

UC San Diego

UC San Diego Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

VIGNETTES ON CATEGORIZATION AND AESTHETICS

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5gd779cr>

Author

Czacki, Catherine Erica

Publication Date

2019

Supplemental Material

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5gd779cr#supplemental>

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO
VIGNETTES ON CATEGORIZATION AND AESTHETICS

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

in

Art History, Theory, and Criticism (Concentration Art Practice)

by

Catherine Erica Czacki

Committee in charge:

Professor William Norman Bryson, Chair
Professor Grant Kester, Co-Chair
Professor William Arctander O'Brien
Professor Alena J. Williams
Professor K. Wayne Yang

2019

©
Catherine Erica Czacki, 2019
All rights reserved.

The Dissertation of Catherine Erica Czacki is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Co-chair

Chair

University of California San Diego

2019

DEDICATION

To Tadeusz Adam Czacki and the plants, animals, stones, air, water, dirt, songs and talismans. For all lost, hidden or subsumed knowledges to return sneakily, may we choose to continue removing the eye.



no ghost to me, I allow you here

EPIGRAPH

Why do people go to the artist and want to know why he did something? They can't understand the work. Sometimes they get an answer, sometimes they don't. Now, the reason they go away dissatisfied, if that be the case, is that they have not explored life to the extent whereby, whatever you conclude behind observing the work is probably okay with the artist. You don't have to go to the artist for any reason. My answer would have been they go to the artist because they want something they don't otherwise get from the work. Outstanding reason is, I don't understand the work, and I want to hear from the horse's mouth what the hell it means. And often times, when you hear from the horse's mouth, you're still not satisfied, because you still have disturbing feelings. Now, what the artist ought to have the intelligence to know and say directly, "You've gotta get your shit together, because mine is together. You see it evident right there. Now you get your shit together." That's a good answer. But a rather disturbing one, I'm sure ... I am a liaison between you and the world you live in.

Noah Purifoy

History is full of people who just didn't. They said *no thank you*, turned away, escaped to the desert, lived in barrels, burned down their own houses, killed their rapists, pushed away dinner, meditated into the light. Even babies refuse, and the elderly also. Animals refuse: at the zoo they gaze through Plexiglas, fling feces at human faces. Classes refuse. The poor throw their lives into barricades, and workers slow the line. Enslaved people have always refused, poisoning the feasts and aborting the embryos, and the diligent, flamboyant jaywalkers assert themselves against traffic as the first and foremost visible daily lesson in *just not*.

Anne Boyer

Did you know that writing stories down kills them?
Of course it does. Word's aren't meant to be stiff, unchanging things.

N.K. Jemisin

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Signature Page.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Epigraph.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
Acknowledgements.....	viii
Vita / Publications.....	x
Abstract of the Dissertation.....	xi
Introduction.....	1
Accumulative Un-alphabetized Index of Themes.....	11
Entry 1: Logical Horses: or Several Historical, Aesthetic, Allegorical, and Mythical Vignettes.....	42
Entry 2: The aaacc(k), co-authored with Angela Jennings.....	67
Entry 3: Almost Invisible Pleasures, Suzanne Herrera Li Puma.....	95
END.....	120
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	126

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Beverly Buchanan notebook image used with permission from Monica Park and the Brooklyn Museum. From “Beverly Buchanan: Ruins and Rituals.” By Czacki, 2016.....48

Figure 2: Phone Screenshot of Oxford English Dictionary’s Word of the Day Service. From “Heathen,” by Czacki, 2016.....54

Figure 3: Angela Jennings. “Stigma Fog,” installation image at UCSD. By Czacki, 2016.....71

Figure 4: Catherine Czacki, *Céliane*, 2015. “~,” installation image at SPF 15, Ocean Beach, San Diego, California. Photo by Morgan Mandalay, 2016.....78

Figure 5: Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, *Almost Invisible Pleasures*, 2015. Photo by Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, 2015.....96

Figure 6: Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, *Almost Invisible Pleasures*, 2016. “(Words With Love)” Edition of cards produced by Cara Benedetto, artist, Sonel Breslav, *Blonde Art Books*, and Corina Reynolds, *Small Editions*. Scan by Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, 2016.....99

Figure 7: Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, Detail of *untitled*, from series (*plurals*), 2012. Collage, silkscreen and drawing on tracing paper. Photograph by Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, 2012.....114

Figure 8: Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, (untitled), 2016. Screenshot by Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, 2016...116

Figure 9: Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, *Laundry Palabras*, 2018. Photo by Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, 2018.....117

Figure 10: Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, *Estoy Escribiendo*, 2018. Photo by Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, 2018.....118

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My deepest gratitude to my committee—Norman Bryson, Grant Kester, Alena J. Williams, K. Wayne Yang, and William Arctander O’Brien. My chair, Professor Bryson has maintained the longest correspondence with me about my art and writing, has seen be through many changes of track and theme patiently and with curiosity for my path, allowing me to deviate while always providing intellectual feedback. Professor Williams believed in my idiosyncratic writing and supported my difference while helping me gain more clarity at conveying my messages to the audiences at hand. Professor Yang arrived just in time to renew confidence around challenging disciplinary inquiry, and understands the deeper connections teaching and grassroots work have to art and writing. My co-chair, Professor Kester has provided ongoing support navigating the nuts and bolts of academia that felt most difficult for me. Professor O’Brien humored my continually expanding and unwieldy intellectual curiosity, reminding me that through all my travels, “the oracle needs a rock to tether to.” I’m not sure I’ve found the rock, but I’ll keep looking. For moral support and preliminary editing, thank you to Stan, Lev Kalman, Angie Jennings, Whitney Horn, Jeffrey Stewart, Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, Carolyn Lieba Francois Lazard, Josh Klein, Vanessa Bateman, Joel Fullerton, Adrienne Garbini, Asa Mendelsohn, S.T. Mark Czacki, Lauren Hanson, Noni Brynjolson, Patrick Dunford, Tim Ridlen, Katrin Pesch, Gracen Brilmyer, María Montenegro, Anne J. Gilliland, Michelle Ty, Cara Benedetto, and Lauren Cramer.

My dissertation would not have been possible without financial support from: the UC San Diego Chancellors Interdisciplinary Collaboratories Award, the UC San Diego GSA travel Grant, the UC San Diego Department of Visual Arts Russell Foundation Grant, the Terra Foundation for American Art residency and fellowship, the SOMA Mexico City residency, the UC San Diego Center for Iberian and Latin American Studies (CILAS) Travel Grant, and two quarters of research under the UC San Diego Department of Visual Arts Dissertation Completion Fellowship and Field Research Fellowship.

The book *Creosote*, by the author of this dissertation, published in 2019 by Line Script Diary, is a partner to the project. Entry 1: *Logical Horses: Or Several Historical, Aesthetic, Allegorical, and Mythical Vignettes*, in full, is a reprint of the material as it appears in UCLA’s Journal of Education and

Information studies, *InterActions*, for the Special Issue: “[mis]representation, [dis]memory, & [re]figuring the archival lens: visual archives & forms of representation.” Entry 2: *The aaacc(k)* is coauthored with Jennings, Angela. The dissertation author was the primary author of this chapter.

VITA

2003 Bachelor of Fine Arts, New Genres, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco

2008 Masters of Arts, Sculpture and New Genres, Columbia University, New York

2015 Master of Arts, Art History, Theory and Criticism, University of California, San Diego

2019 Doctor of Philosophy, Art History, Theory and Criticism (Concentration Art Practice), University of California, San Diego

PUBLICATIONS

Creosote. Miami, FL: Line Script Diary, 2019.

“Logical Horses: Or Several Historical, Aesthetic, Allegorical, and Mythical Vignettes.” *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies*, no. Special Issue: [mis]representation, [dis]memory, & [re]figuring the archival lens: visual archives & forms of representation, 2019, www.interactions.gseis.ucla.edu/.

“The Baroness Is All Hands.” *HAUNT Journal of Art* 2, no. 1 (2015).
<https://doi.org/https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9h97w2bm>.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

VIGNETTES ON CATEGORIZATION AND AESTHETICS

by

Catherine Erica Czacki

Doctor of Philosophy in Art History, Theory, and Criticism (Concentration Art Practice)

University of California San Diego, 2019

Professor Norman Bryson, Chair

Professor Grant Kester, Co-Chair

VIGNETTES ON CATEGORIZATION AND AESTHETICS is a multi-tiered series of entries weaving history in relation to storytelling, science fiction, poetry, art and visual culture, akin to the “constellation thinking” of Walter Benjamin. Various methodological approaches are used to illuminate how systems of categorization influence aesthetic discourse. The project jumps historical time periods and styles, a problem navigated by focusing on vignettes as instances and experiential cases that relate together the “cacophony” of history and aesthetics. The concept of “cacophony” is used in line with Jodi Byrd’s argumentation in *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*, as a means to connect divergent histories and stories. Entry 1: *Logical Horses: Or Several Historical, Aesthetic, Allegorical, and Mythical Vignettes* was edited by several of the participants in the narrative, a move towards personal accountability in writing outside of the self. The first entry serves as an introduction to the subsequent two entries and their attendant themes, Entry 2: *The aaacc(k)* is a healing correspondence

co-authored with Angela Jennings and Entry 3: *Almost Invisible Pleasures* is a conversation with a collection of drawings and writings by Suzanne Herrera Li Puma. Entry 1 takes Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* as a point of departure regarding cultural and social othering as a broader issue, elaborating throughout how social othering relates to aesthetics. Other vignettes detail structures, such as Marxist thought, the history of Western ideas like the Great Chain of Being and institutions such as the College Art Association as participants in knowledge construction within aesthetics and art history. Each "idea" is analyzed as a participant in cultural tendencies, extending to how artists become authentic hierarchicalized producers of culture, or are excluded altogether by ongoing structures of separation. Systems of connoisseurship and validation belie how subjective preference precedes canonization, with language implicated as a tool for serving dominance or subverting it. Language is approached as capable of causing further rifts despite aiming to clarify or communicate. Concepts that decenter and shift emphasis, such as "liquid blackness," a research collective and a term used by Black Studies scholars, "polysemy," a term for multiple meanings used by Christopher Bracken, "haunting" used by C Ree, Eve Tuck and Avery Gordon to denote the incommensurability of history as a secure presence, "shapeshifting" and "forcefields," coined in collaboration with Sarah Dziedzic and Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, are invoked towards hopeful futures where methodologies will melt, combine and start anew. Sneaking in through the fissures of polemics are interspersed fragmentary quotes, speculative science fiction narratives, poetic asides, all used as potential resistances to dominant paradigms expressed through content as well as deviation from singular writing styles. The aim of this project is to point to tensions within disciplinary narratives that trouble the stability of monolithic canonical histories. This seeking of hybridity and fragmentation as a methodology, admittedly troubled and imperfect, seeks to continue what Byrd describes as "opening doors" on the complex issues relevant to how colonialism, diaspora, cultural othering, politics, social life, phenomenology and aesthetics are inextricably interwoven. A variety of paths are presented for the reader, using words as personal and collective acts that trouble the canons with poetry, truncated stories, weird asides, and various other discordant tunes.

INTRODUCTION

I do not come with timeless truths. My consciousness is not illuminated with ultimate radiances.¹

We believe that history is also about justice, that understanding history will enlighten our decisions about the future. *Wrong*. History is also about power. In fact history is mostly about power. It is the story of the powerful and how they became powerful, and then how they use their power to keep them in positions in which they can continue to dominate others.²

A history is always about who is telling the stories and to whom the storyteller is speaking, and how both understand their present circumstances.³

Such histories are not simply available *on* the surface of the object, apart from the scratches that might be left behind. Histories shape “what” surfaces: they are behind the arrival of “the what” that surfaces. Histories are in this sense spectral; just like Husserl’s “missing sides.”⁴

Prehistory. History. Posthistory. It is evidence of the arrogance of Occidental culture and discourse that even the concept of history should be turned into a colony whose borders, validations, structures and configurations, even in life tenure, are solely and entirely decided by the West.⁵

un dios. El papel se ha convertido en un fetiche.⁶

The hardest part about an introduction is that it is supposed to define the accumulation of knowledge as a closed loop process with a beginning and an end. As if what we do discursively can be finished and embalmed in the printed word. I have struggled to find a way to frame cohesively the writings that follow as academic prose, given my difficulty with this finite circle of knowing. The best I can give the reader as a way of arrival into the zone of the entries in this work is that they touch on and intersect themes questioning the human impulse to categorize. This is an initial overview of how categorization relates to artists, their biographies, their artwork, and

¹ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 9.

² Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Zed, 2012), 35.

³ Paul Chaat Smith, *Everything You Know about Indians Is Wrong*, 1st ed., (Indigenous Americas Series) (University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 53.

⁴ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 44.

⁵ Olu Oguibe, *The Culture Game* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 3.

⁶ Hannah Burdette, “Literary Contraband: Indigenous Insurgency and the Spatial Politics of Resistance,” *Revista Canadiense De Estudios Hispánicos* 39, no. 1 (2014): pp. 273-301, <https://doi.org/10.18192/rceh.v39i1.1670>, 274. Burdette quote of Hugo Blanco in her article, translation: “a god. The paper has converted to a fetish.”

their ghosts as acknowledged or rendered anonymous. This also necessarily touches larger arcs of interpretations of human status in the phenomenological world. The entries engage with artistic and cultural “survivances,”⁷ a hopeful path through narratives of damage. Hybridity is one methodology of working with damaging, contested and unwieldy narratives. Hybridity is not perfect or innocent, as it can become another form of gleaned aesthetic pastiches, but it is a way of engaging the troubles of history, passing through all the stories invented by humans. As Frantz Fanon’s quote poignantly asserts, the “timeless truths” that historically become solid, via religion, science, and politics, are most dangerous in their relationship to transcendent or “ultimate radiances.” So, I seek no such authority over the world or its truths should they exist. Instead I am interested in the frictions and overlaps, the places of intersection and weaving of everyday life with art. Like many of the thinkers I align with in what follows, I seek to address how categories we are given are a cultural invention, and how we repeat their patterns in a continued process of unwinding, attempting to heal and keep on keeping on. This entails being accountable to beliefs in patterns, knowing I still perform my own, even in undoing. The pursuit of art and aesthetics does not receive an apolitical pass, nor forgiveness for citing theories or performing representational inclusion without actualizing structural change. My goal is to move sideways while self-checking. Sara Ahmed’s image of “scratches on the spectral surface,” evokes the kind of poetry scholarship achieves in service of its ghosts, when it sees itself as inevitably haunted. To label artists is to make them available to be included or excluded in canons as a continuation of classification that extends from how dominant culture and its semantics operate, what Ahmed

⁷ Gerald Vizenor, ed., *Survivance: Narratives of Indigenous Presence* (University of Nebraska Press, 2008). I first encountered the term through Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Zed, 2012), 146. “Celebrating survival is a particular sort of approach. Non-indigenous research has been intent on documenting the demise and cultural assimilation of indigenous peoples. Instead it is possible to celebrate survival, or what Gerald Vizenor has called “survivance”—survival and resistance. Survivance accentuates the degree to which indigenous peoples and communities have retained cultural and spiritual values and authenticity in resisting colonialism. The approach is sometimes reflected in story form, sometimes in popular music and sometimes as an event in which artists and story tellers come together to celebrate collectively a sense of life and diversity and connectedness.”

would call “orientation,” a word that itself belies an etymological zone of tension, through invoking “orient” as the other moved towards from a center. I hope the reader of what I present here can follow patiently, and understand why a decentering of the conventions of disciplinary writing that posits an endgame qua polemical argumentation had to be eschewed for an opening up of styles and forms. The art historical tradition, similar to Fanon’s points regarding the failures of Ontology,⁸ cannot describe adequately the others that shift within the margins and become included or excluded based on the interests of those who hold the keys to the gates of privilege and power. Aesthetics and art making, is an extension of idiosyncrasies, how cultures love, perform and solidify individual beliefs, desire to touch the cosmic, trying to incorporate the seen and unseen. It is also a form of being in the world that sometimes wishes to rest from language in favor of embodiment. When the description of this vibrancy is pontificated from a bureaucratic standpoint that seeks to explain and organize via the apparatus of interpretation, it is primarily a way of speaking the language that is most understood to be authoritative in service of the collection of data. I hope to reach through the folds of selective quantification to address how artists becoming categorized, polarized, made into a social, cultural, biographical, historical products supports a particular worldview that oppresses and suppresses.

1 The idea that history is a totalizing discourse

The concept of totality assumes the possibility and the desirability of being able to include absolutely all known knowledge into a coherent whole. In order for this to happen, classification systems, rules of practice and methods had to be developed to allow for knowledge to be selected and included in what counts as history.⁹

This need to puncture through the story is also a laying bare of my inability to separate thoughts from feelings. When I force myself into a straight line, tension builds and the joints and all the interstitial organs and microbes complain. Instead, this mess is an approach. It is, like any good

⁸ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 110. “Ontology—once it is finally admitted as leaving existence by the wayside—does not permit us to understand the being of the black man. For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man.” I extend this to any category imposed.

⁹ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Zed, 2012), 31.

chaos garden, a mess tended to and loved. Watched, helped along, without being forced, coerced or controlled into shape. Seeds strewn, see what grows, harvest a bit, do a little composting, cut back some things that start to take over so that the little greens can poke through. And keep rotating. Without that you will spend all your soil in one generation.

I am wearing my dead uncle Bill's Air Force jacket as a writing talisman,¹⁰ because I think of his conscription every time the planes fly over the University of California, San Diego. I think about the hard decisions he had to make for a marginal sense of stability when I read the news that the Air Force funds nanotechnology labs on our campus, who are currently developing technologies that will, among other things, allow for implants to be embedded in the wrists of soldiers,¹¹ a campus whose knowledge project I am further participating in and serving by writing this project. Another day, I will wear a thrift store t-shirt that bears the slogan in large letters across the back "He who dies with the most toys still dies." Is each body the revenge of the forced conscription and services to power of the blood that came before? Some of my other ancestors rise and rose to power, others will and do not. Being forced to fight wars as a knowing or unknowing accomplice is one story, gaining titles through military prowess, inheritance, money, education is another story. Losing it all throughout the lines is there as well. Losing is a great way to think about how the structures push and pull, create our stress and pain and bodily tensions, and maybe convince us to do what we are supposed to do in service of whomever it is that holds the key to a perceived sense of stability. I inhabit my own privilege and power as an awareness, when it is amplified or denied is embedded here. To let it all out to let it all in. None of it is separable. Artists and

¹⁰ Bill was in the Air Force from the 1950s to the 1970s. I remember him as a big man, with a pragmatic sadness and simultaneous softness, a great love of my aunt, his daughter and his cats.

¹¹ Jitendra S. Tate, Sergio Espinoza, Davontae Habbit, Craig Hanks, and Dominick Fazarro. "Military And National Security Implications Of Nanotechnology ," scholar.lib.vt.edu (Virginia Tech University, JOTS v41n1, 2015), <https://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JOTS/v41/v41n1/tate.html>. I first heard about nanotechnology implants from an engineer working in a lab two floors down from my office.

humanities scholars are not exempt from the changes and movements going on around them politically and socially.

THE DISORDERED OUTLINER

Teaching writing for several years, I had a difficult time conveying to students the standard orders and outlining. As a disordered thinker, starting with a set of rules never got me writing. I devised various strategies for my students, based on my own struggles with language, argumentation, and the like, letting other disordered thinkers know they had an ally, helped them breathe through the problems attendant to working with language. For example, I suggested to let the words flow, going back later to reverse outline, signaling to them that this way of thinking means “you” are a conversational thinker who needs fluidity. As I taught, an illumination kept glimmering at me: to take what is conversational and flowing and put it in order, is to control it. Grammar does this quite well as a structure. The argument for order appears to be that we need rigid concepts to communicate effectively, however the rigidity of concepts sometimes misses what is constant: change, and through being rigid causes stoppages in communication. It seems to relieve students of a huge intellectual burden to realize that humans invented language and writing, and that like any technology, words have their share of joys and burdens. Similarly to the application of nanotechnology cited above, language can be used for damaging or for healing purposes. Each technology bears this dialectical possibility. I hope to understand when I am using language in the service of a master, and when I am trying to liberate the tool.

To the reader of this document: the entries interrupt. Start with the first one, then push on through. It will be different each time, but you might see some familiars. Some patterns I try to break, others I reluctantly hold onto, because of my own needs. The survey had to be derailed because aesthetics is always troubled by how categorization and valuation interact. Categorization is the first step of inclusion that leads to valuation. But what of the material practices that

continue on the other side, in other worlds? Edges. Borders. Crossing over. Staying put. Leaving. Returning. Keeping going.

This project also functions as an archive of encountered terminology and ideas, a navigation through the categories used to frame artists (and really anyone) externally by “experts.” What if we read everything differently? As Linda Tuhiwai Smith points out, history is about *power*, the individuals who create and maintain the authority to say what the “truth” is then control knowledge. This is also Paul Chaat Smith’s assertion, that the way a story is told, who the intended audience is, as well as acknowledgment of the “circumstances” that make and maintain a telling are part of the establishing of “facts.” Concepts belie their violence and the aesthetics of those in powerful structural positions are gleaned and absorbed from the disenfranchised. Each term that states an authoritative meaning is etymologically rooted, passing down meaning sometimes visible within the shape of the word, at other times subsumed by how far and wide a word circulates. Exemplary of this word problem within artistic aesthetics is clear in how people became primitivized during colonial ethnographic data collection, but also extends into contemporary art in more subtle ways. Exemplary of this is Eileen Myles quip in *Afterglow*, that artist Mike Kelley believed his use of craft was ok because it was “ironic,” though he had little interest in the implications the aesthetic of craft had for feminism.¹² This suggests that anyone who engages with craft sincerely: women, working class artists, colonial subjects, are to be relegated to the dustbin of history, or sometimes ethnographic and folk arts museums. Being unimportant to the canon, has implications that are colonial, racial, gendered, economically elitist

¹² Eileen Myles, *Afterglow: (a dog memoir)* (Grove Press UK, 2018), 97. “Mike Kelley actually said in an interview around 2004 that despite people always asking him about feminism and its affects on him it was really beside the point because when he does craft he is being IRONIC whereas when a woman does it she is being natural.” I extend this past genderness to colonial designations, because a means of denigrating the cultural objects of other cultures has been to posit them as “craft.” See also: Rick Anthony. Lopez, *Crafting Mexico: Intellectuals, Artisans, and the State after the Revolution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), and Fred R. Myers, ed., *The Empire of Things: Regimes of Value and Material Culture*, Advanced Seminar Series (School of American Research Press, 2001).

and ableist. Alternately, historiographic self-framing is a system of validation, whereby artists can escape these designations into contemporary art, if they perform Mike Kelley's remove of irony or self-mythologize a compelling biography.¹³ The individual myth is why it is deemed necessary for artists to go to art school, show in museums and galleries, be on the internet, learn how to frame and defend and talk about themselves in the eyes of the audience, institutions, etc. towards becoming legitimate cultural producers. Artists are pushed to form a language (even if it is of dissent), have a compelling and authentic biography, or create a historiographic agenda as part of the allure and legitimization of their work. If the longer lifetime project is to remove the eye towards de-hierarchicalization, strike the negative framing, it is hard not to invoke critique as part of the process of moving on, but it is worth noting that all argumentative critique puts the eye on someone or something as a form of externalized judgment. Several quotes below by Christopher Bracken illuminate how the artist, dyi philosopher, poet, and cultural other, are caught up in this manifold of history. Accused of not performing or doing what the larger structures of power find most useful, verifiable, real, or superior:

Artists, like "savages" and "primeval" peoples, are guilty of wasting energia (according to Nietzsche). In consequence they neither "progress" into the future nor recede into the past, but can only repeat themselves in the now.¹⁴

Positivism aims to establish correspondences between signs and things and accepts only those correspondences that can be verified directly, by perception, or indirectly by experiment.¹⁵

Mythology makes "reality" out of "images." Nancy's term for this error is "autoficting." Nietzsche favors the term "hallucination." It is not only a "primeval" mode of thought, he maintains, but a racially inferior one.¹⁶

...metaphor is a characteristically savage form of expenditure.¹⁷

¹³ I sincerely love Mike Kelley, his aesthetics and writing. He is exemplary of high art inclusion for punk weirdo's. However, I feel compromised by this. As I'll discuss later, being caught up in the *style* of a message or artwork as it speaks to our subjectivity, is a form of bias that troubles our judgments. I cannot claim objective immunity either, my subject is caught in the same manifolds as everyone else's. In the capitalist mercantile art system, this inclusion is also a smokescreen that continues to exclude those not granted entry into spaces of privilege.

