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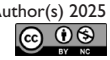

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Drawing a 'revolutionary we': queer antifascist lines for universal liberation

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Abstract

This paper explores drawing as a queer antifascist praxis. Discussing 'who' comes together through the line drawings that were included in the Gay Liberation Front's (GLF) main newspaper *Come Together* in the 1970s, I explore how drawing can construct a 'we' as a group agent. Based on distinctions that the GLF drew between revolution and liberal reform, and between universal liberation and identity politics, drawing as a liberatory praxis constitutes a space for interrogating connections between revolution and fascism, including microfascist aspects within revolutionary processes. Examining this space in relation to exploring social and urban relations, I propose drawing as a process of antifascist subjectification for a future of sexual becoming. I argue that when queering and antifascisting come together – drawing a 'revolutionary we' – a political horizon can be generated to end differing and interrelated forms of oppression.

Keywords

antifascism, drawing, identity politics, liberation, nonrepresentational theory, queerness

Fascism against liberation

The lines in Figure 1 delineate a Catholic priest who became aware of the idea of starting a gay club in town and who urged his congregation to fight 'this threat to the children'.[1] As a representative of a key oppressive institution – the church – he wears a swastika and is labelled a Nazi. He is the only 'complete' figure in the drawing. He is sat down, fixed and immobile. And then there are the outlines of two dynamic figures. They do not have feet. One head is cut open. Their bodies have holes in them. They lack some organs. Are they partly dissolving? They point at the priest. They threaten him with a gun or, in the case of the taller figure, perhaps with a Nazi salute.

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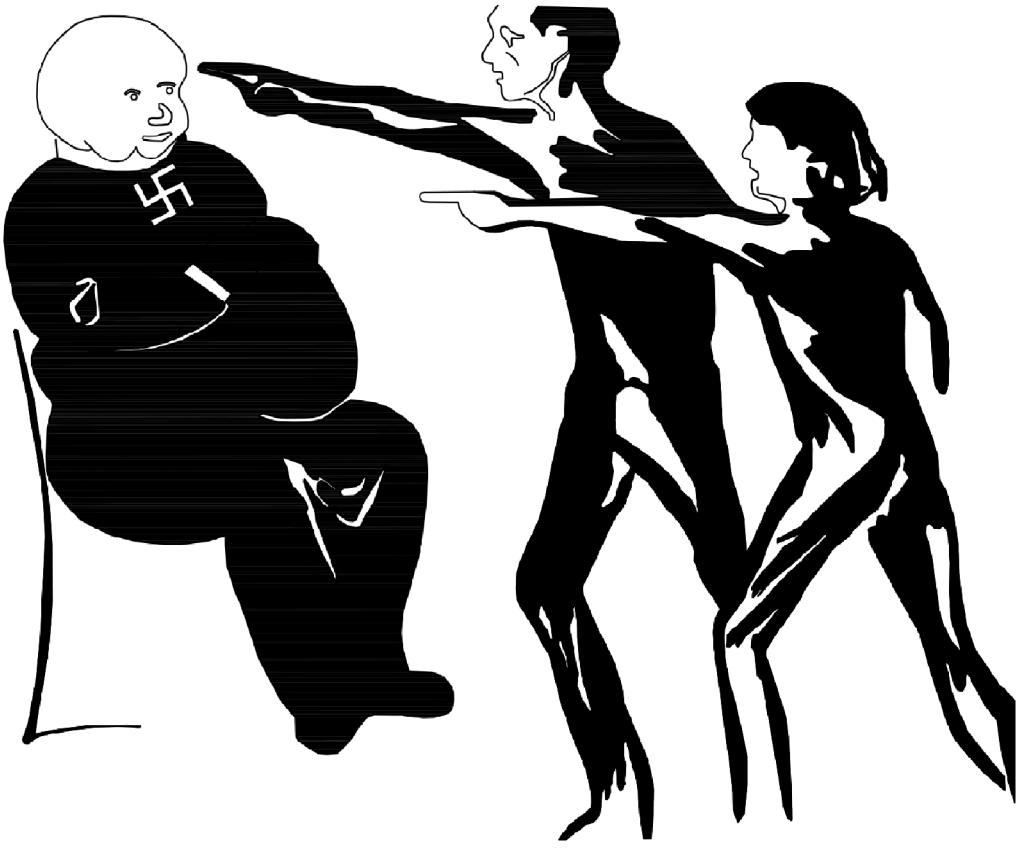

Figure 1. Tracing lines of a drawing that is included in *Come Together*, 8, p. 2. © The author.

With a few swift lines, I trace a drawing published in the eighth issue of *Come Together*, the main newspaper that came out of the media workshop of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) between November 1970 and the summer of 1973. It was one of the many drawings with which activists responded to a call by the editors of the third issue to include 'more artwork and photographs of our own activities' in future issues, emphasising that 'we do purport to be Gay LIBERATION and not gay reform'.[2] What is the liberatory potential of drawing lines? And 'who' comes together in *Come Together*? These are questions that are explored in this paper in relation to issues of representation, political subjectivity and identity.

Together with the *Manifesto* (originally published in 1971 and revised in 1979), studying the 16 issues of *Come Together* allows important insights into the GLF's main concern: the end to all forms of oppression of queer people in society. The GLF was a short-lived revolutionary movement founded by Bob Mellors and Aubrey Walter after they visited several gay liberation groups in the United States and attended the 'Revolutionary Peoples' Constitutional Convention' in Philadelphia, arranged by the Black Panther Party. The GLF was not a uniform movement: activists engaged in lively and controversial debates. Some of them questioned whether the GLF actually was and remained to be a revolutionary movement or if it had quickly become 'increasingly myopic in focussing too exclusively on the specifics of gay oppression and the struggle against sexism'.[3] Questions if and to what extent the GLF was neglectful of other oppressed communities

in society, including its relationship to the women's liberation movement, remained ongoing issues of discussion.

According to Michael Hardt, the GLF was one of several revolutionary movements of the 1970s, which 'set the mold for today's activism'.[4] In the aftermath of student protests in 1968 and the Stonewall uprising in New York City in 1969, gay liberationists developed a provocative and powerful critique of the liberal – and fascist – society, opening up a space for imagining a world without capitalist exploitation, racism and sexism. We are living in a time that sees electoral success for the far-right, the return of autocratic leadership and demands for a return to greatness through war, censorship and hatred. For Ronald Beiner and other scholars, ours is an 'age of resurgent fascism'.[5] With this paper, I suggest that revisiting 'The Radical 1970s' is of critical importance to understand the potential and shortcomings of today's activism. Yet, how can we do so without falling into the trap of becoming nostalgic about the radicalism back then?

