Wildlife Fund package in the mail. It wasn't addressed to me, but I was like, Oh, I'll open this, it looks fun. Which I guess is a federal crime, but whatever. Um, so I opened it. And there were pictures of like tigers hanging from whatever, I don't know, but they had been poached. And I was like, 10. And I was like, Wait, this is something that humans do what? And you know, that I think I took it to my mom, or my dad or my brother. And they were like, yeah, it's awful. Humans are garbage and, you know, you can support it. Of course, it was worldwide Wildlife Fund, which I don't recommend that people support because they're a very white supremacist organization, particularly with how they treat folks in Africa, Indigenous and tribal peoples -- sidenote. But at the time, I was 10. And I was like, Cool, I'll send my savings, which was probably like, you know, 30 bucks to World Wildlife Fund. And that made me feel like I had done something positive. And so that's one way that it's shifted, because I certainly don't send money to WWF anymore. But it kicked me off into caring about environmental issues. And I started like a recycling program at my school and stuff. And then, when the US was banging war drums, for the second Iraq war in like, 2002, I shifted, kind of like 100%, to anti war organizing. And at the time, I thought that these were totally disparate issues. I was like, Okay, I have to let go of the environmental things. Now, I'm just focused on war. And I do recall, when when my dad called me and said, they've started bombing Baghdad, I just remember thinking, wait, they didn't listen to us. You mean?

You mean, they don't care what we think. And it was the first moment in my life where I was like, Man, that's awful, but they don't listen to what the people want. And so from there, I kind of walked away from organizing for a bit and thought that it would just be more fun to go to LA and be a rock star, which it was for a time, but I started organizing again and started organizing around money and politics, when I still thought that electoralism was going to save us. And then then it's really started shifting to understanding like the larger systems that include, you know, the the, I would say, genocide towards the Ecocide the genocide towards ecosystems, is connected to the genocide of human beings and war and imperialism is connected to, you know, income inequality is connected to systemic racism, like all of these things are tied under the same horrific system. And that's when I really started to move away from electoral politics and feeling that, well, if we're just voting inside of the same system, then we're just voting inside of the same funhouse circus, and we can't get or we can't find our way out of this horror story. And so in that sense, I really started focusing more on organizing in terms of like community spaces and organizing, in terms of like specific fights like fighting to protect this specific place or fighting to, you know, protect communities against deportation was a big thing, particularly in LA. And then I also from there, I'd say the next significant step was recognizing that it's not just about fighting but Building. And I'd say that Carla was also instrumental in this the the the idea of like joy and despair existing at the same time. And really like giving voice to the things that I had felt and that fighting, just fighting is exhausting. And it is depleting in a really dark way not in like a fun I just worked out kind of depletion, but like in a soul sucking kind of way. And, the first time I really remember feeling this was when I was down in Louisiana fighting the bayou bridge pipeline, which is kind of like the tail end of dapple, the Dakota Access Pipeline. And we were down in the swamps, which are gorgeous, but there's just way too much temperature down there. But mad respect for the folks who who live there and call that home i i will not be that person, but love to you. And it was just like this ridiculous sunset over the swamp and you've got these huge birds. I don't even know what they are, but they're gorgeous, just flying across. And like, you know, you feel like you just wandered into a postcard. And somebody turned to me, they're like Eleanor, you know, you got to remember what you're fighting for, not just against. And I was like, Okay, shut up with your perfect comment, your perfect sunset. Everything's just too perfect. I was like that scene in the movie where like, the the music, crescendos and everything, it was one of those moments. And that combined with, you know, like things like, you know, Carla your work, not just the book, but also looking into what you've done with like the thistle and everything. And this idea of creating spaces that emulate what you want to see, as opposed to just always being back on your heels and always fighting and always being exhausted. And that it kind of made it okay, in a weird way. I was like, Okay, I'm not the only person who's felt this, that I'm exhausted from fighting. And I really like to build something and I'd like to grow some fucking cucumbers or something like I, I want to create the world that I want to live in. And then it really started shifting towards mutual aid, which is what I've been doing predominantly for the past couple of years. So I'd say that's kind of the very rocky trajectory that started when I was like, 13 or so.

Uilliam 17:23

Thank you. That was amazing. That was really good. It's that also just, I also noticed in the way you talk and stuff like that, is that another thing of getting through that is humor, and just how important that is, you know that being able to joke even in dark times can really help.

Eleanor 17:46

Totally, and yeah, I remember my dad saying once that, you know, be happy that you're Jewish, because if there's one thing they were never able to take away from us, it's our dark sense of humor, and I agree with that.

Uilliam 17:59

that sounds amazing.

carla 18:00

I will never forget the statement step into a postcard. that's so good.

Eleanor 18:05

This is so true.

carla 18:07

I also would not like that heat. Cool. I have this kinda like the part where, like with this, the show Liam and I were trying to like, have people on to talk about like one big issue and go deep into it. And it's kind of connected, the threads are all there. We're kind of touching on this idea of American exceptionalism. It's even in your early story. But I was, and I'm so interested in how this is weaved in but I was I listened to a recent episode you did with Project Censored about reproductive justice and rights. It was fantastic. We will give the link you should all go listen to because it's a bit different than what we're gonna do here. But we do have a different audience. So I'm wondering if you can break open some of I mean, just the straight up lies, but also the mythos around this conversation of Roe v Wade overturn? You know, it's such a hot button issue in the US. Yeah, I just would love to hear your thoughts. I know you have a lot. Again, go listen to that episode, because she weaves in her own personal story, which is beautiful. But yes. Thank you.

