



**FIRST  
SHIPMENT!**  
October 2018





Laughing at logistics trucks  
is trans culture



trans logistics  
is (obviously)  
a kink



posted in r/traaaaaaannnnnnnnnnns 11th Aug 2018  
The meme that got there first  
(just-in-time)





# Thanks to:

my fellow-travellers / (counter)logistics partners – you made this happen  
my hitchhiking buddies (all three of you)  
you're beautiful people





# **TRANS LOGISTICS** is **COUNTERLOGISTICS\***

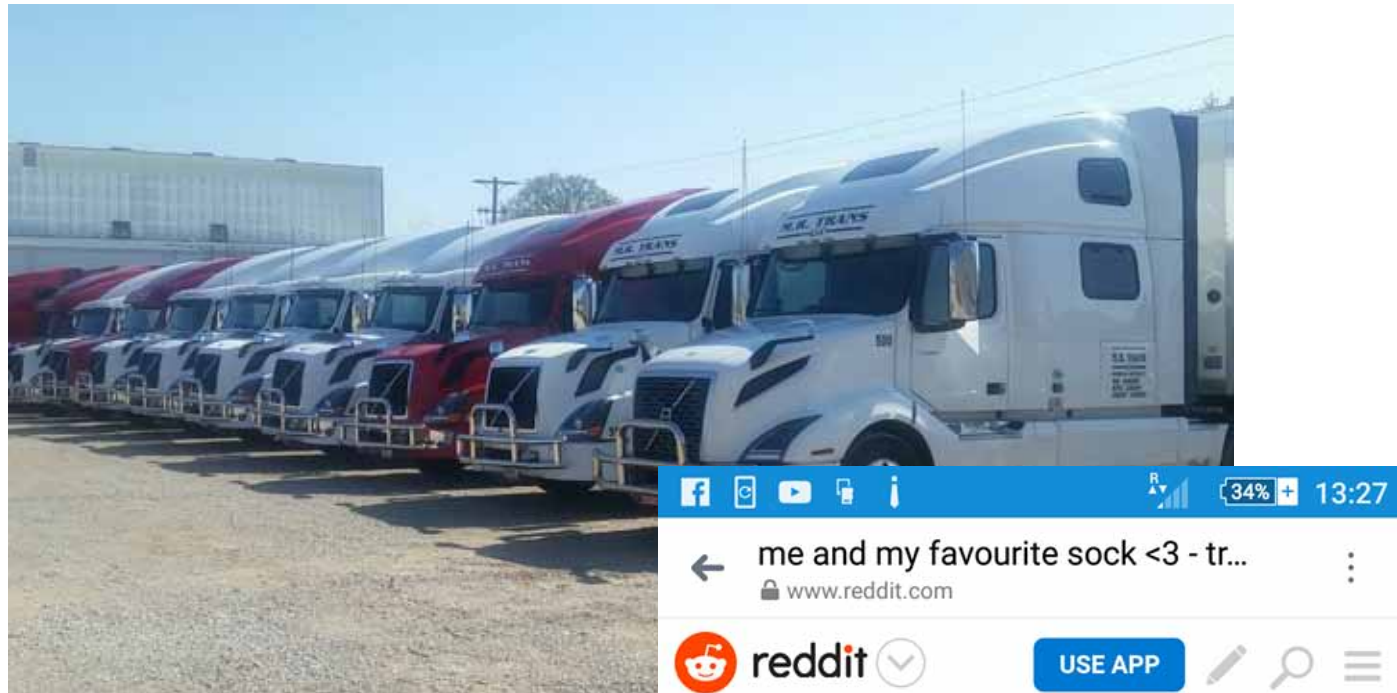


as in **COUNTER-CULTURE**  
as in **COUNTERFACTUAL**  
as in **WHAT IS / WHAT IF ?**

\*as in "Logistics, Counterlogistics and the Communist Prospect" Jasper Bernes (Endnotes, September 2013)







# logistics

/ləˈdʒɪstɪks/

noun

plural noun: logistics

the detailed organization and implementation of a complex operation.