I argue that interrogating relations between drawing and antifascism can be politically productive in this endeavour. The GLF's antifascist approach is not without ambiguity. Most often, in using the term 'fascism' activists either referred to Nazism and to the situation of gay men in concentration camps specifically, or to the police as 'fascist pigs'.[6] References to the 'threat of fascism' in contemporary society sometimes proved to be 'too controversial'; for example to be included in the *Manifesto*.[7] To understand the potential encapsulated in GLF's antifascism, I allege that we need to move from *statements about fascism* to *drawing as an antifascist process*. The latter works against one specific representation of fascism and does not allow for (a nostalgically motivated or not) antifascist mimicry. It is an antifascism in the doing, an antifascist praxis here and now that maps revolutionary and antifascist tendencies. I will discuss this praxis in relation to Deleuze and Guattari's account of microfascism. If fascism means to 'fix subjects to rigid boundaries of thought and action and fix bodies to pre-established patterns of flows', as they suggest, how can drawing swift lines speed up flows and let desire flow freely?[8]

It is difficult, indeed, impossible to determine the exact number of drawings included in the 202 pages that comprise the different issues of *Come Together*. Sometimes letters turn into visual clues; sometimes lines cut across words and pages; some lines are spaced far apart (perhaps too far) to determine if they belong to one drawing. There are no clear-cut boundaries. What can be stated with some certainty is that only 11 pages do not show line drawings. Many of the drawings look like rough sketches, done quickly without a lot of detail. Many of them seem to be drawn by hand. While I do not know if these lines were drawn swiftly, these are drawings that do not purport to represent someone or something accurately. They are, at times, highly reduced and fairly abstract: just a few lines seem to be sufficient to bring out their relevance as political tools. And the drawings are often provocative, less because of what they show than what they leave out. I take these characteristics as a starting point to reflect on swift line drawings or, better, on the process of drawing swift lines and, more specifically, on my own drawing process.

I will suggest that the process of drawing swift lines can constitute a space for questioning and problematising preconceived connections and distinctions in revolutionary attempts in our everyday lives. I therefore do not focus attention on drawings as representations of the revolution or life after the revolution but, instead, on drawing as a revolutionary process that is entangled in fascist relations. Drawing, as I explore it here, is less about communicating, expressing or conveying already formed and fixed ideas than it is about processes of reflection, investigation and speculation.

I trace some of the lines previously published in *Come Together*, not to reproduce them, but to think with and through them about the politics of drawing. Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between tracing (copying without changing in nature) and mapping (a method of creating).[9] I, on the other hand, explore tracing as a method of creating relations through drawing swift lines in which visual resemblance is not a key criterion. The selected drawings are figurative in that they

depict recognisable figures, but are not representative; they do not seek the most accurate depiction of a perceived social or material reality.[10] I focus on a 'nonrepresentational drawing approach'.[11] Such an approach is crucial, because fascism, as Hito Steyerl emphasises, means a collapse of political and cultural representation.[12] A nonrepresentational drawing approach, then, operates in opposition to fascism that 'claims to express the essence of the people by imposing a lead and by replacing cultural representations with caricatures passed off as simple truth'.[13] In so doing, as I will suggest, the process of drawing lines can pose important questions about the relationship between universal liberation and identity politics.

This paper aims to develop a novel understanding of the politics of drawing. Despite the many line drawings included in *Come Together*, GLF's drawings have not been scrutinised in academic literature until now. My analysis builds on extensive archival research on the GLF in the UK, which I conducted at the Bishopsgate Institute Archive and The Hall-Carpenter Archives at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Archival work allowed me to study the contexts and debates that led to the production of articles and visual presentations in the newspaper. Based on a detailed examination of all published issues of *Come Together*, I selected only five drawings to structure the paper. I started with lines that make an unapologetic reference to Nazism and which allude to GLF's critique of institutional oppression in 1970s society. The following two sections revolve around lines that construct two key dimensions of GLF's visual praxis: first, anger about the status quo and, second, multiplication as a key tactic to escape the status quo. For the final two sections I trace lines that constitute two environments GLF activists regarded as critical towards an end of oppression: the home and the city.

My drawings look rather similar to the original ones that were published in *Come Together*. My main concern is not to consciously change them but also not to copy them. Rather, I want to draw swiftly some queer antifascist lines to reflect on the drawing process. In so doing, this paper contributes to emerging work on drawing as a critical geographical method and a method for '"vulnerable" research' by focusing on drawing as a process of constructing an 'angry we' as a group agent.[14] It also contributes to research on gay liberation and identity politics by discussing relations between revolutionary and fascist tendencies in drawing processes.[15] Furthermore, it contributes to the under-researched theme of antifascist geographies, by focusing on queer antifascism as an affirmative, space-creating praxis.[16]

Revolutionary lines

Figures are grounded by big heavy boots that stamp one figure into the floor (Figure 2). After the murder of a gay man at a cruising ground in London, GLF activists draw attention to the 'systematic murder of gay people by sexually and socially frustrated "queer-Bashers"'.[17] Queer-bashing is identified as 'a result of uncertainty over masculinity and a secret fear of their own homosexuality'.[18] And since queer people are not adequately protected by the 'so-called forces of "law and order"', activists identify the need to protect themselves, for example by organising self-defence classes or patrolling cruising grounds.[19]

Lines fly around in *Come Together*. Drawn swiftly, they are part of a tentative and provisional process that is characterised by a commitment to end all forms of oppression.[20] What matters is less the specific starting and end points of lines on the page than their directions of movement.[21] How can these swift lines move a revolutionary process forward? Chris Campe suggests that line drawings lend themselves to an emotional engagement with the world because they are 'less mimetic of the physical world than photographs and appear to be more personal because they are obviously *made* representations'.[22] She alleges that they can trigger memories and desires. The radical potential of drawing *swift* lines, I propose, lies in their capacity to open up a space for alternative futures

