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*Imagine how a trans woman with dreadlocks is treated by society and then has to navigate a community that no longer views them as compliant with the strict laws that govern it? Imagine this woman going from house to house while jobless and homeless and being told, “No, we won’t house you because of your hair.” We’re not talking about a genuine threat to people’s immediate physical safety. This isn’t someone who has committed sexual assault or is threatening their roommates at gun point. Yet ask yourself how many members of the community would just post “ew, YT dre\*ds” or some other reddit one liner if they posted in a queer housing group begging for help? How is this cliquishness revolutionary?...*

*I’ve strayed in the past. I’ve caved in and cut my dreads twice and always regretted it. I keep coming back to the hairstyle because it is so integral to my identity, my core being. It’s who I am. We spend our childhoods being fed propaganda about how all the “bad” people in the world will use peer pressure to force you to smoke, drink, do drugs, walk home with a stranger.*

*When we grow up and become politically and culturally aware, we see hypocrisy. The peer pressure from society tells us to follow the career path, invest in the stock market, vote for change, and follow the newest trends.*

*Suddenly the community police are telling us (in the exact same propagandistic, hyper conformist, neoliberal tone they used to tell us smoking was bad) that our expression is all wrong, our bodies are up for debate, our lifestyles are subject to internet scrutiny, and if we don’t conform we’re the “bad people.”*

Warzone Distro  
WARZONEDISTRO.NOBLOGS.ORG  
2026

# Our Dreadlocks are Revolutionary

*Conventional Beauty Standards, Bodily Autonomy & Anarchy*



Gail Tail

## *Introduction – In an Age of Woke Slop*

A.I. HAS GIVEN us exactly one gift; the redefinition of the word “slop.” It is the generic sludge of content that seeps from water devouring, energy wasting server farms. Silicon fortresses where upper class cis men burn through our finite resources to churn out digital drivel. Yet A.I. can only imitate what humans have been doing for ages. Long before the slop generators spewed digital delirium out into the world, humans were regurgitating the nonsense ourselves.

The difference between the faux leftists Tumblr posts and genuine discussion and dissemination of political theory is hardly blurry. The **woke slop** of social media demagogues follows the Angry Atheist YouTuber formula to a T. Find someone or something obviously in the wrong, moralize over it, mock it, “educate” the audience via regurgitation of trivia, and then issue an edict. Either you obey the edict or you’re the enemy. End on a memetic catchphrase. I recommend “decolonization.” That one’s in vogue at the moment.

Social media pauperized our resistance. Community centers, ways of life, alternative cultures, and the very act of resistance itself have been discarded as inconvenient. Do-It-Yourself is a meme and not an actual stance. The same slactivists who have a new delivery from Amazon every single day are keen to tell us what is and isn’t problematic. The same people defending identity politics are also defending the “just keep spending cus there’s no point in fighting it” interpretation of *No Ethical Consumption Under Capitalism*.

For over 15 years – that’s a decade and a half – we’ve seen the collapse of resistance culture and the rise of the social media justice influencer. Bicycle collectives, veganism as a political stance, collective squatting, rail hopping, hitch hiking, anarcho-punks, and free expression have been swept away in favor of a cartoon caricature of a “leftist.” The results speak for themselves. In those 15 years, we have lost so much and the fascists have nearly achieved total victory over the world’s governments (a redundant statement, I know).

What do dreadlocks have to do with this? Everything. You see, it’s not just the dreads. It’s understanding the actual ideas, ethics, and beliefs behind the so-called ‘leftist theories.’ The one people advocate so viciously for yet don’t actually believe in. Things like bodily autonomy, an end to racism in all its forms, and an end to fascism. How can someone who calls themselves a leftist decide that a woman has a right over her body, be it her womb or the right to transition, but not her hair? *An abortion is one thing but let’s not get too hasty here. Hair is just taking it too far!*