"the logistics of a large-scale rock show demand certain necessities"

synonyms: organization, planning, plans, management, arrangement, administration, masterminding, direction, orchestration, regimentation, engineering, coordination, execution, handling, running; More

- the activity of organizing the movement, equipment, and accommodation of troops.

noun: logistics

- the commercial activity of transporting goods to customers.

"our fleet vehicle management system enables logistics firms to track deliveries using satellite technology"



# counterfactual

/ˌkaʊntəˈfæktʃʊəl/

PHILOSOPHY

adjective

- relating to or expressing what has not happened or is not the case.

noun

- a counterfactual conditional statement (e.g. *If kangaroos had no tails, they would topple over*).



# GETTING / MOVING

Trans people are often figured as being 'on a journey', as always in motion or in relation to it: transitioning from one gender to another, or to neither... moving from silence, fear and victimhood towards acceptance, visibility, political rights...

Even the term 'passing' (always a logistical consideration) implies motion through space.

Sometimes we are accused of being vehicles for neoliberal capitalism, or carriers of 'identity politics' who want to undermine material struggles against exploitation.

In all these ways we might find some affinity with logistics trucks, which really are vehicles in motion, carrying not just cargo but, as they circulate all over the globe, structural changes to the global economic and social order. Jasper Bernes's essay 'Counterlogistics and the Communist Prospect' is about this 'logistics revolution'. Here's a little extract...





## LOGISTICS, COUNTERLOGISTICS AND THE COMMUNIST PROSPECT

by Jasper Bernes

Originally associated with the Toyota Production System, and Japanese manufacturers in general, these corporate forms are now frequently identified with the loose moniker Just In Time (JIT), which refers in the specific sense to a form of inventory management and in general to a production philosophy in which firms aim to eliminate standing inventory (whether produced in-house or received from suppliers). Derived in part from the Japanese and in part from Anglo-American cybernetics, JIT is a circulationist production philosophy, oriented around a concept of "continuous flow" that views everything not in motion as a form of waste (*muda*), a drag on profits. JIT aims to submit all production to the condition of circulation, pushing its velocity as far toward the light-speed of information transmission as possible. From the perspective of our blockaders, this emphasis on the quick and continuous flow of commodities multiplies the power of the blockade. In the absence of standing inventories, a blockade of just a few days could effectively paralyse many manufacturers and retailers.<sup>6</sup>

In JIT systems, manufacturers must coordinate upstream suppliers with downstream buyers, so speed alone is insufficient. Timing is crucial. Through precise coordination, firms can invert the traditional buyer-seller relationship in which goods are first produced and then sold to a consumer. By replenishing goods at the exact moment they are sold, with no build-up of stocks along the way, JIT firms perform a weird sort of time-travel, making it seem as if they only make products that have already been sold to the end-consumer. As opposed to the older, "push production" model, in which factories generated massive stockpiles of goods that retailers would clear from the market with promotions and coupons, in today's "pull" production system "retailers share POS [point-of-sale] information with their vendors who can then rapidly replenish the retailers' stock".<sup>7</sup> This has led to the functional integration of suppliers and retailers, under terms in which the retailers often have the upper hand. Massive buyers like Wal-Mart reduce their suppliers to mere vassals, directly controlling product design and pricing while still retaining the flexibility to terminate a contract if needed. They gain the benefits of vertical integration without the liability that comes from formal ownership. Whereas in the early 1980s some thought that the emphasis on flexibility and dynamism would shift the balance of power from big, inflexible multinationals to small, agile firms, lean production has instead only meant a phase change rather than a weakening of the power of multinational firms. The new arrangement features what Bennett Harrison has called the "concentration without centralisation" of corporate authority.<sup>8</sup>



This is the actual logo for a truck drivers' school in Tacoma, Washington (USA) ->







For every 'walled flow' there is the opportunity of strategic blockade, but also there is the possibility of opening up other, uncontrollable flows, in new directions, without destinations that can be marked on any map.