¹⁴ Christopher Bracken, *Magical Criticism: The Recourse of Savage Philosophy* (University of Chicago Press, 2007), 68.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

The “ancient savage philosophers,” says Tylor, traced changes in nature to the actions of a host of invisible and intangible beings called spirits. The philosophy of spirits is called animism. Mythology is the archive of its findings, a savage *Physics* that borrows its postulates from savage rhetoric.¹⁸

If all of these forms of power and knowledge could feel into themselves, they would feel that they are built of all the animate parts they claim to be beneath in the order of things. This positioning is the tenuous continued ground of artists and poets, inhabiting the space of what is and is not. Making due, as everyone does, in relation to power.

END

I hope to change and be changed over time. As an artist, thinker, human, anything. This might mean eventually straying from the written word as a tool for explanation. For in explaining we fall into traps, such as thinking any method or opinion will somehow stand the test of time. I recently bought a pencil from a bookshop in San Francisco while taking care of a friend, embossed in gold with the words “make more mistakes.” I will take this to life, to my reading of life, to my writing and art as a call to own mistakes not as things to pretend do not exist or are always possible to be erased but as ways of becoming a different human that inhabits many spaces. I’m hesitant to say more complex, because that is itself is a judgment and a category. Instead I invoke tendrils, that spread out and burrow down. We know that metaphor is a problem too, but as Bracken points out it is a form of “expenditure,” primitivized, and worth thinking through. There is violence in comparison because it does not allow things and beings to be what things and being are. Comparison validates or lessens all in a litmus test of standardized approved existence.

¹⁷ Ibid., 70. Bracken is stating here this is the case for both Friedrich Nietzsche and E.B. Tylor’s viewpoints of “savage philosophy.” “Just as overexpenditure is a characteristic trait of savage economies, which belong simultaneously to modernity and to prehistory, so anyone who wastes a quantum of verbal energy in a particle of now-time is a savage philosopher.” e.g. artists, conversationalists, poets.

¹⁸ Ibid., 70.

Building upon what society has imposed as categories, the haunting experience is not always reconcilable to one “culture,” “history,” or “identity,” in the attachment to name, lineage and place. The struggles are incorporated in the soul/body split. Is the alternative to support the unknown or under-seen artists? Outing and making known artists getting by and making it and living and making great art in communities means making them vulnerable to the dominant market driven art world, speculative real estate, money. It is not an escape from obscurity to be seen or heard, it is merely trading one set of problems for another. You can’t tell people what to do as the adage goes, and I will practice my own forms of withholding, while suggesting the questions become part of the strategy of thinking, writing, making, doing and being. But I also hope to shift the paradigm of privilege that allows for the exceptional status to write, by being in and of the world. This means passing time in different ways, being aware of how each moment we write or make art is a lucky escape from daily needs. The labor of the everyday is so expertly hidden, artists and poets become caught in the paradigm of exceptionalism as well. Each meal out, each supply purchased, produced by someone else’s hands or a machine that someone’s hands and brain had to run. I hit the middle ground running: still writing about, or using artists as examples, suggest affinities, and straddle multiple worlds. Relating to the phenomenological environment, the pain of past traumas of families and selves and communities, the danger of representational aesthetics, the violence and magical status of language and labor are all intertwined in any removed observational enterprise.

What is an expert. What is an intervention. What is a legacy. What is historical inquiry. What is autofiction, what is truth. A search for fissures, circling around animisms, understanding how human thought does what it does in the world, environment, community. Materiality, place, personhood, animacy, agency, none of these terms are able to render fully explicit how polemics or disciplined inquiry serve certain masters. Under various influences, it becomes impossible to walk lines, and therefore defiance becomes the method. Interrupting registers, academic, poetic, artistic ones. Anxious language. I’ve read the books I’m supposed to have read and I’ve thought

about their ideas. In the end, proving that I understand or know these ideas is less interesting than the constellation formed by their intersections, resonances and punctures. Flow of the troubled I/we/you/they address.

Hands hold things. They touch things. They let things go.¹⁹

I do not know how their stories end, but I know the possibilities are there for the unexpected, the surprising, the improbable, and even the impossible. And these possibilities are precisely what escape the big game hunters. They search for ghosts, for elders trapped in amber. Sometimes, they even find them. But no matter how their poltergeist expeditions turn out, no matter what they find, they miss far more.²⁰

If the origin of all classification is metaphor,²¹ are we always thinking each something is like another something? The conundrum is: is it possible to think without comparison? We miss so much in searching for ghosts. If escaping metaphor is an impossibility, it is one to be accountable to, maybe through other words like affinity. To distress the impulse to validate and make like. The writing that follows, is very much “constellation” based, engaging history as a series of flashes that don’t always follow a neat temporal line.²² Eli Friedlander takes issue with other scholars calling Walter Benjamin’s *Arcades Project* an exercise of “fragments” illustrating his “constellation thinking.” I suspect this is because it suggests disorder, and Friedlander is trying to prove Benjamin is ordered as a thinker.²³ I think it’s ok to inhabit the fragment. There is space for the disordered thinker. Friedlander’s “luminous contents”²⁴ is nice too, but I also choose to believe peoples’ stories or terminologies as what they need to create their worlds, hoping for co-extensive instead of in-competition sharing of ideas. The objectivity with which I am supposed to approach anything seems suspect, the more that is accumulated the more expansive and tendrillike the record becomes. Fragmentary is in the way we make and live. Write one day, garden

¹⁹ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Duke University Press, 2007), 165.

²⁰ Paul Chaat Smith, *Everything You Know about Indians Is Wrong*, 1st ed., (Indigenous Americas Series) (University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 177.

²¹ Christopher Bracken, *Magical Criticism: The Recourse of Savage Philosophy* (University of Chicago Press, 2007), 85.

²² *Ibid.*, 51.

²³ Eli Friedlander, *Walter Benjamin: A Philosophical Portrait* (Harvard University Press, 2012), 42.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 42.

another, sew yet another, build some shelter, cook a meal. Make green and blue sounds. Write a poem. Do a drawing. End with it all as a sculpture. But that isn't what we are supposed to do. We are supposed to narrow down, manage, and force others to do the labor for us of everyday life so we can rise to a center position as a manager or an expert. And if one can't labor (which not everyone can depending on the "able" prefix attached to body), and does not want to manage, the impetus is to try to levitate seamlessly through life, an impossibility worth investigating. Push up against structures of power via how individual artists are engaged with their own histories, the uneasiness of language, cultural and contextual ties invented from within or without, categorization and how it serves. Follow many paths. It's easiest to derail from a discipline once you've been granted entry into it, otherwise you have no ground to stand upon in the face of the power of what is agreed upon truth. Since the ideas and themes are necessarily snakelike and fragmentary, the best way to list them is in the style of chaos gardening. In the forthcoming index, I list terms as I was able to remember them or found them re-circulating between various documents and files. The index is for the reader to slink through, skip along quickly, ignore, return to later or never. I seek not answers to questions in the series of essays that follow this index, but instead hope the reader will adventure with me down the paths that illustrate a variety of ways of thinking: using words as personal and collective acts that trouble the canon with poetry, truncated stories, weird asides, and various other discordant tunes.

ACCUMULATIVE UN-ALPHABETIZED INDEX OF THEMES

1. Phonic correlation of the first letter to the rest of the word
2. Order the word as it was remembered or encountered.
3. An oracle need not rewrite
4. Quotes are enough
5. Let other voices tell the story.

C. CONSTELLATION THINKING

Walter Benjamin's "constellation thinking," what we encounter in unwieldy lived life. The fragments that go on alongside, underneath and within linear narratives.

It's not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on the past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent. – Only dialectical images are genuine images (that is, not archaic); and the place where one encounters them is language.²⁵

Pulling threads, the relation and splitting apart of everything. Arguments and truths. Language is the encounter. Does it trouble our relations with time? Question: "What is time." Answer:

"Water."²⁶

The advocates of "historicism" insert spacing among the now-just-passed, the now-just-pasing, and the now-to-come, as if to hold open the future-oriented horizon of civilization and accumulation. The advocates of "historical materialism" conceive of the present as an interruption that interrupts the series of causes and effects. They revive the possibility of savage time. "Historicism," explains Benjamin, "contends itself with establishing a causal nexus among various moments in history." It tells one moment from the next like beads in a rosary. "The historical materialist," in contrast, "cannot do without the notion of a present which is not a transition, but in which time takes a stand and has come to a standstill." Materialist historiography collects events that may be separated by thousands of years and makes them simultaneously present like stars in a constellation.²⁷

It is not something Benjamin owns, this way of thinking. There are debates within scholarship surrounding the Frankfurt School whether "constellations" should be attributed to Benjamin or Theodor W. Adorno. Likely, it was emergent for both of them through conversation, only one man dies and the other writes on. The concept of constellation thinking is also another version of ideas residing within many different epistemological worldviews. No one owns being in the world and challenging to see how the past and future could be interrelated in a flash, how ideas could relate like stars, but scholars seek to prove how their favorite philosophical genius owned

²⁵ Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 462.

²⁶ Thank you Asa Mendelsohn for the answer provided via text message to my question.

²⁷ Christopher Bracken, *Magical Criticism: The Recourse of Savage Philosophy* (University of Chicago Press, 2007), 51.

an idea so they can in turn own the golden key to unraveling the idea. So I invoke further concepts to challenge the singular genius of any thought or artwork.

Gerald Vizenor describes the path one goes on as constituting a “secure personal reference.”²⁸

One decides at some point what path to follow, what feels worthy of attention, what might be “fact.” The beliefs, ideas and conversations in any social space or aesthetic are “secure personal references,” constellations of choice and social patterning. People’s truths. Nothing is separate from our experience, what makes the identity we hold. Our stories might change upon loss of memory or revision. Looking for something, seeking. Outsiders to in. The exotic or strange is merely a misunderstanding of the everyday epistemologies of difference,²⁹ whatever one finds in those spaces of tourism, magic, art or otherness are for the most part a form of epistemological orientation to everyday material and cosmic negotiation that has been idiosyncratically centered by an individual or agreed to by a group through some form of following a leader or the arrival of a social consensus. Being aware of how we secure our references is a task towards opening to the possibility of others.

The ideas of Benjamin are seen as ideological “black holes.” Probably because the ideas open in and out and contradict each other at times. The black hole effect is due to the need for disciplinary thinking to create “postulates,” which can render interesting ideas obsolete by guaranteeing their useful death if they cannot be proven or have any use towards creating a method:

Benjamin regarded the dialectical image as the methodological heart of the Arcades

²⁸ *Globalizing the World: Gerald Vizenor* (University of Michigan, 2013), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrKY3i77qko>.

²⁹ I hope to expand writing I have begun on the *Sonora Market* in Mexico City and the *Gold Museum* in Bogotá, centered around the idea posited by Benjamin that mystery is only the “everyday that is impenetrable,” which ties the aesthetics of Surrealism to global travel and cultural encounter. Walter Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings 1927-1930*, vol. 2, Part 1, 4 vols. (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 216. “Any serious exploration of occult, surrealist, phantasmagoric gifts and phenomena presupposes a dialectical intertwinement to which a romantic turn of mind is impervious. For histrionic or fantastical stress on the mysterious side of the mysterious takes us no further; we penetrate the mystery only to the degree that we recognize in it the everyday world, by virtue of a dialectical optic that perceive the everyday as impenetrable, the impenetrable as everyday.”

Project. Yet he was unable to offer a coherent, intelligible account of what dialectical images were, what their precise methodological role should be taken to be, how they were to be related to the agency of the critical historian, what sorts of meta-theoretical and meta-methodological (in other words: theological) postulates they might imply, or indeed how, and under what conditions, dialectical images were possible at all. The dialectical image has been the subject of a good deal of dedicated scholarship. Yet, at the heart of the Arcades Project, the “lightning flash” of the dialectical image has, to this day, remained far more a dark star, indeed a kind of theoretical and methodological black hole, a “singularity” following its own extraordinary laws and capable, apparently, of absorbing any number of attempts at critical illumination.³⁰

C. CLASSIFICATION

The identity identified with has a slippery relationship with the identity used to identify.

Thus it was that from the end of the sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century, the project of distributing all living beings, animal or vegetable, into a hierarchy of collective units enclosed one within another, gained such a hold upon naturalists, that it finally seemed to them the formulation of their scientific task.” (Daudin) ‘The first of the great modern systematists, Cesalpino, was a sixteenth-century enthusiast for the Peripatetic philosophy, and it seems to have been largely a fresh study of Aristotle’s logical and scientific writings that set him upon the undertaking which he executed in his *De Plantis* (1583). It is true that the most elaborate “systems” (as they were called) which were the most monumental products of biological science in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, were avowedly, in great part, “artificial” classifications.³¹

D. DISCIPLINE

Being disciplined in the disciplines. Is there a software that would make academic discourse feel less violent, for self and others. The word discipline appears 13 times in this introduction, overly redundant of itself. No, there’s no software that can fix this because the software becomes a science of oppression as well if it posits a deeper truth through constant seeking and labeling.

Only our own refusals can lead us out of discipline.

...for Black academics to produce legible work in the academy often means adhering to research methods that are “drafted into the service of a larger destructive force” (Saunders 2008a, 67), thereby doing violence to our own capacities to read, think, and imagine otherwise. Despite knowing otherwise, we are often disciplined into thinking through and along lines that reinscribe our own annihilation, reinforcing and reproducing what Sylvia Wynter (1994, 70) has called our “narratively condemned status.” We must

³⁰ Max Pensky, “Method and Time,” *The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*, 2004, pp. 177-198, <https://doi.org/doi:10.1017/CCOL0521793297.010>, 178.

³¹ Arthur Oncken Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1936), 228.

become undisciplined. The work we do requires new methods of research and teaching; new ways of entering and leaving the archives of slavery, undoing the “racial calculus...and political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago” (Hartman, 2008, 6) and that live on into the present. I think this is what Brand describes in *A Map to the Door of No Return* as a kind of blackened knowledge, an unscientific method, that comes from observing where one stands is relative to the door of no return and that moment of historical and ongoing rupture.³²

D. DOMINATION

“The natives vanished in his pictures and left behind surreal clocks and other evidence of survivance, the remains of a culture,” said Tune. “But the gaze of those behind the camera still haunts the pictures, the obscure presence of melancholy, and the epiphanies of a chemical civilization...”

“The camera creates an instance that never existed in native stories,” Tune told the reporter. “The last and the lost are not native poses but the stoical remembrance of the photographers who vanished with their own obsessions behind the camera.”

“Curtis was an artist,” said the reporter.

“Art is not a license of dominance,” said Tune.

“One gaze invites another,” said the reporter.

“Curtis, like other photographers with a melancholy gaze, discovered in the native other what they had not been able to find in themselves or their institutions, a simulation of silence.³³

O. ONTOLOGIES

Edward Said’s “third” definition of “Orientalism” is that it is a field of study that contributes to the “Western” knowledge project. Distinctions of “Occident/Orient,” “East/West/South/North” as divisions continually appear in academia and aesthetics. Despite inclusion, e.g. to have a department that specializes in the other, the purpose of departmentalization and fields supports further colonial efforts:

Taking the late 18th century as a roughly defined starting point Orientalism can be discussed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.³⁴

The disciplines bear a relationship to power, via performing Said’s “authorizing,” “describing,” “teaching,” “settling,” and “ruling over”... This series of actions are forms of dominating within

³² Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016), 13.

³³ Gerald Vizenor, *Hotline Healers: An Almost Browne Novel* (Wesleyan University Press, 1997), 60.

³⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 3.

institutional frameworks, regardless of subject matter. In problematizing the forms of authority partnered with the dispersal and gathering of knowledge, additional forms of sharing and knowing can push against the categorical imperatives of study. Any category that is posited by European derived epistemological categories and taxonomies, serves to support the dominant ideological apparatus that catalogues all to be knowable based on specific criteria. This logic of comparison, of metaphor, creates a ripple effect into areas of study performed for the disciplines.³⁵ To write about outsider art and use “behaviorism,”³⁶ to write about indigenous art and frame it in relation to *Object Oriented Ontologies*, serve to support the ideological apparatus of aligned boxes based on the taxonomic system.

P. PERSONHOOD

To be a person.

P. POETRY

Poetry is not a luxury.³⁷

Audre Lorde says that poetry is the most “economical” of writing forms. You can write it on your lunch break from a factory job, in hallways “between shifts,” on the bus home.³⁸ It requires little energy and less thought or physical space.³⁹ Lorde extends these ideas to visual arts when she says “The actual requirements to produce visual arts also help determine, along class lines, whose art is whose. In this day of inflated prices for material, who are our sculptors, our painters our photographers?” and “When we speak of a broadly based women’s culture, we need to be aware of the effect of class and economic differences on the supplies for producing art.”⁴⁰ This extends

³⁵ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (Vintage Books Edition, 1994).

³⁶ I hope to complete a future article on the category “Outsider Art,” as a hierarchically constructed term.

³⁷ Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Freedom: The Crossing Press, 2001), 36.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 116. “It is the one which is the most secret, which requires the least physical labor, the least material, and the one which can be done between shifts, in the hospital pantry, in the subway, and on scraps of surplus paper.”

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 116.

to the valuation of art, or how it is stratified and categorized based on production, e.g. work produced by individuals on their spare time from work, or by factory style tiers of assistants for mega-reputation artists on large scales or quantities. Artists tagged *contemporary* can ascend, however they are also sometimes asked to perform their otherness as a price for inclusion. Lorde addresses how poetry reaches for an “irreducible form of knowledge,” that approaches the ephemeral and sensual rather than the rational.⁴¹ Rationalized thought, or the truth seeking of empiricism being credited with utmost “truth,” are problems that Aimé Césaire and other Surrealists also engaged, including how the colonized received the rupture of modernity to their everyday life. Science and systematization, politics and its attendant hierarchies, create distances between selves interacting within the world. Robin Kelley quotes Césaire’s essay “Poetry and Knowledge,” in his book *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*, summarizing cogently the oppositions created by colonization and systematization: “Poetic knowledge is born in the great silence of scientific knowledge.”⁴²

Why does the event of actual inaction happen in “the East” more than the West or the North? The Nietzsche of (it. Human, All Too Human) suggests it is because the difference between positive observation and vivid description is a marker of racial difference. “Europe,” he claims, “has attended the school of consistent and critical thinking,” whereas “Asia still does not know how to distinguish between truth and fiction [or “truth and poetry,” it. Wahrheit and Dichtung].” Reasoning from cause to effect

⁴¹ Ibid., 116.

⁴² Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2002), 9. “Progressive social movements do not simply produce statistics and narratives of oppression; rather, the best one do what great poetry always does: transport us to another place, compel us to relive horrors and, more importantly, enable us to imagine a new society. We must remember that the conditions and the very existence of social movements enable participants to imagine something different, to realize that things need not always be this way. It is that imagination, that effort to see the future in the present, that I shall call “poetry” or “poetic knowledge.” I take my lead from Aimé Césaire’s great essay “Poetry and Knowledge,” first published in 1945. Opening with the simple but provocative proposition that “Poetic knowledge is born in the great silence of scientific knowledge,” he then demonstrates why poetry is the only way to achieve the kind of knowledge we need to move beyond the world’s crisis. “What presides over the poem,” he writes, “is not the most lucid intelligence, the sharpest sensibility of the subtlest feelings, but experience as a whole.” This means everything, every history, every future, every dream, every life form from plant to animal, every creative impulse—plumbed from the depths of the unconscious. Poetry, therefore, is not what we simply recognize as the formal “poem,” but a revolt: a scream in the night, an emancipation of language and old ways of thinking. Consider Césaire’s third proposition regarding poetic knowledge: “Poetic knowledge is that in which man spatters the object with all of his mobilized riches.”

makes Europe actually what it is potentially. Reason in school has made Europe Europe.⁴³

...science can only speak if it draws upon magic's power source.⁴⁴

This parameter of development and enlightenment, returns to what Kelley stated about poetry's relationship to science. Bracken illuminates that science must use the reserves of magic and animism to speak truths about positivistic ways of seeing the world. The metaphor, the finding like with like, which is a magical form of thinking, is also embedded in the origin of classification.⁴⁵ I extend this to the categorization inherent in any disciplinary inquiry, and further to aesthetics, the modernist project of making the is unruly and everyday hidden beneath the veneer of pure aesthetics. Covering over magic and the relationships with materiality. But the relationships haunt, still echo in the ways certain artist's work. Artists who let their everyday life bleed in to the art and blur the categories of what constitutes a discipline. William Pietz points out that this bleeding of subject and object, ritual and function, art and daily life is how the cultural objects outside of European aesthetics were and are deemed less than as "fetishes."⁴⁶

C. CRITIQUE

Because theory that critiques the models is accountable to argumentation that will hold most valid as objective and provable, it is doomed ouroboros-like to always be eating its own tail. A metaphor.

Taiiaki Alfred suggests "indigenous critique" not as a mere negation, or simply in order to create "false dichotomies," but as a means to think about how "the colonial attitudes and

⁴³ Christopher Bracken, *Magical Criticism: The Recourse of Savage Philosophy* (University of Chicago Press, 2007), 88.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 85. See also Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books Edition, 1994).

⁴⁶ See trio of essays by William Pietz titled *The Problem of the Fetish*.

structures imposed on the world by Europeans are not manifestations of an inherent evil: they are merely reflections of white society's understanding of its own power relationship with nature."⁴⁷

The value of the indigenous critique of the Western world-view lies not in the creation of false dichotomies but in the insight that the colonial attitudes and structures imposed on the world by Europeans are not manifestations of an inherent evil: they are merely reflections of white society's understanding of its own power and relationship to nature. The brutal regime of European technological advancement, intent on domination, confronted by its opposite in indigenous societies. The resulting near-extinction of indigenous peoples created a vacuum in which the European regime established its political, economic, and philosophical dominance.⁴⁸

This has a direct correlation to what art white society most supports as part of its institutions. In contemporary art, this parameter is ever shifting and tricky. Institutions will try to hide their pasts or presents. By occasionally showing *non* white/male/hetero/wealthy/able-bodied artists, institutions create a smokescreen around the politics and capitalism they have participated in that allowed them to amass and accumulate so much wealth in the first place. But the artists are still categorized as such, as part of the double bind of legitimacy:

Suppose, for a start, that it refers to all of us non-Europeans, all positioned, in some or other respect, beyond the borders of the West. Ethno-aesthetics, then, signifies a non-being, our not being Westerners.⁴⁹

Conversely, ethnographically sensible Europeans may have a finely tuned ear for the voices arising from the depths of our ethnic origins, a keen eye for our humanity; yet the ethnographies, the display of the collected material, cannot after all fully explicate the relationship between cultures – in particular, it cannot explain the enthusiasm with which members of Western societies throw themselves on strange and backward cultures.⁵⁰

William Pietz elaborates Hegel's implicitness in the colonial mindset about Africa. Hegel states that Africans relate to objects "with caprice," or rather, without intention, which suggests lack of logic. Because they do not ascribe to the white/western/male/hetero/able-bodied/elite forms of knowledge accumulation, they are then "unhistorical, and underdeveloped" in terms of "Spirit,

⁴⁷ Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: an Indigenous Manifesto* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 21.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁴⁹ Pia Arke, "Ethnoaesthetics," *Rethinking Nordic Colonialism Act 5: Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden* (2006): pp. 1-17, <https://doi.org/http://www.rethinking-nordic-colonialism.org/files/index.htm>.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

and....incapable of universality,”⁵¹ an extension of categorization that continues today in artistic canonizing.

