



# Volume 3, Issue 4

# November, 2021



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## ABOUT TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE JOURNAL

The *Transformative Justice Journal (TJJ)*, founded in 2012, is an online, open-source, peer-reviewed scholar-activist, anti-authoritarian, subversive, and critical penal abolition journal dedicated to promoting transformative justice. TJJ is organized and edited by a radical critical grass-roots collective of activist-scholars, community organizers, and current and former prisoners from around the world. TJJ was influenced out of conversations at the International Conference on Penal Abolition ICOPA in 2010. As a scholar-activist journal, TJJ was developed out of scholarly and community dialogues around promoting a decolonizing and anarchist criminology social justice penal abolition community-based alternatives to both the retributive, punitive, and utilitarian justice models used by most colonial criminal justice systems, which victimize offenders and re-victimize survivors of offenses, while promoting profits over people and corporate interests over community interests. The current punitive criminal justice system takes control, responsibility, healing, and accountability away from victims and offenders and instead gives them a powerless and victimizing experience. Transformative justice, a decolonizing and anti-oppression approach, however, views conflict not from the lens of the criminal justice system, but from the community; as such, those involved in the conflict are seen as individuals rather than victims or offenders. Moreover, transformative justice works to dismantle oppression by systems of domination, such as racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, elitism, statism, classism, transphobia, ecocide, speciesism, and ableism within all domestic, interpersonal, global, and community conflicts that foster theories such as, but not limited to eugenics, capitalism, and colonialism. In short, transformative justice is restorative justice plus social justice. Transformative justice expands the social justice model, which challenges and identifies injustices, in order to create organized processes of addressing and ending those injustices and providing space and place for marginalized voices. Transformative justice also builds off the principles of, anarchism, decolonizing, prison abolition, healing justice, Quakerism, liberation, revolutionary social justice resistance movements, First Nations in Canada, and restorative justice in order to dismantle oppression, repression, suppression, and domination.

## LOCATION

The Transformative Justice Journal is located in the Department of Criminal Justice at Salt Lake Community College.

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Siena College
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### **SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

Please read these guidelines and then send your article, essay, review, research notes, interviews, reflections, poems, art, event summary, etc. to: [transformativejusticejournal@gmail.com](mailto:transformativejusticejournal@gmail.com)

#### **Value and Uniqueness of TJJ**

- The Transformative Justice Journal was influenced in 2010 by discussions at the International Conference on Penal Abolition (ICOPA).
- The *Transformative Justice Journal* publishes rigorously peer-reviewed scholar-activist work of the highest quality.
- The *Transformative Justice Journal* provides the utmost respect and care during the review process.
- The *Transformative Justice Journal* is a free-to-access electronic journal.
- The *Transformative Justice Journal* charges no fees for publication.
- The *Transformative Justice Journal* supports and encourages submissions that are excluded from mainstream journals, such as, but not limited to use photographic, video, MP3, art, poems, raps, and new media work.
- The *Transformative Justice Journal* is organized and edited by a radical critical grass-roots collective of activist-scholars, community organizers, and current and former prisoners from around the world.

## We Seek

- **Incarcerated writings and art** – of any length
- **Research articles and essays** – 2,000 to 10,000 words
- **Student final papers** – no more than 10,000 words
- **Course/class summaries** – no more than 2,000 words
- **Research notes** – no more than 2,000 words
- **Commentary** – no more than 2,000 words
- **Tactic and strategy analysis** – no more than 10,000 words
- **Academic development** – no more than 10,000 words
- **Lecture/presentation summaries** – no more than 2,000 words
- **Conference/panel summaries** – no more than 2,000 words
- **Events/protests/resistances summaries** – no more than 2,000 words
- **Action alert summaries** – no more than 2,000 words
- **Film, book, art, and media reviews** – no more than 3,000 words
- **Interviews and dialogues** – between 1,000 to 10,000 words
- **Poems and rap** – no more than 10,000 words

## Style

- All submissions should have appropriate references and citations. Manuscripts should be single line spacing, 12-point font and conform to the [American Psychological Association](#) (APA) style format.
- Submissions must be sent in Microsoft Word format. Submissions in other software formats will not be reviewed.
- Authors should remove all self-identification from their submissions, but all submissions must be accompanied by a title page with author(s) name and affiliation, name of type of submission (e.g., article, review, conference summary, etc.), contact information including e-mail, postal address, and phone number.
- Authors must include an abstract of no more than 150 words that briefly describes the manuscript's contents.