### *How Bush and Obama Killed the Left*

HERE IS THE quickest and dirtiest summary I can give for the last quarter century. In the 1990s, the anti-globalization movement, radical environmentalist movements, anti-colonial resistance, and countless other activists were making

at least a glimmer of what I see. Look at footage of the 1999 World Trade Org protests and tell me you can’t see rebels fighting and winning in a way we so sorely need. Look at bands like Nausea, Aus-Rotten, and ¡Tch’Kung! and tell me the message isn’t as powerful as it ever was. Look at the movements to bring bicycling to the masses, fighting the animal cruelty industrial complex and advocate for veganism, the crust punks riding the rails, the great musicians who spoke from the soul, the innumerable civil rights activists who embraced their roots and rejected European hair standards. Do you see something worth joining in? Hell, even those misguided 2000s tattoo models still sparked rebellion in the young girls who saw another way to be in an age when Britney Spears and Paris Hilton were the mascots for what young girls were “supposed” to think was cool?

This isn’t about who is and isn’t allowed to wear dreadlocks. It’s about telling you why they are important to everyone. It’s about dispelling the myth we just get them for fashion’s sake or because we don’t know any better. It’s about pride, rebellion, and a shared history. A history that is being erased by reddit-esque quips and reply guys. This is about taking pride in something worth being proud of! Dreadlocks aren’t antiquated or a vestige of a bygone time. It’s the future of rebellion as much as it is of rebellion time. Above all else, it’s about love. Love – no matter how much folly it can get you in – is always a path worth following.

### **Other related reading material:**

*Race is ‘Spooky’*

*Cultural Appropriation is a Toxic Concept*

*Really Though, Not All “Black” People Give A Fuck About “White” Dreads*

*Identity Crisis: Identity, Politics and Anti-Politics (An Excerpt from Queer Ultra Violence Bash Back! Anthology)*

*The Limits of Contemporary Anti-oppression Theory and Practice (A critique of Privilege Theory and Cultural Essentialism)*

*Toward Terra Incognita: A Critical Look at Cultural Essentialism, Nationalism, and Body Policing*

**These and many more can be found at:  
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Dreadlocks are the ultimate symbol of rebellion to me. I saw them on everyone I admired. Be it the alternative models of the 00s. Those who I desired more than anything to look like for usual unhealthy reasons young girls idolize models who are used by the toxic fashion industry, even if it's dressed up as "alt." The super cool bicycle punks and anarcho-punks of the anarchist scene. The smelly dirty kids of Tompkins Square Park. My friends, the bands I loved. It was everything to me. It still is and might one day become what it was meant to be. A symbol, a cause, and a friendly flag to all those like minds.

I've strayed in the past. I've caved in and cut my dreads twice and always regretted it. I keep coming back to the hairstyle because it is so integral to my identity, my core being. It's who I am. We spend our childhoods being fed propaganda about how all the "bad" people in the world will use peer pressure to force you to smoke, drink, do drugs, walk home with a stranger. When we grow up and become politically and culturally aware, we see hypocrisy. The peer pressure from society tells us to follow the career path, invest in the stock market, vote for change, and follow the newest trends. Suddenly the community police are telling us (in the exact same propagandistic, hyper conformist, neoliberal tone they used to tell us smoking was bad) that our expression is all wrong, our bodies are up for debate, our lifestyles are subject to internet scrutiny, and if we don't conform we're the "bad people." I remember exactly what I was told to say if some weirdo tries to mess with my body as a kid. Bad touch! Stranger danger! I don't know you! I need an adult!

All joking aside, how can we have strayed so far from ourselves and our respect for one another? What happened to us that we became so enamored with morality that we forgot our humanity? Dreadlocks are who I am. I love them with a burning passion. I think they're cool as all hell! If you have any respect for me as a human being, you have to accept this part of me. Not strong arm me, shame me, excise me like a cancer. I belong here as much as anyone else. There is nothing wrong with my hair. I am not being unreasonable by scoffing at petty bullies and calling out their bullshit.

### *Why You Should Get Dreads*

BECAUSE YOU LOVE THEM. Because you've always wanted them. Because you felt like it. Because you think they'd look cool on you. Because you think they're bad ass! Because life is short so wear the hair you want. There is only one wrong answer and that is, "because someone else..." That's it. If you're doing something for someone else, be it their approval or fear of their disapproval, then you're setting yourself up for failure and pain.