Dyani Reynolds-White Hawk, draws compelling parallels between what is categorized outsider art and the way institutions deal with Native American art. Institutions such as “galleries, museums,” and “academia” that uphold Western notions of aesthetics, “prevailing value systems,” which arguably are not just aesthetics, but the way producers of aesthetics are treated in the social realms they inhabit, within spaces and on the periphery of them. It is through “patterns of treatment,” that we see how otherness is constructed and maintained by the institutions that hold the most “power and privilege.”⁵² Edward Said’s use of Karl Marx in the epigraph of *Orientalism* cogently describes this pattern: “They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented.” This is congruent to what Reynolds-White Hawk is saying about art, that the

⁵¹ William Pietz, "The Problem of the Fetish I," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 9 (Spring 1985): 7, accessed October 23, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20166719>. Pietz references Hegel. Africa "is no historical part of the World," writes Hegel, "it has no movement or development to exhibit. . . . What we properly understand by Africa, is the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature, and which has to be presented here as on the threshold of the World's History" (G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree [New York: Dover, 1956], p. 99). Hegel's characterization of Africans and of the religion of fetishes that actualizes "the African Spirit" typifies the accepted European understanding of African fetishism in the early nineteenth century. "The peculiarity of the African character," according to Hegel, is that it lacks "the principle which naturally accompanies all our ideas ? the category of Universality" (p. 93). Africans worship "the first thing that comes their way. This, taken quite indiscriminately, they exalt to the dignity of a 'Genius'; it may be an animal, a tree, a stone, or a wooden figure. . . . [I]n the Fetich, a kind of objective independence as contrasted with the arbitrary fancy of the individual seems to manifest itself; but as the objectivity is nothing other than the fancy of the individual projecting itself into space, the human individuality remains master of the image it has adopted. If any mischance occurs which the Fetich has not averted, if the rain is suspended, if there is a failure in the crops, they bind and beat or destroy the Fetich and so get rid of it, making another immediately, and thus holding it in their power. Such a Fetich has no independence as an object of religious worship; still less has it aesthetic independence as a work of art; it is merely a creation that expresses the arbitrary choice of its maker, and which always remains in his hands. Hence there is no relation of dependence in this religion" (p. 94). Paradoxically, this implies the second characteristic of African religion for Hegel: absolute dependence on the kings and priests who act as human intermediaries with the transcendent power. That is, the "natural man" can only slavishly worship the abstract power of command endowed in those who control the chaotic power of Nature. The function of this view of Africans, which was far from being peculiar to Hegel, as an ideology justifying the slave trade by explaining Africans as slavish by nature is obvious enough.

⁵² Dyani Reynolds-White Hawk, “Unexpected Parallels: Commonalities between Native American and Outsider Arts,” *Wicazo Sa Review*, Special Issue: American Indian Curatorial Practice, 27, no. 1 (2012): pp. 47-61, <https://doi.org/10.5749/wicazosareview.27.1.0047> <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/wicazosareview.27.1.0047>, 47.

representational apparatus is not in the hands of the artist or creator, but is ward of the institutionally and bureaucratically powerful.⁵³

The over-emphasis on non-Eurocentric art with behavioral methodologies extends categorizing through empirical observation techniques that bear troubled ties to ethnography, anthropology, and medical pathologizing, how artists who do not make sense to the standards of the canon are explained. Beneath all of these structures are forms of implicit bias within disciplinary inquiry when addressing the aesthetic traditions of a group or an individual. Magical, personal, communal or ritual associations to objects being inherent in the logic of “colonizer and colonized.”⁵⁴ This is not just about who is looking and being looked at in terms of eye/gaze, or ethnographic eye—but also relates to how epistemological worldviews become primitivized. 1. via ideas of property and ownership: cultures who do not see objects as a private property and therefore museums are a weird invention 2. the idea of having a “removed” (or aesthetic ala Hegel and Kant, European philosophical traditions) experience of a work of art, also implies it is possible to separate art from lived everyday life. This extends to how political organization works in the larger state and social structures on all levels, impossible to separate but made separate by bureaucracy. Our foundational economic theories posit communal sharing as a primitive stage of being,⁵⁵ and certain magical practices, such as the evil eye, as engaging a primitive worldview of enchantment. The evil eye’s wide international diaspora is due to how well it describes and gives a visual embodiment to social inequity, simultaneously providing the average person with a measure of hope in dispelling both their own eyes onto others possessions and status, and to protect what they have from external jealousies. The evil eye belief only exists in cultures that have hierarchical stratification, posited in folk case study books as more “advanced” or

⁵³ Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin Books, 1991).

⁵⁴ See John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 2008).

⁵⁵ See Frederick Engels, *The Origins of Private Property and The State* (New York: International Publishers, 1972).

“civilized” societies, versus those that are de-hierarchical being “primitive.”⁵⁶ Artistic canonization builds into the rhetoric of advanced society and hierarchicalization, by raising or elevating a genius figure, one who gleans their encounters in the world into a modernist, removed, haunted oeuvre, elevated for performing as the exceptional one of a group that is supported as the best example, creating a veil around material use and production that makes having a name advantageous, but hides beneath it all the labor of arts workers and assistants producing and maintaining the one. Aesthetics works in Western canons and institutions, via positing artworks and performances of colonized peoples being presented as “symbols” and representations of a position, rather than “as.”⁵⁷ This not only continues the tradition of Cartesian dualism to separate, rather than acknowledge embodiment, but it also serves a continued form of bias based hierarchicalization of art. Tuhiwai Smith’s outline of how the Western knowledge project asserts power, bears relevance to how the construction of larger histories is reflected in aesthetics and art history:

2 The idea that there is a universal history

Although linked to the notion of totality, the concept of universal assumes that there are fundamental characteristics and values which all human subjects and societies share. It is the development of these universal characteristics which are of historical interest.

3 The idea that history is one large chronology

History is regarded as being about developments over time. It charts the progress of human endeavor through time. Chronology is important as a method because it allows for events to be located at a point in time. The actual time events take place also makes them ‘real’ or factual. In order to begin the chronology a time of ‘discovery’ has to be established. Chronology is also important for attempting to go backwards and explain how and why things happened in the past.

4 The idea that history is about development

Implicit in the notion of development is the notion of progress. This assumes that societies move forward in stages of development much as an infant grows into a fully developed adult human being. The earliest phase of human development is regarded as primitive, simple and emotional. As societies develop they become less primitive, more civilized, more rational, and their social structures become more complex and bureaucratic.

⁵⁶ See Alan Dundes, ed., *The Evil Eye: A Folklore Casebook* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1981) and Clarence Maloney, ed., *The Evil Eye* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976).

⁵⁷ Graham Harvey, *Animism: Respecting the Living World* (London: Hurst & Company, 2005), 74.

...8 *The idea that history is constructed around binary categories*

This idea is linked to the historical method of chronology. In order for the history to begin there has to be a period of beginning and some criteria for determining when something begins.

...9 *The idea that history is patriarchal*

This idea is linked to the notions of self-actualization and development, as women were regarded as being incapable of attaining the higher orders of development.⁵⁸

Continuing on, Tuhiwai Smith illustrates how Hegel in particular did not “invent” but supported hierarchicalization in history and aesthetics:

Hegel conceived of the fully human subject as someone capable of ‘creating (his) own history.’ However, Hegel did not simply invent the rules of history. As Robert Young argues, ‘the entire Hegelian machinery simply lays down the operation of a system already in place, already operating in everyday life.’ (footnote 19) It should also be self-evident that many of these ideas are predicated on a sense of Otherness.⁵⁹

Zoe Todd on object oriented ontology being another colonialism:

I left the hall early, before the questions were finished: I was unimpressed. Again, I thought with a sinking feeling in my chest, it appeared that another Euro-Western academic narrative, in this case the trendy and dominant Ontological Turn (and/or post-humanism, and/or cosmopolitics—all three of which share tangled roots, and can be mobilised distinctly or collectively, depending on who you ask), and discourses of how to organize ourselves around and communicate with the constituents of complex and contested world(s) (or multiverses, if you’re into the whole brevity thing) - was spinning itself on the backs of non-European thinkers. And again, the ones we credited for these incredible insights into the ‘more-than-human’, sentience and agency, and the ways through which to imagine our ‘common cosmopolitical concerns’ were not the people who built and maintain the knowledge systems that European and North American anthropologists and philosophers have been studying for An Indigenous Feminist’s Take on the Ontological Turn.⁶⁰

...well over a hundred years, and predicating many of their current ‘aha’ ontological moments (or re-imaginings of the discipline) upon. No, here we were celebrating and worshipping a European thinker for ‘discovering’, or newly articulating by drawing on a European intellectual heritage, what many an Indigenous thinker around the world could have told you for millennia: the climate is a common organizing force!⁶¹

How the critique can reaffirm Eurocentrism, from Hannah Burdette:

⁵⁸ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Zed, 2012), 31.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁶⁰ Zoe Todd, “An Indigenous Feminist’s Take On The Ontological Turn: ‘Ontology’ Is Just Another Word For Colonialism,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 29 (n.d.): pp. 4-22, accessed May 21, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12124>, 6

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

...struggle for intellectual and political sovereignty. In this regard, the framework of American Indian literary nationalism poses a challenge to Walter Mignolo's concept of border thinking, as it sidesteps the Western/non-Western (or Euro-American/indigenous) dichotomy that arguably underpins his conception of the colonial difference. The problem with this concept, as Catherine Walsh has argued, is that it tends to relate all thought back to the West, even if it does so through a sense of opposition or critique (29). It thus ends up being partly Eurocentric, despite Mignolo's declared intentions...⁶²

I. INSURGENT POETICS (SEE ALSO P. POETRY)

Additionally, emphasizing poetics as part of the equation leaves room for the plurality of meanings and the coexistence of complementary, or even contradictory, modes of insurgency. Perhaps it is most productive, therefore, to think of poeticizing insurgency as an act of pushing the term to its limits to reveal what kinds of assumptions it contains, to explore the limitations and potentialities of poetic language and the concrete obstacles that social movements face, and to challenge the ways in which we understand resistance and anticolonial struggle. Insurgent poetics would thus comprise a constant push and pull, a complex interplay of positionalities in flux between centrality and periphery.⁶³

I. IT'S HOW YOU USE IT

Francophone scholar Christopher Miller argues that it is precisely in the space between the practical and metaphorical valences of nomadism that their argument loses traction, particularly in post-colonial contexts where nationalism and identity politics constitute key idioms of struggle. Undoubtedly, essentialist politics have contradictions and pitfalls of their own; however, Miller maintains that "Neither the identitarian nor the nomadological mode of thought has a monopoly on truth or justice" (7). After all, "rhizomes can colonize just as well as trees can" (208). In short, border-making and border-breaking can both be used in the service of colonialism, or they can provide the tools for struggle against it.⁶⁴

This is the dialectical turn. Poetry, like Surrealism, despite its "opening doors" and decentering thought, can be used as a tool for capitalism, fascism, dominance if deployed by institutions or individual artists as an aesthetic covering that suggests a particular ideology while supporting very different institutional and social practices.⁶⁵

⁶² Hannah Burdette, "Literary Contraband: Indigenous Insurgency and the Spatial Politics of Resistance," *Revista Canadiense De Estudios Hispánicos* 39, no. 1 (2014): pp. 273-301, <https://doi.org/10.18192/rceh.v39i1.1670>, 291.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 292.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 288.

⁶⁵ Two cogent examples are Aimé Césaire and Salvador Dalí. Césaire used Surrealism towards freedom and anti-colonial struggle, Dalí used Surrealism to build his mythopoetic status while supporting fascism. See George Orwell's essay on Dalí: George Orwell, "Benefit of Clergy: Some Notes on Salvador Dalí," 1999, http://www.orwell.ru/library/reviews/dali/english/e_dali.

H. HISTORIOGRAPHY

Simone White says it best:

Reach for the “farthest star” is intellectual gesturing toward a furiously local rupture inside thinking formations that are still being built by individuals whose relations to one another are subject to dispute at the fundamental level of whether or not these individuals are capable in the first place of making a thought tradition in relation solely to one another, and he associated terror & refusal of terror by he individual constituted as without ties about the nature of ties. The rupture is caused by disagreement about what must be held in a state of arrest by thinking and what can be transcribed as unthought, where the extraordinary comes about by trying to get in a different place in relation to thinking about previously Serious or cosmic historiographies of rupture—how to get away.⁶⁶

C. CACOPHONY

Cacophony is a word with negative seepage as per definition. The 1941 copy of *Roget's*

Thesaurus of Words and Phrases that I found at a thrift store long ago has it listed under *discord*,

but also *style*:

579. Inelegance. — N. inelegance; vulgarity, bad taste; stiffness &c. *adj.*; unlettered Muse; barbarism; slang &c. (*affectation*) 855; euphuism; fustian &c. 577; cacophony; want of balance; words that break the teeth,—dislocate the jaw.⁶⁷

“unlettered Muse,” “barbarism,” “words that break the teeth,—dislocate the jaw.” I read the dissonance, noise, discordant notes not as a negative, but as the chatter of everyday life that necessarily interjects into anything we do or think. It is also clear by how the word is defined, that it can be used to describe a person or thing that is accused of being unlettered, barbaric, or in bad taste. I read it in Jodi Byrd’s way of reading it, as a quality of how the messiness of global culture deals with battles for hegemony:

In the wake of this transit, and indeed as its quality as a colonialist practice, one finds discordant and competing representations of diasporic arrivals and native lived experiences—what I call cacophony throughout this book—that vie for hegemony within the discursive, cultural, and political processes of representations and identity that form

⁶⁶ Simone White, *Dear Angel of Death* (Brooklyn, NY: Ugly Duckling Presse, 2018), 86.

⁶⁷ Peter Mark Roget, *Thesaurus of Words and Phrases*, ed. John Lewis Roget and Samuel Romilly Roget (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1941), 197.

the basis for what Wendy Brown has identified as the states of injury and Foucault and others have termed biopolitics.⁶⁸

Invoking fragments, poetry, correspondence and other interruptions are a necessary cacophony. Myth and poetry and art are also history, critical theory, tangential archives of language, image and object in relation to the given epochs of individual signatures.

Reading artists as agents of their larger social worlds, through Byrd's cacophony and Avery Gordon's hauntings, I suggest not only examples of trauma, but what comes after trauma—how artists negotiate, and re-negotiate histories of trauma, indigenous identities, diasporic identities, through small moves and subtle gestures. Instead of repeating trauma or dominance, seeking an intimate and considered relationship to that which surrounds them, the histories they can and cannot access, the material world that is pushed aside in the quest for compartmentalization, the aesthetics that they were not granted authority over. The continuation of being *questioned*, when institutional proximity and power still primarily dictate how aesthetics or art will be registered as important to the human cultural project.

C. COMMON SENSE

Contemporary Western common sense, building on various historical traditions in philosophy, law, and natural science, has a strong tendency to oppose “words” and “things.” Though this was not always the case even in the West, as Marcel Mauss noted in his famous work, *The Gift*, the powerful contemporary tendency is to regard the world of things as inert and mute, set in motion and animated, indeed knowable, only by persons and their words (see also Dumont 1980:229–30). Yet, in many historical societies, things have not been so divorced from the capacity of persons to act and the power of words to communicate (see Chapter 2). That such a view of things had not disappeared even under the conditions of occidental industrial capitalism is one of the intuitions that underlay Marx's famous discussion, in *Capital*, of the “fetishism of commodities.”⁶⁹

T. TEMPORALITY

⁶⁸ Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xiii.

⁶⁹ Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 4.

If time is a colony, then nothing is free.⁷⁰

Time is subject to human intervention because it is a human invention. In relation to canonical art history, that which is primitivized on the record will always be pre. If art engages with the aesthetics of subjectivity, a redundancy of categories will be applied. The pre is also an invention of European origin, a map of domination that required past-ness as a metric.⁷¹ Olu Oguibe suggests a “plurality of centers,” to decenter modernisms and the linearity of history. Rather than flattening circumstances, I hope to follow Byrd’s “cacophony” and Oguibe’s “plural centers” to talk about material practice. Settler colonialism and diasporas intersect and weave together, effecting politics, language, art, and by extension any human cultural endeavor. There are artists who deal with themes as ghosts, for whom making is also a resistance to scale and dominance, engaging with the material world towards the co-extensive in a context of the instrumental. Hauntings, myth, trauma, use and reuse, all teetering together, on the edges yet always inside because there is no outside.

M. MODERNISM, E.G. THEFT

Disavowal is a tendency inherent in the black radical tradition, a kind of inevitability that emerges from the pathologically auto-critical force of a more genuine (anticipatory variant of) enlightenment, on the one hand, and the more basic – which is not but for nothing other than to say base – desires that animate the *ideology of uplift*. The logic of correction is political instrumentality’s fugitive, though such fugitivity has a doubled, self-consumptive edge – the pathological drive of the pathologist; the end of an anti-essentialist anti-racism without the necessary re-routing. Such instrumentality can very quickly turn sour or get turned out in the interest of empire (artists against art in the interest of gold, prefabricated knockoffs – with readymade provenances – of a certain New York intellectuality, a state of mind, a state of mind, a mind of the United States of Exception, of the unoriginal gangsters of The American Century who stole modern art

⁷⁰ Olu Oguibe, *The Culture Game* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 4.

⁷¹ Taiaiake Alfred quotes Luther Standing Bear on the notion of progress: “True, the white man brought great change. But the varied fruits of his civilization, though highly colored and inviting, are sickening and deadening. . . I am going to venture that the man who sat on the ground in his teepee meditating on life and its meaning, accepting the kinship of all creatures, and acknowledging unity with the universe of things was infusing into his being the true essence of civilization. And when native man left off this form of development, his humanization was retarded in growth.” Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness: an Indigenous Manifesto* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 23.

from the ones who stole away as modern art, the moving, motley, sculptural, animated, theatrical things.⁷²

The idea that collectors were actually rescuing artefacts from decay and destruction, and from indigenous peoples themselves, legitimated practices which also included commercial trade and plain and simple theft.⁷³

As England challenged Spain on the global stage during the mid 1700s, Charles III set out to modernize his vast holdings into an overtly extractive empire along the lines of the English, Dutch and French. To this end he became an avid patron of botany and cartography, the twin pillars of imperial science. One official revealingly declared that “a dozen naturalists and some chemists scattered in Spain’s dominions...will offer an incomparably larger utility to the state than a hundred thousand men fighting for the enlargement of the Spanish empire.”⁷⁴

W. THE WEST

Thus, indigenous Asian, American, Pacific and African forms of knowledge, systems of classification, technologies and codes of social life, which began to be recorded in some detail by the seventeenth century, were regarded as ‘new discoveries’ by Western science. (footnote 8) These discoveries were commodified as property belonging to the cultural archive and body of knowledge of the West. (footnote 9)⁷⁵

See also Edward Said’s *Orientalism*.

See also Sara Ahmed’s *Queer Phenomenology*.

See also all poetry that decenters the idea of a singular center in favor of many always changing centers.⁷⁶

Many researchers, academics and project workers may see the benefits of their particular research projects as serving a greater good ‘for mankind,’ or serving a specific emancipatory goal for an oppressed community. But belief in the ideal that benefiting mankind is indeed a primary outcome of scientific research is as much a reflection of ideology as it is of academic training.⁷⁷

E. EVIL EYE

⁷² Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (Wivenhoe / New York / Port Watson: Minor Compositions: Autonomedia, 2013), 49.

⁷³ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Zed, 2012), 64.

⁷⁴ Rick A. Lopéz, “Nature as Subject and Citizen in the Mexican Botanical Garden, 1787–1829,” 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt180r1mz.7>, 76.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 64. For further treatment of the history of ethnobotany as exemplary of the cannibalism of imperialism see source for Rick A. Lopéz’s quote in M. MODERNISM E.G. THEFT. Modernist art is the aesthetic and artistic example of this form of “new discovery.”

⁷⁶ Some examples are Gerald Vizenor, Epeli Hau’Ofa, Katherine Agard and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

The exchange of energy between people, animals, plants, objects. Subject to jealousy, desired ownership. To own materials or reputations or others. The eye is one means by which to sort the cacophony of aesthetic life that we encounter when discussing the traditions of makers. It is also particularly relevant when we are acculturated to being seen or watched. In standard disciplinary inquiry, our relationships to folklore, history, myth, magic and storytelling are to be rationalized, made available to found new philosophies that give little credence to precedents from various epistemological traditions.⁷⁸ Many folkloric case studies on the eye posit witchcraft as fanciful, and non-objective, even though the practices relate to very real and present feelings of illness, jealousy and envy, the primary reasoning behind evil eye beliefs. Since there is work within the practices of those who are making objects for protection or healing, Bacon's assertion "To get what one wants without work,"⁷⁹ is part of the colonial denigration surrounding magic as a tool. Anthropologists and sociologists note that it is most found as a belief in areas of resource lack, for to have a little more than your neighbor might tip the scales. To fear that others want what one has, and will try to take or destroy it, belief in the evil eye constitutes itself a "means of social control, like gossip or witchcraft, minimizing deviant behavior."⁸⁰ It also describes power relations in forms of "victim/aggressor," a worldview where attack is always possible and feared. As Clarence Maloney points out, this "psychological interpretation," is "ethnocentric," and indeed the idea is posited that the "criteria," of logical Western thought and discipline deems this belief as fancy. In an entry on Mexico, Michael Kearney points out that this ascribing of "paranoia" to a culture is "diagnostic," and therefore accusatory.⁸¹ But isn't belief in the evil eye, as a roaming entity, just giving import to the actual practice of envy and jealousy over resource

⁷⁸ e.g. "Object Oriented Ontologies." See "C. Critique" and "O. Ontologies" sections of *Accumulative Unalphabetized Index of Themes*.

⁷⁹ Attributed to Francis Bacon. See Silvia Federici quote in A. ANIMISM.

⁸⁰ Clarence Maloney, ed., *The Evil Eye* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), viii.

⁸¹ Alan Dundes, ed., *The Evil Eye: a Folklore Casebook* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1981). 179.

gain? When looking at its function, it seems like any system for negotiating inequity.⁸² Relevant to any situation where there is a hierarchy and a base, welcome scenes for this belief to emerge. Given global inequity, the history of slavery, domination, and property, it is un-surprising that the evil eye gained and maintains popularity through its diaspora in various cultures, suspected of being older than written language.⁸³ It is a system that protects, but also its appearance and removal are how it performs social control.⁸⁴ There are many variations of warding of the malevolence of the evil eye, from herbal baths and incantations, to specific colors, food-based materials, and gestures. Many of the methods for dealing with this malevolent force have to do with lists that include how to remove it. Such as wearing blue beads on ones person, tying ribbons in places, sprinkling marigold under the bed. *Mal de ojo* in Spain and South and Central America intersects with European traditions, intersecting with Arab teachings during the period of Islamic occupation of Spain. It exists in Eastern Europe, India, and Northern Africa as well.

A. ANIMISM

At the basis of magic was an animistic conception of nature that did not admit to any separation between matter and spirit, and thus imagined the cosmos as a *living organism*, populated by occult forces, where every element was in “sympathetic” relation with the rest. In this perspective, where nature was viewed as a universe of sights and signatures, marking invisible affinities that had to be deciphered (Foucault 1970: 26-27), every element – herbs, plants, metals and most of all the human body – hid virtues and powers peculiar to it...Eradicating these practices was a necessary condition for the capitalist rationalization of work, since magic appeared as an illicit form of power and an instrument *to obtain what one wanted without work*, that is, a refusal to work in action. “Magic kills industry,” lamented Francis Bacon, admitting that nothing repelled him so much as the assumption that one could obtain results with a few idle expedients, rather than with the sweat of one’s brow (Bacon 1870; 381).⁸⁵

Back it up and rework how the words have been negatively interpreted. There is accident in Marx’s use, but there also isn’t. He is using animism and the fetish based on E.B. Tylor’s

⁸² Democracy or economic theory could be seen as a similar negotiations, just with different symbols attached.

⁸³ Alan Dundes, ed., *The Evil Eye: a Folklore Casebook* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1981).

⁸⁴ Clarence Maloney, ed., *The Evil Eye* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976).

⁸⁵ Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (New York: Autonomedia, 2014), 141.

designations, repeating the implied negativity.⁸⁶ William Pietz's scholarship traces this line to Western philosophical aesthetic traditions, including Hegel, who as Brittney Cooper points out provides further negative designations to non-Europeans. As Cooper illustrates, even the concept of time is "owned by white people," and used against all others.⁸⁷ This extends to how having relational epistemological orientations to the material world that deviate from Christian theological transcendent and Cartesian dualistic models are rendered in the negative, as unreasoning, untruthful, and false.