## Review Process

- Upon acceptance for review, the Transformative Justice Journal editors will send manuscripts, under a double-peer reviewed process, to no less than two, and generally three reviewers. Reviewers provide their recommendations to the editor, who makes the final decision to accept the manuscript.
- The Transformative Justice Journal holds to the utmost respect, love, and care when reviewing manuscripts. Each review we assure is constructive, positive, and hopefully useful to the author. We strongly welcome first time authors, students, nontraditional students, activists, youth, community organizers, prisoners, politicians, and teachers.

## Submissions will be assigned to one of the four following categories:

1. Accept without revisions
  2. Accept with editorial revisions
  3. Revise and resubmit for peer review
  4. Reject
- Every effort will be made to inform authors of the editor's decision within 100 days of receipt of a manuscript. Authors, whose manuscripts are accepted for publication, will be asked to submit a brief biography that includes their institutional or organizational affiliations and their research interests. The

Transformative Justice Journal only publishes original materials. Please do not submit manuscripts that are under review or previously published elsewhere.

### **Copyright, Republishing, and Royalties**

- All Work published by the Journal is copyrighted by the Transformative Justice Journal.
- Replication of Contributor's Submitted Work may be assessed a reasonable fee for the administration and facilitation to other presses. Such fee shall be determined at the discretion of the Transformative Justice Journal.
- Royalties: Contributor agrees and acknowledges that no royalty, payment, or other compensation will be provided by the Transformative Justice Journal in exchange for or resulting from the publication of the Submitted Work.

### **Publication Dates**

- TJJ uses a rolling submission process, allowing authors to submit at any time during the year without time restraints or quota of articles in an issue. Rolling submission, the most current scholarly method of accepting publications, allows for more timely publications and current scholarship to enter the public sphere in a more timely fashion, rather than conforming to traditional academic print journal guidelines.
- We are pleased to accept your submissions at any time and will move quickly through the review process to ensure timeliness.
- For submission, please submit to: [transformativejusticejournal@gmail.com](mailto:transformativejusticejournal@gmail.com)



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### **Interview with Maurece Graham**

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Four Keywords: Russell Maroon Shoatz; Political Prisoner; Black Liberation; Maroon History

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### **Interview with Maurece Graham**

Lucas Alan Dietsche

Lucas Alan Dietsche: Please talk a bit about yourself, nothing has to do with anything about the reason you are incarcerated. This is your place.

Maurece Graham: I see myself as trying to be a transformative presence in whatever situation I encounter. That means I take a critical eye and look at history, movements, relationships (in)justice, faiths, and life, and I try to push at the flaws that conceal the diamonds beneath these interactions. I also don't mind transgressing traditional taboos in regard to how I participate in the world. If I see a Wiccan practice, or a Zen one, a particular quote from the bible or Quran, something from the Upanishads, and it catches my eye or sparks my imagination I go with it. I wouldn't see myself as religious, agnostic or atheist, simply as a person who believes each individual can shape the lump of reality they've been inculcated in according to their context and their vision Family, community, solidarity, love, compassion, energy, these things are my biggest driving forces, and I strive to educate myself as good as possible because I see education as a tool in working with these driving forces to optimize outcomes.

LAD: How has COVID changed your vocation/institution/and personal life?

MG: Covid has severed many ties with institutional program interactions, especially things like writing workshops, Alternatives to Violence workshops, and other opportunities provide by volunteers from the



community. It has also limited the ability to pursue legal issues as the law library has been closed the entire time. Exercise has also been very limited as well.

LAD: What advice would you give to incarcerated or formerly incarcerated persons during this time during covid?

MG: Advice I would give is to be cautious, clean, and creative. Journal your experiences. Exercise in your cell. Take your health seriously because no one will bat an eye if you get severely ill or die. People who disbelieve in covid won't believe it even if you collapse in front of them, and people who never cared about your health needs in the first place won't suddenly gain compassion or resources to deal with you, so caretake yourself. Also, read!!

LAD: What hobbies, books, and writing keep you occupied?