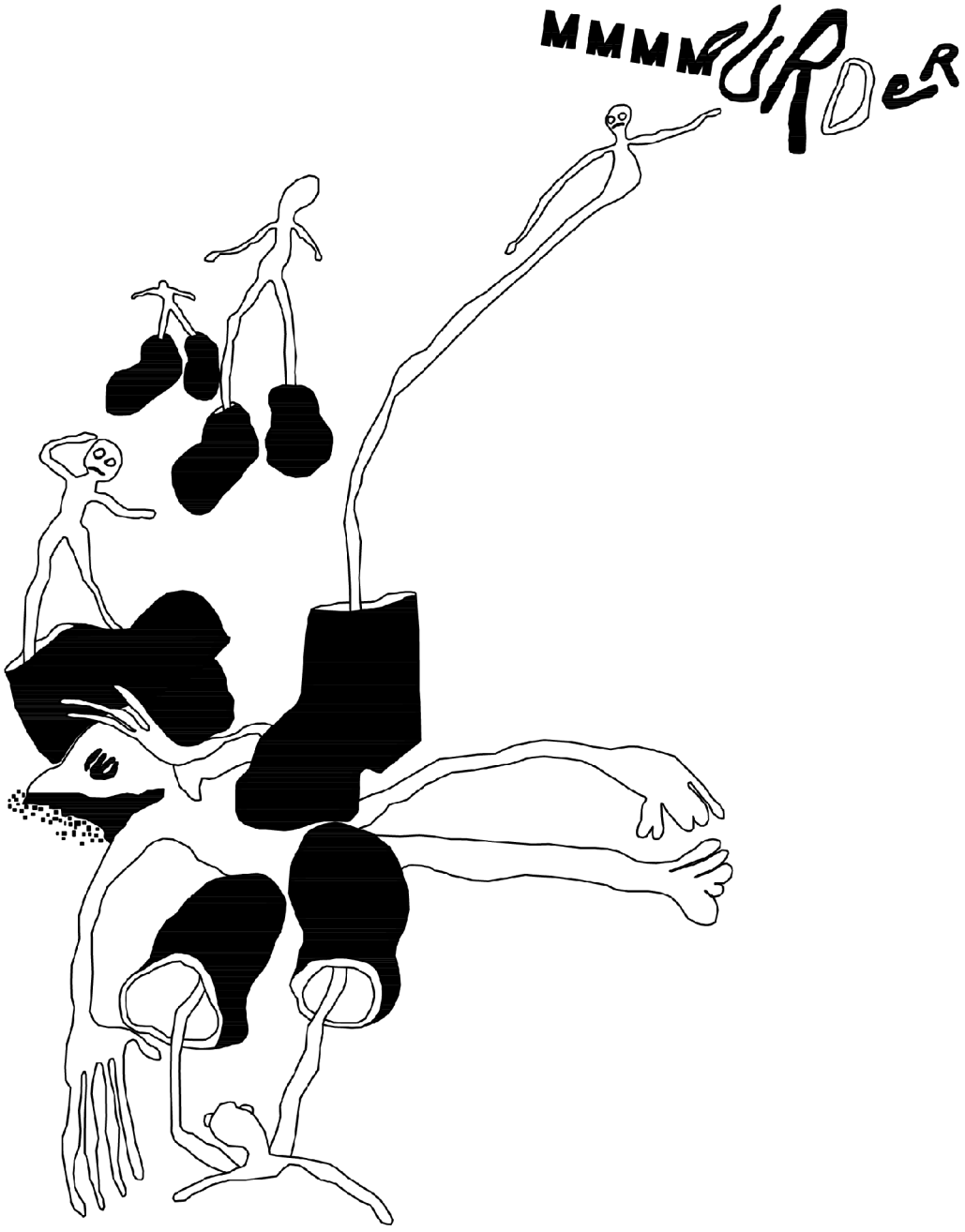

Figure 2. Tracing lines of a drawing that is included in *Come Together*, 4, p. 15. © The author.

without representing a utopia (or eutopia) as a static endpoint. This can be done by disrupting an equation of visibility and political recognition.[23]

Swift lines do not ask for recognition but exert a presence. And because they do not want to accurately represent someone or something but, rather, point at states of emergency while, at the

same time, moving away from them, they also constitute a space for absence through presence. Sarah Casey describes 'queer intimacy' as a space '"between," an oscillating and unfixed interstice between ideas and matter; a space where relationships remain contingent, ideas and matter provisional'.[24] Some line drawings in *Come Together* do locate queerness in a 'radical requirement to question normativities and orthodoxies'.[25] They help us question normalised and internalised forms of oppression. They do so by making use of the tentative and provisional character of swift lines to open up a revolutionary space for alternative social relations and human–nonhuman relations.

In a recent analysis, Sage Brice explores drawing in relation to a generative understanding of vulnerability. Drawing can 'attend expressly *to* questions of vulnerability to discrimination and harm'.[26] It can be a process that '*renders vulnerable* societal ideas of fixity and order'.[27] And drawing can be a process that renders the drawer vulnerable in a process of subject-formation that is a 'provisional and relational individual process'.[28] Brice draws on Gilbert Simondon's notion of 'transindividuation', according to which an individual and collective 'come into being only through their mutual constitution, and the possibility for transformation is necessary to one as it is to the other'.[29]

Gay liberationists in the 1970s were vulnerable. And they were, at the same time, angry and proud.[30] Their slogans were: 'Gay is Good! All Power to Oppressed People!', 'We are Not Beautiful, we are Not Ugly. We are Angry!' and 'Gay, Proud and Angry'.[31] They stated clearly that they did not 'intend to ask for anything. We intend to stand firm and assert our basic rights. If this involves violence, it will not be we who initiate this, but those who attempt to stand in our way to freedom'.[32] Crucially, the GLF was not a group of violent individuals but a collective that fought for an end to (direct, structural and symbolic) violence. An important question is how they brought their vulnerability and anger together?

If drawing can be a meaningful and transformative encounter between a drawer and social and physical worlds, how does such an encounter create a 'revolutionary we'? I do not ask how a line drawing can be an effective propaganda tool, but how a 'revolutionary we' can be constructed through drawing swift lines. In the case of the GLF, we have to consider encounters between individuals, a revolutionary collective and a milieu outside of the collective (liberal society including self-proclaimed fascists). Such a consideration shifts our attention from drawing as an individual to a collective process, not in the sense that several individuals co-produce drawings, but that drawing produces a collective through opening up a space for creating new bonds of solidarity to end differing and interrelated forms of oppression.