As the next phase of the 'logistics revolution' unfolds, in the new spaces, connectivities and flows that are opened up by the strategy of the blockade, those of us that won't submit to logistics' logic must centre those of us, and those parts of us, that can't.



'Every flow can be a wall': Black Lives Matter protesters block a freeway in Berkley, 2014.



['Let's block everything'], Toulouse, 2016



In 2017-18 a Two-Spirit camp at Standing rock was set up by and for two-spirit people resisting the Dakota Access Pipeline, and hosted a range of queer and trans accomplices in the struggle.

(There is a cruel irony in the naming of projects and corporations of pipeline-building: Trans-Pecos, TransMountain, Trans-Canada. . .)

## **UNCONTAINABLE FLOWS**

If trans existence has until now been in large part implicated in the logistics of autonomy – a matter of survival, and struggle – then it has necessarily been a kind of counterlogistics. Increasingly, however, a choice exists to abandon the logistics of autonomy. A rift opens up offering some trans people a route out, whose accessibility or feasibility depends on a number of factors including nationality, migration status, wealth, and education.

New nationalisms and fascisms might seem contrary to the transnational and globalising force of just-in-time logistics. Brexit border crises and Trump's wall come to mind. But the two tendencies may well prove to be perfectly compatible, creating 'walled flows' (a term used by Jasper Bernes in a 2017 lecture, 'Logistics and Counterlogistics in an Age of Walled Flows') in which the movement of goods is unimpeded and the movement of people is ever more closely surveilled and controlled.

The solution to the Irish border question might in some way have already presented itself in the 'hostile environment' policies of the 2010s, with the border existing not just at land crossings, airports and ports, but in neighbourhoods, businesses, schools, hospitals. . .

If globalised capital and neo-fascism can be reconciled, logistically and ideologically, it may be that the recuperation of certain trans identities in the service of whiteness and capitalism continues under the new regimes, or it may be that the direction of 'progress' is reversed for everyone. Whatever happens, the time to form connections and affinities is now; the time to build counter-infrastructure and methods of blockade and sabotage is now.

## **REVOLUTIONS**

Gender is logistical. Whole industries of clothing and cosmetics, branding, advertising, news and entertainment, policing, incarceration, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, social care, childcare, border enforcement and deportations (among many others) both thrive off and sustain our ability to exist as gendered individuals in the present day.



Mountains of stuff and millions of people are shifted and mobilised, as unimaginably vast communications networks are required to relay information, every minute of every day.

Trans lives are singled out as artificial, as products of culture and chemicals only imaginable in that most logistical of spaces, the modern metropolis.

If the production/reproduction of transgender bodies and identities as embedded in logistical networks is more obvious and visible, this is because cis identities draw on histories of logistical movement, supply and interconnection that go much deeper, into the foundation of modern global society..