Look back at all this history, media, and movements and tell me you don't see at least a glimmer of what I see. Look at footage of the 1999 World Trade Org protests and tell me you can't see rebels fighting and winning in a way we so

great strides towards total liberation. From the Oka Crisis, to AIDEX protests, to the Zapatistas, Warner Creek, Earth Liberation Front, and of course the WTO Protests, the left had such momentum. It was an extremely diverse movement.

Dreads were pretty common among these groups, be it environmentalists or anarcho-punks, or just the style of the '90s in general. Then we had three devastating blows to the left we never recovered from.

The first was 9/11 and the Patriot Act. 9/11 took the wind out of the Anti-Globalization movement's sails and caused it to falter. The Patriot Act is the foundational document to modern techno-fascism, dismissing all personal rights in favor of the surveillance state. People were rightly terrified of it and the new powers Homeland Security had been given. When the initial Iraq War protests failed to stop the invasion and Bush won a second term, it genuinely did feel as if all was lost.

The second blow was the Green Scare. Environmentalists were being heavily targeted by the Bush regime and later Obama. While its most famous case was against the members of the Earth Liberation Front, across the board activists were being stalked, wiretapped, set up for entrapment, and terrorized by the authorities. It's impossible to build a movement when the full force of government suppression is leaning in on every door, window, email, phone call, and text.

Finally there was the great False Hope of Obama. Obama lied his ass off to portray himself as some new kind of politician. He was going to be a man of the people whose literal fucking tagline was "CHANGE." How fucking hilarious was it that he kept the Bush doctrine intact. He kept the wars going, signed the Patriot Act back into law, kept the torture camps up and running, fueled the surveillance state, need I go on? The wildest part of all this is that Boomers and Gen X'ers genuinely bought his bullshit hook, line, and sinker. They were more than happy to pretend that Obama was the end of Bad Times and the start of Good Times. Oh, and let's not forget the Great Rescission. That sucked too.

So around this time, Boomers are going full Cronus and Gen X'ers have never liked anyone younger than themselves. The activist organizations, DIY spaces, coops, squats and everything relating to resistance from their generations are falling into disrepair. They don't want to bring in the next generation and pass the torch. This is the same time the actual internet is dying out and social media is being born.

Thus enters Tumblr. Tumblr is a microblogging site that kicks off the woke slop. Young college kids – who in previous eras would have joined aforementioned communities and become politically literate via immersion and action – instead began to regurgitate their curriculum onto their blogs for angsty teens to gulp up religiously. The actual "left" got cut out to make a faux left. Memetic causes, trends, and edicts are being issued by people who are

completely removed from both the causes and reality.

At this point in my life, I remember how activist orgs were ghost towns, devoid of anyone under 35. Trying to recruit millennials was like pulling teeth. Sure, they wanted to talk a big game about social justice but they didn't actually want to do anything about it.

Our history lesson ends where Trump and the alt-right begin. Upon seeing this new wellspring of feckless idiots fork over cash to right with demagogues, former angry atheist "skeptics" did an about face and spewed Tumbrisms and faux leftist social justice slogans in what is now called "breadtube." These cynical grifters became the face of the modern "left." Thus, our resistance died so that an incel's Patreon and Nebula subs can rise, *and don't forget to like, click, and subscribe.*

### *Faux Leftists Think Like a Democrat*

THE PERFORMATIVE OUTRAGE Democrats are known for has become a meme in and of itself. The one liners, quips, and retorts to GOP cruelty are as meaningless as their campaign promises. Faux leftists have largely taken this to heart with endless virtue signaling and woke mongering. The virtues they espouse are never followed through on in action. The truths they wish to impart are nothing more than quips to get social points and move up in the social media hierarchy. The insincerity is not just a crime of vanity but actively sabotages both genuine activists and those who are apt at political education. This is perhaps even done so intentionally as the virtual signaling woke monger is in direct competition with the genuine article for social media clout.

For example; the job of a political educator is to provide the knowledge required for someone to become a revolutionary. This requires understanding people, meeting them on their own terms, and delicately imparting the harsh truths. The awakening must be palatable. The goal of the woke monger is to use harsh truths to get a post to go viral. They choose to attack a movie, singer, book, artist, etc directly because people will react to this harshly. An educator knows that people wrap their egos and identities up in their favorite media. Directly attacking that will repulse them. The woke mongers know this will not work but does so banking on the negativity to score points with those already in agreement. They taint the revolution by making it a cheap gimmick to get likes, shares and followers. Not unlike how Democrats virtue signal to get votes and donations.