Liberal subjects and identity politics

A group of four individuals who are dressed the same, with the same hairstyle, who look the same (Figure 3). Are these lines of a concentrated resistance to conservative and right-wing views of how one is meant to express oneself (in the 1970s)? Or, perhaps, this is the drawing of an individual multiplied by four. An individual who refuses to be viewed from one specific point, who escapes being fixed to a single representation. An individual who moves around, away from being looked at, and who expresses 'radical views, for his time, on the nature of man and society'.[33] In *Come Together*, this drawing was positioned next to a re-print of an excerpt of Oscar Wilde's work. Perhaps this individual is Oscar Wilde, who 'was a right on gay person, who was hounded and persecuted by the straight, uptight, fascist male-chauvinist state'.[34]

Tracing these lines, I ask how multiplication and 'being numerous', to refer to a term that Natasha Lennard uses, relates to a 'revolutionary we'? Multiplication, here, is a visual tactic against institutionalised and normalised ideas of fixity and order. I am multiplied. I am many. Our concerns are multiplied. We are many. How does multiplication link to distinctions that the

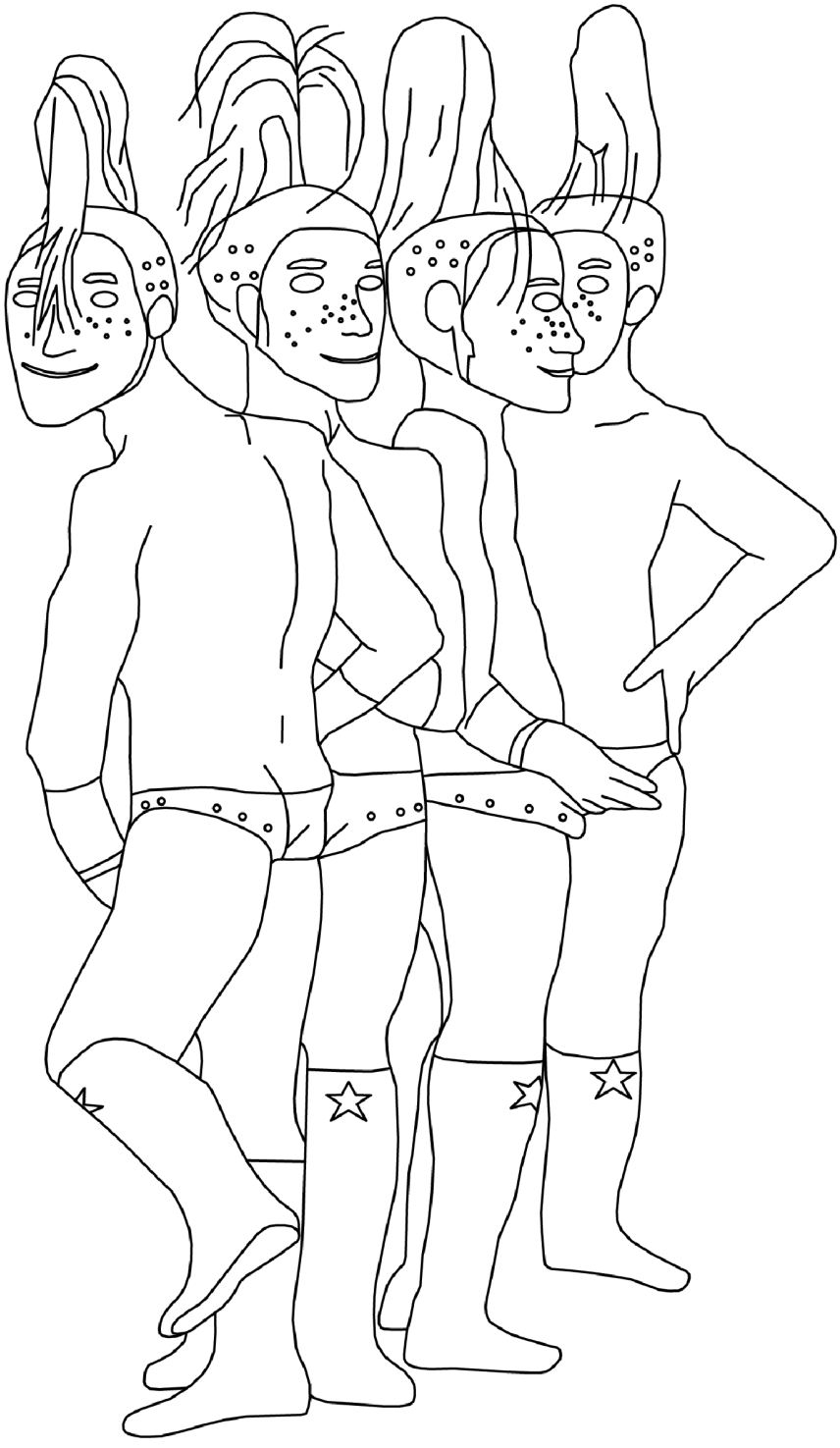

Figure 3. Tracing lines of a drawing that is included in *Come Together*, 6, p. 3. © The author.

GLF drew between revolution and liberal reform and between universal emancipation and identity politics?[35]

Those revolutionary activists in the 1970s that 'devised a robust anti-fascism rooted in revolutionary queerness and an analysis of everyday fascism as inherent in capitalist society' understood queerness as 'necessarily anti-fascist, revolutionary, and intersectional', Rosa Hamilton argues.[36] With their intersectional approach, they were forerunners of activists who developed the Combahee River Collective statement in 1977, several years before the term 'intersectionality' emerged from ideas debated in critical race theory and as first laid out by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989.[37] Liberation, for gay liberationists in the 1970s, was an 'act of solidarity across differing forms of oppression', demanding an end to all forms of oppression: an anti-capitalist, anti-racist, anti-sexist society.[38] This is also why, as Hamilton suggests, queer antifascists were so critical of those 'cis-het antifascists' who focused 'solely on confronting fascists in the streets while ignoring structural violence' – and symbolic violence, we must add.[39]

Queer activism, then, links to those strands of revolutionary antifascism that are generative and which refuse to be defined and limited by a negation of fascist attacks. This refusal is usually based on the conviction that if antifascism is nothing but *anti* fascists, then it gives certain individuals even more importance in society than they already have while remaining (conceptually, emotionally and in actions) tied to fascism.[40] A nonrepresentational drawing approach that questions normativities and orthodoxies through multiplication creates a space of potentiality for a generative political horizon that is neither limited by militant street activism or liberal antifascism.[41]

Gay liberationists aimed to 'discover the limitations of the liberal attitude and to go beyond it'.[42] Liberal society, they argued, names and aims to integrate 'deviant individuals', assuming that these individuals are either sick or that they would be happier if they were integrated. The 'liberal idea of tolerance does not mean acceptance on an equal basis but just a more subtle form of control of subversive groups'.[43] Revolution, therefore, needs to be distinguished from liberal reform. As we know from the GLF's aftermath, the liberal state can and will 'grant symbolic victories that shift demands from dismantling to reform in order to pacify one identity group with concessions while actually strengthening the tools of oppression'.[44] In contrast to gay rights movements that targeted laws within the political system that discriminated against gays and lesbians, gay liberationists rejected being (or becoming) liberal subjects. This is crucial because while *liberal* antifascism operates from fixed positions of 'the liberal antifascist' versus 'the fascist' as given subjects (not interrogating the fascist relations in and of liberal societies), rejecting being a liberal and/or fascist subject, as I will suggest, can involve a process of antifascist subjectification.