Education is enlightenment, and Enlightenment in the words of Adorno and Horkheimer, demands "the extirpation of animism."⁸⁸

Acknowledging world-views that see a wealth of "persons" in the world, not all of them human.⁸⁹

P. PLAYING OTHER

In the service of empire, more danger. Much like the danger of ethnobotany as a project of imperialism, is the project of "indigenizing."⁹⁰ The white shaman is easily legitimized.

T. TOUCHING THE THINGS

It is not always easy to elicit folkloristic data in cases where informants are genuinely afraid of the consequences of misusing such data. Informants often feel that revealing magical medicinal formulas may do harm to themselves or to their charges.⁹¹

Artists still touch the things. Healers still touch everything and everyone. There is a thought, that all *object based* art is by default capitalistic, because it creates goods for exchange, but I am convinced this is a flaw within Marxism that ignores aspects of animism or fetishism that enchant

⁸⁶ See Christopher Bracken's *Magical Criticism: The Recourse of Savage Philosophy* and Graham Harvey's *Animism: Respecting the Living World*, particularly pages 19 and 26, for fuller treatments on these negative designations.

⁸⁷ Brittney Cooper, "The Racial Politics of Time," TED, 2018, https://www.ted.com/talks/brittney_cooper_the_racial_politics_of_time?language=en.

⁸⁸ Christopher Bracken, *Magical Criticism: The Recourse of Savage Philosophy* (University of Chicago Press, 2007), 98.

⁸⁹ Graham Harvey, *Animism: Respecting the Living World* (London: Hurst & Company, 2005).

⁹⁰ See Eve Tuck, "Biting the Hand That Feeds You" (YouTube, August 12, 2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXEEzqIjA3I> and Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

⁹¹ Margaret M. Hardie "Evil Eye in Some Greek Villages" 107

and heal. For general pleasure and material play. Making it on and getting through. Even when visitors give the bad eye.

M. MYTH

Does it help that structural analysis self checked and decided to state “myth as model” rather than “myth as charter”?⁹² Empiricism still seeks the explanation or facticity even if more softly worded towards the non-linear.

Three major features are seen as characterizing traditional societies. First are what might be called *facticity* and *arbitrariness*. By *facticity* is meant that, in Hegel’s words, “the thing *is*; and it *is* merely because it *is*...and this simple immediacy constitutes its *truth*.” (footnote 12) In such case, there is nothing to justify; since things and institutions have always been there, there is no need to seek any other ground for them than the *fact of their being there*. By *arbitrariness* is meant that, in contrast to reason in the West, myth and fable are seen as what, in such societies, denote order and time. Since myth and fable are seen as expressing the very power of the *originaire*, nothing in these societies requires, as noted above, justification, and there is little place for open argument; it is enough to invoke the time of origins. Caught in a relation of pure immediacy to the world and to themselves, such societies are incapable of uttering the universal.⁹³

The attack on myth is warranted only in acknowledging that it is also power and a way of knowing that has oppressive potential in over use or singularity. The evil eye when used as a form of accusatory social control has this oppressive potential as well. Everything has dangerous potential depending on scale, use, and context. The uttering of myth as anti-reason is how to negate the power of each story.

A web of many displacements rooting and attempted roots.

“Do we not miss volumes when we think we have caught existence in a fixed or linear pattern?”⁹⁴

⁹² Vladimir Propp, *The Morphology of the Folktale*, 2nd ed. (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2009), xiii. “It is in this light that Levi-Strauss’s approach has helped lead to the new notion of myth (and other forms of folklore) as models (Note that Malinowski’s basically diachronic conception of myth as charter [set back in primeval time] has had to be updated to include a more synchronic conception of myth as model. The intellectual shift from “myth as charter” to “myth as model” is surely one significant consequence of synchronic structural analysis.)”

⁹³ Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 4.

⁹⁴ Fred D’Aguiar, “Wilson Harris ”(BOMB Magazine, 2003), <http://bombmagazine.org/article/2537/wilson-harris>.

A. AUTHENTICITY

One of the more captivating notions of authenticity involving outsider and Native arts is the idea that the qualifying criteria are not set up entirely from within their own communities, but are defined primarily by the very cultures that view them as peripheral. This has been carried out in a variety of ways, including through the power of the economic market. What that market responds to, and therefore invests in, often serves as the strongest governing body of what is accepted as authentic within a category.⁹⁵

S. SURVIVANCE

...an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy, and victimry. Survivance means the right of succession or reversion of an estate, and in that sense, the estate of native survivancy.⁹⁶

D. DUALISM

The Leibnizians with their *monads* have constructed an incomprehensible hypothesis. They have spiritualized matter rather than materializing the soul. How can we define a being whose nature is absolutely unknown to us?⁹⁷

The excellence of reason does not depend on a grand meaningless word (immateriality) but on its force, its extent or its acuteness. Thus a 'soul of clay' which discovers as if at first glance the relationships and consequences of an infinite number of ideas which are difficult to grasp would obviously be preferable to a silly, stupid soul made of the most precious elements. A true philosopher does not blush, like Pliny, at our miserable origin.⁹⁸

H. HAUNTINGS

Desire is what we know about ourselves, and damage is what is attributed to us by those who wish to contain us.⁹⁹

Freud's initial understanding of the unconscious, tied as it is to otherness and animism, might have been a more fruitful path. For what does animism represent if not the idea that

⁹⁵ Dyani Reynolds-White Hawk, "Unexpected Parallels: Commonalities between Native American and Outsider Arts," *Wicazo Sa Review*, Special Issue: American Indian Curatorial Practice, 27, no. 1 (2012): pp. 47-61, <https://doi.org/10.5749/wicazosareview.27.1.0047>

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/wicazosareview.27.1.0047>, 54.

⁹⁶ Gerald Vizenor "Acts of Survivance," *Survivance*, April 20, 2016, <http://survivance.org/acts-of-survivance/>.

⁹⁷ Julien Offray de la Mettrie, *Machine Man and Other Writings* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹⁹ Eve Tuck and C Ree, "A Glossary of Haunting," essay, in *Handbook of Autoethnography*, ed. Holman Jones Stacy Linn, Tony E. Adams, and Carolyn Ellis (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), 648.

everything in the world outside yourself is alive, perhaps with designs on you, clearly capable of quietly creeping in or noisily invading, assuredly in the same field as you? Freud's science will try, once and for all, to rid itself of all vestiges of animis by making all the spirits or the hauntings come from the unconscious, from inside the troubled individual, an individual, we might note, who had become increasingly taken with the animation of the commodity world.¹⁰⁰

We are haunted by somethings we have been involved in, even if they appear foreign, alien, far away, doubly other.¹⁰¹

Hopefully this entailed haunting means we can try talking to the ghosts to get at something future.

Within this history of thieved aesthetics and hauntings, are the “survivances” created by artists who make works for self healing, to engage smaller communities, to question the solidity of words and disciplinary thought, to touch the cosmic within materiality, to speak with their sometimes known and alternately foreclosed ancestral histories. The agentive power of honoring the strength and alternatively admitting the damage. The call out, the airing of dirty laundry within the formation of our selves, needed release valves. The “survivances” are the sneaky ghosts who smile as they bestow some past into the future, something that surges slowly. The surface appeal of surrealism has travelled far, but the “Freedom Dreams” are the philosophies and ideas underneath, the social and personal power art can contain. As Fred Moten and Stefano Harney point out, the “instrumentalism” of art that gets “turned out in the interest of empire,” is played out by the “unoriginal gangsters of The American Century who stole modern art from the ones who stole away as modern art, the moving, motely, sculptural, animated, theatrical things.”¹⁰² Despite this negative form of theft, there is also the rupture created by surrealism, the offering forth of a new dialogue of others with aesthetics first seen as outside of, engaging cultural histories based on idiosyncratic interpretations of their own hybridity. As Kelley states: “The surrealists are talking about total transformation of society, not just granting aggrieved

¹⁰⁰ Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 48.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁰² Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (Wivenhoe / New York / Port Watson: Minor Compositions: Autonomedia, 2013), 49.

populations greater political and economic power. They are speaking of new social relationships, new ways of living and interacting, new attitudes towards work and leisure and community.”¹⁰³

M. MELANCHOLY (RACIAL MELANCHOLY)

Thus the melancholic ego is formed and fortified by a spectral drama, whereby the subject sustains itself through the ghostly emptiness of a lost other. Several aspects of this psychological drama are relevant to this study’s interest in American racial dynamics. First, it is this peculiar and uneasy dynamic of retaining a denigrated but sustaining loss that resonates most acutely against the mechanisms of the racial imaginary as they have been fashioned in this country. While psychoanalytic readings of melancholia have been mostly theorized in relation to gender formation (footnote 24), melancholia also presents a particularly apt paradigm for elucidating the activity and components of racialization. Racialization in America may be said to operate through the institutional process of producing a dominant, standard, white national ideal, which is sustained by the exclusion-yet-retention of racialized others. The national topography of centrality and marginality legitimizes itself by retroactively positing the racial other as always Other and lost to the heart of the nation. Legal exclusion naturalizes the more complicated “loss” of the unassimilable racial other.¹⁰⁴

F. FETISH

See William Pietz’s trio of essays “The Problem of the Fetish I, II, and III.”

What is the possibility for:

A. “AN ANARCHIST ANTHROPOLOGY.”¹⁰⁵

E. “ENTANGLED EMPATHY.”¹⁰⁶

See every poem sincerely enacted towards re-enchanting a relationship with each other and the phenomenological world.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2002), 5. Kelley credits Aimé Césaire and Wilfredo Lam as having “...given us some of the most imaginative, expansive, and playful dreams of a new world I have ever known.” Dreams of collectivity and banishment of isolation implied within their Surrealist challenges to hegemonic forms of knowledge.

¹⁰⁴ Anne Anlin Cheng, *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation and Hidden Grief* (Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 10.

¹⁰⁵ David Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004).

¹⁰⁶ Lori Gruen, *Entangled Empathy: an Alternative Ethic for Our Relationships with Animals* (New York: Lantern Books, a division of Booklight Inc., 2014).

¹⁰⁷ Joy Harjo, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Simone White, Rosemarie Waldrop, Anne Boyer, Audre Lorde, Beth Cuthand, Aimé Césaire, CA Conrad, Bernadette Mayer and Ariel Goldberg are a few examples.

U. UNIVERSALISMS

How to try for plurality without flattening. Messy and un-linear by necessity because straight lines suggest answers that push truth to the harshest ends.

I. INCOMENSURABILITY

The woven textures of histories, pulled at, unraveled and upended by inserting more storytelling. Admitting to flaws and mistakes in vulnerability. “Normalcy” and “Innocence,” may not be rescued. Opening space and attempting to decenter privilege and power, the kind that subsumes and the kind that is held. The incommensurable as process.

An ethic of incommensurability, which guides moves that unsettle innocence, stands in contrast to aims of reconciliation, which motivate settler moves to innocence. Reconciliation is about rescuing settler normalcy, about rescuing a settler future. Reconciliation is concerned with questions of what will decolonization look like? What will happen after abolition? What will be the consequences of decolonization for the settler? Incommensurability acknowledges that these questions need not, and perhaps cannot, be answered in order for decolonization to exist as a framework.¹⁰⁸

S. SEEING

Yet when an image is presented as a work of art, the way people look at it is affected by a whole series of learnt assumptions about art. Assumptions concerning:

Beauty
Truth
Genius
Civilization
Form
Status
Taste, etc.¹⁰⁹

A response to seeing:

Letter to John Berger, Haute Savoy, France

May 12, 1995

A cold dawn drags itself between the fog and the thatched roofs of the village. It is morning. The dawn leaves, the cold remains. The little streets of mud begin to fill with

¹⁰⁸ Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012), 35.

¹⁰⁹ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 2008), 7.

people and animals. The cold and a small bench accompany me in the reading of Boar Land. Heriberto and Eva (five and six years old, respectively) come and snatch the book. They look at the picture on the front cover (it is a Madrid edition from 1989). It is a copy of a painting by John Constable, an image of an English countryside.

The drawing, Mr. Berger, elicits from them a quick connection between image and reality. For Heriberto, for example, there is no doubt that the horse in the painting is La Muñeca [The Doll] - a mare that accompanied us in the long year when the indigenous rebellion governed southeastern Mexico, which no one could mount except Manuel, a playmate who was twice the age, size and weight of Heriberto. And what Constable called "a river" is really a stream that passes through "La Realidad". ("La Realidad" is the name of the reality of the village of La Realidad, which is the outer reaches of Heriberto's horizons.) The most distant place that Heriberto's trips and running around have taken him is "La Realidad."

Constable's painting does not transport Heriberto and Eva to the English countryside. It does not take them outside the Lacandon Jungle. It leaves them here, or it brings them back. It brings them back to their land, their place, to their being children, to their being campesinos, to their being indigenous, to their being Mexicans and rebels. For Heriberto and Eva, Constable's painting is a coloured drawing of La Muñeca, and its title, Scene On A Navigable River, is not a valid argument: the river is the stream in "La Realidad," the horse is the mare La Muñeca, Manuel is riding it, and his hat has fallen off. That's it. On to another book. This time it is Van Gogh's turn, and for Eva and Heriberto, the Dutchman's paintings are scenes from their land, of their being indigenous and campesinos. After this, Heriberto tells his mother that he spent the morning with the Sup. "Reading grown-up books," says Heriberto, and believes that this earned him a free hand with a box of chocolate cookies. Eva is more farsighted, and asks me if I have a book about her doll with the little red bandanna.¹¹⁰

M. METAPHYSICAL PATHOS

Another type of factors in the history of ideas may be described as susceptibilities to diverse kinds of metaphysical pathos. This influential cause in the determination of philosophical fashions and speculative tendencies has been so little considered that I find no recognized name for it, and have been compelled to invent one which is not, perhaps, wholly self-explanatory. 'Metaphysical pathos' is exemplified in any description of the nature of things, any characterization of the world to which one belongs, in terms which, like the words of a poem, awaken through their associations, and through a sort of empathy which they engender, a congenial mood or tone of feeling on the part of the philosopher or his readers. For many people—for most of the laity, I suspect—the reading of a philosophical book is usually nothing but a form of aesthetic experience, even in the case of writings which seem destitute of all outward aesthetic charms;

¹¹⁰ Subcomandante Marcos, *Professionals of Hope: The Selected Writings of Subcomandante Marcos* (Brooklyn, NY: The Song Cave, 2017), 39.

voluminous emotional reverberations, of one or another sort, are aroused in the reader without the intervention of any definite imagery.¹¹¹

Q. QUESTIONS

Who is to be protected, by whom, against what and whom, and at what price? Who is the equal of whom? To what has one a right by virtue of belonging to an ethnic group, a region, or a religion? Who has a right to take power and govern, in what circumstances, how, for how long, and on what conditions? Who has the right to the product of whose work, and for what compensation? When may one cease to obey authority, without punishment? Who must pay taxes and where do these revenues go? Who may contract debts, and in the name of whom, and for what may they be expected? To whom do a country's riches belong? In short, who has the right to live and exist, and who has not, and why?¹¹²

B. BREATHY WRITING

Poet Susan Howe in *The Difficulties* describes history as this thing that just feels like a monolith, especially when one starts pushing against the authority of its truth content. She talks about hesitant or “breathy” writing.¹¹³ Paul Chaat Smith gets it as well, that history depends on who is telling, who is told, and how they see themselves in relation to current circumstances. The monolith. The haunted monolith, the biggest all encompassing sculpture there is.

S. SENSUOUS KNOWLEDGE

Avery Gordon's “sensuous knowledge.” What we feel is tangled in the structures. Not empiricism, but something else. Objects are exactly “ghostly” as they bear the remnants of touch, history, social-ity and subjects. In some cases, the deeper and harder to parse cosmic materiality of subjectivity and personhood shines out.

¹¹¹ Arthur Oncken Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1936), 11.

¹¹² Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 67.

¹¹³ Susan Howe, *The Difficulties*, vol. 3, 2 (Viscerally Press, 1989), 28. “...my own work is doomed to be hesitant—breathy...”

I can't remember where I read it, but the meaning of the words "subject" and "object" completely swapped places sometime between the 13th to 15th century. Something to do with sovereignty.

O. OUTSIDER

Institutionalized rejection of difference is an absolute necessity in a profit economy which needs outsiders as surplus people. As member of such an economy, we have *all* been programmed to respond to the human differences between us with fear and loathing and to handle that difference in one of three ways: ignore it, and if that's not possible, copy it if we think it is dominant, or destroy it if we think its subordinate. But we have no patterns for relating across our human differences as equals. As a result, those differences have been misnamed and misused in the service of separation and confusion.¹¹⁴

The construction of folk art as a separate, minor art form and the modernist response to selected elements of "folk" art as pertinent to the fine art tradition illuminates the dynamics of modern art that permits an expanded appreciation of the "art" of all cultures—Western and non-Western, sophisticated and primitive, modern and classical, pre-historic and contemporary, as well as the "artful" aspects of design, craft, and the popular arts—while at the same time what is considered truly *Art* is narrowly restricted to a specific set of self-conscious aesthetic practices within a single cultural tradition.¹¹⁵

Daniel Wojcik points out that exclusion or inclusion depends on the desired programs of institutions, critics and art historians. These categorizations are therefore not based on individual roles within communities or self-identification, but on the relationship, or lack thereof, to institutions that hold the most resources through property and money.¹¹⁶ Mythical misanthropes. Some real ones. What does misanthropy have to do with power.

P. POLYSEMY

The fact that words have several senses is called "polysemy." Conventionally, polysemy is assumed to pose a "threat" to the process of communication. Communication aims to "convey information from speaker to hearer," but because words are polysemous, the hearer has to distinguish the meanings the speaker intends from those the speaker connotes as unintended surplus. If the hearer cannot distinguish denotation from connotation, then the act of communication is prey to "ambiguity": it is open to several interpretations at once. Ambiguity can lead in turn to equivocation: the hearer is left

¹¹⁴ Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Freedom: The Crossing Press, 2001), 115.

¹¹⁵ Charles Russell, *Self-Taught Art: the Culture and Aesthetics of American Vernacular Art* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001), 15.

¹¹⁶ Daniel Wojcik, "Outsider Art, Vernacular Traditions, Trauma and Creativity," *Western Folklore* 67, no. 2/3, Special Issue in Honor of Michael Owen Jones (2008): pp. 179-198, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25474913>.

hesitating between competing interpretations. If left unresolved, equivocation ends in misunderstanding: there is no transfer of information from speaker to hearer. The act of communication falls short of its aim.¹¹⁷

If there is more than one meaning, how do we make a solid. If meaning changes, how do we let go of forcing a solid to maintain shape.

L. LOVE

As Jimmy Boggs used to remind us, revolutions are made out of love for people and for place. He often talked about loving America enough to change it. ‘I love this country,’ he used to say, ‘not only because my ancestors’ blood is in the soil but because of what I believe it can become.’ Love isn’t just something you feel. It’s something you do everyday when you go out and pick the paper and bottles scattered the night before on the corner, when you stop and talk to a neighbor, when you argue passionately for what you believe in with whoever will listen, when you call a friend to see how they’re doing, when you write a letter to the newspaper, when you give a speech and give ‘em hell, when you never stop believing that we can all be more than what we are. In other words, Love isn’t about what we did yesterday; it’s about what we do today and tomorrow and the day after.¹¹⁸

W. WE/I/OUR/YOURS

Caution with encompassing, as not everyone feels included in the “we” or “our” that is written into language. The impossible dissolve of the narrator/I character.

The “I” in Wilson Harris. A melting sifting time warped I.¹¹⁹

F. FAMILIAR (n.)

See also F. FETISH and Entry 2: *The aaacc(k)* coauthored with Jennings, Angela. Neither author is primary. Both make art about familiars.

I. INTRICACY (QUA INTIMACY)¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Christopher Bracken, *Magical Criticism: The Recourse of Savage Philosophy* (University of Chicago Press, 2007), 84. Citing Paul Ricoeur’s “Creativity and Language,” pgs. 124, 126, 127.

¹¹⁸ Grace Lee Boggs and Scott Kurashige, *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2012), 96.

¹¹⁹ See Wilson Harris, *Palace of the Peacock*.

¹²⁰ Special thanks to K. Wayne Yang for suggesting the words “Familiar (n.),” “Intimacy” and “Intricacy” to help work through troubled etymological meanings.

Is intimacy a possible alternative for complex. Is intricacy a possible alternative for intimacy. Is it possible to erase the hierarchy implied by the dichotomy between simple and complex.

ENTRY 1:

LOGICAL HORSES: OR SEVERAL HISTORICAL, AESTHETIC, ALLEGORICAL, AND MYTHICAL VIGNETTES.

INTRODUCTION

un-designated Part I

—

rustles/gestures

leaving notes, echoes

melting, sinking, sifting.

Liquid Languid: folds, the catastrophic

Validation Machines

connoisseurship, genius, exceptionalism

designated Part II (because the sequence demands a line)

Gulliver's Travels

allegory of otherness: conquest, + heathens, barbarians

"Sausages and Champagne"

History from

*cacophony, science fiction, ^ *The Great Chain of Being*

~

"Metaphysical Pathos"

Our Debts / Alternative To:

fragile puddle forms,

gummy tendrilled support networks

*The impulse to explore and learn is to colonize, curiosity's sinister side. New planets discovered—
—lit by the soft salmon glow of a smaller, slower sun. These are real and metaphorical planets.*

*Empirically discovered, yet distant enough to project theoretical fantasies onto, too far for
immediate sensual experience. The supposed outside that can be gleaned from, distant potential
utopias. Like Gulliver, we risk crushing what we encounter that is smaller and more fragile than
we are. We risk being annihilated by the larger and denser than ourselves. Hallucinating a
potentially snail-like unfolding life-space in the cosmos, while having a hard time creating this*

unfolding within intimate phenomenological environments. Touching the rocks, touching the things, collecting, sifting, holding. Watching the snails move. Bending matter for the will of some, at the expense of others, earthly demons.

—

rustles/gestures

A CONTINUATION (OR IS IT PRE-AMBLE?) OF AESTHETICS. AUTHORITY.
SURENESS. VALIDATION.

During the 2017 College Art Association conference, I participated with Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, Cara Benedetto, Natalie Beall and Michelle Ty, in a panel titled *rustles/gestures* on the political potential and implications of subtle moves.

Here is the description that we wrote for the CAA about our panel:

How does one avoid dominating matter while still lightly touching it, inhabiting it, arranging it? In this Open Panel session, we will discuss how abstaining from grand scales and gestures might inaugurate a different relation between aesthetics and politics.

Slight rustles or minimal gestures made by thinkers and artists often resist interpretation. By investigating the minor force of apparently silent things, we hope to discuss makers and thinkers working within marginalized and/or minimal zones, and ask how these light moves can have a larger impact, contesting more visible or dominant historical narratives. We are interested in thought / art practices that seek negotiation with the compulsion to arrange or possess matter, as we address why cultural producers choose to arrange material and language in subtle ways.

The panel will consist of artist presenters who find strategic ways to resist scale and dominance via light gestures and subtle moves—in their aesthetic and linguistic practices—aiming to counter power not with power, but with the persistence of the minor or small. In assembling this panel, we follow a maxim offered by artist Cecilia Vicuña, who has suggested inhabiting an aesthetic of "maximum fragility against maximum power." Our panel format will consist of a set of three conversations across speakers, followed by discussion with the audience. We suggest the format of the conversation as a radical opening toward critical engagement.

We wanted to question the sureness of disciplinary categories, revealing spaces of movement within architecture, language, aesthetics. The anti-monumental hides and leaves notes, sifting through the realm of overt authority and material power.

Michelle Ty, in her presentation *Canto for the Supernumeraries*, called for a consideration of the validity of seemingly silent players, of the non-expert amateurs that are necessary to the full unfolding of an operatic story, of the “movable furniture,” as they are sometimes called within the theatrical world because of their non-acting/non-singing movements across the stage. After the conference, she told a side story about how a man at a party replied to her attempt to describe the presentation to him with “oh, so you are giving voice to the voiceless.” This wasn’t her aim at all. Instead she urges we listen to the “silent” as silence, rather than to recreate situations of hierarchy based on imposing language on the non-speaking. She hoped to reveal the super necessity of the supernumeraries. Not singing or acting, still crucial to the working of the narrative. Tremors of Enlightenment ideology betray the position that forces action or speech, we all must rise, phoenix-like, into a progress-fueled future. As suggested by *The Great Chain of Being*, reaching for an ideal transcendental level, rather than sifting and shifting on the low level. Climb the Ziggurat to reach the sun god, to become it. There is little room allowed for beings or creatures that move through space without trying to dominate it.