Eleanor 19:17

Thank you. Yeah, and I'm really happy with it too, because I got to include one of my favorite humans, which is Jen Deeranwater. She's a Indigenous journalist, a Two Spirit, bisexual, rad human being. And she brought some very important context, particularly with regards to Indigenous access or really lack thereof to reproductive care. Yeah, I mean, I think the world is rightfully pissed off about Roe v. Wade being overturned, but I think it's also important to understand that Roe v Wade was not even the floor of the basement. It was not protecting access to reproductive care for so many people in the US already, particularly poor and non white people, which poor people are, like a lot of the people that seek reproductive care in the US a lot, because a lot of people are born in the US, but also because they don't have access to the preventative care that would allow them to plan for, or not plan for pregnancy. And so I think, you know, Roe v. Wade, being overturned is kind of like the last nail in the coffin, but the coffin was already there. And states had already made it impossible to access reproductive health care, I mean, the US is a hell of a large country. And people would sometimes have to travel days if they could to access reproductive health care, which you can't in the US both, because it's not economically feasible. But getting time off of work. I mean, yeah, you barely get that if you have a child much less if you don't want to have a child. So I think it's important to contextualize it in that way. And also make it clear that people who can get pregnant have always and will always make the decisions for our bodies, and they continue to do so if there are any Americans listening who are concerned, you can go to abortion pill dot info, you can also go to shout your abortion.org they have a lot

of great links to support, whether that's funds or how you can get the abortion pill, I recommend to a lot of mutual aid groups that you store that you stock abortion pills, so that you can have them available for your community members. And I think that right now, the focus, the focus, I think, is on for me, of course, combating the fallout of this, but really making sure that folks understand the context. And making it clear to folks that this is just yet another in a long line of horrifying decisions by the Supreme Court, which by the way, is such a totalitarian entity. We don't elect them. They are chosen by people that we barely elect, because our election system is bogus and totally undemocratic. And by the way, democracy is not like the be all end all of how humans can organize. But it's a totally undemocratic institution. And these people just sit there and rot for life in these seats of ultimate power. And to give you another example, recently, there was another decision by the Supreme Court that prisoners could not take their case to the Supreme Court, or in a federal court, even if they had evidence of wrongdoing in their initial state trial. So even if they could prove that they were inappropriately defended, they couldn't have access. And this is the sixth amendment. Again, not saying the Constitution is great, but people say it is. But then the Sixth Amendment guarantees a fair trial, where you have adequate defence, and the Supreme Court just said that was null and void. So the Supreme Court's, you know, on a roll, but it has been for so long, and that's the I think that's the important context that really needs to come forward here. And I think the in terms of community organizing, that's a lot of what we've been doing the past two years is like COVID did a really good job of ripping the sheen, from the American dream from capitalism from all of this, and showing it for what it is. And so I say, let's keep tearing down that facade. Let's make sure that this paint flaking turns into the stripping of this paint, and we just tear this shit down. Roe v Wade being overturned, sucks, but it sucks in a context of an entire empire of suck, like, and I'm not trying to trivialize it or minimize the pain that people are feeling. But I'm saying it's important to contextualize what Roe v Wade did and what it really didn't do, which was a lot. And so and to point out that people have been organizing and will continue to organize around bodily autonomy. And I think this is a great opportunity to continue to push people towards radicalism in the sense that you're not turning towards electoralism. Don't you, the Dems love that this happened by the way, the Democrats love this, because they're really hoping it'll get them votes in November. Don't fall for that shit. They don't care about you. They could have codified Roe v Wade into law anytime in the past 50 years. They chose not to because they want to toy with you. So please don't like move away from electoral politics. And I hope that this can in that context radicalized folks.

Uilliam 24:57

Yeah, that's amazing. And it also makes me thinking about how you said like, the amount of marginalized groups and all that kind of stuff that have been struggling with body autonomy and stuff like that for way longer. And a big one I'm seeing a lot is just yeah, how people of colour and trans people have been struggling with this issue for years. But now because the CIS Het white person is also in trouble now it matters. It's like that whole thing, right of, okay, now it matters because the cis-het- white woman is in trouble. And it's like, of course, it's still it's like, oh, you know, no one should be in trouble. But it also, there is context behind that it's. ,no this has been going on longer and whatnot. And the same problems happening with in places like Florida, with gay and trans people and stuff like that. Now, they're passing a law around gay marriage not being a thing anymore. And how all the gay. the cis gay people are panicking. And then, so many. So many trans people I know are like, Hey, we've been

getting literally crucified by those same people that are now passing this law, and none of you guys cared. And now you guys care. Because you're, it's like, there's just that, you know,

Eleanor 26:17

it's so classic, it's like this is so repetitive. There's that poem, like, they came for the socialists, and I didn't say anything, because I wasn't, it's like, okay, we're just gonna keep doing this matter until it's me or my daughter, or my friend or my, it's like, that's not a way you can structure any kind of community or society. And, yeah, it's, and there was another post that I was just sharing with a friend of mine. And it was a picture of like, of course, like these white couples that say, Don't abort, your baby will adopt it. There are 400,000 children in foster care in the United States. There are oodles of children that you could adopt, but you don't want to, because a lot of them are not white. A lot of them have, you know, past trauma that makes them not fun for you to adopt. It's like, you just you just want to adopt like, Leave It to Beaver. But like that's yes, not. Yeah. And it's also

Uilliam 27:15

now the, for social media, oh, we got to post this, this thing of you know, will adopt your kid, but they actually won't. They just want to look good online.

carla 27:27

And the shit show continues.