### *Cultural Appropriation Can Never Be Defined*

WHEN IT COMES to "cultural appropriation," it's an umbrella term for any number of separate issues of varying legitimacy. The exploitation of culture by celebrities is primarily a capitalist issue, in which all things are commoditized.

uniquely American. Only in this country of excess, ignorance, and superficiality could such a thing happen. There is no queer and trans community. There is only the scene. One of fashion.

Of course there will be those who advocate for a chosen community. People who believe that someone should be excluded from that community if they have politics, a lifestyle, or a personality they dislike. Say, for example, there's a queer gift shop that refuses to sell postcards to a queer woman with dreadlocks. They would be in the right, no? After all, it's a chosen community. This is the same ethical framework by which the supreme court case *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission* (2018) handed down a victory to homophobes across the country. The same framework that Kim Davis took to the supreme court to try and end gay marriage. It is the idea that *people only have rights and resources so long as I like them and agree with them.* The ethical nightmare of dreadlock discrimination is just a small piece of the faux leftist pie.

There's a line from Phantom of the Opera that comes to mind. "[Who is] This slave of fashion...?" Who are these rich, frivolous, privileged dilettantes who have appointed themselves the taste makers and arbiters of their communities? The trust fund kids of the SoCal elite. The flyover state brats playing poverty tourism while it's convenient. The sheltered, self righteous, over opinionated, myopic woke mongers of the Pacific Northwest. Those whose college education has blinded them to critical thinking and engaging with the communities they claim to serve while gentrifying their neighborhoods. Those with antisocial/narcissistic personality disorder who wear beliefs like clothing to manipulate people. The transplants of Bushwick and West Philly who are a collection of all the latter. To sum them all up; the counter revolutionaries and petite bourgeoisie.

### *Why I Got Dreads*

I WAS BORN in the late '80s and grew up in the '90s. My childhood world view was shaped by the influence of Gen X. Grunge was my first taste of cool. Bart Simpson was my first antihero. As a kid growing up in New York, I saw the squatters of the Lower East Side rebuild a neighborhood with their bare hands. They were all dreaded punks with bad tattoos and struggled against the fascist NYPD to make a home, only to see it got stolen from them by force. My parents used to drive by The Bank, the NYC goth club on Houston and Ave A. There, waiting to get in and dance to Joy Division, were the dyed hair and dreads of the NYC goth scene. I remember Astor Place and St. Marks when they were still the place to be. Dread head alternative heaven, if you don't mind stepping over discarded heroin needles. I remember what a radical anarchist looked like on the subway. A head filled with dreads. I remember learning about the Zapatistas, Mumia, AK Press, and CrimethInc from the inside of a Rage Against the Machine CD case.

At this junction, a faux leftist would point to the slew of weird social media personalities with dreads that are equal parts ignorant, shallow, consumerist, and racist. To which I say, what about them? You can find these exact people with straight hair, no hair, dyed hair. You can find plenty of shallow racist tender queers. Does that mean that the entire queer and trans community is unforgivably racist? Your average faux leftist would answer with “yes!” Like many right wingers, they have the all or nothing mentality. It’s either perfect or it’s bad and we shouldn’t do it. A binary world view, locked in with no nuance or critical thinking. Unless it’s something they like and THEN there are shades of grey, and we should all forgive and believe in restorative justice, and it’s not a big deal, right?

### *A Temperature Check on the Revolution*

HOW MANY TIMES have you seen someone exiled from the community for thought crimes? Someone said something with nothing to back it up. No screenshots, callout posts, just “I heard...” There is no such thing as a “chosen” community. A community is a group that lives in the same neighborhood. It’s a group that is marginalized. You don’t get to pick and choose who is and isn’t a member. How the least and “worst” of that community are treated marks the quality of the community.

Social justice is a pretty nebulous phrase. Our only shared definition of the world “justice” comes from the prison industrial complex and the oppression of the state. The state’s monopoly on violence is synonymous with the word.