My own presentation that day, *Light Moves, Haunted Histories*, co-authored with Natalie Beall, started with a Francis Ponge quotation:

Ideas are not my forte. I do not handle them with ease. They handle me instead. Give me a queasy feeling, nausea. I don’t like to find myself thrown in their midst. Objects in the external world, on the other hand, delight me. They sometimes surprise me but seem in no way concerned about my approval: which they immediately acquire. I do not question them.¹²¹

¹²¹ Francis Ponge, *The Voice of Things*, trans. Beth Archer Brombert (New York: McGraw-Hill Book, 1974), 93.

Suzanne Herrera Li Puma provided me the introduction to Ponge several years ago, influencing my thoughts, writing, and art ever since. Ponge expresses his uneasiness with polemics, the authority of language over the world of things, a language that he himself feels compelled to speak and write in. In this spirit of Ponge, our presentation deviated from the polemical, consisting of vignettes of poetry and short stories in tandem with images describing material encounters and their attendant haunted social/historical relationships.

Herrera Li Puma and Cara Benedetto's presentation, *shuffling, shifting, sifting, folding*, addressed printmaking as a visual/tactile extension of the idea of the echo. Suzanne began with Gayatri Spivak's reading of Ovid's *Myth of Echo*, in which:

Spivak travels through a history of (phallogocentric) misreadings and blindnesses to Echo, readings of Ovid's rendering of the myth of Narcissus and Echo that would deny the figure of Echo an existence, deny her radical possibility as an Other to the speaking I.¹²² Spivak's argument is finely wrought, a complex lacework of critique, but I am distracted as I read it by a more basic shock. I am shocked to remember that Echo really only repeats. It is an allegory of repetition, of speech being mouthed (or is it even mouthed?) by an only ever extremely spectral Other, who is Echo. The myth is also therefore about the way in which --what do I call it -- "we", a subject, an "I" a non-I, mouths patriarchal discourse back to itself both keeping and transforming its meaning.¹²³

The myth (and its re-readings) opens towards the relegation of the role of listening, of repeating as a lesser than position to the authority of stating, or talking. Suzanne would like the “echo as the repetition” to be validated, not simply as a mirror/void position—but as an acknowledgement that nothing about Echo's repetition is empty (note: Echo is the female counterpart to Narcissus male personage). Narcissus is more interested in his own reflection than he is in the listening nymph before him. As Suzanne and Cara evocatively described—each copy bears shifts and changes, like a fingernail scratch appearing on a printing plate ensuring that subsequent prints bear the marks of time and process.

¹²² Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Echo,” *New Literary History* 24.1 (1993): 17–43.

¹²³ Suzanne Herrera, “Print Echoes,” in *Contemporary Print Handbook*, ed. Cara Benedetto (New York: Halmos, 2016), 69-85.

Trauma lives in architecture, it lives in words. Trauma lives where we cannot reconcile the ideas we hold solid/rigid, with the ideas of others. In the days before the panel, Suzanne and I reflected that one of us addressing these topics alone, in the manner of address we preferred could possibly be met with hostility. But together, we form a small and quiet force field, with simmering ripples underneath constructed of historical trauma we witness/have witnessed. Our panel recounted experiences of oppressions, of witnessing oppressions, of feeling angry about oppressiveness as it is expressed through hierarchies and binaries (e.g. Supernumeraries and the Narcissus/Echo paradigm), of hauntings sometimes visible and other times subsumed through time, desiring instead of a rising or transcendence, an allowance to be, to sift and shift at these slower smaller temporal scales. An allowance for existence as a speaking I. "all she can do is double each last word, and echo back again the voice she's heard."¹²⁴

A melting sifting sinking creature comes across a wall. A monument. A building. An edifice. The melter cannot liquefy in the presence of this authoritative monolith. This structure is for some a commemoration of a past nostalgic historic time, for others a site of ancestral trauma that elicits fear and aggression. Remembrance's double edge. The structured monoliths that are handmaidens to oppression—claimed to be historical remnants that we preserve as a shared past. But that past was not experienced the same by all, is not experienced the same by my/our ancestrally haunted bones. When the liquid comes up against the solid, the desire is to go around and underneath, but the solid makes this difficult in its persistence/insistence. Sometimes the solid forces the liquid into a contained shape. I feel this fear at the foot of certain buildings, we feel fear at the continued presence of certain monuments. The continued realization that violence is not a pre-existing condition—it is a bubbling bursting forth due to encounters, traumatic forces and the authority of some forms/states over others. The radical/fundamental. The sensitive empath is taken in, taken over. When agency is ripped from a being, that being sways with the

¹²⁴ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. A. D. Melville (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008), 62.

panicked anxiety of hopelessness. A state of reversal, where the oppressed becomes oppressive. The projection of an afterlife is the solace for some of what cannot be achieved in this realm, the projection outside into the interstellar. Away from the swampy earthy mess. I/you/we cannot pass, I/you/we cannot melt. Fear gasps outward intensity. Burning an object or a structure is a destructive act. No doubt. When is that burning a deletion of history, when is it a negotiation, when is it a letting out of trauma in a puff of smoke, like entropy that allows for new growth. What do we learn from fragments and remains/reminders. When is burning, destroying, pulling down and tearing up a survival response. Pushing smokey density up to the cosmos in honor of what can be done and what cannot be known. When is folding not enough, when does the fold repeat the trauma without actually destroying or altering the underlying structure. What is reclaimed in the ashes of something that should never have existed, that existed at the expense of the multiple for the benefit of the singular.

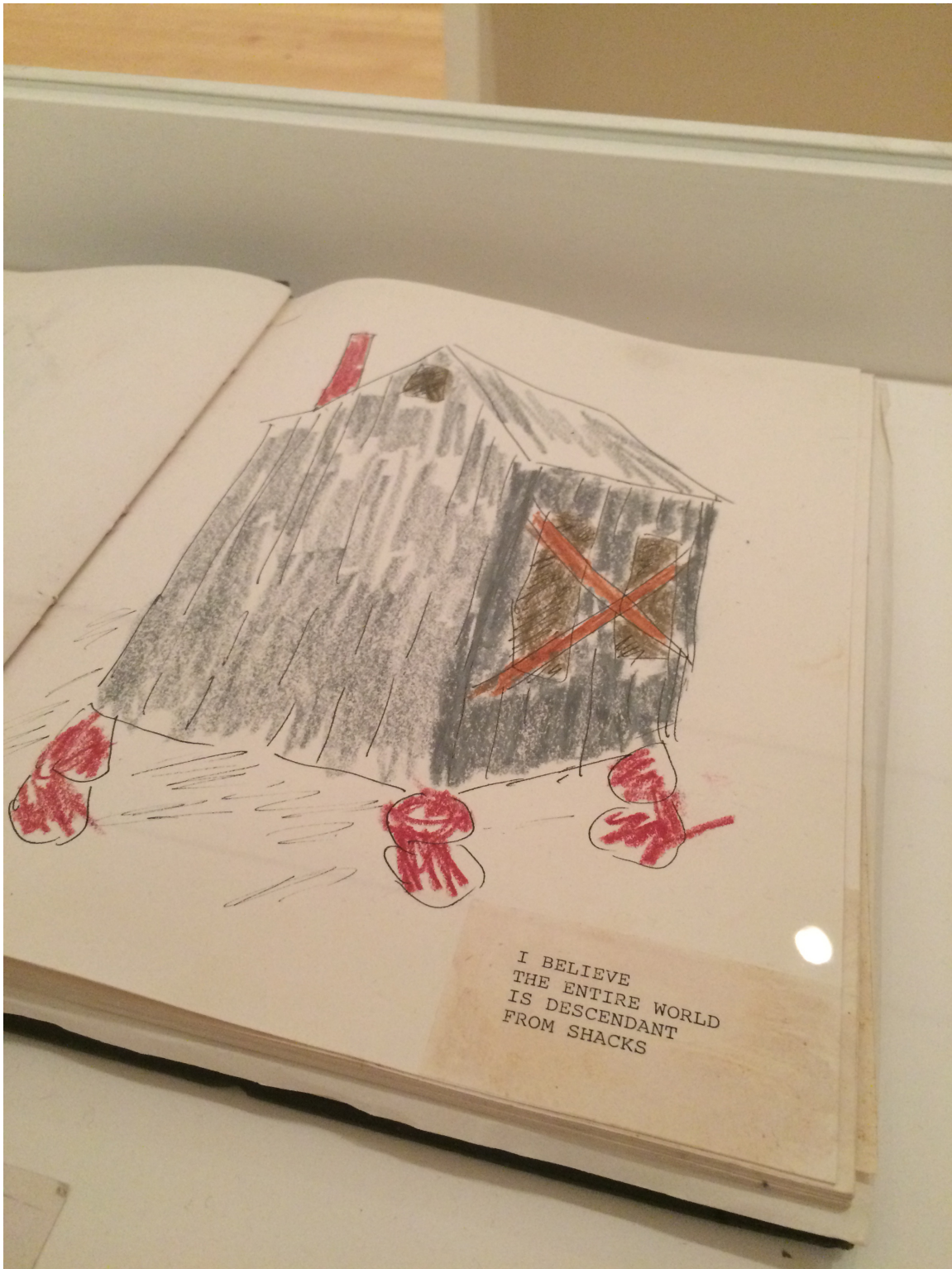


Figure 1: Beverly Buchanan notebook image used with permission from Monica Park and the Brooklyn Museum. From "Beverly Buchanan: Ruins and Rituals." By Czacki, 10/21/2016–03/05/2017.

We visited Beverly Buchanan's exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum later the day of our panel, encountering another force field. Her writings and sculptures approach entropy and monumentality, honoring ingenuity as it seeps through the fissures. Ripples made by ghosts, a materiality of the available and accessible. Swampy rock objects that could be altars to some ritual past, structures harkening to the DIY architecture of plantation extremities. Speaking to a longer temporality, to un-reconciled pasts, where all things that humans see as solid melt back into the earth. Bottle trees, memory ware, clothing, small-scale replicas of shelters, little monuments. She was concerned the dolphins might be watching her while she did one of her outdoor projects. She knew the materials, no matter how seemingly innocuous and basic were haunted. Buchanan's concrete structures are filled with little bits of sea-shells.¹²⁵

Buchanan's work is a physical representation of a hope for a side-temporal future that negotiates trauma with a measure of beauty, letting the haunting seep through, resuscitating the vibrant life of doing what one can with availability. Titles of her works allude to chronic illness, notes and small objects together make a grander arc statement about all the things we touch with bodies and make with hands. There are few objects, the scale is small, many cast off and remnant things. Deep underbelly meanings sneak through the materials and the language attached. The non-monumental, the covered over with moss and seashells, little bugs slipping through the cracks and temporal unfoldings revealing that we are not only witnessing negative entropy, but the curious nature of time and regrowth that seems to both move forward and cycle back. Making due with the materials at hand, "survivances,"¹²⁶ managing to carve out vibrant little swampy existences congruent to the more powerful, visible hierarchies.

¹²⁵ Natalie tells me this is a common building material in the South, indicative of the troubled history of plantations. Buildings constructed on the margins of slave-owners properties were frequently made of this stuff.

¹²⁶ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Zed, 2012), 146. "Celebrating survival is a particular sort of approach. Non-indigenous research has been intent on documenting the demise and cultural assimilation of indigenous peoples.

Turtles all the way down, until the turtles reach the base. That absent turtle shelled underbelly where there is no luxury, just soft and precarious parts in danger of being punctured or boiled into soup. Underbelly underthings.

LIQUID LANGUID (RESPONSES)

Lauren Cramer, Derek Conrad Murray and Alessandra Raengo addressed the concept of liquidity as related to blackness during a panel titled *Black Sentience* at the prior-mentioned CAA conference. Liquidity is both a state of survivance and a description of how bodies move through aesthetic spaces. The panel stemmed from a research group *Liquid Blackness*, a collective (of which the panelists are members) that seeks to engage the way aesthetics are produced and perpetuated as “transnational artistic and intellectual flows.”¹²⁷ Liquidity is a state assumed and projected, perceived as less solid yet capable of viscously pushing through cracks and fissures—though fluid, still visible. One of the most compelling features of this panel came during Cramer’s presentation, where she performed a mathematical demonstration with a sheet of white paper, illustrating catastrophe not as a rupture but as a fold, her use of the concept is based on René Thom’s Catastrophe Theory. The catastrophic, as I understood from her presentation, was the folding of the flatness of a single plane into an overlapping form, curves that confound and create a ripple effect that extends throughout the structure.¹²⁸ These fissure spaces, created by folds, render the “stability” of a plane questionable. Flatness is then the state where things disperse evenly, while the folding creates unpredictable results, defying uniformity or easy prediction of outcomes. As Cramer put it, this is the act of overturning but not of breaking. If

Instead it is possible to celebrate survival, or what Gerald Vizenor has called “survivance”— survival and resistance. Survivance accentuates the degree to which indigenous peoples and communities have retained cultural and spiritual values and authenticity in resisting colonialism. The approach is sometimes reflected in story form, sometimes in popular music and sometimes as an event in which artists and story tellers come together to celebrate collectively a sense of life and diversity and connectedness.”

¹²⁷ Liquid Blackness, March 08, 2017, accessed June 21, 2017, <http://liquidblackness.com/research-projects/>.

¹²⁸ See also Christina Sharpe’s *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* for a discussion on how the catastrophic as a current form of everyday life has historical roots in transatlantic slavery.

breaking happens, then there is actually no “ground” to start from, but if it is simply a matter of folding, the structure hides corners. This is a version of catastrophe that hides its catastrophicness. Appearing unbroken but bent, structurally unsound, unquantifiable according to mathematical rules. Cramer described the “joints” of architectural spaces, components evocative both metaphorically and actually, concrete ways of “holding” things together, that aching space that serves the larger apparatus via connection.¹²⁹ It is in this jointed space that things happen, things shift. Potential becomes available in the very movement of the parts. Architecturally, these could be hallways and accidental closet spaces—places to hide or just breathe, undetected to those unaware of the joints. Places that defy the hegemony and control of the larger project of architecture and resist total visibility.

THE CRITIC/CONNOISSEUR (OR, VALIDATION MACHINES)

In her book *Primitive Art in Civilized Places*, Sally Price discusses the power the art connoisseur held in the dissemination of modernist aesthetics. Essentially, the connoisseur supports some artists being elevated, others remaining anonymous. Anonymity is required of the latter to retain the mystique desired of certain types of objects. The critic/connoisseur decides what art is craft, what art is high, what art is authentic or inauthentic, who is included and who is excluded. Arguments regarding authenticity, validation, good versus bad art continue to reveal how aesthetics follow similar social rules as other human constructed ideologies. Forms of taxonomy, illustrated by the naming of artists by categories: *outsider, indigenous, female, other*. Additional is the socio-economic factor, an artist who does not have property or money, will thereby have less control over how their work is seen, circulated and preserved or not—decisions having little to do with their desires to bury or monumentalize their *ouvres*. The designation craft when talking about the production of objects by artists outside of gallery, museum, and academic contexts is a

¹²⁹ Lauren Cramer, e-mail, June 20, 2017. Cramer clarified in an email correspondence that her particular approach to the catastrophe in architecture comes from the collection of essays by Greg Lynn: *Folds, Bodies, & Blobs*.

categorization that sets apart makers of things. The collector, museum curator, or art historian is the authoritative entity that rescues the objects from daily life, transforming them into objects of high culture. Careers in these institutions are gained through canonizing particular artists, elucidating the merits of one biography versus or in relation to another, an act of discovery and reframing that validates the artist and the persons and institutions attached to the artist. The poor or marginalized are accused of not caring for their objects properly. Altruism on the top hides the depths of judgment of the actions and aesthetics of others. The cultural drive, on the part of institutions, is to rescue the objects from their entropic doom at the hands of their makers. If they take their objects back to the woods and melt them all down, is that not a valid and real thing to do? And what about radical redistribution? A significant shift in global-cultural aesthetics would occur, if all of the holdings in all of the world's ethnographic collections were returned to makers or their descendants and communities.

There are aesthetics that happen in hallways and hidden spaces, objects and people who interact in space and time other than in galleries and museums. This may sound like I'm saying that these spaces are all artificial, but they are part of real life too. Galleries, museums and archives just happen to uphold a real life of division, inclusion/exclusion, property and possession.

Inside/outside. And we are implicated in the system, I am implicated in the system every time I write about artists, present at conferences, teach a class picking one over another maker to illustrate a complete history. The preservation of cultures isn't possible simply by recording them and placing their objects in collections, preservation requires care and understanding of how that culture sees itself and its aesthetic/social contributions—allowing space to grow rather than dictating/predicting the outcome. The decisions of preservation versus letting go—to be decided by makers and their communities, in their hands. Culture evolving in fluid moves, life spans and cycles—sideways temporal moves.

PART II

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

Colonial logic trips over itself, falls into itself. Jonathan Swift's 18th-century *Gulliver's Travels* is an allegory on many levels—for slavery, for human mastery over animals, for otherness as an impassable gulf of subjectivity, for dichotomizing of logical and illogical ways of being in the world. Gulliver travels to lands where he is the outsider. In one land he is a giant in another he is miniature. There is a land populated by horses and humanoid beings—the horses are the bearers of “culture” and “civilization,” while the humanoid beings are categorized as savages. The laws and cultural practices of each new country seem strange to his European mindset. Reading the preserved, not updated for readers of modern English, version of the text is disorienting. Many capitalized words, as was the style of the time. A language-rift showing the distance of then-language from now-language, annotated editions correct the temporal shifting. In the final section of the book, he falls in love with what he eventually describes as *his Master*. This Master, by all descriptive language, is a horse. Gulliver's love for him is based on the logic he sees the horse culture possessing. He returns home whinnying and galloping, imitating the horse culture. In the land of Yahoos and Houyhnhnms the humans are the savage other seen by the horses as not having reason, logic, order. He becomes indebted to the order and reason of the horses. This debt is the debt of love. A love that is uneasy in its asymmetry, its possession/possessiveness, the captive falling for the charisma of the captor, the seemingly superior logic of the one deemed above. Convincing the conquered to want what is offered by colonial ideology. Meritocracy, progress, new things, big things. Purchasing into the system. Gulliver returns from his adventures with possessions, valuable things, collections and accumulations. The preface of the book takes the form of a letter where Gulliver describes how language is a slippery thing that can both serve as a tool for communication and aid dominance—or, in the case of encountering other cultures or

species, language can only be a mis-communication. In his retrospective, nostalgic account of his adventures, he says that he loves the horses the most of any culture, including his own, because in two years they taught him how not to lie. He sees their culture as bearing truth through logic and order—“Europeans are masters of deceit.”¹³⁰

+

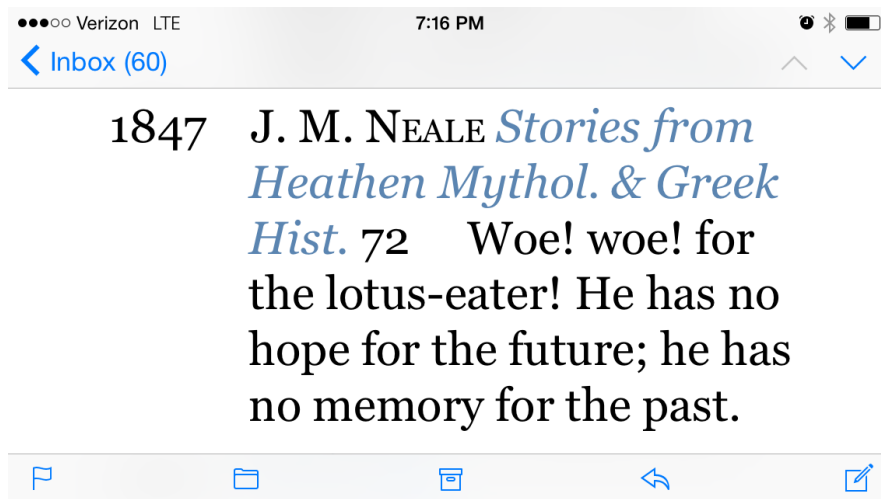


Figure 2: Phone Screenshot of Oxford English Dictionary's Word of the Day Service. From "Heathen," by Czacki.

The allegory of otherness is evidenced in historical literary examples. Homer's Odysseus calls the Lotus Eaters "heathens." They are said to have no concept of time. Seen as a-temporal, non-historical, pleasure seeking and lacking logic. The accusation of barbarism bestowed on one human culture from another is constituted by acts of judging via logic, beauty, temporality, all systems of ordering. Barbarian is a name bestowed by the colonizer on the so-called outsider (even if that outsider was there first). Naming the other a barbarian/outsider/other makes acts of

¹³⁰ Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), xix.

violence permissible, domination possible. Comparing religious beliefs, superstitious customs, social organization, aesthetics in the service of relegating said systems to a lower strata. The name given to the other is an insult. “Barbarism,” a patterned cycle of domination.

Travel to other lands in the name of military conquest or gathering of resources or establishing cheap labor becomes a routine practice of situational judgment of others, based on the distance from what is known to be true and good and right as established by the colonizer. Checking in, taking over, checking out. Mary Douglas, in *Purity and Danger*, asserts that all cultures create systems of order. She was accused for decades by the discipline of anthropology of being overly universalizing—however, her work serves as a poignant acknowledgement that colonized societies are/were not without order, they simply had different systems of ordering. What her examples reveal, is that each culture reaches a consensus’ about what is taboo, establishing social rules and codes based on a relationship to purity/impurity. This difference of ordering is a means of denigrating the other, whomever the other happens to be in a particular context. Barbarism is an accusation related to cultural concessions—definitions of barbarian/barbarism include: “1. *etymologically*, A foreigner, one whose language and customs differ from the speaker’s,’ ‘3. a. A rude, wild, uncivilized person,”¹³¹ the “absence of culture and civilization,” and or “extreme cruelty or brutality.”¹³² A presumed generalized absence of culture and an assumption of a predisposed penchant for violence. Accused/assumed heathen-hood.

“SAUSAGES AND CHAMPAGNE”

In the *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Karl Marx accuses the proletariat, particularly soldiers, of being easily plied to fight any war with “sausages and champagne,” desiring these delicacies

¹³¹ Oxford English Dictionary, accessed June 21, 2017, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/15380?redirectedFrom>.

¹³² Google definition search, accessed June 21, 2017, <https://www.google.com/#q=barbarism>.

instead of standing for social change.¹³³ His criticism is comically discomfoting, and telling. Disquieting, like the revolting body language that convulsively springs from the body of the tickled. Walter Benjamin suggested that the joke, or the resultant fit of laughter, is a rupture in logical everyday ordering—it looks to “nearness” and opens up a space unseen prior.¹³⁴ The logical security of a well-behaving body is subsumed by seizures of laughter. The joke boils up a something-else response from within that cannot be contained. It is revulsion. The joke reveals of itself the parameter required of its working mechanism to elicit laughter—that it is an accusation, that it is at the expense of someone. Jokes, or unintentionally comedic assertions, leap through a text, make the reader/recipient uneasy because the joke reveals tensions in the social realm. In this case, the comment about “sausages and champagne” that caused me to laugh with discomfort, which I read *as if it was a joke*, was a rupture. It interrupted an otherwise authoritative description of the shapes and structures of revolution. Those who rise to power, even in progressively termed paradigms still judge others, rib them for wanting the luxuries they don’t have. The phrase reveals problems regarding material/social inequity as it imports into the contemporary social milieu. Under the veneer of humanism, socially constructed systems of altruism and judgment require the poor and those in structurally unequal positions to reveal and perform their inequity in order to receive aid in a decidedly rigged system of divvying resources—prostrating before the state to obtain services such as welfare.¹³⁵ Telling and re-telling stories of poverty and trauma to get the scraps. To “sing for their supper.” Thoses seen as living in the absolute margins are stated as not being able to rise above, without much discussion about how colonialism is one of the factors

¹³³ Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (Wildside Press, 2008), 107-123.

¹³⁴ Walter Benjamin, "Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia," in Walter Benjamin. *Selected Writings*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael William. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 217.