Eleanor 27:29

And it totally also diminishes the fact that pregnancy in and of itself is dangerous for a lot of people. So it's like, it's not just that people get abortions, because you're like, I don't want to have a kid. It's like, well, no, there might be a lot of reasons why you don't want to be pregnant at all. And so it completely diminishes that side of things as well.

Uilliam 27:48

Exactly. Yeah.

carla 27:49

Yeah. I really appreciate how you broke that open. And I mean, to me, what the first thing that popped in my head is we, when are folks going to read, and particularly people on the left, and I mean, like the Democratic Left, quote, unquote, are going to see that as long as you're just reaching for rights, it's inherent in rights, that they can that they are something that can be taken away from you. It is based on the idea that something an overlord, it's begins with Empire gives you them, and therefore they can give you about this. It's so different than justice. And this is why, like you touched on why reproductive justice is something that's constantly being happening and will continue to happen. But what I'm seeing is that rights are still the focus. And yeah, I'm wondering if you have anything to say about that kind of dynamic? Because it seems to be connected to American exceptionalism on this idea that well, yeah, and other states. Yeah. Other parts of the world. You know, they need justice, not rights aren't good enough, but we do it well, here. We know how to do it. You know?

Eleanor 28:59

Yeah. Yeah. No, it's a good point, for sure. And I think that language oftentimes just kind of gets dismissed as Oh, that's just a philosophical argument. And I'm like, life is a philosophical argument. So I don't mean, what is your point? But, ya know, I think that's a really important aspect because in the US were raised, focusing on rights, you have the right to the right to bear arms, the right to dit, dit, dit, dit, dit, dit. And it's all focused on this, which is, it's granted to you by the Constitution, which means like, Oh, if the Constitution didn't exist, I guess I wouldn't have the right to whatever. And that so necessarily, like you said, ties it to the state, as if to say that outside of a nation state outside of this, which by definition exists only through violence. Without this, you would not you just be this meaningless blob that wouldn't have the ability or the okay to do anything. And the psychological like the the the psychosis of capitalism is I think something that and imperialism and colonialism is something that gets overlooked so often we can talk about how it oppresses us, in terms of, you know, people's bodies giving out and people not having access to things like health care schools, but the psychological effects of these systems just in the way we talk, I think is so overlooked. And I'm so glad that you brought that up, because rights are just like, I mean, that just the sound of it feels so like, you know, social studies class, I don't know. It feels so structural, you know, and yet justice feels radical, because justice can only exist in radical spaces and with radical ideas. And, of course, that word too gets completely destroyed by our so called justice system and stuff like that. But I think that, you know, in terms of rights, I hear that word, a lot less in radical spaces, which I'm really happy about. But I think that it's really hard to deprogram. And, I mean, I still do it every day. And I think that, you know, I reminded of someone who said that I don't use, I don't use sports terminology, when I talk about this, we do, we cannot win against the forces of capitalism are colonialism, like, there's no like, done and the buzzer goes off, and everyone gets, you know, a Capri Sun and goes home. Like, that's not it's, it is a struggle that will continue. And even when empires fall, it's not like injustices end. Just like we've seen after past revolutions, like the French Revolution, they built something in the same image of what they destroyed, and you're watching it, you know, hundreds of years later, new guys guys. I'm like yelling at my book, I'm like, guys don't don't know. And yeah, they just, you know? it's just like, and it's this human, like, when you're ripped from everything that you've known, I think there's this human need to rebuild something that you feel comfortable with, like putting on an old pair of jeans. And so that's why the build aspect is so important, because we need to have something that we've already started building so that when shit really goes down, and when the Empire Falls, that shit will quake continents, we have to be ready for it, we have to have something built already. And that cannot be based on rights. It cannot be based on a piece of paper that somebody wrote that just gets handed to people. And you know, told to them, this is your life, this is your reality. No, it's got to be about people deciding for themselves. This is what Justice looks like, for us and in our space in our community. And, you know, fuck your federal scale, fuck your nation state, like, this is what works here. And then we're going to network it out to other places, and we're going to connect with folks. But like, you know, I think that that's, I feel like I've gone off on a little tangent here, but it's great. I don't know if I can climb off the soapbox. But yeah, basically, I completely agree with you. And as a word nerd, I love that I'm hearing less of the rights and the, you know, the sort of constitutional Social Studies arguments and more of like the Yeah, but what feels like justice and not just not just sounds like right, but actually feels I think that's an important word, too. It's like, well, that sounds good. But shit, everything can sound good. But like, you know, Hitler's speeches sounded good. But it's like, what feels good. And so like, what feels like justice, what feels like freedom? And I think that is something that I'm hearing more of? And that I'm really excited about?