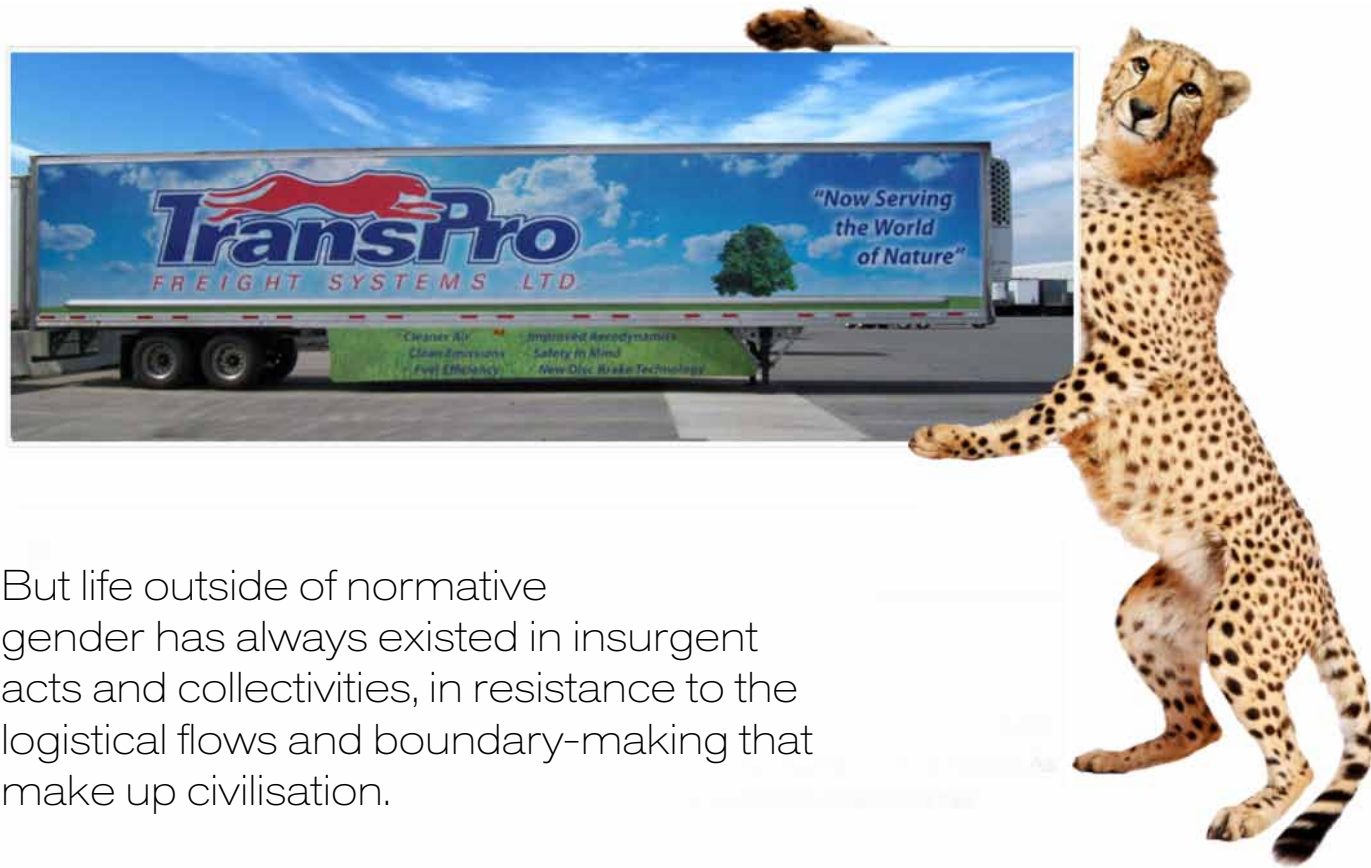
Colonisation, slave trades, indigenous genocides, feudal state-formation, witch hunts, heresy trials, inquisitions, the Roman Republic/Empire and its Mediterranean and Mesopotamian precursors (the first military-industrial complexes) . . .

For approximately the same time people have been calling themselves trans, logistics trucks with 'trans' written on the side, often in amusing combinations and neologisms (made-up words), have been on the road.

The 'logistics revolution' in modern globalised capitalism is approximately as old as the trans movement, which emerged out of the most radical elements of feminism and gay liberation.







But life outside of normative gender has always existed in insurgent acts and collectivities, in resistance to the logistical flows and boundary-making that make up civilisation.

Sex is logistical too. It is only knowable to us as an object of scientific study. Since science's first elaboration as a discipline (as distinct from 'art') in the early modern period, there has always been two-way traffic between science and commerce.