Constructing a 'revolutionary we', then, is not a process of bringing together political subjects but a process of political subjectification. This also challenges identity politics. Gay liberationists 'saw homosexuality as a socially oppressed identity', although, as Linda Nicholson observes, some of the ways in which activists 'depicted social identity were limited'.[45] They critiqued 'stereotypical gender roles and identities, patriarchal family arrangements, and traditional understandings of sexual desire'.[46] Michael Bronski argues that they fought 'for the right to engage in homosexual acts, the right to have a sex life' and not 'the right to identify as homosexuals'.[47] At the same time, as opposed to those activists who engaged in a revolutionary project, some reformists and integrationists were also part of the GLF and 'eschewed the idea that homosexuality is a fixed identity'.[48] Many activists 'abandoned a fixed notion of gay identity and actively sought alliances with women's groups and racially based organizations', although these alliances were often fragile and contested.[49]

The GLF, like other gay liberationist groups, brought together individuals with quite different 'understandings of "gay identity"', although the core group was also largely dominated by white, middle-class men.[50] What we find in numerous drawings in *Come Together* is a politics that is

informed by a group's distinct experiences – and, in this sense, identity politics – but also attempts to pursue the modern promise of universal emancipation.[51] Before it was taken up by modern-day electoral politics, identity politics had 'military origins'.[52] Revolutionary identity politics holds on to those origins by embracing identity to eventually abolish it. Drawing queer antifascist lines can involve a process of working with and through identity that leads to a 'radical critique of identity' for universal liberation.[53] In the end, the 'revolutionary we' is not defined by who the group is but by how non-fascist relations can be engendered.

Antifascist subjectification

As mentioned previously, GLF activists used the term 'fascism' usually to refer to Nazism and the police. *Come Together* includes numerous lines that interrogate institutions of oppression – family, school, church, media, words, employment, law, physical violence and psychiatry.[54] While only few lines make a direct, symbolic reference to fascism (see Figure 1), I explore drawing as a process of working through everyday fascism, described by Deleuze and Guattari as 'microfascism'; all those local authorities and mini-despotisms in others and in us, and which, when aligned under one supreme despot – a Hitler or a Mussolini – amount to fascism.[55]

Here, drawing lines is not a detailed representation of how a minor group is being oppressed. It is an exploration of self-oppression, which gay liberationists understood as the 'ultimate success of all forms of oppression'.[56] Self-oppression is the normalisation of oppression, internalising and adapting capitalist, racist and cis-het values while 'believing: "I am not oppressed"'.[57] Queer activists formed consciousness-raising groups to think and talk through oppression for a world after oppression. Drawing swift lines contributes to this agenda of consciousness-raising by engaging in experiments with forms of unconscious investment.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, desire can have two forms of investment: it can either be revolutionary or fascist.[58] Based on an understanding of desire not as lacking something but as something that is always positive – desire as social formation, as 'the material process of connecting, registration and enjoyment of flows of matter and energy coursing through bodies in networks of production in all registers, be they geologic, organic, or social' – drawing as desiring-production allows focusing attention on fascist tendencies within revolutionary processes.[59] It constitutes a space for problematising fascism as a desire not only to oppress but also to be oppressed, or what Foucault describes as a 'fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us'.[60]

Here, I draw on an understanding of fascism as a 'fixation opposed to the fluidity of desire'.[61] If fascism is a process of 'ordering matter as it is drawn into a body', then revolution is a 'decoded flow, a deterritorialized flow that runs too far and cuts too sharply, thereby escaping from the axiomatic of capitalism'.[62] As Deleuze and Guattari emphasise in their later work, a line of flight can either spiral towards liberation or towards fascist annihilation. Fascism can be understood as a figure of power that spirals out of control: a movement that is 'too fast'.[63] Yet, focusing on swift line drawings in *Come Together*, I am not concerned with fascism as a kind of acceleration of desire but with fascism as a movement that is 'too slow', which relates to the account of fascism that Deleuze and Guattari develop in *Anti-Oedipus*.[64]

Drawing swift lines opens up a space not only for drawing distinctions between revolution and liberal reform and between universal liberation and identity politics. It also opens up a space for identifying connections between revolution and fascism. Just as revolutionary becoming is something that happens 'in the world' and 'in the head' and that has to happen 'every minute of the day', as a GLF activist argued, so it involves interrogating how one keeps 'from being fascist, even (especially) when one believes oneself to be a revolutionary militant'.[65] Drawing can generate a

space for exploring 'the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behaviour'.[66] Put differently, if drawing is 'not just an act of representation, but of subject-formation', then drawing queer antifascist lines can construct a 'we' that is not a 'we antifascists' but a 'we' through processes of antifascist subjectification.[67] This is a 'we' that creatively explores fascist relations. A 'we' that is constructed through 'anti-fascisting' and not a 'we' that is group of antifascists.[68] As a queer praxis, antifascisting questions binary distinctions between fascism and antifascism, between oppressed and oppressor, between desiring freedom and a 'desire to desire repression'.[69]

Drawing as a process of antifascist subjectification speaks against '"anti-fascist" as an identity'.[70] Evans and Reid argue that fascism is elementary to politics and power relations and, indeed, to 'life as such'.[71] If 'we exist and act politically only through practices that are themselves already fascist', as they claim, then we must consider the politics of drawing lines as a matter of ordering (or re-ordering) matter.[72] Imposing an order is an authoritarian act and can be a fascist one. Drawing numerous swift lines, however, has the potential to disrupt an order as soon as it has been imposed. If drawing is an attempt to return desire to its affirmative structure, then this cannot be done without exercising power over lines that are already there or over the white page.[73] And, yet, through exercising power, new lines of solidarity can be created.

Drawing on Spinoza's ethics of joy, for Dolphijn and Braidotti an antifascist life is one that is 'affected by others'.[74] Against a fascist politics of resentment and negativity (including sexism, misogyny, homo- and transphobia, racism and antisemitism), they position a project of antifascism as 'affirmative ethics'.[75] I suggest that drawing queer antifascist lines can only be such a project when it works through the 'ontological irreducibility of fascism for liberal power relations *per se*'.[76] So, if we accept that power relations are fascist, that one cannot simply be a stable antifascist subject, one can nevertheless engage in antifascisting. Drawing swift lines can have the effect of triggering 'new social imaginaries and igniting unexpected political passions'.[77] Yet, such lines are not based on the integrity of a moral claim (the 'good antifascist' vs the 'bad fascist'), because to believe in such integrity one would 'be wilfully blind to the fascism that, necessarily, underwrites one's own political subjectivity' as Evans and Reid point out.[78]

To reiterate, it is not the antifascist who draws swift lines. Rather, drawing swift lines is a process of antifascist subjectification. This means that a general (and for some Deleuzian scholars absolute) claim that antifascism is nothing but a fascist desire to destroy fascism (and, hence, is inherently fascist in itself) might be directed to an anti-fascist group that reduces its actions to certain forms of militant street activism.[79] The same argument can be applied to Simon Watney's claim that the GLF's main limitation was that it defined itself solely in opposition to an abstract and monolithic notion of heterosexuality.[80] Drawing swift lines, however, can be a process of queering and antifascisting that disrupts such ideas of fixity and order as a means of creative liberation.