William 33:57

Yeah, I mean, it's interesting. Thinking about that, like, with rights. You're already given into that stuff, right when you're born, like, I really like, think about that with me, because I got my name and gender legally changed. And the amount of money I had to pay, just so that the government would know I exist as this. And it's like, wow, so you basically have to, you have to pay so that you can be a person in society. And it's just like that is that is and then there's people that yeah, there's so many people that won't recognize you as having that name. And that those pronouns unless you're recognized by society, and it's just like, but then you have to pay all this money and it's like.

Eleanor 34:47

But at the same time, like we're willing to call. We're willing to call the guitarist of U2 the edge. We're willing, we're willing to call Jennifer Lopez JLo. Like you don't think blink an eye about that. But somebody's like, Hey, that's not my name anymore. And you're like, I will not stand for this, what the fuck!

carla 35:09

Yeah, I think at the base of rights. What we're really circling is that brutal ideology which really is at the crux of this, which is individualism or neoliberalism. I think they're entangled. You know, and Silvia Federici writes a lot about the problem with framing by rights, particularly around the idea that usually when you get a right, somebody else is getting kicked off a wrong. Yeah, thank you. There's a very much you know, like, it also builds that dynamic, which is something that I don't see a lot in the dialogue either. I mean, I'm not on social media anymore. So I'm not getting everyone's hot takes but I you know, but what I'm doing is really is going deeper into reading things and, and still not really coming across that very much unless I read, you know, philosophers or political theorist or historians or, you know, people who maybe go a bit deeper in these issues. But um, yeah, I'm wondering if you have any thoughts about that?

Eleanor 36:21

Yeah, no, I It reminds me a bit of a Simone de Beauvoir quote, which I'm not going to attempt to say, because I'll just ruin it. And then I feel like she'll get mad at me from, um, but it's, like, she said that, like, my will to freedom is directly connected to yours and my freedom to basically like, I don't have the freedom to oppress you, that is not a freedom, that is a constriction of the concept of freedom. And so that like defining it in that way, then you understand that like, Okay, well, the right to bear arms is why I'm not going to get into the gun conversation, because I think it's far more complex than just saying take away all guns. Because of course, the cops are not going to give up their guns. But, um, but like, I think that, you know, this concept of rights in a nation state that exists only because of violence will necessarily be defined as who gets them and who doesn't. I mean, when the US was founded 6% of the population to vote and that was white, landowning, aka human owning men. And you know, like, when the nation state of Sweden was founded, the state had to default define who was Swedish. And that necessarily meant that the Sami the Indigenous people, the far north were not. So by creating a nation state and defining your people, you define who aren't your people that is inherently exclusionary, and inherently violent in that exclusion. It's not like you're like, hey, you just chill in your ancestral lands, and we're not going to bother you. It's not that kind of exclusion, it's a violent kind of exclusion. And that

means that the people with the rights are the ones who dictate who gets excluded, who gets wronged, you know, in, in that in that sense, and I think that, unfortunately, I don't hear a lot of people connecting this, like rights conversation to the existence of an empire or even just a nation state. Because I think, unfortunately, people will call it anarchism. You can call it Steve, I don't really care. I like people who are like, Oh, Eleanor, you're an anarchist. I'm like, if that makes it easier for you to say that I am one fine. But I don't call myself that. Because I don't really call myself anything. I'm like, give me a list of shit. That you like you think we need for a better world? And I'll tell you if that is what I am. But so I think a lot of people are still, like tied to this, like socialism concept where it's like, Well, I think we need the state to and I'm like, whatever the end of that sentence is no. Like, whatever you're gonna say, it's just no! the state doesn't like, and it's, it's to me, it's just, it's indicative of how deep that programming is. Because it's it speaks to this idea like, oh, well, we don't we don't want this kind of violence state, but we want a nicer state that will protect those rights. And it's like, Dude, you don't understand. And I think, you know, again, like, there's a good friend of mine who said, You got to, you know, you gotta meet people where they're at. And, you know, as Malcolm X said, There was a time in your life where you didn't know what you know, and there was definitely a time in my life where I thought that the state was good. And that it was just, you know, fucking up a bit on the side. And I think that part of the part of the hard work is connecting with people and asking these difficult questions and going deeper because like you said, carla, like existing on social media, you don't get those deep conversations, which is why the community organising is so important to have these spaces where you can talk to folks about, okay, well, why do we need cops? Why do we need a state? Why do we need any of these entities that were told are necessary? And yeah, I?

Uilliam 40:24

Yeah, I mean, carla always says it's that, uh, trying to Yeah, trying to find ways well, maybe if the state did this, then it would be like, no, just just get rid of the state -- just just no state. Just stop. If we didn't have all of, any of Empire or anything like that, then the idea of rights wouldn't be, it would just be we're just people we are just humans doing human things.

carla 40:52

We wouldn't say, I see that you're bleeding to death? Here's a little bit of bandage. Oh, wait, no, I can't get you the band aid. Let me call the state.