Darwin's innovations in what are now called life sciences were conceived and elaborated against the ideological backdrop of Victorian colonialism and laissez-faire capitalism. In turn, the idea of natural selection, 'survival of the fittest', has since its origin been isolated from Darwin's other findings and used to naturalise and justify capitalist systems, as well as various forms of racism, nationalism and statism.

It is not through a whimsical metaphorical lens, but rather the only lens available to us, that we see life as an ever more complex set of logistical pathways for the transfer of genetic information.

As Deborah Cowen explores in 'The Deadly Life of Logistics' (2014) (quoted in the pages that follow) modern logistical science emerged from both military procurement techniques, and systems theory, which emerged in ecology and biology. Logistics companies are theorised and marketed in professional literature as operating in a neo-Darwinian 'war of all against all', competing to be more efficient and resilient than their competition.

## **FLOWs**

From the mid-20th Century and before, trans existence has been wrapped up in various logistical rackets, including underground dance/ music, the entertainment industry, sex work, organised crime, the drugs trade, sub-legal and illegal medical practices, official medicine and research, political activism, state bureaucracy, and latterly academia and the global art market.

On the night of the Stonewall riots, Sylvia Rivera was in the Stonewall Inn, a mafia-owned bar made possible by networks of bootlegging and corruption, for logistical reasons: she wanted to pick up drugs to take somewhere else.

It was a botched police attempt to seal off flows of people and substances that sparked the Stonewall riots.

In the last two years a trans-led migrant caravan saw dozens of trans and queer people crossing from south and central American countries to the US.

Initiatives to fund taxi rides for trans people, especially trans femmes of colour, travelling to and from events such as performances and parties, work to force the logistics of trans survival into the foreground of nightlife and culture. Travis Alabanza has made passing around the taxi fund hat part of the fabric of their performances.

## **BLOCKADES**

'We are not in transition. We are in occupation.'  
Verity Spott, '(Manifesto)' (2012)

After the recuperation of queer/trans/fem anger into a 'non-violent bloc' at the "October Rebellion" march against the World Bank in Washington, DC (2007) a specifically queer and trans blockade at the Republican National Convention in 2008 was organised, leading to an upsurge in explicitly queer actions and spaces in anarchist organising sprung up across the US Midwest and later the rest of the country, and beyond, under the banner of 'Bash Back!'.



**Logistics is dystopian /  
as in dysphoria / Trans  
logistics is utopian / as  
in no future, utopia now  
/ as in let's block  
everything**



More recently, scientists have pointed out that Darwin's theories, and their synthesis with genetics, only apply to a tiny minority of complex organisms. Darwin himself, and many others since him, have also drawn attention to the importance of relationships and cooperation in species survival, and many people now think that 'methodological individualism' (focussing on a single species / individual / organ / cell / gene) lacks explanatory power. Furthermore, as Elizabeth Grosz and others have pointed out, Social Darwinism or neo-Darwinism ignore Darwin's theory of sexual selection, which is a driving force between all kinds of creativity and perversion in the 'natural' world.

However we may choose to challenge the logistical view of life, with its essentialist and reductive narratives about bodies and how we relate to them, the inter-connected histories of capitalist logistics and life sciences shows us all the more why the struggle against gender is necessarily counter-logistical.