Justice is associated with kangaroo courts, literal witch hunts, the McCarthy hearings and lynchings. How can we ever hope to have a community when there are gate keepers who decide who is and isn’t worthy of being in it? How can we coexist and support each other when someone can just label someone else as problematic with no cause or explanation and force a vulnerable person out into the cold with nowhere to go?

Imagine how a trans woman with dreadlocks is treated by society and then has to navigate a community that no longer views them as compliant with the strict laws that govern it? Imagine this woman going from house to house while jobless and homeless and being told, “No, we won’t house you because of your hair.” We’re not talking about a genuine threat to people’s immediate physical safety. This isn’t someone who has committed sexual assault or is threatening their roommates at gun point. Yet ask yourself how many members of the community would just post “ew, YT dre\*ds” or some other reddit one liner if they posted in a queer housing group begging for help? How is this cliquishness revolutionary?

The greater revolutionary movement world wide has no time for this nonsense. Body policing is the symptom of a privileged elite class who have hijacked numerous communities and turned them into scenes. This issue is

It’s bad faith to say the average person is doing as much damage and exploitation as a millionaire. Accreditation for the origin of some aspect of culture is an issue of colonialism. The concept that culture is an intellectual property that “belongs” to a group is capitalist thinking. The wealthy brats of Coachella and Burning Man using indigenous headpieces is one of blatant racist mockery, not appropriation. The idea that someone can grant permission to engage in culture is hyperbolic and authoritarian. Who gets to decide this? Is there a popular vote? Do we take a poll on a yearly basis? What if only a fraction side either way and the vast majority don’t care? What if I get permission from my black friends and / or partners? You see how quickly this idea falls to pieces. The reality is you can never truly have a good faith argument about cultural appropriation because the definition will change when convenient.

Recently the argument has shifted to people’s feelings. First – and most importantly – using people’s emotions as the basis for political edicts is the most right wing argument there is. This is what the American right is known for. An irrational demand based on emotional immaturity and arrested development. Do

I really have to explain that *Culture Appropriation is a Toxic Concept* when Farah Shah’s eponymous essay should have been the death of that misery? Just to reiterate because this bears repeating, when people are called out about how dreadlocks appear in numerous cultures, woke slop mongers move the goal post to make it about “respecting people’s feelings” (???) while shifting back and forth on what exactly is the issue.

Here is the real test. Do you believe someone has a right to their own body? If you answered, “Yes, **but...**” then you don’t. There are no conditions, exceptions, or asterisks attached to someone’s rights. If you think someone has the right to their body, that means they have it regardless of your feelings on the subject. It’s not a right if it’s conditional to someone else’s emotions. Do we ban abortion because some Christians think it’s murder? I’m sure there’s a few out there who wail, and scream, and thrash in agony thinking about all those aborted fetuses.

What if said wailers were black Christians? What if they said that abortion is racist because it’s white doctors killing unborn black children? What if they said you can’t be for black liberation and abortion? Would you take that seriously? Would that be enough to make you give up fighting for abortion? The whole pastiche of inarticulate sentiments passed off as “cultural appropriation” is absurd and silly as fuck. It cannot and should not be taken seriously.

### *Faux Alternative, a Defanged Punk Effigy*

DYED HAIR, TATTOOS, AND PIERCINGS were once symbols of rebellion. They allowed young rebels to confront mainstream culture and fight conformity. While the people on TV were squeaky clean, all American families, us punks fought against this Reaganite image with everything we had in us. Our attire was not a uniform, it was a shared coat of armor against the conservative

fashion uniform that was being forced on us. Some people – followers of the mainstream for whom conformity is key to their personality – attempt to accuse us of being conformists in our attire. Yet it is the opposite that is true. We attract like minds. Those who not only want to dress this way, but find freedom in it. NOBODY is forcing you to be a punk. If you don't like it, then it's simply not for you. These same conformists always end with the baffling statement, "you should dress normal to rebel against punk." In what world does that make sense? They genuinely cannot fathom doing something because you want to. They can only think in terms of who they obey. It explains why those exact people switched sides from Bernie / A.O.C. to Trump without a second's thought. That is the depth of sheepishness which we fight against.