MG: During covid I've limited myself to three studies: Chemistry, Finance, and the creation process of the Independent Film. Writing mostly focused on analysis of Candace Owen's book "Blackout" as well as conversations with small town newspaper editors about what the "Race Card" is, and finally, I've been working on a YA sci-fi novel with the help of an author who has mentoring me in this effort. Most of the reading material I've engaged with has been in furtherance of my studies, with the exception of a couple of books about Black in Rembrandt's time.

LAD: How can poetry and writing change the world?

MG: When I first came to prison, I was twenty years old with a nearly fifty year sentence. I recognized that my ability to have a career was limited in most every area except for writing. I had the freedom to write, and so I committed myself to overcoming my ostracism through the written word. I had to learn in order to enrich my writing, whether I was writing salacious stories to sell with the prison, love letters to people's girlfriends, legal letters to people's attorneys and other prison-specific things, or whether writing essays about politics and race, college reports, newspaper articles, short stories and poems, and novels for any writing I did I had to learn. So writing drove my reading and studies, and helped me develop myself in a circumstance in which I was otherwise retarded. Tupac lyrics helped me see that life wasn't always cut and dry, that things could be both bitter and sweet at the same time, and that hardening oneself against life's onslaughts wasn't necessarily anathema to embracing intellectualism and personal growth. In the same way that this artist ensured himself an ethereal life through poetry and writing I believe that people in general can defy whatever catacombs life has encapsulated them inside through working creatively with the word.



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### Interview with Dr. Meghan Krausch

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### Interview with Dr. Meghan Krausch

Lucas Alan Dietsche

Lucas Alan Dietsche: Please talk about school, groups, locality, future goals, and background to activism in the Detroit area?

Meg Krausch” I am currently involved as an organizer and active participant in a few different groups in Detroit. I am part of the comrades or allies circle of Movimiento Cosecha Detroit, a movement led by working class and undocumented migrants struggling for dignity, permanent protection, and respect. Currently in Michigan we are working on a multi-year fight for access to driver’s licenses, something that directly affects thousands of people on a daily basis and separates families as they are ripped out of their homes and communities after being stopped by the police. This fall, I am also facilitating a bilingual study group on abolition affiliated with Study and Struggle, which I see as deepening the conversation for myself and those in the group around the connection between abolition, borders and immigration, and different racial and intersectional identities. I also have a longtime commitment to the anti-imperialism work of the Witness for Peace Solidarity Collective and its partner movements in Latin America, especially those in Honduras with whom I have worked closely at times. I’m really passionate about this work, and about our responsibility as people in and from the United States to understand the utterly destructive role our nation has and to fight this empire from within. These are two key projects, and I also make and save time to show up for other peoples’ projects and events. Really, I see all the movement work I do as interconnected and based in a common vision of what human liberation looks like and a constantly evolving analysis of intersectional oppression.

LAD: Since COVID has killed, sickened, making life in an imperialist state even more oppressed, how has COVID affected your life, your vocation, activism, and what steps can transformative activists and abolitionists take, to learn locally and nationally?

MK: I have been very very lucky personally so far with COVID but of course it has changed my life. My entire view of the future is different, including my vision for my career. I am not sure I'm in a good position to say what other abolitionists should do, but what I have tried to do in response to COVID is to double down on figuring out and building systems of care in the most literal and physical way possible within my network, community, and city. Abolitionists have been the ones saying for a long time that we are the ones who keep us safe, and that it won't be the state, and COVID has shown us that in another horrific way. For me, adding a COVID analysis has forced me to really confront what a healthy, sustainable community looks like, and that includes having local access to healthy food, medicines, and networks of support, ideally unmediated by capitalism. I believe creating these for each other are all part of the "presence" aspect of abolition. Even personally, I am further from having these things than I thought and have been focusing dually on strengthening my own sustainable network and strengthening the larger networks around me. Another one of the projects I participate in is a once-a-week mutual aid food delivery.

LAD: What new outlets, goals, and paradigms have changed during COVID and the rebellions against police murder?

MK: It has been amazing to see how the conversations about abolition have flourished and become more mainstream. Four years ago, I published something and identified myself as an abolitionist. I was asked to clarify the term because the editor thought that the only frame of reference people would have been the nineteenth century. Fast forward to this month when my dad is telling *me* that his town definitely does not need that many cops and complaining about how much of the budget they take up. This is a direct result of the rebellions last summer. Of course, there was a backlash, of course the Democratic party fought it and tried to make "defund" a confusing word. But divest/invest and defund are fairly clear concepts and goals on which the movement is making progress.