## Extracts from..

# The Deadly Life of Logistics

MAPPING VIOLENCE IN GLOBAL TRADE

**Deborah Cowen**

### CONCLUSION

## Rough Trade?

Sex, Death, and the  
Queer Nature of Circulation

Figure 35 captures one moment in the extraordinary migration of the pronghorn antelope. Taking the longest trek of any land mammal in the United States, their migration follows the western mountain range. Increasingly treacherous as a result of human development and enclosure, their fraught migration has led the population of pronghorn to plummet to only 158 animals. This scene of seasonal circulation is captured in a major recent National Geographic production titled *Great Migrations*. The series explains that the precarious life of the pronghorn rests on the protection of their mobility. In fact, this is the recurring theme of the program across the hundreds of species and seven continents it surveys—that life itself relies on circulation, captured boldly in the show's motto: "Move or Die." National Geographic calls *Great Migrations* "its most ambitious programming initiative to date," with the effort to collect footage "the most arduous undertaking in the 122-year history of the National Geographic Society" (National Geographic 2010). The show premiered in 2010 in 330 million homes, 166 countries, and 34 languages. A hefty three-hundred-page coffee-table book with color photos and extended text serves as the official companion to the global television event. The text is a sensational mixture of science and fiction, quite literally; the descriptions of mating and migrating are mixed with the words of explorers and poets from the high period of European imperialism. The series offers a thrilling four-part romp through a ruthless, often violent, deeply racialized, social Darwinist world defined by necropolitics and reproductive heteronormativity. The individual episodes, like the book chapters, carry the titles "Born to Move," "Need to Breed," "Race to Survive," and "Feast or Famine." Like most nature shows of this genre,

# TRANS LOGISTICS IS TRANS STRATEGY

CALL FOR LOGISTICAL WAR ON  
RAINBOW CAPITALISM

Many trans and queer people have criticised the presence of police, military, banks, corporations and other representatives of capitalism and the state, at Pride parades. Some have put themselves at risk to disrupt this image-washing, interfering with the presence of these organisations, and drawing attention to desires and demands that directly contradict their interests.

Actions such as these have allowed people to forge links, to reach friends who might not otherwise have known about them, to experiment with acting collectively and on the streets, claiming as a zone of struggle what is intended as a zone of passive spectacle.

These are the first steps towards real collective power, and without moving towards this it is impossible for us to imagine what real 'pride' might feel like.

However the representatives of state and capital will continue to demonstrate at Pride while it is still profitable to do so, and they will still permit Pride to happen while it remains something that can be controlled and policed.

To begin to take back Pride from profit and control, we must recognise that profitability and controllability are not wounded by criticism, but by direct attack. The nature of this attack must be strategic and, specifically, logistical.

Trans Survival, Trans Defense

September 2018





FIGURE 35. Pronghorn antelope migration, 2009. Source: Photograph by Drew Rush/National Geographic Creative.

*Great Migrations* often hovers on the edge of gruesome: one species grabbing another with outstretched teeth or claws and ripping open flesh or one species hunting then eating the young of another. Yet distinct from similar scenes in the established archive of nature shows is the framing of this violence as a *problem of disruption*. As the online social gaming companion to the National Geographic series (*MOVE!*) suggests, “With potential risks looming at every turn—from unforgiving terrain to ferocious predators—the decision to keep moving or stop to graze could be one of life or death.”

*Great Migrations*’s narrative of the survivalist imperative to circulation is a story of not only animal migration but also trade flows. It is not just the species of the natural world that must keep circulating; capital, too, must move or die, and thus commodities must keep in motion. The connection drawn between animal migrations and trade flows is direct. In fact, the United Parcel Service (UPS) provided the major corporate sponsorship for the series as part of their dramatic recent rebranding initiative (Miller 2012). Rich Goldfarb, the vice president of media sales for National Geographic, explains how the partnership with UPS worked specifically “to create an association between animal migratory behavior and the logistics that allow UPS to unfailingly ship millions of packages around the globe” (Crupi 2010b). He continues, highlighting how the



UPS “emphasis on logistics proved to be a great contextual fit with what *Great Migrations* is all about. It was sort of a marriage made in heaven.” In the UPS partnership with National Geographic, logistics becomes the bloody ripping flesh of one species eating another in order to move and survive. This “nonhuman” story of logistics is animated by procreative sex and gruesome death. “Move or Die” is the story of *logistics at war*.