¹³⁵ As Kelley points out in *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*, welfare is not redistribution. Redistribution could be, and would require an even more radical alternate model that considers how many in contemporary structurally unequal positions are there because of a lack to inherited resources, as well as the historical ramifications of slavery that still haunt everyday life. Redistribution wouldn’t be based on implicit judgment of those needing assistance as being ‘lacking,’ reparations would need to be free of systems of judgement to counter historical racism, sexism and ableism.

deeply rooted within the distinctions of developed versus underdeveloped, the very force which creates categorizing terms.

HISTORY FROM

Cedric Robinson and Jodi Byrd address the problem of “logical horses,” from within academic disciplinary fields. Revealing that even the most coherent explanations or histories frequently produce gaps that require future investigation. A “cacophony” of cultural forms of gathering and transmitting knowledge.¹³⁶ Robinson asks us to question the sway Marx has over the ideas of the left in his book *Black Marxism*. Though he holds the *sway* critically, he is also clear to advocate for Marx’s important contributions. He is asking us to address our wholehearted reliance on an economic theory that was created from a primarily Eurocentric viewpoint.¹³⁷ Robinson points out how irrevocably tied the history of slavery is to capitalism, and how this haunting ghost is sometimes all too briefly footnoted, quickly passed over, or altogether left out in written histories and analyses of economic history—an avoidance of acknowledging what capitalism required to get started, the bodies of others. (e.g. profits obtained by Caribbean sugar plantations that allowed for the rise of the English Bourgeoisie, or gold extraction in *Côte d’Ivoire, Colombia and Ghana that merchant capitalism depended upon, particularly in France, but also in the rest of Europe*).¹³⁸ Marx’s founding economic critique reiterates the colonial language that classifies enchanted ways of dealing with the world, placing animism and fetishism in the negative. Even if unintentionally, this results in lasting classifications of the aesthetic/artistic/social/ritual/material moves on intimate, personal as well as larger cultural levels.

¹³⁶ Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

¹³⁷ Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

¹³⁸ A. Adu Boahen, *Topics in West African History* (Longman/ Pearson Education, 2012).

Byrd, in *The Transit of Empire*, addresses the tensions between diaspora and indigeneity unfolding through global imperialism and Empire,¹³⁹ calling this tension “cacophony,”¹⁴⁰ the inherited space of contemporary “biopolitics” where representations and belief systems compete. Byrd asserts that challenging dominant narratives of continuity could create a space of interplay, working with the cacophony. An oscillation between things and ideas, concepts and materials, logical empiricism, enchantment and myth. A balancing that could constitute changes in ways thinking and gathering knowledge used as forms of recuperation, even if reconciliation is impossible. Byrd gives the example of the transit of Venus as a scientific marvel in terms of empirical observation that ushered in specific ideas about the ordering of the world. This transit is an interstellar metaphor for the continued movement of colonial encounter, transition not fixedness—an excuse for Enlightened conquest, to “civilize” and alter cultures.¹⁴¹

Tying together all the loose threads, temporalities, histories. Byrd and Robinson voice challenges to how history has been written in the past. The pressure to make linear and disciplined that which sometimes defies linearity, disciplinarity. Accepted histories written from narrowly-grouped subjective standpoints. They point out what should be the obvious, and urgent to contemplate terms of engagement between selves and others, personhood and the material world, including the problem of freedom being written about and pontificated upon from above. By subjects who wish to explore moral issues, but who can do so from a relatively secure social position. Their analysis addresses continual penury, subjugation and exclusion of particular

¹³⁹ Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, xiii.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, xxi. Byrd uses transit based on the event of Venus moving, as it ‘served in 1761 and 1769 as global movements that moved European conquest towards notions of imperialist planetarity that provided the basis for Enlightenment liberalism. The imperial planetarity that sparked scientific rationalism and inspired humanist articulations of freedom, sovereignty, and equality touched four continents and a sea of islands in order to cohere itself. At its center were discourses of savagery, Indianness, discovery, and mapping that served to survey a world into European possession by transforming indigenous peoples into the homo nullius inhabitants of lands emptied and awaiting arrival. As I use the term here, transit as a concept suggests the multiple subjectivities and subjugations put into motion and made to move...’

subjectivities, the colonial logic that stumbles over itself again and again towards progress. One of Byrd's strongest examples ties the threads to aesthetics, describing the writing of Guyanese (now London based) writer Wilson Harris. His novels defy linear narratives in style and content. Characters become other selves, time seems to push and pull rather than unfold in a line, making it hard to read his works as straightforward novels. Byrd discusses the critiques launched against his work, as relegating cultures engaged in "myth" to a temporality of "pastness," exotification of the "noble savages" of non-western cultures. Despite these criticisms, Byrd sees his body of work as opening conciliatory space. Harris brings the rendered absent into the present. By dealing with semi-subsumed histories brushing up against authoritative historical accounts, the troubled factuality of history as a discipline is laid bare. Pulling at loose threads that many subjectivities must pull to unravel a very tight ball.

*

Joanna Russ, writing across the disciplines and genres of Science Fiction, Feminism and Literary Criticism, revealed additional parameters of the accusation "you are doing it wrong," particularly through the dichotomous lens of male/female in her book *How to Suppress Women's Writing*.¹⁴² I extend this idea from writing to how individuals and communities judge any form of aesthetics: storytelling, music, art, daily workings in life (including what is necessary for survival: e.g. shelter, food). It is significant that Russ uses science fiction as a polemical tool. Allegories need not only be in the past, and are less beholden to the apparatus of truth as related to power. Russ's science fiction narrative *The Female Man* describes multi-temporal time travelling through the past, present, and future, by sometimes amorously or gender bending/gender non-conforming characters. Stories overlap and shift similar to those of Wilson Harris.¹⁴³ One character, from a future, has retractable fangs and claws; another hails from a fantasy feminist lesbian utopian farm

¹⁴² Joanna Russ, *How to Suppress Women's Writing* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983).

¹⁴³ Joanna Russ, *The Female Man* (Boston: Gregg Press, 1977).

world, a third is a familiar historical figure, a woman from the 1970s who works as a librarian. We return to old cycles, they shift each time, hitting road-blocks. The peoples of different time periods push against each other's belief patterns of what it means to be a woman, to be a part of a socially patterned environment. They have difficulty communicating due to their temporal incongruence. The time-traveller moves across terrains of subjectivity within veils of acculturation, patterns of social behavior, and changing systems of ordering that relate to language and aesthetics, style and representation. Cyclical renewals, letting go's and hiccoughs. More sideways temporal movings.

^

A hierarchical system for judgments of possessing logic and agency comes to us from *The Great Chain of Being*, a system devised in the Middle Ages that places white/male/European subjects at the highest apex closest to God, with women, others, animals, vegetables and minerals beneath in several layers. Avery Gordon suggests that we perceive haunting as an “un-reconciled” event or part of history, the story not quite told or visibly coherent, the stories of the oppressed or “disappeared.”¹⁴⁴ *The Great Chain of Being* does not need to haunt, because it is the base criteria, though it is haunted by those pushed beneath. It is what empirical sciences are based upon, otherwise known as taxonomy. Though modern science hopes to distance itself from a taxonomy that categorized humans within these layers, the categorization of states of animacy given to material life is still prevalent. Arguably, by basing our structures on it, we can't escape the poisoning effect on human cultures—no matter how badly we try to relegate the problematic to the distant past. The “mimicry” of power as Robin Kelley points out, is a danger Frantz Fanon

¹⁴⁴ Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

and Aimé Césaire warned about. Through trying to gain freedom via old models, we risk becoming “colonial masters” or “new jack American corporate rulers.”¹⁴⁵

The animal/mineral/vegetable/female/other gets sifted to the bottom. Dancing and doing and living, hiding in pockets and corners, sometimes refusing to do what they are told. Sometimes met with resistance, other times allowed a little bit of wiggle room in the caged house of logic/patriarchy/colonial domination. Dancing with all the categories seen as illogical, beneath, or outside. We are culpable, I am culpable too. Mimicking the master, not only in language—via acts of domination, to get a little foothold. Falling for logical horses. Upholding categories dictated by the root of the structure, the occasional veneer of equality providing a smokescreen. New paint can be applied, something else is always underneath if you know to scratch at it. Some scratch from within structures and disciplines, following rules strategically in order to create spaces where cracks and fissures show through.

~

“METAPHYSICAL PATHOS”

To speak of aesthetics is to speak about how we choose to believe in one idea over another. Our philosophical leanings piggyback on our visual predilections. We choose our philosophy, ethics, moral positioning, gravitating towards that which speaks to us. As Arthur Lovejoy posited in lectures delivered in 1933, later published as *The Great Chain of Being*, this is “metaphysical pathos,”¹⁴⁶ a concept suggesting that a person will find most authoritative or true messages delivered in ways that are already familiar and trusted. His lectures trace the history of empirical knowledge as interwoven with the way we see truth. The irreconcilable disagreements based not

¹⁴⁵ Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2002), 180.

¹⁴⁶ Arthur Oncken Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1936).

only on content, but style of delivery. Visual and verbal messages are likely to land the hardest with audiences already primed for their arrival. Our systems for understanding the metaphysical and physical world are irrevocably tied to the stylistic sureness of an argument.

We seek what we already know. We search for what we expect to find. When incongruity arises we become uneasy. In *I Swear I Saw This*, Michael Taussig notes that if we have our “eyes open” as we gather knowledge—sometimes the sureness of our assumptions or arguments or logic will come under question.¹⁴⁷ It’s risky to allow oneself to follow a trail with an unknown outcome, to let the threads lead the way. This is not how discipline or aesthetics is supposed to work. Taussig points out that we are not separate from that which we witness. Witnessing is a form of experience, experience is not separate from the subjectivities we touch, that touch us, lightly or with force. The tragedy of miscommunication is happening before the utterance dares to escape our throats.

Allegory creates temporal confusion. A present-ness is cast to the past. In science fiction, the future. Storytelling is a space of access, like poetry, disciplinary lines shifted. Language can fly its freak flag. Ursula K. LeGuin and Octavia Butler packaged their critiques in allegory and science fiction. They have an oracular feel because of the illuminations in their writing, being keen observers of the social pasts and presents that they satirized into futures. Familiar fogged messages available to those who are attuned to a facet of acculturated “metaphysical pathos.”

The difference between myth and allegory is that myth tells stories from the inside. Reflections of how things happen and attempting at a grander why. Allegory presents idealized scenarios for moral teaching. Magic and enchantment are dangerous within the structure of Enlightenment

¹⁴⁷ Michael T. Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This: Drawings in Fieldwork Notebooks, Namely My Own* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

based thought, because they are superstitious orientations, acknowledging unseen and uncontrollable forces. Superstitious orientation requires a direct engagement with chance, the obscure, as the world of the unseen can yield potentially harmful results that are not always controllable. Achille Mbembe in *On the Postcolony*, describes the dichotomizing of reason against myth and fable. This contrasting act means that societies with alternative epistemologies are seen as un-reasoning, and un-reasonable with, as “originaire” and “incapable of uttering the universal,” or so called Western logic.¹⁴⁸ Each allegory, truth, fable, myth, fact is tied to the particular form, style of metaphysical pathos that a group of people, a culture, agree upon, as a truth or something close enough. That which lies outside is rendered false. Reason and myth both become dangerous through scale, or the wielding of either as tools for domination.

To be unsure is to supposedly lack a position. But what if being unsure is to be open to the validity of many positions? When is this unsure-ness a benefit, and when is it a detriment? When is unsure-ness a position of apathy, backing down—and when is it an act of kindness towards difference? Who do we believe as the authoritative creators of social/political/aesthetic messages? Who do we believe and why do we believe?

No text is ever totally rigid. At least I hope not. Or it shouldn't be. This is what publishing does, renders thoughts and ideas solid, imposes linearity on ideas that ephemeral conversation does not. The record becomes concrete. But it does and can change through revision because our interpretation changes, our opinions change with exposure to other things. Our languages change, the meanings of the words change. The printed word can communicate or alternately miscommunicate intentions. We can continue to think through hierarchies and debts and try to

¹⁴⁸ Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 4.

sift. Following Ponge, I try to understand the ways in which “ideas handle us,” how we fall to their power.

OUR DEBTS / ALTERNATIVE TO

Refusal, redistribution, intimacy, shared accolades—the boundaries could shift. I perform this boundary making, I can try to change it. Focus on the narrow, the very small, the everyday, the less than, the underneath. Seeing process and outcome, making new processes all the time.

Slowing the pace that requires instrumentalizing others, knowing that regardless of speed, we will always be calling in favors. Consider dependencies and what depends. Watching disparate things push up against each other, intertwine into “cacophony.”

Collecting rocks. Feeling their smoothness, hiding them in pockets for later re-discovery. Holding them, massaging them, without classifying them or attempting to remember their provenance.

Understanding what it means to want to possess them, that even the small gesture of putting a rock in one’s pocket and taking it home to put on a shelf is an act of possession. Glean from their material silence, non-speaking, the lack of words, advice for the future. The rocky terrains they inhabit and disperse from, the years it takes for water to wear down their forms, shaping.

Think about science fiction fantasies manifesting in the now time, instead of distant planets with salmon colored soft lighting and slowly unfolding species. Refuse the logic of ASAP, remove it from the collective vocabulary, create spaces to see what is front of us obscuring truths and falsehoods, or letting either the true or the false be designated too quickly. Toss things around on the tongue for a moment and taste before swallowing. Ride uncertainty like a wave, engage the help of others. And also, do it yourself. Question how genius requires exploitation or exemptionalism to uphold a one magical being that creates without influence or help from the minds and bodies of others. Promote multi-faceted many non-geniused forms. Think about what

is it that we are sitting on, touching or eating at any given moment. If we want to think about how to use exception, have it be a way to empathize, care outside of the very immediate-of-one selfhood. Face the hidden by scratching at the surface, face culpability. See many avenues and shapes. Communicate through small circles, rather than imposing large systems from a hierarchical position.¹⁴⁹ Instead of falling in love with the logical horses, seeing into the right here, right now. All the horses. In Donna Haraway's words, "staying with the trouble," whatever that trouble may be.¹⁵⁰

Being nomadic, being stable, being parasitic, being "together in homelessness" and having "positive debts,"¹⁵¹ to communities, lovers and other species and material forms, creating debts alternative to capital, while becoming comfortable to saying no to what feels wrong. Because "refusal" is not "inactivity."¹⁵² Redact, retract, burrow down and in. Not giving up, but slowing it down. Soaking in small intimacies, focusing. Aware of what close forms of contact mean. Still present mammals that burrowed during the dinosaur apocalypse (however it actually happened or is happening still), waiting for their time to emerge and feel the sun again on their fur. Strategically and softly collecting what is needed. Insisting and persisting that being outside, on the edges and on the margins is not suicide, it is living. Alternative to.

Favor of a collective of fragile puddle forms, sinking deeper into each other's sea spines making tendrilled networks of support. Gummy multi-legged pathos webs adjusting to collective precarity. Paddle through steamy veils of viscous muddy softness. Feeling the gooey insides. Dealing with the need to liquidize, consume, cannibalize—negotiating what dominance means.

¹⁴⁹ David Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004).

¹⁵⁰ Donna Jeanne Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016). Haraway suggests moving away from the term 'anthropocene' towards an interlinking of human/nonhuman as a way of thinking through troubled ecologies/histories/futures.

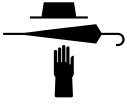
¹⁵¹ Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (Wivenhoe / New York / Port Watson: Minor Compositions: Autonomedia, 2013), 96.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

*Accepting that total, permanent, or sure solutions are evasive, careful survivals will return.
Refusals echoing forth from alternative temporalities, firm and edgy corners of inhabited
universes, in the company of microbes and species and lovers and friends. Particularly the rocks
we listen to in their silence.*

ENTRY 2:

THE AAACCC(K): CO-AUTHORED WITH ANGELA M. JENNINGS



Space, weight of objects, demons, thumbprint fingernail, little space on the under belly. Cards, universe, quilt, burning, give things to friends, burdens. Elements consumed by themselves, cleansing. Shaving head, release. The pleasure of that. Gunky pens, spirals.

C: My friend Caró said the other day that she heard that “green is the color of the future.” This made me think of you Angie, of your last show. Where you were trying to heal the elements. To give space for them to come back in quiet darkness. Green starting out in the hidden cracks. Out of the death of other things and after some time, poking out, starting sunning. Is the plant just the beautiful parts perceived by us, or is it all of it even where it lives in mud.

A: Oh yeah, all this winter rain is making everything so lush and green. It makes me want to think of rain metaphorically as wealth, support and even motivation. When there’s a drought plants dry up and become brittle, many die, but can sometimes be revitalized when given nutrients. I see this very much in relation to the circumstance of supporting one’s self and trying to make art. How can you make the work without the sustenance of rain?

A THEORIST

WHOSE HOLES

are, the comparison issue:

I’ll commune with nature when I want it but it sucks that because you wanted to control the difference from you and the nature like-ness within you

To have to compare as less than

now “educated” peoples fight to be removed from nature
meaning we all lose our relationship to what we are so we can be a less than exceptional other
still

The Who We Are

Let’s do a little CA Conrad inspired ritual today

Let’s word salad all the pain and self-criticism

The eye we start putting out

jealousy and fear because it has been put on us too

We don’t need to perform the trauma again by saying it for the record

Let’s go cosmic

Get outta the patterns

I suggest distillation

Like a filter

Highlight individual words and phrases to keep

But fuck up upend the narrative

Shorten the message

Make it about acknowledging

Without repeating

Catharsis it



Little plant tendrils. Looped around a stick. Hug like. Cucumbers eventually, the lemon kind that look like lemons but act like cucumbers. Classification is a funny thing. It goes by taste, act and visuals. Some things defy one category. Like the lemon cucumber. Or Stan the dog. When people

ask what breed he is the new go to response is “all dogs.” It seems possible and probable. It seems accurate but also open enough to question what the category is. It frustrates people though, because they want to be able to attribute what they think are breed characteristics to his behavior. He acts all ways. Energetic, loving, silly, joking, snoozing, cuddling, soft, overly excited at times, very physically strong. Is this a type. It’s pre-emptive type-casting to say he is because of xyz.

if you simmer in the corners at the disgust of the system you mostly get the debt. until you free yourself of judging by the metric others control by access to privilege does not shift everything. those structures may tremble but have yet to yield. appear in context. tenuously included in the dominant hierarchies feel it inside skin all the time, precarity still lurking. fear the fad will fade haunts. what to make what to show who to be who to represent who to align with. the system is fucked. gold gilded trap bought by a gold ticket. go outside the walls now let’s do it together ‘cause there’s a whole vibrant space of other worlds to see...

why compare. we are taught to want and to compare to make us less that rather than live in love. eats itself and stammers on the horizon of centuries.

We owe it to each other to falsify the institution, to make politics incorrect, to give the lie to our own determination. We owe each other the indeterminate. We owe each other everything.¹⁵³

After all, the subversive intellectual came under false pretenses, with bad documents, out of love. Her labor is as necessary as it is unwelcome. The university needs what she bears but cannot bear what she brings. And so on top of that, she disappears. She disappears into the underground, the downlow lowdown maroon community of the university, into the undercommons of enlightenment, where the work gets done, where the work gets subverted, where the revolution is still black, still strong.¹⁵⁴

If one were to insist, the opposite of professionalization is that fugitive impulse to rely on the undercommons for protection, to rely on the honor, and to insist on the honor of the fugitive community; if one were to insist, the opposite of professionalization is that criminal impulse to steal from professions, from the university, with neither apologies nor malice, to steal the enlightenment for others, to steal oneself with a certain blue music, a

¹⁵³ Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (Wivenhoe: Minor Compositions, 2013), 20.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

certain tragic optimism, to steal away with mass intellectuality; if one were to do this, would this not be to place criminality and negligence against each other?¹⁵⁵

Knowledge of freedom is (in) the invention of escape, stealing away in the confines, in the form, of a break. This is held close in the open song of the ones who are supposed to be silent.¹⁵⁶

His plants get a nap mid day when the eucalyptus shades them.

Today we saw a bee in the arugula.

Later I see many in the marigolds and think of you every time and visiting the garden together and watching the wiggles as the bees try to nestle into the flowers.

The amber leaf sterling silver rings. One has a twig setting, it's brown. The other a green setting. Amber is electric. The ancients used to rub it because it created static. Brown is standard amber coloration. Green happens when the amber forms in a mossy bog. Swamp thing amber.

Thefted greens to become pharmaceuticals. Thefted art to become ethnographic art museum holdings. Thefted because the accusation is that the objects aren't being taken care of. But the theft is a form of funneling of power from some bodies (the many) to other bodies (the few). Stealing power. Disparaging those stolen from so they are disciplined into place. Categorizing against the preferred way of being.

next time its water kefir grains so you can grow nourish water.

Hierarchical rectification.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 40.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 51.

Progress found on the other side.

The sacred and limitless.



Figure 3: Angela Jennings. “Stigma Fog,” installation image at UCSD. By Czacki, 05/18/2016

And a Parisian collector with whom I spoke volunteered: “I am completely enchanted by the artist’s anonymity. Not knowing the artist is something that causes me enormous pleasure. Once you learn who made an object, it ceases to be primitive art.”¹⁵⁷

EW statement by a EW art collector stating that removing agency allows mysteriousness to the Western canon, the collector then absorbing the power of the maker by denying their name, the modern artist absorbing the power of the other to create transcendent formal works. The intent for the objects originally—to be seen or unseen, ritual, cosmic, social or otherwise erased in domination. Only the accepted geniuses who prospect are allowed to be named. What is in the name now. What has changed. How are artists denigrated and validated. It’s that golden ticket to

¹⁵⁷ Sally Price, *Primitive Art in Civilized Places* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 103.

the golden spaces. How is naming used and misused. How are canons established. How are we ignored or alternately exotified. How is that bind a stress and a trigger and a continued violence. Money. Privilege. Power. Art History collecting artists to be itemized. Craft, outsider, other. The circumstance of being labeled, perpetuates the ew cycle of the awful inferiority complex in the contemptible system. Pushed beneath for and by those who wish to ascend on the ashes of what they deny. To create a less than is to make ghosts. Where can we find rectification, healing. Finding affinity with earth, let's do that. Convene with the material mental we know is inseparable.

I've been thinking a great deal about categories lately. The metaphysics and the physical implication. Othering's old practices. Based on envy, desire, fear, perceived difference, a want to control or dominate. Pattern making is hard to break when control simmers everywhere inside our personhood. At different registers. Wanting others as property, or others' property, or all of that and more. And the things to heal as property. I suspect the healing does not work if it's for aesthetics and profit only. Yet, we make things pretty to: 1. Attract attention from others because sometimes that attention feels good and 2. Survival economies when the system sets us up with few options. Better term: "survival capitalism." Flippin' it all out on the internet.

Innovation is such a weird word. Progress loves a linear ideal. Much of what we experience will be future soup. in the mud it continues on just compacted. what is tagged innovation is prospected (e.g. ethnobotany: cultures using plant magic for centuries have their lands and their knowledge patented and purchased by pharmaceutical companies to then produce fast fix pills removed from the various other relations of soul and thing that provide temporary relief but not deep structural healing). Its demon is phlegm monsterring out in contemporary spiritualism: selling new ageism on the internet. Some of the ideas are still beautiful, the facetted cosmic sides of it all. The parts

people try and try out. But profit and attention in frenzy make it hard to see the parts that are for all of us.

...Take notes about each of them for the poem, their names are unimportant as such cowards are rarely remembered. Create a line of tiny photographs of their faces on your computer, ALL IN A ROW, and then print it out; this will be the rolling paper for a cigarette. Cover their faces with equal amounts of the following dried ingredients: fennel seeds, pine needles, rose petals, mugwort, basil, white sage, red sandalwood powder, perique tobacco, and marijuana. These ingredients quell negative thoughts, shift gears for transformation, and also invoke prophetic dreams, clairvoyance, happiness, honesty, peace of mind; and marijuana because you put up with a lot of shit and deserve to enjoy yourself! Roll it up, keep track of which enemy you are smoking, but smoke them all, SMOKE THEM ALL, the ones who didn't have what it takes to beat you down, the ones who never deserved your friendship in the first place. Exhaling their faces on a braid of smoke is more satisfying than the usual forms of forgiveness. Find your poem in the notes and utterly relish your day!¹⁵⁸

ghosts get ideas
bad ones mostly
caught in a
new average for
boots to the stomach
the moon is not
a favor machine
hope is a fiction we
would better be without
but find hard to live without
I met a spider who
hopes we will let the house go to insects
will you roll your
eyes if I call
this spider
my sister
regardless if
you do
she is
My sister¹⁵⁹



My moon is not for favors only for asking maybes and if it happens not it's ok because

THE MUD DOES NOT LIE

¹⁵⁸ CA Conrad, "You Don't Have What It Takes to Be My Nemesis," poem, in *While Standing in Line for Death* (Seattle: Wave Books, 2017), 33.

