

Tiqqun is a complicated word. In the 17th Century, a band of Jewish radicals in the Middle East evoked Tikkun as a way to describe “redemption” or “restoration” or “justice.” In 1999, a band of militant writers in Paris used Tikkun as their pseudonym and published a series of essays calling for political insurrection.

Tiqqun is not an author, not a group of authors, not a person, not even a subject. It's not a body, but a place that bodies might be drawn to. Like a taste, or a mood, but nothing that can be named or located—a stubborn *whatever*, which is even more difficult to pin down than an elusive *je ne sais quoi*.

More than anything, Tiqqun is not a *what*, it's a *how*. Its problem is how to contest the form of power they call Empire, and its writings are the transcription of the movements and actions of an Imaginary Party—a party that strikes by way of withdrawal, that speaks by way of anonymity, and that asserts itself by getting rid of itself. The Imaginary Party is a *host*, in both the *hostile* and the *hospitable* senses of the term.

Introduction to Civil War (2001) is an alternative origin story for the modern state, and it goes something like this: set against the inherent reality that a free man is always at war with himself, the modern state was created to suppress civil war. After the Reformation, for example, it abandoned “the pious” as its system of control, invented “the social,” and developed a system of laws that authorized certain behaviors and promised protection from unauthorized violence. But Marxism exposed this system as fundamentally oppressive, so the liberal state had to invent the welfare state, which once again insisted it could promise safety from civil war. Now, as Empire, the state governs not by imposing laws, but by managing norms. This is biopolitics...and you can’t get out of it, ‘cause it’s inside you.

So you have to empty yourself. Become a *whatever*, form anonymous communities that enter into civil war. Like a virus, take possession of the state's manipulative definitions of violence, occupy them, re-route them, and live an everyday life of permanent molecular revolutions. Continue communism by others means.

Frantz Fanon reminded us that being “violent” originally meant being “vehement” or “intense,” and Tiqqun reminds us to reappropriate it, and go for it.

Jason E. Smith, along with Alex Galloway, translated *Introduction to Civil War* in 2010. He introduces the book and leads a reading on September 28th, 2011.