Based on an understanding of drawing as antifascist subjectification, how does drawing swift lines intervene in social and family relations in capitalist society? For Deleuze and Guattari, fascist and revolutionary tendencies are 'two extreme oscillations of a pendulum' in capitalism.[81] Capitalism, they allege, includes a revolutionary decoding that frees flows as well as a fascist desire to replace decoding by fixing subjects to rigid boundaries and bodies to pre-established patterns of flow.[82] A 'revolutionary tendency' is accompanied by a 'fascist tendency' that reintroduces codes that are 'invented primarily as a screen for the installation of power-structures'.[83] The nuclear family is precisely one of the domains where the decoding process, which is at work in society at large, 're-inscribes the oppressive but now socially-obsolete role of the despot in the repressive figure of the father'.[84]

The traditional patriarchal family and strict gender roles are of fundamental importance for fascist ideology. Gay liberationists in the 1970s identified the family as the 'most basic unit of [capitalist] society' and the starting point of all oppression.[85] They argued that the nuclear family

implies an enshrinement of strict gender roles, which is 'essential to the advanced capitalist society'.[86] Indeed, patriarchal authoritarianism is the 'substance of both family and capitalist organisation', which is precisely why 'reforms are not enough'.[87] They demanded the 'destruction of the nuclear family' by consciousness-raising communes to 'create, construct a total alternative kind of being'.[88] In a commune, and in drawing a commune, individuals can enter into a transformative relation with a collective and construct a 'revolutionary we'.

In Figure 4, I juxtapose two drawings previously published in *Come Together*. I do not bring the nuclear family and a commune together, because in each I draw lines for a commune through drawing's 'privileged relation to the non-visible'.[89] Put differently, in these reduced line drawings, presences are created through the absence of lines. The top lines trace a drawing from an article by Carolyn, writing about her life in a commune with Jenny, Lorna, Richard, Julia and Barbara.[90] Relations are being established between a commune and the nuclear family – father, mother, son and grandparents. In other words, the space of a commune comes into being between words and lines. Yet, this does not mean that the drawing represents the family home. The lines that contour skulls and the growth of the hair, faces and facial expressions, scraps of cloth and jewellery do not appropriate an actualised space but configure social relations. Juxtaposing contour lines, lined-up lines, figures refuse to become three-dimensional.

Here, drawing social relations also challenges the representation of patriarchism and strict gender roles. Swift lines map relations between faces but faces also become maps themselves. The violence of drawing contour lines of figures – limiting them to a fixed being – is challenged by drawing 'fuzzy boundaries'.[91] Grandmother and grandfather merge into a cluster of lines. Hierarchical relationships are being interrogated but not reproduced. This is due to the arrangement of figures. The father is not at the top of the household. Indeed, he is placed at the very bottom. Furthermore, he is offered as a figure who is lost in a world where his privileges are being taken away from him. The boy asks about nonhierarchical social relations that the father simply has no answer to. The refusal to reproduce hierarchical social relations in a drawing while, at the same time, interrogating stereotypes and gender roles through drawing (the father has a moustache, the mother wears a pearl necklace, the boy a tie) leads to the opening up of a space for memories and desires that are not represented, that cannot be represented, but that direct gay liberation to everyone's liberation.

The bottom lines trace a drawing from an article about a commune including Ruby Tuesday, Marlene Garbo, Bette, Astral Lights, Ostrich, Beaulah, Crystal Ball, Pansy Power, Richard, Celeste and Evening Star.[92] Here, lines are positioned in an actualised space with communards looking upwards. Figures are positioned in a circle, which suggests a nonhierarchical relationship between them. But this is an open circle. Figures are numbered from one to twelve (and the numbers could go on infinitely). One included number refers to Richard, who is absent (and who probably has taken the photograph the drawing is based on).[93] Another number refers to Ruby Tuesday's hand as a figure in its own right. Again, the violence of drawing contour lines of figures is being challenged. The circle opens up outwards towards individuals who are invited to the commune and who are not visible in the drawing yet (Crystal Ball seems to be looking outwards), and it opens inwards to differing desires and behaviours.

Why has Ruby Tuesday (rather than someone else) been divided or, rather, multiplied? Why have they become a spliff? Why have Marlene Garbo, Bette and Beaulah a mouth but no eyes? Why has Ruby Tuesday eyes but no mouth? Why is only Celeste wearing jewellery? And why a hierarchical ordering of numbering from one (as a starting point) to twelve (not an endpoint)? If the lines describe an open, nonhierarchical circle, then they do not represent a homogeneous group. Lines are drawn swiftly, and the process of drawing is stopped early enough so that not a single redundant line is being drawn. Drawing, here, constructs a 'we', avoiding an identity-based