Eleanor 41:03

Wait, do you have the right to health care? I don't know. Did you pay your taxes?

carla 41:07

Yeah. And like, you touched on something really interesting, because I can't remember his name. Anyways, there's, there's a few people who are really researching, like, you know, the Proud Boy movements and all that stuff. And there's one, there's a thing to realise about it that yes, it's very much about white supremacy and whiteness, but really, it's actually about the right to land, and the right to the state and this proudness of like, I think proud boys actually started in Vancouver, if I'm correct. So like, it has this, it's very connected to nationalism. And actually there's members of the proud boys who are non white. And so it, you know, this, like this hold, this colonial hold on our imaginations and our way of being in the world, and it's very Eurocentric about the importance of the nation state and also like, the pitfalls like it's just where, where ideas are swimming and hold on and even on the left,

because historical materialism, which was very relevant in the Eurocentric mind of Marx when they were writing, but it's actually quite racist. And actually not true. When you look at the whole world, it's actually a downfall of Marxism, but Marxist were like, yeah, yeah, yeah. Anyway, socialism, you know, and so, like, I just, you know, not to go after left people. But I had this image when you were saying "no" reading about the French Revolution, I kind of feel that when, you know, the whole notion of left and right. emerged from that moment. And every time I hear that I go, No. It's the left within the compounds of the nation state. And, yeah, so it's, it's just a fucking mess. Yeah. Anyhow, we could go on...

Uilliam 43:03

gonna go on and still have a random conversation. Yeah.

carla 43:07

Yeah. And we're excited to ask your next question, because

Uilliam 43:11

Oh, yeah, this is, since you mentioned stuff around that. This is a part of the show where we asked some questions, we ask all our guests. As a fellow word nerd, we are curious to hear if you have a favourite word these days. Something that captures how you feel or think about things right now or across time, it can also be a phrase or mantra too... anything that you think

Eleanor 43:33

of. Okay, so I loved when I read this question. I actually, I mean, I heard it, but when I saw that, you guys were y'all were still doing it. So yes, I love words, and I hate words as well. But something that has been dawning on me recently, not only because I'm having a hard time keeping my Swedish my English straight, but also because I have a six month old Wait, well, almost seven month, seven months. So he obviously doesn't have language yet. And I remember going on a walk with a friend of mine in DC. And she's also a word nerd, and like, kind of a philosophy nerd like I am. And she was like, yeah, just imagine how much more open his world is than ours. And I was like, Oh my God, that's such a good point. And so I started thinking about the restrictions and there's actually some some cool books that will highlight words that exist in other languages. So, you know, like, there's, like, there's a word in Swedish that means like, when you first wake up in the morning, and you're not ready to get out of bed, but you kind of just like lay there and you feel cozy, you know, and moreolessah, but there isn't a word for that in English. And so I'm like, why do people not do that? Like an English? Like, I mean, I know you do, but it's like, that was one of my favorite things. Like I would wake up and then my grandmother would pass My room or something, and you'd be like, Oh, okay, just, you know, lay there and mornaleta and I'd be like, Okay. And I wouldn't get out of bed because I'm like, Well, I'm I'm morning or whatever, however you'd say that in English. So like the concept of what gets lost, not just in translation, but ascribing language in and of itself, got me thinking about, like, defining things. And so I went on to a bit of a rabbit hole. And so I found that the word define actually comes, it goes all the way back to Latin. The word to mark the limits of which

carla 45:37

Oh, my God, I know. Right? And it's true. Right? Yeah. And then dictionaries. Yeah.

Eleanor 45:42

And so I was like, fuck. That's it. I mean, obviously, what we just talked about with rights is so indicative of this and are in just like the concept of left and right, and it's like we are caged by our adherence and our need to use language and whatever language we speak. And yet, you know, I look at my kid, and he's like, not restricted by it at all. And I'm almost like, I was sitting there the other day, and I'm like, maybe I just couldn't teach you the language. Which, of course, I'm not going to do like, he'll pick it up, because kids pick up all of that. But it's like, Ah, yes. Imagine like, how, how can we keep the world so beautifully open the way it is, when we're first born into it. And at the same time, of course, have language so we can communicate, but not get caged by these words, and like literally the definitions that exist to place limits on the words and therefore the people who use them? Like? I don't know, I don't that is, that is a question for the world. I have no idea. But it totally got me thinking about that. And so I guess the the word that I, that I'm stuck on at the moment, and not in a good way is the word define because of the limitations and the limitations.

Uilliam 47:02

oh that's really cool

carla 47:04

Well, thank you for that. I love learning new things about words, I was just talking to my other son about the roots of enthusiasm, and I was like, just like, possessed by God, it's just really interesting. When you think about in the context, or you know, out of your mind, or whatever it doesn't, it has like this bizarre

Uilliam 47:26

This is can easily fall back into empire and control. And yeah, can just, just whiteness and all of that kind of just English language in general about how the English language is just, it's, it's kind of been created in this way of control.

carla 47:40

It's, yeah, it's a colonial language.

Uilliam 47:44

It is such a small language, there's no depth to it, unless you really dig and then when you start digging, you start it's like it is turning into Latin and another languages.