¹⁵⁹ CA Conrad, "Home 1," poem, in *While Standing in Line for Death* (Seattle: Wave Books, 2017), 97.

What if we just wrote about mud for a page. And then something else. Like fog.

muD

Slippery slick all things combined together fermenting and bubbling and soft and pulling stuff out of the skin and sinking in. Sittin in it. Sometimes it's hard sometimes it starts to slide around. Is it always brown sometimes its reddish depending on where you are and people call it clay and if it sparkles it's mica. the other night in the dark it was like a starburst and glittered all over and had all these effulgences and looked like the universe. Cracks when dry, transitions to a paler hue; often used to clarify the skin.

OED word of the day

Your word for Thursday 7th March is: duckety, adj.

duckety, adj.

[‘Designating a drab nondescript colour, esp. a dull brown resembling the colour of mud; of such a colour. Frequently appositive in duckety-mud adj. Cf. dunduckety adj.’]¹⁶⁰

FOg

Covering hiding dense little particles suddenly air seems animate instead of being assumed as a no-thing not matter but it is matter as well there particles all up in it everywhere surrounding little water molecules convening and helping make a soft soggy blanket around density and a sort of grey tone. Have I ever told you my vision mist peoples idea. That our souls just become mist particles when we die. Just condensation floating about. Not like ghosts really just happy water

¹⁶⁰ Oxford English Dictionary, *Word of the Day*, email subscription. 03/07/2019

vibrations. Can't know it's true. Won't even know truth in death because it's not like another physical realm or a heaven or something it's just what it is. Matter. Moist.

That could be interesting.

I feel like I'm living in a fog, I still can't find a job or maybe it's that I'm trapped in mud? Yes, I am

swimming in the future soup of progress

two and a half years out from degree s unable to support myself

The educational ascension holds some sort of stigma in regards to being able to get an entry level job, no one wants me! I've been marked yet again! Swamp Thang!

Enter: A snakelike cracked windshield

How to de-mark ourselves. Maybe we redact in black the education. Top of the resume black swatches and brushstrokes.

Wait for stipend checks and UC health insurance to run out. There's always welfare, disability, and parasiting. Those violences.

"that fancy school on your resume," I finally have the confidence enough to reply: "was duped into the meritocracy and lifetime debt for school."

3. food stamps ain't gonna buy you all that what heals

4. autoimmune stress cycle starts again and

all of the above rigamarole is categorically “nonsense bunk.”

get a good tent. learn to grow adaptogens. leave some friends and lovers behind and make new ones. could i create my own narrative where I love the tent the car the walk in closet the couches the temporary shelters the little hidden objects of still growing plants on borrowed window sills and borrowed time

If nomadism is decided upon then you don't have to let yourself believe what stasis tells you is wrong with it.



Figure 4: Catherine Czacki, *Céliane*, 2015. “~” installation image at SPF 15, Ocean Beach, San Diego, California. Photo by Morgan Mandalay, 12/18/2016.

THE FAMILY OF CONFLICTING STORIES

nobility, accused ex-savagery or poverty history teaches as it changes to all of the above the
ciemny kons that hide out when in new spaces because they can pass and pass along and then
there's still this bubbling forth of the past somehow because it can never rest and truly sleep.
aspirational middle class ideology denial of past histories embracing of certain past histories but
the covering over of others. that's everyone I guess. THIS philosophical worldview. how to stop
gap the patterns. knowing that healing has been co-opted, and frequently by those in the most
privileged of positions. time to heal, I know that is a suspension for me. some just get death.
there's a poem I wrote. that we just get what we get till we die. maybe we fall in love maybe not
maybe we die maybe not maybe tomorrow maybe not maybe the next day or another still.

Why families don't want their kids to be artists. Or the kind who seek healing instead of money.
The money demons. Given with survival stress. How to do without feeling disgusting or
accumulating trauma and more hurt. Or causing.

NOTHING THAT INCLUDES MONEY MAKES ME FEEL EMPOWERED

Maybe that's because it's always small fries. Big money seem so actually untenable. Or ew. Not
even illusive anymore cause we all know how it happens. Like it's ew to get there and then you
have to be the ew to keep the ew that keeps everyone else out while you get to be in but then
maybe once you are in you say to yourself in nightmares "what the fuck is this even all about."

Call: I duuno,

if i had money

I would have more time to take care of myself,

have a comfortable bed,

find support,

go on vacation,
travel,
read,
see cool art shows,
have space!
Dress real cool!

Response: the dream is somewhere in this to be able to do what we wanna do when we wanna do what we want. is that everyone. Is there a share more, a little work each day when and if you are able then do what you wanna do? That's called de-civilizing because the idea is that you civilization is the stage where hierarchies and levels developed.

so you don't have to be with all the people struggling with the everyday you make a treatise that says your idea for the state is actually progress when in really it's just domination cleverly restated in language that fools. state of exception.

C and A: UNIVERSAL WAGES WOULD BE DREAMY

TO be. I really wouldn't give a shit what kind of job if freedom was built in and love and creativity, like I could eat good. We could eat good. We could garden together. I don't mind getting up everyday and doing shit. I do shit all day every day. Except those fog days of slow moves. When I'm told how to do it or who its in service for or why it's not good enough comes the annoyance. And more annoyed fever all around. It's a redundant thinkers wheel. we are not less than. Strike it through. That sinking constant knowledge of being measured in awareness is a reminder we lack not we already have it all.

centers in the periphery. allowing the thread to guide the way. life will always have conflict, what does doing catharsis mean. Is it this document. To air it to release up the muscles, find ways to let the energy go. Let go. That's a demon to make. The burn it up catharsis let it go find a little corner of existence to sit in with some joy and love and accept the pain will arrive again but maybe a small forcefield will help soften the blows.

SWAMP Thing THANG thang as a meditation rather than a metaphor, as a possible, as an escape, as an inside, as an outside. An affinity chosen because it's funny and endearing and comic and cosmic and muddy and full of green growing out of fingertips and muscles and entropy and new life. The name as a choice always feels different.



Freak flag friends.

Saying goodbye

Not getting to say goodbye

How was the beach that day

Kinda chilly and overcast

What's the evil eye again?

Beads.....

A: I was just looking at beads as decorative and having the ability to make something look special

C: Having something decorative distracts from fascination. So maybe it doesn't have to be either.

Both of our ways of using them are valid. No wrong or right avenues here. The decorative and the

supposedly purposeful, it's mostly dangerous when aesthetics are gleaned because they look cool and profited by those who always have the backbones. The ew is when it feels stolen. But the look cool part is the less bad kind. Is that interest or affinity?

“quote” you dress cool in your you. They always wanna end up buying it anyhow, because they suddenly are paranoid that what you do for free is cooler than what they drop all the coin on. And when what they get copies or simulacra of that in the “high” it gets super popular all the cheaps dry up then new ones come along and find new revamps then they need those to and the thing stars all over again.

Fascination, word

the evil eye.

Good luck

Dirty Sneakers

Acorn

What to do when you're lost

Think about the happiness rainbows keeping the sad swirls apart

I'm going to pee, I'll start the first pour

Peeing at the same time of the pour with the dirty sock

Keep the sock wet

That buzz of coffee facilitating the words

Coffee is a mud too

No Fear

Goin' down to the pool. How do we keep from getting depressed about the uncertain futures we face. We go to the sun. Go to the free pool in subsidized housing together while we got it. Friend soup. Enjoy days. Watch some basketball. Collect basketball stamps. Looney tunes basketball shirt, New Mexico themed. Cook some food together. Share poems and songs and trade some art. Go to the co-op. Trade scobies and kefir grains and herb recipes and the you know it you do.

1. move to the somewhere else
2. avoid xyz
3. more

No bugs where we live

lotsa sun

does that help

Feel better

People watching. So many mundane things to observe. people cleaning their cars. a woman in a nice skirt on a winding path. sleeping bag on a skateboard.

splisshy slassshy in the dystopic medical industrial black mirror Target (copyright symbol)
google plex building more buildings like Star Trek tribbles and then still raising the rent even

though they have thousands more bodies to shove into their little boxes that of course still look like Le Corbusier's housing that he said he built to control what he saw as unruly populations.¹⁶²

I can't tell if i want to swim yet

Remember that night we were here before watching all the people on their phones in the tub face timing and selfie ing but ignoring us who were there in their germs with them. Yeah, I remember a night when there were a ton of young kids in the hot tub. I was envious of their young toned bodies, and felt as though mine was deteriorating.

Haha but so are theirs they just don't know it yet. At least we know it. Maybe that's something beautiful itself because we can wake up and feel the sun and be like "I know I'm dying!" but it's ok. We all do. Everything is supposed to die. Eventually. No permanence. No fear. Yeah it's scary, our bodies are commodified and placed with a certain value. The perfect selfie, the ew. Bathing suit bottom with a blousson effect. The fabric is just worn out. Does it look poor or purposeful. stretchy worn out black fabric. looks like some of both of our arts. Our inhabitations in the discard fabric, thrift store blossoms.

What's the new kitty like. She's aggressive, which is a problem. She cuddles though.

what makes aggress

what makes cuddles

is it hardness of life

softness of fur

Who knows her inner life.

¹⁶² Joseph Nechvatal, Michelle Fisher, Dan Schindel, Jack Sjogren, Jon Hogan, Deena ElGenaidi, and J. Faith Almiron, "Revisiting Le Corbusier as a Fascist." *Hyperallergic*, 15 July 2015, hyperallergic.com/221158/revisiting-le-corbusier-as-a-fascist/.

C: But still, the scratches she leaves on you are not ok. That's every day infliction of pain. Keep hissing at her, trying to speak her language.

A: Yeah, I guess she's trying to dominate me, and I her.

Hey! I guess it's interesting that we have both made art about demons or familiars. I guess I was thinking about the otherness of these beings and how they could relate to the position of an othered persons. How our surfaces fluctuate.....

yes yes yes. they are demons inside us or without us. but we also recon with them through making. Like we clean house when we make art. It's no surprise to me. Everything I've learned about folk traditions (why "folk" ask what that word means) around demons has to do with this. It's a way of coping, seeing protecting the self. Negotiating lack or times of illness. Putting that demon outside of your house to keep the eyes out and the energies away. Othered ness requires all these tools for counterbalancing the damage of everyday life. But talismans are simple, easy to make. You can make em' out of trash or make em' out of gold. I read awhile ago that healers talk about this as the way you use the thing. If you manipulate material to hurt others or profit from them, you are not a healer.



HOT SWEATY HAM

I'm really struggling with finding a way to support myself financially. Yesterday, I had to slice ham in a hot sweaty kitchen in La Jolla.

I'M STRUGGLING THERE TOO. I used to slice hot sweaty ham before I got into school. And sold knives door to door one time. And worked at a porno store where I got vomited on. Then in school I had to do various things to survive and pay rent that felt just as bad as hot sweaty ham. Fear of the future is that thing, what happens is my body starts attacking itself. It's always what brings it on. Overwhelm, too much to do. Conflict. I have to soothe it and spend all my time soothing it and reminding it that the future is always uncertain and that's ok. I'm eating fish stew with the carrots from my garden right now, the ones I told you I'm pretty sure were auspicious since the first one I pulled looked like one of our demon/familiars. I also put the marigold leaves in, soon I can eat the flowers too. The ones that "bring the sun." I ate it right away. No putting that friend in the fridge, gotta absorb that power immediately. I'm trying to remember to thank the food each consumption. The carrots furry tops went good in the stew as well. I remembered to thank the carrot creature before devouring for the nourishment.

It had two dangly legs.

Sometimes the art just arrives you don't even have to make it, it just grows out in the dirt and presents itself to us. The artwork isn't really a struggle, it can be a release. If it's a struggle maybe the framework is off. Like the healers said. And again the mud does not lie.

Peter Nadin who wrote *The First Mark* and *Taxonomy Transplanted* makes all his art on and with his farm. Collaborating with the bees and the honeys.

A: I dunno, I'm really struggling to find the motivation. It seems I'm only making work when there's in opportunity or pressure to show.....I'd rather not work that way. I wish making art was an organic part of my everyday. I guess I can (or hAVE) transfer(ed) the making of art to what I think about and what I see, and how I interpret and experience the everyday. I'm very much lacking the thing that pushes me to make visible art. I write this after months of

procrastinating on this document. I write this while lying on my back in bed, while my cat sleeps on my belly. I write this after a day of working minimum wage, making food and drinks for people in downtown San Diego. I write this after eating leftover spaghetti I made with my boyfriend last night, who bought most of the ingredients from the dollar store, including the spicy hot dogs he cut up and threw in. And now I feel like I've written a sappy account, and am judging myself about being sappy.

C: we keep having to find new ways to steal time back from those who steal it from us so their lives can be more convenient, easier. Don't feel guilty. The document took as long as it needed. And look now we are sitting in the sun next to each other in a coffee shop following each others cursors floating on the document and it's a beautiful illumination and then we interrupt the flurry of each others fingers to chat and all of it is our art.

A: Yeah this is nice. I've never been to this coffee shop. I like the music, it's making me feel productive. We're having a special moment. I also really like the weather outside, the cloudy, soon to come rain, after rain, windy afternoon.

C: Remind me to ask you about what herbs you need. And to show you my bad rash energy be gone dance. It can be danced on many legs or one.

Wait why haven't we played music yet. That seems right. We both have musical pasts. I always struggle with it because I'm not a virtuoso or interested in being one. I just like plucking the strings for simple sounds, I like the way it feels in my body after shaking one of those egg balls with the seeds inside for awhile. Or ringing my brass bell.

I found a Kalimba at the garden store, mislabeled as a hand piano. The instrument is referred to interchangeably, when actually the Mbira has two rows of keys, the Kalimba one. I looked up the instrument, it has a seriously long pan African History, initially attributed to the Shona:

The Shona (*/ˈʃoʊnə/*) are a Bantu ethnic group native to Zimbabwe and neighboring countries. The people are divided into five major clans and adjacent to other groups of very similar culture and languages. This name came into effect in the 19th century due to their skill of disappearing and hiding in caves when attacked.¹⁶³

Cave hidens. Naming. Being named. How is Wikipedia as a site of dispersal and un/in credibility while also providing an opening to the disjunctive narratives of colonial cacophony? “Consider your sources credibility,” says the pop up window. How do we gauge credibility in the wake of colonialism? Who authors for whom? How do we gauge the naming apparatus, the names proliferated by our pseudo-democratic powerful global data collection that is?

Coincidentally a few weeks later found this album that has a song dedicated to the Kalimba, called *Liter Thru Dorker Vibes* by *Mediko Doktr Vibes*. It’s the only album released by this group, no one knows who the musicians are, but it’s speculated they recorded in Los Angeles sometime in the late 1970s. From what the clerk at the record store told me this album is a mainstay of deep music record geeks. I go often to this record store, because the clerks acknowledge my “weirdo likes,” and are interested in what I find and how I describe it. It. Lately I’m on this kick of collecting music by colonized peoples, who managed to survive animist, spiritual or other traditions through art and music when assimilated into larger political geographic religious groups. One of the clerks shows me stuff that they call the “unclassifiable,” e.g. that which cannot be easily put in a file cabinet category related to ethnicity, country, genre, time period. The that’s a not genre genre, which has become my genre.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ “Shona People.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 9 May 2019, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shona_people.

¹⁶⁴ Thank you to Scott and Brendan at Folk Arts Rare Records in San Diego, for being a generous environment for the intellectually and musically curious, and for acknowledging in their efforts to have wide intersections of representation, that “good” music is subjectively relative.

Whoa the reviews of the album online. The violence of the critique says more about the critic than the maker of the vibrant cosmic sounds. It says this: the reviewers can't hear the sounds because the focus is on denigrating, assuming the musician had no "self awareness," and criticizing the economy of the recording.

The so-called "economy" of the sound is what I found appealing about it. The scratchiness, the fact that any of us could probably find a way to make music in our basements. The dancy echoes. The space that moves through each song. "The instruments were kind of small, the player stood up very tall." Clicking wood wind chimes. "Hotter than the burning sun."¹⁶⁵

When we went to the other record store run by the same people it was magical. The joy is the dig. The records are cheap, which makes it feel less like the inaccessible fetish of record collecting that's about rarity, and more the chance to come across some resonant musical ancestry.

I think anonymity is something that happens sometimes to great artists who have to hide from the dominant paradigms. They went back to the caves "in the basements," to be safe from the prying eyes of critique and visibility. But the objects and the songs and the poems sneak around in our continued making and learning and sharing. And then if future weirdos are lucky they find inspiration in past weirdo art. Or maybe they quit making music someone said to me. I choose to believe they never stopped making for their own pleasure, they just hid it in the secret places. Playing the Kalimba to chase away the bad energies. This is part of the function of the instrument, it's supposed to travel as a secular object, be shared, for anyone to learn, to proliferate. You can play it without much skill but also become a virtuoso. Still, the purpose is to

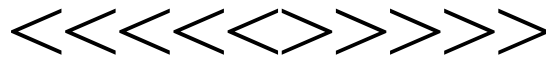
¹⁶⁵ Liter Thru Dorker Vibes, *Diska Limba Man*, vinyl recording (Bi Russell Records, 834 W. 131st Street, Compton, CA, 1979). Repress 2013, Companion Records.

chase out bad energy by thumping the keys into pleasurable noises. Where did I hear this. I can't find a citation for it. So there it is.

Ethnomusicology is all I find at the library. Paul F. Berliner's *The Soul of Mbira*. There was this section where he talks about the poetry of the Mbira:

As a metaphoric art form which often contains allusions to old proverbs and historical or cultural events, oral poetry is not easily interpreted by researchers who are not native Shona speakers with an intimate knowledge of Shona culture (he footnotes here that it's been his "good fortune to work closely with Shona translators..." but he names none specifically). Second, because of the subtlety of the symbolism in the song texts, the same line of poetry can hold various meanings for different people. A third problem is that some of the idioms used in the poetry consist of "deep Shona," ancient words or expressions the rich mystical meaning of which only the old people understand. Some of the older villagers say that even when they first learned certain lines of poetry from their parents or grandparents, the meanings of some words were surrounded with mystery and never fully explained.¹⁶⁶

Not sure why he thinks all these things are problems. Are multiple meanings problems? I think multiple meanings could be freedom.



The above account is also about the two tiered Mbira, still not the single tiered Kalimba which I find nothing about in the library.

A: yes, I've been thinking about playing drums. I actually played the snare drum and recorded it on a loop for my show Organic Play Time at UCSD, do you remember that? We have a drum set here in the unfinished basement. I've played it once or twice, it's missing a high hat, but it felt

¹⁶⁶ Paul F. Berliner, *The Soul of Mbira: Music and Traditions of the Shona People of Zimbabwe* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 161.

good to play. Although, I think there was mold and dusty bad debris that covered me like glitter. Yes, music is a release. Remember when I told you about my shamanic journey? Drumming plays a big part in that. I guess the drums allow you to fall into somewhat of a trance state, I forget why though, it has something to do with brain waves.

C: Yes music touches the cosmic by vibrating our bodies. No need to be a specific music, it's about tapping into what feels good as you do it. I do remember that show, I loved being in that room with you with all your sounds. It felt really good vibrationally, left me smiling and happy and like art is the thing and it's what we need sometimes to do together or even alone then together.

... having it be perfect is never my interest, which is why I shy from sharing it with others, it's not music to listen to, maybe it's music to chase ghosts away, placate them.

I feel like when I can move really slowly, do things I feel like doing, be with plants, be with dogs, cats, I briefly see eternity. This has something to do with swamp thing thang. Like when I feel really bad, meditating that I am a honey like goo melting into the dirt that crystals then grow out of. There's something to feeling like my entropy could nourish plants. That longer time than what the frenzy I feel now is, the stress frenzy that is everyday life.

A: (such beautiful words here, I feel weird writing in between them) Yes, the crystals, the special stones. Are their properties real? How are we to know? I bought a piece of citrine to make me happy, I'm not sure it's working. I also bought some green fluorite. I carry the two fruit colored stones sometimes, grasping and holding them in my hands. Sometimes I put them on the ledge of the windowsill next to my bed. I'm not sure where they are now.....probably in a dirty pocket in one of my bags.

C: We write between and with and along that's the point! It's perfect. Things work and they don't. Placebos or real medicines I think it's always hard to tell. Some things work different in different times on different bodies for different reasons. And at least, going back to the thing about fascination, maybe the stones will give you something pretty to look at so the energy can shift elsewhere.

Fruit stones in dirty pockets. A great place to be. Sometimes lost and found again.

A little comfort in the touch of hands.

Bad rash be gone dance

On one foot or many

Pushing it out

Not letting the little red dots consume

creak and crack it out

You said "the mud does not lie"

I believe the mud. I agree.

It knows and does not need to claim any truth because it just does not lie

On Shona, distrusting humans, "roads don't lie" (an extension of the mud does not lie), and healing with the plants

A KIND OF DROUGHT

In our land
We found a bird
that sings.
A bird
that will tell it all:
We can't trust humans anymore:
 What if –
 What if we send
 What if the one we send
 What if the only one available

is the father of
the mother of
the uncle of
the aunt of the sister of – ?
In our land
We – you – all – are alone.
Everyone you know (or knew) is gone!
Everyone you thought you knew
you don't know anymore.
Only roads.
Only roads don't betray.
(Pot-holed though they may be.)
No, roads don't lie.
They always bring you
or someone like you
to bump into each other
round a corner.
Trees, as well.
Trees.
Only trees.
Yes, trees.
They remain
the same old faithful parents.
You can climb them.
You can hide behind them.
(Or go round and round and round
behind, to the side, or in front of them).
You can chew their leaves for water.
You can chew the roots
to cool the pain in belly or limb
and, there is always, always, the fruit.
And, of course, out of the sun, the shade.
And, finally, you can safely die under a tree.
In our land
the trees can be trusted
and sometimes they hide someone
who feels just like you do
and for a while
there are just the two of you

to frighten the darkness away
if only, only if,
if only
you can come to a river.¹⁶⁷

Edmond Jabès has this poem about the desert where he says that the desert is not empty. It's only our perception that makes the margins and deserts empty. In fact it's biodiverse, in silence and heat and quiet, when you go into those spaces that seem like isolation, that you hear nature talk back, the outside the everything else.

KEY TERMS

Ew

Awful

Contemptible*

*Searching for critical words that suggest discomfort without shaming someone else

Entry 2: *The aaacc(k)* is coauthored with Jennings, Angela. The dissertation author was the primary author of this chapter.

¹⁶⁷ Charles Mungoshi, "Kind of Drought" (Poetry International, 2008), <https://www.poetryinternational.org/pi/poem/11931/auto/0/0/Charles-Mungoshi/A-KIND-OF-DROUGHT/en/nocache>.

ENTRY 3:

ALMOST INVISIBLE PLEASURES – SUZANNE HERRERA LI PUMA

...and remembering from a time ago...my reading at the love words opening--the reading at printed matter a few years ago --now (so sorry) cant remember if you were there just in my heart or in person---
i had written...

8. For me, the term artist was always a term that meant not a class that one fit *into* but precisely the opposite—an impossible set of singularities, of freaks, a way of not fitting and still having a family.¹⁶⁸

The serious doodle (affirmative)

The doodle taken seriously (evoking negation)

Freaky families

let the threads go clear.¹⁶⁹

Abstaining from material imperialisms, light moves, subtle gestures. Wavy lines are made, and passed along.

you have to keep writing this way. please tell me this is your dissertation chapter. please don't extend it. dont scholarize it. dont change it to reflect a greater number of sources or methods. this voice is so clear and untortured, your poetics touching a reader, your method openly defended and yet declaring its disinterest in defenses. did you not censor yourself to write it? if so, proceed. let hauntings guide you. i'll try to do the same. let's write unafraid.¹⁷⁰

~

An image arrives via email. It is of a piece of paper, possibly an index card judging by its dimensions, puckering from a mark on its surface just below handwritten text. A stain with rings, like the rings of old growth. Maybe this subtle patterning comes from liquid spilling over a cup, but it seems to have a wider sprawl, uneven like water damage on anything porous after a flood. A very liquid liquid. A touch of elemental, mineral fluid substance. Scrawled on the paper in a

¹⁶⁸ Herrera Li Puma, Suzanne. "Re: Laundry." October 8, 2018.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., "Re: Some More Storytelling." June 8, 2017. I mis-remembered the quote from Herrera Li Puma in memory, both versions feel worthy of invocation. The original message from HLP says: "im sure the threads may seem unraveling, but its hard to see the picture in the final editing madness. when you turn away and turn back, it'll appear again, im sure the threads just go clear for a bit, theyre still there, holding."