But the sponsorship of *Great Migrations* is only one side of the massive UPS campaign. A second thread tells a very different tale, anchored in images of happy singing workers and consumers united in their love for efficient goods movement. In the civilian story of logistics, UPS promises its audience the ordering of chaos and the satisfaction of deep consumer desire. The UPS marketing campaign brings logistics out of the background and into center stage. It aims centrally at expanding corporate sales and normalizing global sourcing and supply but also at cultivating affect for logistics’ logics. The art and science of logistics is presented not only as efficient but also as *lovable*.

Like the field of logistics more broadly, the UPS “We ♥ Logistics” campaign is impossible to ignore because of its massive scale. Logistics is big. According to industry estimates, it involves \$8 trillion in global economic activity and nearly \$1.3 trillion of trade just within the United States (Miller 2012). The ad campaign is also marked by its scale; it emerged out of a \$200 million contract that UPS signed with New York-based firm Ogilvy & Mather in 2009 involving “tightly integrated media of every kind; television, print, online, outdoor, radio, special events, targeted sponsorships, and social media” (Ogilvy 2012). This coordination of flows across multiple platforms and media mirrors the actual inter-modal assemblage of contemporary global supply chain management. Advertising Director Betsy Wilson describes “We ♥ Logistics” as “more than an advertising campaign, it’s really a global communications platform” (quoted in Dickens 2010).

Both the corporate identity of logistics and the specific image of this technoscientific assemblage presented in the campaign are worth scrutinizing. Beyond the scale and complexity of global logistics, the campaign also renders its defining political logics: the rationalization of space—the reduction of complexity into a singular system of order and the simultaneous privatization, standardization, and commodification of matter. Yet in “splitting the screen” of circulation between the corporate world of commodity flows and the natural territory of animal migration, the UPS campaign inserts a profoundly social Darwinist politics of species survivalism deep into the “♥” of the human life of logistics. Rather than segregate



In a world in which innovations in logistics techniques has led to the retreat of organised labour as a political force, life under capitalism puts us under intense pressure to act like corporations, as interest-driven, self-fashioning individuals, working even when not being paid to maximise their profitability and improve their personal brand.

As you strive to arrive on time, to deliver the goods, to carry fragile cargo, to do the heavy lifting, to be flexible, reliable, or resilient, to ‘revolutionise’ how you relate to others/yourself, to accept that you and those you care about (and those you don’t care about) are ‘on a journey’... do you ever feel like you’re getting involved in the shipping business?

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(\*sartorial = to do with clothing . Capital is when you can use what you own to get more. Labour is can’t, so you have to sell your body/time to survive.)



**DMC TRANS LOGISTICS CO.**



# RELATIONSHIPMENTS

Sometimes it feels like all this work we have to do for ourselves and our relationships amounts to becoming entrepreneurs of our own social/political/sartorial capital\*. Depending on these forms of capital for our existence, just as we depend on the system of economic capital (and benefit from it as inhabitants of Western nation states) we may find that they come to define us.

People who want to resist or live outside of economic capital may find themselves becoming vanguards or pioneers, branching out into new territories for accumulation. Subcultures that value 'dropping out' of wages and rent might end up populated by individuals very good at finding ways to get and hold onto capital in non-economic forms.

Logistics companies often use the language of social capital and relationship capital in their marketing. Some people who practice relationship anarchy start to sound like miniature corporations, as they balance the books of credit and debit and try to work out if they're getting enough out of their partners, or calculate whether it's advantageous to start out on a new venture. Sometimes contracts are made, and even written out and signed.



FIGURE 36. UPS advertisement: "We ♥ Logistics." Source: Copyright 2013 United Parcel Service of America Inc. All rights reserved.

When it's planes in the sky for a chain of supply  
That's logistics  
When the pipes for the line come precisely on time  
That's logistics  
A continuous link that is always in sync  
That's logistics  
Carbon footprint's reduced, bottom line gets a boost  
That's logistics  
With new ways to compete there will be cheers on Wall Street  
That's logistics  
When technology knows right where everything goes  
That's logistics  
Bells will ring, ring-a-ding  
Ring-a-ding, ring-a-ding  
That's logistics  
There will be no more stress 'cause you called UPS  
That's logistics



has become the dominant paradigm for conceptualizing the security of logistics systems, and it emerges from the natural sciences (Christopher and Peck 2004; Gerven 2012; Sheffi 2006, 2007; Waters 2007).