Personally, as part of this conversation, my own understanding of and commitment to abolition has grown. I was already doing abolitionist organizing and already clear about a lot of things, but all of the debate and conversation introduced me to a bunch of new theorists and organizers on a national level. I am not sure when I started following Mariame Kaba on Twitter (@prisonculture) but I am regularly grateful for the insight and just plain groundedness she brings to this work. I also listen regularly to Kelly Hayes' podcast Movement Memos, and How To Survive the End of the World with Autumn Brown and Adrienne Maree Brown, and really respect the work that Garrett Ferber and Stevie Wilson are doing with Study and Struggle as well.

LAD: With reactionary backlash taking place against Critical Race Theory can you describe as a sociologist and/or activist, why is there such an attack on CRT?

MK: I mean, I think there are a lot of explanations for this, and people much more qualified than me have given them! Here's a good one from David Theo Goldberg: <https://bostonreview.net/race-politics/david-theo-goldberg-war-critical-race-theory>

LAD: What books, research, and other resources have you been interested in towards transformative justice? What are other related topics would you like to share?

MK: I have been reading the book *Beyond Survival*, edited by Ejeris Dixon and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, with a small discussion group and I strongly recommend this! The book is wonderful, and many

of the chapters are extremely short and practical. It answers so many of the questions I've had over the last 20 years since I was first introduced to transformative justice and the concept of not calling the cops in a community center, and I wish I had had it (or gone to look for it!!!) much sooner. I'm very thankful for the work these authors have put in. But I'm really glad that I'm reading it and discussing it now.



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### **Interview with Jeffery Young**

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### **Interview with Jeffery Young**

Lucas Alan Dietsche

Trevor Brown: I have been incarcerated since 2002, shortly after I graduated from Grambling State University on historically Black university. I've spent my time in prison studying, facilitating classes such as Restorative Justice, Exercising, and writing-journalistic writing as well as fiction, poetry, and memoir. My studying includes real estate, stock market, neurology, Islam, Buddhism, criminology, and evolution. My current work assignment in prison is as an editor for the prison mirror, the newspaper for Stillwater prison.

Since the pandemic, our workdays have been cut from 5 to 2 and we are no longer allowed access to other prisoners in different ways, but the main one is it has disrupted opportunities for gym and outdoor rec time and programming. The main class that helped me sane is Minnesota Prison writing workshop. Local writers and professors from prison would come in and teach writing or participate alongside us prisoners in monthly poetry jam sessions. It is one of the few moments in prison that people who are not prisoners honor and affirm my humanity.

My advice to other incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people during the pandemic is to mask-up and vaccine-up if the option is available. Develop a cell work-out plan, read and share your books with fellow prisoners, and use the down time to play your future and the person you want to be.

I'm occupying my time writing memoirs and essays about family and class and poems and prison, race, or other social issues. I've recently read "Investing in real estate with no money down" by Brandon turner, "The master plan" by Chris Wilson, a former prisoner on a life bid who taught himself law, won his appeal,

and now runs his own business, “Post-colonial love poems” by Natalie Diaz, and “We do this ‘till we free us” by Mariame Kaba, a prison abolitionist.

Poetry and writing can change the world because the process of creating changes the perspective of the writer. It makes their view clear and more enlightened. Change your perception of the world, and the world changes. Writing also has the power of a match or candle flame. A candle can light millions of other candles. A match can set millions of acres of land ablaze. Writing for prisoners is one of the most efficient ways to illuminate many minds at once with ideas. Ideas that form a legacy, a new legacy that can outside only negative story of one’s past.



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### **A Prison Ballgame**

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### **A Prison Ballgame**

Jeffery Young

“A prison ball game”  
Turkey vulture’s chandelier  
The prison yard.  
A pitch of hope arches  
Towards sun faceted sky.  
Life’s gravity leads to its decline  
Half revolutions spit softballs into razor wire guarding  
The blue tapestry. We unravel  
And watch the last home run.

A slide, sandstorm, sand-burn, sand  
Between the toes. On the diamond  
Grounds, prison souls  
Are free as the feathered ones  
Who scop for prey. An ar-`15

Perched on an American flag  
Tattooed-forearm of a guard

Makes revolutions ‘round  
The edge of our world.