Eleanor 47:56

Totally. I was corresponding with a member of the Wiyot tribe up in northern, so called California and she was telling me some of the names for things. And it's just remarkable how vibrant languages are that are not steeped in nation states and not steeped in colonialism. And I'm also I'm not trying to do the, you know, like Indigenous peoples never had any issues and never had any strife. And I'm not trying to like romanticize it, like a lot of white people do. But just saying that, like, languages that are steeped in ecosystems, and they're steeped in kind of reverence and an acceptance and like a a commonality with the places that you live. I feel like there's so much more vibrant. Like we literally like call anything that's not like a human or like a pet it you know, like, thing, that thing over there. And it's like, a fucking mountain. That's like, several ecosystems it No, yeah, like you're in it. Yeah, that

Uilliam 49:01

actually is one of my, that actually is one of my pronouns. Yeah. Yeah. Literally, just to just to go against that one of my pronouns, is he, he it? Just because I'm like,

Eleanor 49:13

fuck yeah

carla 49:14

it's so true. I was talking to my friend in Japan. And when you have a language of relationship with the water, with the tree with the bug with the fungi, then you're less likely to extract from it and harm it. So yeah, it's a lot of these languages, more modern languages that come out of that family tree of Germanic or Latin or Greek are very colonial and very, it's where, you know, it's where we can find a lot of the roots of whiteness, and like your word define I love that it's so good. Yeah, so we're gonna move into... So speaking of words, I like to build new words. Like, because to push back so I was thinking a lot of Thriistance, the ability to thrive while while resisting our whole platform is based on this idea of thriving amid and through the horrors that we're collectively facing, and globally experiencing. So we like to hold up and hear stories of thriving in the every day and we're curious how you cultivate that and experience thriving?

Eleanor 50:24

Hmm. Yeah, that's a it's a tough question because I feel like I still struggle with that. And I struggle with I struggle with some guilt around thriving. And I think part of that, I like to think that I've, I've gotten rid of a lot of white guilt, because I was schooled by a lot of non white organizers that were that were kind enough to hold my hand on this, but that like white guilt is fucking dumb, pointless, and it doesn't help anyone. But that I think I have a guilt in terms of finding joy, when I know that so many others can't, they don't have access to it, which again, doesn't help. But it's very hard. I think particularly like for empaths in any situation, to have this sort of, like, really deep joy. Because I still feel a bit fettered by you know, it's kind of like the, like the metaphor that are like the, the old storyline, like you, you're having a great day, and then, you know, you walk by like a wounded kitten or something, it's like, well, that's gonna ruin your fucking night. And it's like, well, but if you just know that the world is filled with wounded kittens, visa vie, like US Empire, or, you know, ecocide or whatever it's like, it's hard to just throw that off. And I think, instead of, instead of trying to do that, which feels very, like Instagrammy instead of trying to do that, doing kind of like what I, you know, what I talked about earlier, which is, you know, what your work, Carla helped me recognize that, like, it doesn't have to be like, Okay, now I'm just joyful. And now I'm just despairing. And now I'm just like, I that is just, I mean, sometimes I am just dispairing, but like, I think acknowledging the fact that these, like the thriving comes, like Thrivistance, like it comes along with all of these things. And it's kind of like I don't, I don't identify just as a journalist, I don't identify just as a mom, I don't identify like, I am all of these things. And so therefore, in the depths of the shittiness, of empire, and the shittiness, of climate chaos, and all of that I am like finding pockets of thriving, whether that be like watching my kid, like see a birch tree for the first time, which he just loves, I can recommend birch trees to all parents of infants, wow. Like the rustling leaves, holy shit, you could like go and take an hour nap, and you come back out, and they'd still be like, so I can definitely recommend that. But pockets of thriving that have to do with the concept of like that building, what you want to see whether

that means spending time with a kid or whether that means, you know, spending time, you know, learning how to do some kind of, you know, like community gardening or, you know, political education, hearing from people about their stories, their experiences. I think that that, to me is the kind of thriving that happens alongside despair and recognizing that it doesn't need to be the Instagram. Oh my gosh, I'm so happy right now. Because that's just creepy. That's like Stepford wife type shit. And I want nothing to do with that.

Uilliam 54:12

Yep, totally. Agree. I'm like, we're having this like, look at each other. I didn't have anything to say. So I was like, Yeah,

carla 54:21

birch tree! Yay. I want to come play with you and birch trees. Yeah, it's true. I also have, you know, learnt from very generously from folks who are non white, about these ideas too about you know, people you know, and dystopics times for different groupings of people whether it's slavery during ongoing but original colonization of the Americas like, you know, those those folks found time to thrive with each other and it's really comes down to that like relationship piece. And including relationships with other than humans and fungi and plants and trees. So I'm glad you brought in trees because it's so true.

Eleanor 55:09

Yeah, I mean, the advent of rock and roll came from the confluence of both slavery and Indigenous genocide, like rock and roll was born from both Indigenous music and, you know, songs that slaves would sing. And so, I mean, that there's I think there's possibly no no more prime example of the joy that is created through horror, and the human ability to cultivate that thriving in the worst situations and how art also plays a huge role in that.

Uilliam 55:46

Yeah, I mean, yeah, I always think about art. And creating has been the thing since the dawn of humans, you know, the cave art, all that kind of stuff that's always in they were really struggling because that the old you know, having to survive against nature, and all these things didn't have a sweet little like home like this to live in. But then they were still, you know, drawing and probably made music and all you know, and that kind of stuff is just really brings people together. And it's really amazing. And, you know, that kind of thing of everyone can do art of some kind. Even if you're like, Oh, I'm not talented, it does not matter. If it brings you joy, and uh, you know, brings people together, then that's amazing, you know? Yeah, definitely. Recommendation.

carla 56:39

Fun times. Yeah. I know, this is a huge question for you

Uilliam 56:45

Yeah. What books podcast shows any media? Really? Would you recommend for youth or any of our listeners to check out? Or perhaps speak to ones that inspire or inspired you feel free to name a few?