All this changed when dyed hair became popular. Suddenly we had micro-trends. Aesthetics. Meaningless meme subculture ripoffs. At long last the normie could make a mock version of rebellion to aspire to. Along with this came a purging of the actual rebellious signifiers. Dreadlocks chief among them. They were simply too rebellious in addition to being labeled "problematic."

The current state of "alt" is a hashtag and a series of products to buy. Goth – which has always had issues with racism, misogyny, and fascist imagery – swapped out its love of death and the macabre for Halloween core. It is a commercial trend for revealing clothing which men fetishize and sexualize. It is a hashtag on Tiktok for the latest *whatever*. Likewise punk and queer culture have become commercialized. Enamel pins, patches, and "punk" are products.

Dreadlocks stand in defiance to all this. They are not trendy. They are not commercial. They require a strength of character that is lacking in the trend followers. As surfers say, *you can't fake the funk*.

#### *Sanitations vs (Racial) Hygiene*

SANITATION IS KNOWING to wash your hands after using the bathroom. It's not letting the garbage sit in the corner, growing mold and gathering pests. It's not letting dirty dishes pile up in the sink till roaches and mice come into your apartment. It's taking care of the black mold in your bathroom. So many Tumblrites make light of the filth they live in. It's not depression, it's a sort of twisted poverty tourism crossed with masochism. It is fetishized by spoiled brats whose parents always looked after them. These same brats who spend hundreds of dollars on hair care products. That vegan, cruelty free hair dye is sitting next to the poisonous hair bleach that was tested on animals.

The cry of "dreadlocks are dirty and gross" is transparently racist. It's taking the demonization of BIPOC hairstyles and just seeing if they can get away with it as long as it's aimed at the privileged. Not unlike the misogynists who found out they can proudly talk about how much they hate women so long as they specify it's just the white ones they hate.

When we look at the travelers, the DIY punks, the bicycle-heads, and the artists, they are only dirty insofar that they do not commit to a regiment of products. They wash their hands after they use the toilet, they bathe when needed, they take care of themselves in more natural and less toxic ways. Chemicals do not factor into their routine. Yet it is the chemical and beauty industry dependent who often glorify the faux leftist rot elemental lifestyle. As long as their hair care products are in a row, as long as their neon blue bangs pop, filth can be their life.

I bring this up because "dirty" is the generic word used against the DIY rebels. It's slander and hypocritical. If by "dirty" you mean not wasting money and resources bleaching things, or washing clothes that really don't need to be washed, or hemming things instead of just buying more crap, then I guess it's a dirty lifestyle. I've seen the pigsties these faux leftists live in. Deeply unsanitary hell holes with moldy dishes, piles of trash, beds with food crumbs in them from streaming shows from dusk till dawn, pets that piss and shit everywhere unchecked. No, our dreads are the least of your sanitation problems. I assure you, they are infinitely more clean than your black mold ridden railroad apartment in Bushwick or Ridgewood, or your rotting house in Portland, Seattle, or West Philly.

#### *Ethics and a Code to Live by*

DO YOU BELIEVE in a personal code? Honor is the wrong word but it's not too far off from having something to live by. The anarchists of yore had one beyond "DIY or Die!" It was an idea of sustainable and resilient living outside the confines of capitalism. It was coops, mutual aid, Food Not Bombs, and a consistent living ethic. Bicycles, veganism, wearing all black, patches, piercings, tattoos, and especially dreadlocks were part of this code. It was about living your belief system.

In our current age, all belief is filtered through algorithms and products. Social media is not a medium, it is a marketing tool. YouTube is not a platform, it is a product. Everything that meets with social media approval and becomes a trend is a corporate approved product by its very nature. The current "culture" of the faux left is a series of memetic products packaged as beliefs. This is why these "cultures of resistance" feel so devoid of humanity. So surface level and banal.

Dreadlocks were a connection. A symbol of commitment to the principles of the left. It didn't matter what brought you to them, they were a flag flying high. It said loud and proud that you lived by the anarchistic principles you preached. It wasn't a hairstyle for quitters or trend followers. It meant someone could look at you and know they had a comrade in you. A friendly face in a sea of consumerism. Now more than ever it means all the more to those of us who wear them with pride. A recognition that we have a comrade in the other.