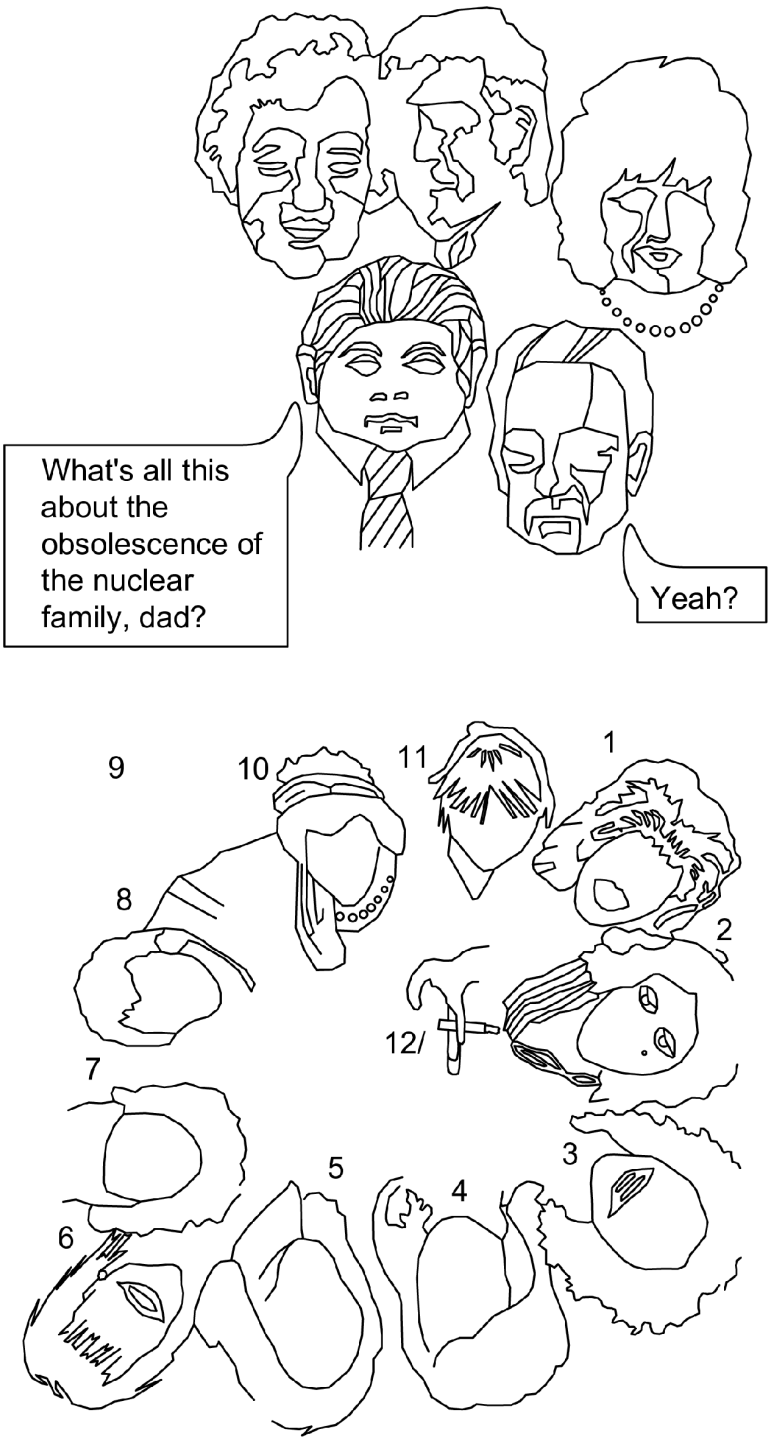

Figure 4. Tracing lines of a drawing that is included in *Come Together*, 11, p. 3 (top) and in *Come Together*, 15, p. 18 (bottom). © The author.

representation of figures or the collective. This is, to a large extent, because difference results from absence: not absence of difference but absence of difference represented. The most affective lines are those of Astral Lights, Ostrich, Crystal Ball and Pansy Power. These are the most reduced figures that open up a space for anyone to imagine taking their positions, questioning how one might encounter social relations outside of the nuclear family.

Sexual becoming

The construction of a 'revolutionary we' implies an orientation towards a world without oppression. If we stay in line with the military origins of identity politics in the early 1970s, as mentioned above, then identity must eventually turn against itself for universal liberation. Roger Lancaster suggests that '[u]nder the rubric of liberation, [GLF] activists embraced identity in order to abolish it'.[94] An identity politics that ultimately liberates everyone – that is revolutionary identity politics – can so be diverted from fascist identity politics which places the 'needs of its own groups as paramount over the needs of society as a whole' by turning to 'a national, ethnic, or religious group'.[95]

If queerness is disruptive because it is an offence against the social institutions that uphold capitalism, then liberation for some activists in the 1970s meant that queerness 'would necessarily destroy all ideas of purity along with the surrounding institutions and eventually itself'.[96] There is, then, a parallel between fascism as 'desire against itself' and queerness and homosexual desire that 'would destroy all ideas of purity along with the surrounding institutions and eventually itself'.[97] Exploring the French gay liberationist Guy Hocquenghem's work, Deleuze describes this process as 'the progression of a future of sexual becoming'.[98] Gay liberation, he suggests, implies producing 'utterances that are not about, and should not be about, homosexuality itself': '[o]nly by making shame more shameful we can progress. We reclaim our "femininity," the very kind that women reject, at the same time we declare that these roles have no meaning . . . The practical form of this struggle – we can't avoid it – is the passage through homosexuality'.[99] A passage through homosexuality that 'opens itself to a loss of identity': 'You call us homosexuals, sure, but we are already something else. There is no longer a homosexual *subject*, but homosexual productions of desire [. . .] homosexuality is nothing, it is only a word, and yet let's take the word seriously; we must pass through it, in order to restore everything that it contains of otherness – [. . .] the progression of a future sexual becoming'.[100]

The notion that gay identity must be displaced 'toward a mobile and disruptive homosexual desire with an explicit horizon of collective liberation' is based on the experience and understanding that any recognised identity serves a purpose for the liberal state.[101] On a GLF flyer, I read: 'Are we a load of screaming queens? Yes! Are we a load of butch dykes? Yes! Filthy reds? Yes! Cocksuckers? Yeah! Freaks Beautiful People'.[102] Numerous line drawings in *Come Together* reclaimed queer identity and worked with and through identity-based categories. As the GLF's cofounder Aubrey Walter suggests, gay liberationists were in 'search of something that was basically gender-free'.[103] Drawing swift lines can have a critical role in this search. Through triggering memories and desires it can create lines that politicise and radicalise liberal society. This is crucial because one lesson that must be learned from the student protests in 1968 is that if revolutionary lines create a new subjectivity, then they must be 'capable of forming collective agencies of enunciation to match the new subjectivity'.[104] Simply put, lines that create a new subjectivity need a milieu they can act on. If there is no milieu – only a 'non-lieu' – then the political relevance of drawing these lines is rendered meaningless in a radical political sense.[105]

Where can encounters with a milieu take place? In fascist ideology, cities were regularly framed as places of 'sexual decadence and sin', with queerness at the forefront of a sinful identity.[106] Drawing for sexual becoming can mean a process of drawing urban lines as a radical 'act of

creating against urban representation'.[107] Such a drawing process is an affront to Nazi urban design and planning ideas that included: (1) urban plans with monumental axes (where a free line of vision becomes the ultimate spatial tool for fascist capture and self-surveillance); (2) romanticisation of the pre-modern medieval city (based on a racist critique of the Enlightenment); (3) dreaming up a purebred ideal city – an Aryan city or, put differently, a city 'after race'.[108]

For gay liberationists, drawing urban lines meant, first and foremost, to undraw the boundary lines of the gay ghetto. Ghettos for specific identity-based groups must be rejected. GLF activists demanded 'the complete negation of the use of gay bars, tea rooms, trucks, baths, streets, and other traditional cruising institutions. These are exploitative institutions designed to keep gay men in the roles given to them by a male heterosexual system'.[109] Traditional cruising institutions must be replaced by 'developing a communistic sexuality of sharing, cooperation, selflessness, and total community'.[110] In short, interrogating the ghetto question implies that the 'meaning of liberation is a universal one'.[111]

The lines in Figure 5 trace the cover of the final issue of *Come Together*, which was compiled 'in the North' – the so-called 'Manchester issue'.[112] Tracing these lines, I encounter the construction of a 'we' that creates urban conditions rather than represents 'the city' as a bordered entity. Put differently, this is a 'we' constructed through affirming the urban as nonhierarchical relations of difference; a 'we' that is constructed through interrogating and escaping a fascist coding of the city. Visual tactics used to this end are not only multiplication but also juxtaposition (of seemingly incongruent elements, like a surrealist collage) and superimposition (of numerous elements, like a postmodern collage).