Eleanor 57:01

Yeah, this question, whenever I'm asked, I'm like, Oh, God, how much time do you have?

carla 57:05

I mean, you could tie it to the show themes if you want it, that helps. I'm just curious what you're reading now I miss your show. Because your solo show, Act Out used to like, go Yeah, dive into a book you're reading,

Eleanor 57:19

I miss it too. Well, right now I'm reading a book called Sentient, which is really beautiful. It's about, it's about animals. And, and it is written by, like an expert in the animal kingdom, and, and talking about, like, how their senses and we have way more than five, by the way. Like a lot of scientists now are saying that we have like upwards of 20. And we're like, why are we still talking about five senses, that's fucking dumb. And, and it's a really beautiful book that connects the senses of the extremely, like acute senses have certain animals to ours, you know, like the ability of like deep sea fish to see like, two miles under the water with barely any photons get to them. And yet we have the ability to see and like pitch blackness, but we just never use it because we're, you know, we're lightened areas. And yet, if you were to go into a pitch black room, and you gave yourself some time, like the your natural abilities to see in the dark, would eventually like start to come out. And so that's a beautiful book. I'm also reading a book called hiking with Nietzsche. Because as I tell lee Nietzsche is my boyfriend. And he has to be okay with that. But yeah, so it's a really cool book about a guy who goes and like hikes the same route that Nietzsche hiked when he was writing Zarathustra, when he was 19. And then goes back once he has a kid when he's like in his 30s, and kind of like compares and contrasts like this journey through Nietzsche at different points in his life, which I think is really cool, because I started reading Nietzsche when I was 15. And what he meant to me then, is different, but no less profound than what he means to me now. And I think there's there's also something beautiful in that, like the books and the art. That means something to us at different points in our life, and can mean something different, but is no less deep and profound. And I think that also speaks to the, you know, the idea that like, I remember when I first started reading Nietzsche, one of my teachers was like, oh, Nietzsche, you'll grow out of that. And here I am. 35 And I'm like, nope, not grown out of it. Um, and of course, that just speaks to the concept that like you could grow out of, I guess, like thinking deeply and profoundly and emotionally about things like, no, I'm sorry, I don't want to get less emotional and hardened and bitter as I get older, I'd like to do the opposite. I'd like to allow myself to feel more of the things. But again, so goes the programming. So, I mean, I would recommend Nietzsche and I would also recommend that people not get stuck in the certainly not the fascist analysis of Nietzsche, which is really thanks to his sister who was a fucking Nazi. But the sort of like any sort of like statist or toxic hypermasculine analysis of Nietzsche is just people who don't understand Nietzsche. And so I would recommend Nietzsche to folks with that understanding. And, I mean, I would recommend things that carla has written because they're fucking awesome. And I know that. I mean, you were Nick wrote joyful militancy. But like that book was, I know, particularly movement spaces, I can say that I know that there was somebody 200 feet up in a tree that was reading that book, and was very moved by it. So I think for folks in movement spaces, that is a powerful book. In terms of art, I would just, I mean, this sounds like a cop out answer. But as somebody who worked in the music industry for 11 years, just all of the things and never the things that fucking Spotify suggests, or that Instagram suggests, or Tik Tok, or whatever people, I'm, I don't know the names of the new, like, I'm so out of the loop on like, the new fucking social media, but like, whatever is hip, but I don't know, whatever the

Kardashians are using right now. Um, but yeah, fine shit that makes you stop thinking. And I say that as somebody who loves to think. But I think one of the most beautiful things about art and about music is that it lifts you up out of yourself. You're not weighed down by your analytical mind, just for like a minute, like our however long that song lasts, or however long that poem lasts, or however long you stare at that painting, or that beautiful dance or whatever, you are lifted up out of yourself. And there's something just raw and human and fucking beautiful about it. And there needs to be more of that. It doesn't need to be something you can hum, it doesn't need to be something that's cool. It just just like anything that makes you feel that you can't think it's like being in love like this, just something that makes you feel like I am so not capable of stringing two words together, right. And that's what we need more of that. People need to feel that deeply. And I think what's beautiful about art is that it makes people feel that deeply and it allows us then to build our capacity for empathy, and build our capacity for building that world that we want to see. And so it sounds like a cop out but it's not. Because it's really just any of the things so yeah, and I would start saying books but then I'd be here all night and I just like it's

carla 1:03:14

Oh, well people go listen to the back episodes on Eleanor's website: Act Out because there's lots of books talk. Yeah. And Nietzsche yeah.

Uilliam 1:03:28

both those books sounded really cool. Yeah. When I heard I was like, oh, I want to read that --sounded really cool.