216 Mark Duffield (2011, 761) argues that the discourse of resilience blurs war, nature, and economy precisely because it casts both social and natural worlds as threatened vital systems. Ecology and economy figure as dynamic though vulnerable organic systems, essential to human (and planetary) life, that therefore need to be secured. He explores how ecologist C. S. Holling’s work in the 1960s and 1970s “reflected in nature how contemporary society mobilizes for war” and argues that “ecology naturalized war.” Duffield outlines a break “with modernist conceptions of social protection that are based upon knowing and protecting against the future through statistically derived forms of insurance . . . resilience positively embraces uncertainty and the ultimate unknowability of the future.” Highlighting the imperial circulation of the concept, he continues, “An organism, an individual, an eco-system, a social institution, an engineered infrastructure, even a city—in fact, anything that is networked, evolving or ‘life-like’ in some way—is now said to be resilient in so far as it able to absorb shocks and uncertainty, or reconfigure itself in relation to such shocks while still retaining its essential functionality.” While resilience has become a mobile metaphysics blurring economy, ecology, and war, this is not the first time that theories of the natural world have migrated to and from these other domains. The notion that capital must circulate in order to accumulate—that the very survival of capitalism is contingent on circulation—is a foundational premise of Marx’s critique of political economy, examined in more detail in chapter 3. Marx suggests in conversation with Engels that Darwin’s vision of species competition was borrowed from the social relations of production that constituted early industrial capitalism (Ball 1979, 473). In yet another interesting twist, modern geopolitics, most notably Friedrich Ratzel’s nineteenth century theories of the geopolitical state as competitive “organism,” borrowed directly from Darwin’s theories of species competition (Cowen and Smith 2009). Thus modern theories of warring nation-states were modeled on evolutionary theories of species competition, which were themselves modeled on historically and geographically contingent capitalist social relations.

And yet perhaps most immediately significant here is the entanglement of nature, war, and trade that made the post–World War II revolution in logistics and the rise of supply chain capitalism possible. Historically, a systems theory that emerged largely out of biology and the natural sciences contributed in important ways to the broad discursive shift in which the 1960s revolution in logistics was an important effect and actor (see chapter 1). Since the mid-twentieth century revolution in logistics, systems thinking has become ubiquitous, most importantly through the rise of the concept of ecosystems fueled by environmental movements (Duffield 2011; Dyckhoff, Lackes, and Reese 2004), such that today the systems approach

in logistics and supply chain management is unquestioned, seemingly natural. While organic theories of systems were critically important to the revolution in logistics, so too were military models of physical circulation practiced during World War II and military conceptions of systems derived from the closed economies of defense procurement in the work of agencies like RAND, which gave us early systems analysis. Thus concern for the resilience of global logistics systems is a powerful contemporary installment in a long history of the tangled ontopolitics of war, trade, and the bios.

## “IF IT’S NOT WRITTEN ON THE SIDE OF A LORRY IT’S NOT MY GENDER IDENTITY”

I’m making this zine from a perspective of being against fixed identity. But this doesn’t mean I want to take away from people’s right to define themselves on their own terms.

It’s just that I’m less interested in the question ‘**who am I?**’ but more in asking ‘**who might I become, with which others, and in what environment?**’. It’s from the latter perspective that I approach the problems of gender / gendered violence, cis-hetero-patriarchal oppression, transphobia and transmisogyny, in daily life and in my wider ‘community’.

So I’m on the move. For this reason, you might think the idea of gender fluidity would appeal to me. But for me it seems to be entirely an answer to the first question (who am I) and doesn’t take me any closer to answering the second (who might I become).