

About this Issue

Cara Hoffman

2021

Welcome to Fifth Estate's *Anarchist Review of Books*, edited by a collective based in Austin, Detroit, Chicago, New York, Oakland and Seattle. ARB brings you intelligent, subversive, non-dogmatic writing with an anti-authoritarian perspective.

We put this issue out at a time of grave concern in American publishing. A deadening combination of corporate consolidation and academic professionalization of writing has produced decades of embarrassing, dull work and uninspired critique that stands as a record of cowardice and complicity in literature; a one-two punch that has brought wily, vibrant work to its knees.

For more than twenty years success in American publishing has been determined by a handful of literary finishing schools—an aptly named terminal degree, a contract with a house (owned by one of just four corporations) that professes to care about good writing not politics—and an implicit understanding politics never refers to class.

You may think this is nothing new—one generation's Evelyn Waugh is another's Brett Easton Ellis is another's Ottessa Moshfegh. The literary world never seems to tire of elegant jaded monsters lamenting how the fall of empire sullied their pleasures and drove them to excess. A concern with good breeding has always dominated the world of contemporary literature, from the days of rich patron publishers who christened their houses with family names, to the corporate coups of media beginning in the 80s, to the current neoliberal essentialism which seeks to brand content and authors by race, gender and sexuality, in order to keep books and authors in easily marketable categories.

But the early patrician patrons of literature, white and sexist all, were still moved by the power of the imagination, and by writing as an intellectual pursuit. They operated independently. Today's corporate gatekeepers, racist and sexist as ever, have reduced readers to data points, books to units, editors to corporate acquisition officers, and authors to content providers who are bullied to adapt their work for the benefit of publicly traded conglomerates.

The *Anarchist Review of Books* publishes work by and about radical voices in fiction, poetry, cultural criticism, and creative non-fiction. We are dedicated to creating a transformation of society—through literature and through open, incisive critique of the media, politics, history, art and writing that shape our world.

In this issue we feature the revolutionary art of Dread Scott, Joyce Kozloff and Ben Durham, interrogate the work of Sylvia Federici, pay tribute to Stuart Christie and David Graeber, and dig into new books by Vanessa Veselka, Jósè d'Arbaud and McKenzie Wark.

G. Gerard takes readers beyond the gloss of *Uncanny Valley* to reveal big tech's scabs in training and Charlie Hix welcomes an Antifa activist home from Rikers.

We know that readers are hungry for truly diverse and transgressive work and we call to all readers, writers and workers in media to bite the hand that breeds you, bite the hand that brands you.

All Power to the Imagination,

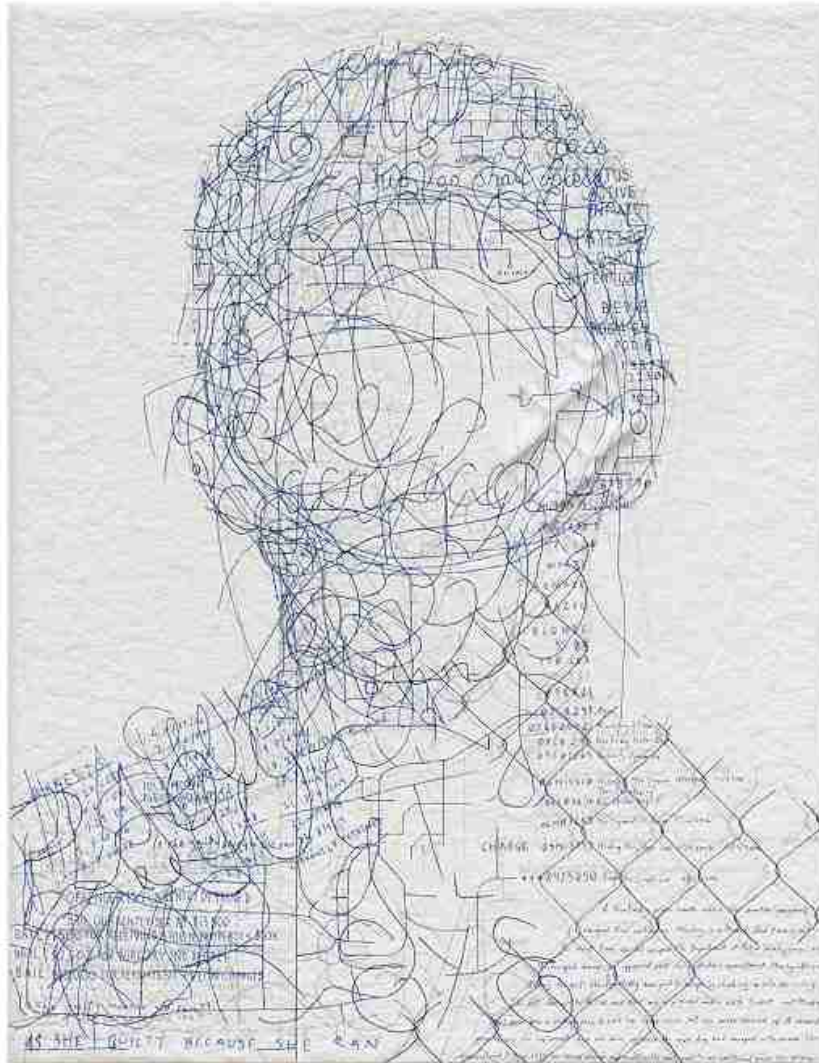
Cara Hoffman

December 2020

**fifth
estate**

Winter 2021 www.FifthEstate.org

The Anarchist Review *of Books*



Permit #792
48068
Royal Oak MI
US Postage Paid
Presort Standard

Change Service Requested

Fifth Estate
PO BOX 201016
Farmdale MI 48220



fifth Estate

Cara Hoffman
About this Issue
2021

<https://www.fiftheastate.org/archive/408-winter-2021/about-this-issue>
Fifth Estate #408, Winter, 2021

fiftheastate.anarchistlibraries.net