As to social relations, it is not easy to identify some of the human figures and it is impossible to trace all of them. There are so many and none are a 'closed' organism. This does not mean that figures lack something but that bodily elements are connected in all kinds of ways. A face is connected to another breast that is connected to another back that is connected to two eyes, and so on. Urban space is generated by these relations. There is no single viewpoint. A juxtaposition and superimposition of multiple viewpoints escape a monumental axis that predefines a focal point like that of the fascist city. The viewer is multiplied or, put differently, a 'we' of viewers is constructed through the drawing. At the same time, points of view are multiplied. There seem to be eyes everywhere: in faces, above and below grounds in ornaments that stare.

If these lines construct a gender-free society, then they do so not through a refusal to depict male and female figures but through creating connections between them, experimenting with gender roles. In the centre of the drawing are two faces – one with a beard the other without, one dark and one light, both appear gentle. Binary distinctions are not being avoided but drawing is a process of working with and against them (working with dualisms to liberate from dualisms). This applies to male–female binaries as it does to other binaries such as modern and traditional architecture (vs the romanticisation of pre-modern urban life in the fascist city) or nature and culture (vs Nazis' value of culture over nature, degrading nature to a 'blood and soil' metaphor).

These lines experiment with affirmative human–nonhuman relations. The contours of a face might as well turn into the outlines of a modernist building. The branches of a tree morph into a building façade, and the lines of a suit and that of a thong frame an exposed breast. The veins of a face are building ornaments. A breast turns into an underground pipe. Materiality dissolves – and yet is stable enough to confront Nazi dreams of planning the city for the next 1,000 years. In contrast to reduced line drawings (see Figure 4), where presences are being created though an absence of lines, here is a space of abundance. Through an unapologetic over-presence of lines, absences are being created. An urban environment is enabled that is so filled with lines that create new lines of solidarity that there is simply not enough space for capitalist exploitation, racism and sexism.

Figure 5. Tracing lines of a drawing that is on the cover of *Come Together*, 16. © The author.

Queering, antifascisting, drawing

In this paper, I discussed 'who' comes together through swift line drawings in *Come Together*. Focusing on a nonrepresentational drawing approach to exploring social and urban relations, I examined drawing as a revolutionary process and ways in which drawing lines constructs a 'we' as a group agent. I developed a conceptualisation of drawing as a process of antifascisting: an

antifascist subjectification that moves away from fixed identity towards revolutionary relations for a non-fascist life. In the case of drawing queer antifascist lines, this move is directed towards a future of sexual becoming. I explored this conceptualisation through discussing distinctions that GLF activists drew between revolution and liberal reform, and between universal liberation and identity politics. I suggested that a liberatory drawing praxis constitutes a space for interrogating connections between revolution and fascism, including microfascist aspects within revolutionary processes.

Swiftness is an important characteristic of drawing examined in this paper. Responding to Deleuze and Guattari's account of fascism as a fixation that is opposed to the fluidity of desire, I engaged in an exercise of speeding up the drawing process. Here, swiftness does not result in hasty, imprecise representations. It rather means a departure from representation that involves a mandate to free desire. Making use of visual tactics such as multiplication, juxtaposition and superimposition, drawing swift lines is one way of disrupting an equation of visibility and political recognition. Its precision lies in its orientation towards an end of oppression, making demands for an alternative world rather than being recognised by and inscribed into the status quo.

I did not examine drawings that represent antifascism and queerness, or that represent a queer antifascist home or a queer antifascist city. Following my discussion in this paper, the question of 'who' comes together through drawing swift lines should be rephrased in terms of *which processes* come together: queering (a challenge with and against binaries) and antifascisting (a challenge with and against structures of and desires for authorities). When queering and antifascisting come together in drawing as a process of speculation, reflection and investigation, then they do not regulate but act in affirmative ways to generate a political horizon to reach an end of differing and interrelated forms of oppression. In generating a political horizon rather than a static endpoint (i.e. drawing as a revolutionary process rather than drawing as a representation of the revolution or life after the revolution), drawing can create lines of solidarity with those strands of antifascism that refuse to be coopted by liberalism and those that reject definition solely by fascist attacks and militant street activism. Drawing can create lines of solidarity with those strands of queerness that fight for universal liberation.

What does the politics of drawing discussed in this paper mean for an 'age of resurgent fascism'?[113] First of all, my discussion reinforces the argument that we do not live in an age of *resurgent* fascism but that we always have been – and always will be – embedded in fascist relations. This observation is, more than anything else, a call to experiment with ways of antifascisting. Furthermore, and relating to the different bodies of knowledge that this paper contributes to, the politics of drawing queer antifascist lines highlights the following concerns: first, rendering vulnerable ideas of fixity and order can be usefully aligned with and even motivated by anger about the status quo. But anger on its own can easily fix subjects to rigid boundaries and, in this sense, works against liberation. Second, identity politics can be utilised for universal liberation when it explores ways to escape rigid adherence to fixed identities; especially through creative processes. Third, a liberatory antifascist praxis is not a reactive phenomenon in the sense that it simply reacts against individuals who are identified as fascists. It is a means of opening up spaces that are oriented towards an end of differing and interrelated forms of oppression, as exemplified, in this paper, through a nonrepresentational drawing approach that constructs a 'revolutionary we'.

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Notes

1. Gay Liberation Front (GLF), *Come Together*, 8, August 1971, p. 2.
2. Gay Liberation Front (GLF), *Come Together*, 3, January 1971, p. 8.
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7. Walter, *Come Together*, p. 11. See, however, GLF, *Come Together*, 11, p. 2.
8. M.Bonta and J.Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy: A Guide and Glossary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 86.
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112. Gay Liberation Front (GLF), *Come Together* (Manchester), 16, Summer 1973.
113. Beiner, *Dangerous Minds*, p. 15.

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