Eleanor 1:03:35

It's so good. There's another one that I was reading called what I learned from trees which is Yeah, woman you Yeah, the woman who basically like discovered in the more in the, like, scientific sense discovered that trees talk to each other and Indigenous cultures were like, again, oh, shit. But like basically found that like, there's these vast underground networks of communication. Yeah. Which is a little bit like what Kropotkin had found in terms of like mutualistic. Mutualism being in nature and yeah,

Uilliam 1:04:07

yeah, well that's really cool. Yeah, that makes me think we're watching prehistoric Earth or prehistoric planet or something like that. That's another David Attenborough documentary about dinosaurs now and that era. There is in it, they're really cool. They're like some kind of fish with a thing in the water that had luminescent lights on them. And through those patterns is how because there's like giant swarms of them, but through the pattern is how they connect to each other because anytime you see that you're like, how can you tell which one is which? But that's just you know, but that's our human lens. I'm like, what, but they have this different, completely different type of connection and that that's so cool to me.

carla 1:04:58

I'm also frustrated watching this show, and this is all nature shows, and I think your books, this book sounds good. I want to redo all the nature shows through a Kropotkin lens. Because we really do put there's no way that the dinosaurs outside of predatory dinosaurs, there's no way they existed without immense mutual aid. Because they lasted what a billion. I mean, they lasted so long. Like there's no way

Eleanor 1:05:22

yeah hundreds of millions of years. Yeah, exactly. There was yeah, there was one were, but he

carla 1:05:26

doesn't there's no mutual aid and the episode, it's all it's all competitive. And and it's interesting, like, I mean, go back and watch all

Uilliam 1:05:33

the shows. It's true. Like there are a lot of birds that are competitive.

carla 1:05:36

But there's also more mutual aid.

Uilliam 1:05:38

Yeah, well, I mean, that's the thing, right? Is like there was one where they were stealing from the other ones nest speculation, right and make it and it was just speculation to try to make which nests can look at and we're just like, No, that was probably they were probably helping each other.

carla 1:05:53

Well, it seems like a human.

Uilliam 1:05:55

A human idea of what animals

carla 1:05:58

and that's not even like what humans do., anyway

Eleanor 1:06:01

It's like, there was a comedian who said that. He was like, I have kids? And did your parents ever come over and then try to justify how they raised you and be like, Well, I used to do this to you when you were a kid, and you turned out fine. And he's like, I did not turn out fine. Like, I feel like we do that with nature, like we only ever, like will show like the fucking lion and the Gazelle 18 billion times. And we're basically just desperately trying to justify how we structure our societies like, look, we can't help it. We're just the lion. And you guys, all of you who are not part of the ruling class or the gazelle. And that's just how it is. I'm sorry. That's just nature. Yeah.

carla 1:06:40

Imagine though, if the show was actually through the lens of Kropotkin. And the true Darwin, like, how I would end some of this stuff. I mean, I'm gonna make that show. Fuck it. I am so angry.

Uilliam 1:06:42

Yeah. Yeah. Anyway, if we get the last question over with and you guys can actually,

carla 1:06:58

well, Elena has to go to bed. She's in Sweden.. I also wanted to say I look forward to as your child grows, and, you know, he starts bringing up Nietzsche at dinner. Because like, my kids do it all the time. And because there's just not a topic where Nietzsche's not relevant. Like, whether it's a quote, or whatever, you know, well, Nietzsche said. Or this reminds me of...

Eleanor 1:07:25

I can't wait to he gets to the age where he's like, yeah, so I recall that you were saying something about chores. And I just like to refer you to Nietzsche. And I'd be like, Oh, okay, well, you will win this round. Well played.

carla 1:07:40

Oh, my gosh. Well, this has been amazing. Is there anything else you like you feel you want to say or clarify. And then, let our listeners know where they can find you on the internets. So we'll have all everything else in the show notes.

Eleanor 1:07:55

I mean, as per always, I mean, there's, I feel like I could sit here and talk for ever. But yes, folks can find more of what I do over at artkillingapathy.com. All of my work is over there. I'm at radicalEleanor on Twitter and on Instagram, although I'm trying to boost less on those because Yeah, real life is greater than digital space. But, but yeah, and I would also suggest that people check out Lee camp.net. That's, that'll redirect you to his locals page, which is basically like a censorship free space. Unlike YouTube, and Facebook, that's basically owned by the US government. And he's been, you know, forced to go to these places. And that's where he's trying to build up his new, his new work. So I'd recommend that people check that out as well. And that's, we also post our common censored episode there.

carla 1:09:00

Yeah, and it's often live streamed. So it's really, really fun. Because yous and Lee's dynamic and the way that you weave stories and tell speak truth to power is really engaging and fun and, you know, devastating at times, but it's just a really, it's worth it's worth a watch and or listen. Yeah, well, thanks so much for being here

Eleanor 1:09:24

thanks for having me y'all. Yeah, that was awesome. That was a great conversation. And we'll

Uilliam 1:09:30

Hopefully, have you on again.

carla 1:09:31

Definitely will have you on again.

Eleanor 1:09:34

Yeah, thanks so much.

Rooftop Revolutionaries 1:09:35

song, Floodlight

Uilliam 1:13:23

Thanks for listening to our show. Grounded Futures is a media production and mentorship collaborative. And this podcast is produced by carla bergman, Uilliam Joy, Jamie-Leigh Gonzales and Melissa Roach and our sound tech is by Chris Bergman.

carla 1:13:38

Resources and transcripts for this episode are in the show notes. If you want to donate some funds or check out our other awesome shows, head over to groundedfutures.com or email us with comments and suggestions at groundedfutures@gmail.com And please tune in next time to hear more from our incredible guests on how to thrive in the everyday.

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