Patiently awaiting an opportunity to buzzard-food  
The men below.





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### **A Taste of Power**

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Four Keywords: Russell Maroon Shoatz; Political Prisoner; Black Liberation; Maroon History

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### **A Taste of Power**

Maurece Graham

First priority-  
Unravel the words that feed me:  
Breath. Expectations. Work. Worth.  
Vang-jangling.  
Hiccup and spit in appropriate places  
And  
Never frown at adults.  
Always smile if unsure.  
Take care of those smaller than you  
Listen when....well, listen  
To the jawless cat-calls and lipless dog-whistles,  
To the ogled eyes and  
Swimming-squid noses navigating cloud-currents,  
Dipping in wistful curtsies between whispered  
Disbeliefs,  
Herding avian and each timed flick  
Illegal aliens between each timed snicker.  
Thank heaven for seven-eleven  
Thank hell for sixteen-nineteen

Know what I mean?  
     I always did take out the trash on time  
         Mind my baby-sister  
             Be minded by my oldest brother  
 Study, hit the high notes in the right places  
     Put the decimals in the same  
     Pay attention to accent when enunciating  
         Pray when accidents were eminent  
 Right before games  
     Besides graves  
     Bedsides  
         Over patients,  
 Hands squeezed tight  
     Eyes, too,  
         Brow knitting,  
             Curls,  
 Opinions-  
 Know what I mean?  
     Speak softly while the music plays  
         Stay quiet when it ain't  
 Put a Corcoran in it  
     Be Graterfod always  
         In this land of sky-tinted Stillwater  
             And Faribault-gray skies.  
 Here  
     In my skin  
         My history  
             My degree of understanding  
 Caged birds cackle  
     Tire sickly  
     Miss the daises  
         Wait the exit cells  
 Exist in tiny de-atomized links of disquiet between lives  
 Emaciated by dream vacancies  emasculated by fraudulent pleas  
 Emancipated by pills proclaiming the best inside themselves  
     Has yet to be birthed  
 And perhaps never will.  
 Toughened, bluesy  
 Blue-sleeved wearing'  
 State-provided blues  
     Put to music  
 Here  
 Know what I mean?  
     Sing with me,  
 Sing!  
     Oh my god  
         Oh my tree full of sour cherries  
         Cut down,  
 Rolling amidst a sea of ripe peaches  
         Their squishing's ringing

Purpling the Alleghenies  
Of thee I dream  
Sing-sing,  
    Sing,  
Know what I mean?  
    Turnkeys.  
    Death-scented linden blossoms filtering  
Between  
    Careless glances  
    Parentless classes of wilting humanity  
Unprepared for the rest of life  
Even after serving one  
Feeling cursed for coming to the end of it,  
Finished, finally, but friendless  
Know what I mean?  
Here, yes!  
    Trickles.  
Life (Amay-  
    In syllables. Zing grace-  
    And I mean trickles, how sweet  
Not flows, the sound  
    Colorless, that saaaaves  
    Order less, a wretch  
    Nourishment, like meeee!)

Know what I mean?



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**Embodiment: in commemoration of Consuewella Africa**

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Four Keywords: Russell Maroon Shoatz; Political Prisoner; Black Liberation; Maroon History

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**Embodiment: in commemoration of Consuewella Africa**

Esther Marcella

How to be body, when bodies brutalized, criminalized, colonialized?  
Why be body, if bodies incinerated, confiscated, desecrated?

Is there mysterious service of spirit unsolvable on Earth?

Embodiment of Consuewella Africa Essence,  
Leo-roar of heart fire, root-foot on earth, legend mind to wind,  
bearer of mother soul water, ember of eternal ether,  
embodiment of Consuewella Africa Essence,  
we commemorate your existence.

Go within to when names are one silence,  
bring this sound to  
wring hands and ring bells.  
Rest in breath of chest amulet.  
Revolt with love-self. Align spiral of spine.  
Love the hell out of skin into heaven-haven.  
Transcend all paradigms by truth-being.

Earn enemies and friends.

Resolve the needs of understand.  
Purified by passions, sovereign of minds,  
wisdoms in motion, righteous with actions,  
we human the revolution of Gaia's ascension.