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., June 8, 2017.

half cursive half lower case print handwriting and inside brackets are the words *almost invisible pleasures*. The notes on the bottom of the image are more difficult to discern. They run diagonally at the bottom of the paper, separated by the liquid ring from the language in brackets horizontal at the top. Liquid, the state of matter that retains the shape of whatever it inhabits. There are lines that indicate underlining, crossing out or separation, such as a list being attempted, or the kinds of things we do when we are looking at other writing to produce scholarship, jotting piecemealed thoughts down to later absorb into another body. XIIIV can be made out, roman numerals.

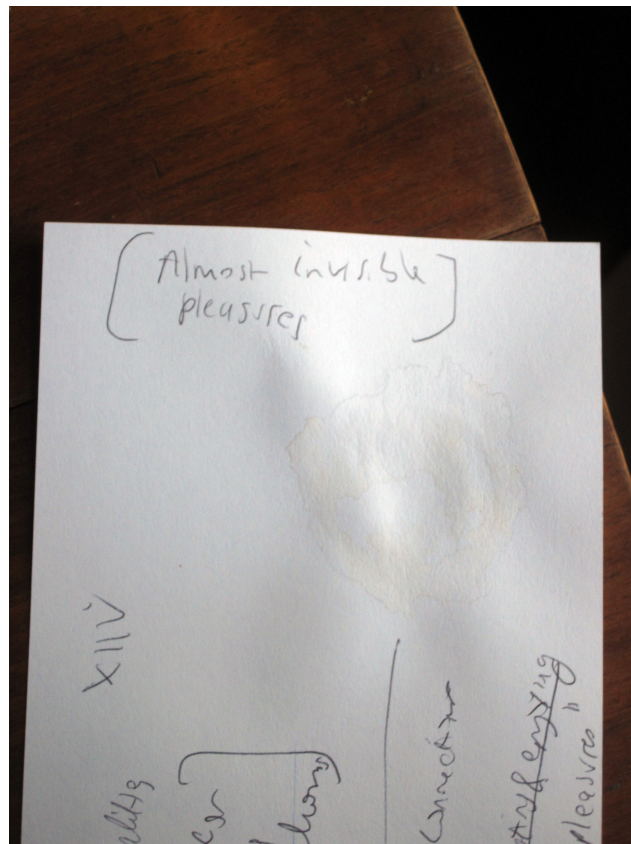


Figure 5: Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, *Almost Invisible Pleasures*, 2015. Photo by Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, 2015.

Herrera Li Puma has made prints, drawings, note cards like the one above, while also pursuing a PhD in Rhetoric. She stands firmly for the squiggle line as a valid form of communication,

worthy of the same serious attention as a word, or a statement. She worries about the authority of language, when it is certain that what it communicates is solid, a conduit for dangerous energetic power. HLP is lover of the doodle, the note, the slight scratching as a piece of important aesthetic or social movement. The subtle ask of “please accept my squiggle as a form of communication,” has deeper philosophical and political ties. Asking the viewer to register communication outside symbols of utility (e.g. language, semiotics). To accept that the doodle is about a moment, not necessarily mimesis or a totally cohesive representational symbol. For some polysemy creates confusion and agitation, others find the freedom invigorating because it means we are the arbiters of what we do, and how we interpret. This phantasmic relationship to meaning is itself a way to question the separation of poetic ways of knowing and disciplinary or scientific ones.¹⁷¹ Equations, numbered or static categorical names suggest unchanging relationships to meaning. Positivism dictates that message and meaning will and must line up.¹⁷² That we can order, reference, cross-reference and find our sources. That we can classify and contain the knowledge we seek as a cohesive accumulation. The almost invisible pleasure is here, in the watermark that defies note taking, a light trace of something else, maybe a momentary sipped pleasure. The very bottom of the additional text simply says *pleasures” with a visible end quote. There is another word that can almost be discerned. It is *enjoying*.

I wonder if this quotation, derivation, is from something learned by Suzanne. In seeking education, as I brought forth in the introduction, Enlightenment based forms of knowledge accumulation create the imperative to categorize, pushing polemics as the means to convince an audience of an authoritative argument. This makes it difficult to defend simply enjoying, inhabiting, being with the interesting fragment, as a register of what was thought that illuminated

¹⁷¹ Christopher Bracken, *Magical Criticism: The Recourse of Savage Philosophy* (University of Chicago Press, 2007), 82.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 68. Quote from body of introduction: “Positivism aims to establish correspondences between signs and things and accepts only those correspondences that can be verified directly, by perception, or indirectly by experiment.”

a manuscript on a particular day, at a particular time and place, after a particular encounter. Scraps of language, gesture and knowledge that might have been disregarded by another subject, take on great importance in combination, as a compilation, as accumulative forces of the intellect of a person and as a revelation of the experiential with no need to describe it further. Audre Lorde talks about the economy of poetry when she gives the example of a woman's magazine deciding to print only prose because poetry lacks the "rigor" and seriousness of polemical language.¹⁷³ I extend this to the idea of the economy of certain types of art making. To make art out of what lies around on a desk or in an office or between shifts is possible, and that is part of what HLP's work does, inhabits the means wherever she can sneak in.

Suzanne sends me two scans she is debating between that are versions of the original, as she has been asked to publish this text as a set of cards. One version of the new iteration shows the texture of the paper, registering as faint scuff like marks in the scan.

¹⁷³ See "P. Poetry" section of *Accumulative Un-alphabetized Index of Themes* in the introduction. Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Freedom: The Crossing Press, 2001), 116. "It is the one which is the most secret, which requires the least physical labor, the least material, and the one which can be done between shifts, in the hospital pantry, in the subway, and on scraps of surplus paper." Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 34. "We could call this the fantasy of a "paperless" philosophy, a philosophy that is not dependent on the materials upon which it is written. As Audre Lorde reflects, "A room of one's own may be a necessity for writing prose, but so are reams of paper, a type writer and plenty of time" (1984:116)."

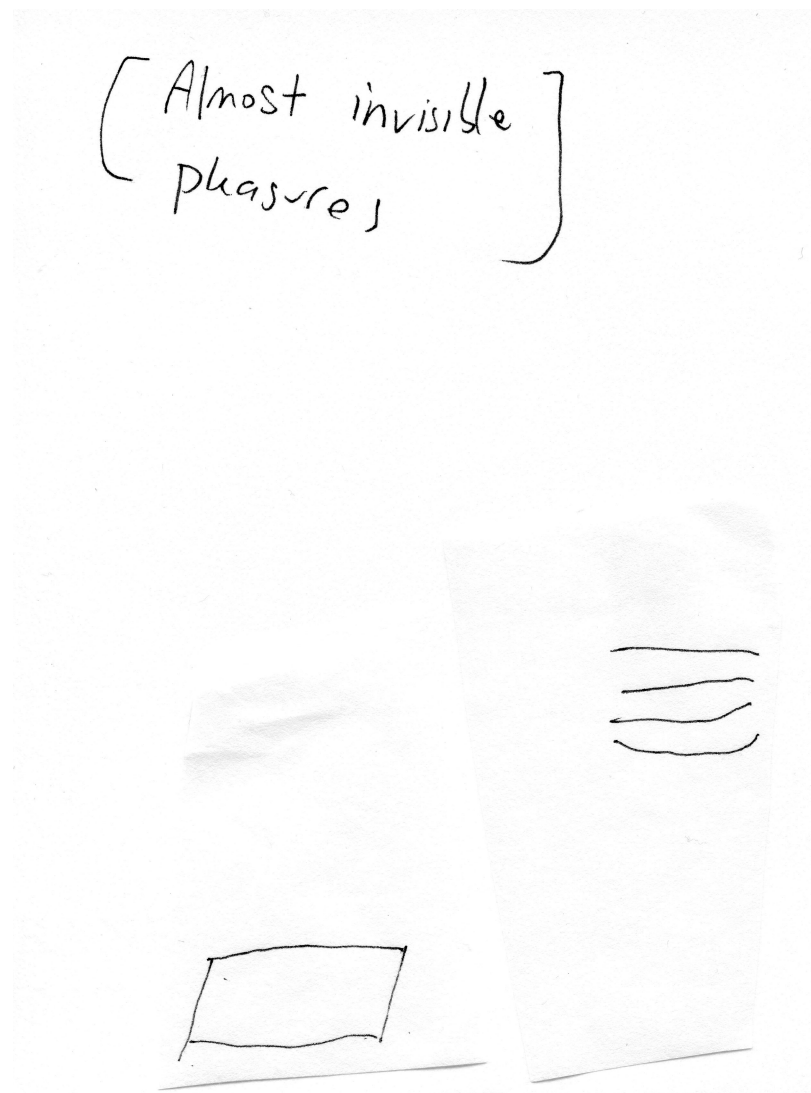


Figure 6: Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, *Almost Invisible Pleasures*, 2016. “(Words With Love)” Edition of cards produced by Cara Benedetto, artist, Sonel Breslav, *Blonde Art Books*, and Corina Reynolds, *Small Editions*. Scan by Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, 2016.

Four not completely straight lines towards the middle right (the most curved of the lines at the bottom of the series) and a rectangle at the bottom left with a slightly wavy bottom edge, a dangling appendage continuing past the paper. The very bottom of the page features several lines running their course, disappearing to the left and the right. *Almost invisible pleasures* is still written on the page, in brackets, at the top. Neither the drawings nor the shapes are overly considered, they are not labored, just simple little gestures, mixed along with linguistic note

taking, a form of shapes notation. The shapes Herrera Li Puma has added give little taxonomical indication to a representational kinship, the rectangle can be a rectangle, or a flag or a fabric, the lines can be lines or oceans or energies. Or they can be both all and nothing. They can be shapes.

THE DOODLE

Like Nerval's apocryphal lobster, the doodle may be strange—but it does not bark, and it knows the secrets of the deep.¹⁷⁴

What “deep secrets” here are in the drawing that defies one category and does not aim to represent. Why do we need to compare the doodle to the lobster? What violence lies in the depths of taxonomizing the misunderstood image with the misunderstood deep sea creature? Both are there for consumption, and we refuse them their autonomy but desire to incorporate them. Or, the subversion of the representational aim is to release pressure by letting it be, the actualization of the gesture and the acceptance that it means nothing and everything. Borges' Aleph comes to mind, from what I recall it is a sphere that contains everything and nothing simultaneously. Then I remove the reference, then I put it back in. Because it's worth talking through the anxiety of likeness, maybe we can push through metaphor to reach affinity.¹⁷⁵

“All things feel,” says Nerval's Pythagoras.¹⁷⁶

In all the argumentation regarding nature and culture, and the human teetering on the edge of the two, sometimes the most interesting stories are looked aside. The stories that humanize us all, make us laugh, remind us that what is strange can unify and open new avenues of thought rather than create a tension and the backlash of political force. Nerval's walk with his lobster is not only

¹⁷⁴ Matthew Battles, “In Praise of Doodling,” *The American Scholar* 73, no. 4 (2004): pp. 105-108, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41221340>, 106.

¹⁷⁵ Why do we need to perform taxonomy? As Edward Said discusses in *Orientalism*, the tradition of European judgment of the objects and images of other cultures lies within this territory of making strange, a tendency that has been happening in epics since Homer, continuing into the romantic tradition with poets like Nerval. To make strange is to separate from the possibility of being incorporated into the corpus of the standard. The story missed by either of these takes on Nerval, is that he took a pet lobster out for walks that he stole from a net at the seaside. See Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin Books, 1991).

¹⁷⁶ Scott Horton, “Nerval: A Man and His Lobster” (Harper's magazine, October 15, 2012), <https://harpers.org/blog/2008/10/nerval-a-man-and-his-lobster/>.

a strange image, but it asks every witness to wonder what a lobster might be like as a pet, what a lobster might feel. How a lobster is a living being.

Samuel Johnson defines a doodler as “a trifler, an idler.”¹⁷⁷ Naming it all of these things is to disparage it. Battles’ use of the Nerval quote asserts that it “knows the secrets of the deep,” suggesting that this material manifestation, though somewhat indeterminate or ambiguous as symbolic thought or language, holds deeper philosophical relevance. And that it does not bark? Maybe it does not even bite. What harm does it have, perhaps only its strangeness is seen as harmful by those who judge it. When one sets out to draw or build or make an object mimetic, the intent is to render in material a symbolic representation of the thing sought. Doodling, sketching, note taking in so-called (absent)-mindedness, do not seek the heights of conviction or representation, or to prove a point the subject already believes to be true. It simply is what it is, without pre-determining the intention of the outcome. Doodling is posited as deviant behavior.¹⁷⁸ Do the serious representationalists have to classify the doodlers in order to feel better about mastery, discipline, control in comparison to free-er idler companions? Is a doodle really unserious, or is it simply a less imperialistic gesture? Is that its threat? When Audre Lorde says that “poetry is not a luxury”¹⁷⁹ surely she means that it isn’t something we should attribute to being done only when idle, by those in the structural positions to be idle, but as a form of resistance that we all deserve access to. The resistance of poetry is its “growing secrecy,” the way it persists even in spaces of domination. Similarly, the doodle persists, as a resistance to the regimented disciplinary use of time.¹⁸⁰ This is what Matthew Battles gets at when he says “doodling offers a fossil poetry.”¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Matthew Battles, “In Praise of Doodling,” *The American Scholar* 73, no. 4 (2004): pp. 105-108, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41221340>, 106.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 106. “By the late nineteenth century it is used to describe a cheat: and gradually “doodling” becomes the name of idle, deviant, or erratic behavior.”

¹⁷⁹ See “P. Poetry” section of *Accumulative Un-alphabetized Index of Themes* in the introduction. Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Freedom: The Crossing Press, 2001), 36.

¹⁸⁰ Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (Wivenhoe / New York / Port Watson: Minor Compositions: Autonomedia, 2013), 42. “Instead, the undercommons

IS A PERSON A DOODLE OR A POEM

We are in the classroom. He giggles and falls on his face. I say stand up and read the Papaya poem! He goes into the poem from its rear, struggling through its warm blood, clawing his way. A Charlie Chaplin wobbler, this boy is a doodle squat. He walks to the wall and with it holds a conversation. Look, kid, I say, if you want to make it through Word Driving 101, you must stop bringing me rotten onions. How about a few Idaho potatoes? The idea cracks him up. He leaps on he table and makes like a frustrated monkey, jumping up and down, waving his arms. The girls and boys laugh. Listen: is this any way for a poem to act? His pink-tinted sunglasses are frosty from his own breathing. The girls scream when he suddenly takes out his tiny notebook. He reads: "I am a frog with bat wings. I want to eat cars on the freeway. I want to stroke my mothers butter." Look, I say, go stand in the corner and write a hundred times: I will understand what it means to be a poem.¹⁸²

We are taught from very young that poetry isn't the same as other forms of writing. But, as Robyn D. Kelley points out, "poetry is born in the great silence of science."¹⁸³ It is formed in the corners where it can sneak by. The doodle and the poem are classified as the unserious playthings we do in idle times, not part of the scale of social adulthood unless made by the hands and minds of genius. What would it mean to be a poem, not just write a poem? In Clarence Major's poem, we see how punitively education deals with the unruly performances of children, even though the child in the end, had a poem. Was a poem. He acted as poem and doodle, in resistance to the assignment. The boy performs poem and then has to sit in the educational dungeon that is the corner and think about what it meant to act according to his will instead of the assignment.¹⁸⁴

takes the prison as a secret about the conquests, but a secret, as Sara Ahmed says, whose growing secrecy is its power, its ability to keep a distance between it and its revelation, a secret that calls into being the prophetic, a secret held in common, originated as secret, calling into being the prophetic organization."

¹⁸¹ Matthew Battles, "In Praise of Doodling," *The American Scholar* 73, no. 4 (2004): pp. 105-108, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41221340>, 108.

¹⁸² Clarence Major, "Doodle," *From Now On: New and Selected Poems, 1970-2015*, n.d., <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt17573vh.42>.

¹⁸³ See "P. Poetry" section of *Accumulative Un-alphabetized Index of Themes* in the introduction. Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2002), 9. He cites Aimé Césaire: "Poetic knowledge is born in the great silence of scientific knowledge,"

¹⁸⁴ Grace Lee. Boggs and Scott Kurashige, *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 142. "We all know kids who are as smart as a whip but who do poorly in school and drop out as soon as they can because they refuse to accept this violence to their humanity. I view the struggle against this obsolete, hierarchical model of education as a struggle for democracy by and for young people. The factory-type school is based on the profoundly undemocratic belief that only experts are capable of creating knowledge, which teachers then deliver in the form of information and students give back on tests. Like workers in the factory, children and young people are denied their full humanity by a system that trains them to survive, consume, and produce."

When we refuse to do a particular assignment, be it a poem or an academic paper, we are deviating from what the hierarchical educational academic complex wants from us, to produce goods that make sense for its wellbeing, rather than ours. To act the poem in defiance, to doodle ones days away, these are all insurgent poetic forms, ways of “de-linking” the tools.¹⁸⁵

The point of this gesture, I would argue, would not be to proclaim, "We, too, can write!" but rather "We can use writing too (against you but also for ourselves)." For the most part, insurgent poets do not merely seek recognition within the framework of dominant society. Rather, they manifest an attempt to de-link the tool (alphabetic writing, the novel] from its product (modernity/coloniality, "universal" literature) and to construct alternative affiliations between indigenous peoples themselves.

Christopher Bracken tackles the origin myth of the sign, useful here to think about how polemics in language or representationalism function in art work: “the original sign is a pure potentiality for impotentiality. But its impotentiality lies all of it’s potential. It is “absolutely vague” because absolutely undetermined, indefinite, “a blank.” Considered in logical terms it is a subject without predicates; considered in semiotic terms, it is the sign of nothing in particular.”¹⁸⁶ He goes further to complicate the sign saying that it becomes “animated” around its “purpose” creating an emergent sense of reality. It becomes stable and real through its ability to invoke meaning. In this light, the artist or poet who defies the signifiatory apparatus of image and word, is primitivized, working outside of Enlightenment ideological designations for proper taxonomy and meaning. Bracken discusses how science and poetry are separated by the ability of the former to relate to logic, though both have the same magical impetus, and indeed science uses the poetic or magical as the root for its inquiries.¹⁸⁷

But scribbling is not doodling, because scribbles are marks made in haste or by an uncertain hand. Doodling, by contrast, is beyond craft and criticism; it belongs to us all; it’s impossible to do it badly—or well.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ Hannah Burdette, “Literary Contraband: Indigenous Insurgency and the Spatial Politics of Resistance,” *Revista Canadiense De Estudios Hispánicos* 39, no. 1 (2014): pp. 273-301, <https://doi.org/10.18192/rceh.v39i1.1670>, 275.

¹⁸⁶ Christopher Bracken, *Magical Criticism: The Recourse of Savage Philosophy* (University of Chicago Press, 2007), 1-9. Bracken is citing Charles Sanders Peirce.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁸⁸ Matthew Battles, “In Praise of Doodling,” *The American Scholar* 73, no. 4 (2004): pp. 105-108, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41221340107>, 107.

In its modern sense, doodling is surrealism and abstract expressionism's dour bachelor uncle—a workaday, intuitive expression and proof of the conviction that the artist is coextensive with nature.¹⁸⁹

preliterate, primordial, the doodle is at once the most common and the most ignored art form. And yet for all of its primitivity, and despite its surely universal occurrence among the literate peoples of the world, there was no English word for the behavior we now call doodling until the middle of the twentieth century.¹⁹⁰

SUZANNE'S RESPONSE

primordial is a hard word for me. it calls up heidegger for me and [...]. it also refers to the notion of an origin when i feel like im closer to a notion of origin-less-ness, scrambled and without wanting to find an "original" or definitive "pre"

[and]...primordial makes me think of craggy unmoving stones...¹⁹¹

The idea that the doodle is both what humanity is in touch with, and an act more enchanted by nature, while also being “surrealisms dour bachelor uncle” posits and repeats again an elitism of representation and aesthetics. This primordializing or pre-ing of a form of mark making and doing that survives, clears the path to virtuosity as the goal of aesthetic production. This is a violence conducted against doodle and doodler, to ascribe the act and the person conducting said act as primordial, pre, primitive. The definition of a pre, assigns the phenomenological experience of life to categorical progression. In response to Suzanne's “unmoving stones,” I invoke the moving ones. The ones that act and shuffle about and create a stir and circulate through rivers. Stones that hope to move the concepts time has not fixed but has left us with and circulate them through the situation. The pink pyramid stone found in the canyon one day, slid out of a pocket, to be found again the next day. A needle in the haystack. Did I find it, or did it find me again?

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 107.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 105.

¹⁹¹ Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, “Re: Draft Stages (Always and Forever),” *Re: Draft Stages (Always and Forever)*, October 29, 2019.

WHAT IS WRONG WITH HEIDEGGER

I have been at many conferences and read many books to resuscitate Heidegger. His violence is still there. Grant Farred's *Martin Heidegger Saved my Life* grapples philosophically with this conundrum, through an autobiographical account of modern racism combined with philosophical rumination around why this particular thinker came to mind in a time of duress.¹⁹² Farred keys into how language, in Heidegger's estimation, provides the "essence of a thing,"¹⁹³ and has additional implications towards how human subjectivity is denigrated by language when used as a tool for domination. Farred's use of Heidegger, his anxiety at resuscitating him in a moment of crisis that led to an essay reminded me of a game Suzanne told me she and her colleagues in graduate school played, to "atone that thinker/philosopher/theorist." Essentially it involved her group talking through why invoke someone with characteristics and beliefs incongruent with personal desires, and how they could be used anyhow. The atonement game is potentially a way academia is survived, where so many conversations, histories, narratives, and even the basic shape of the classroom and the way we are to read and learn, to be punished or rewarded, is triggering. Farred's essay invokes this problem of how to read a particular thinker, work through them, when we know that their illumination comes with a lack of intersectional dedication, biases that trouble subjectivities that are the descendants of intellectual inquiry, denigrated socially and politically by the social systems supported as ideologies. This happens with artists as well, as we dig deeper into biographical information, we risk landmines that could problematize an initial "aesthetic" enjoyment of an idea, or artwork. These incommensurabilities abound, forcing inhabiting the historical inseparable from the now.

¹⁹² Grant Farred, *Martin Heidegger Saved My Life* (Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 2015). Farred's story goes like this: he is out in front of his home raking leaves when a white woman pulls over and asks "do you want another job?" His response is "Only if you can match my Cornell Faculty Salary." He realizes in the moment he responded, that his ability to have that quip was owed to his study of Martin Heidegger, well known as a philosopher, but also a known Nazi supporter and party member.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 51.

Heidegger is the oft invoked and favored precursor in the lineage established by *Object Oriented Ontologies*, the French Continental philosophical discourse currently popular as a new materialist “alternative cosmologies/ontologies” approach. As Zoe Todd points out, these traditions still ignore and perform “symbolic annihilation,” through exclusion of the sufferers of dominations such as settler colonialism, as seldom are thinkers invoked outside of the western canon.¹⁹⁴ Acts of exclusion continue in the way the aesthetics of the “othered” are ignored, negatively framed, or sidelined by canons of thought and institutions.

Heidegger supporting of the Nazi party, and their extermination campaign, is what is wrong with him. Why his origin-ness is troubling. His “pre” deems a state of below-ness. That his milieu supported this line of thought, is hard to be forgiven as a *product of the time*, as it is an ongoing facet of how humans produce cultures of domination. In the same way, we are all accountable in how what we do reaffirms cultural practices of domination, and how we can, and should, always be changing those habits and biases that nestle into all of us. Whatever it is that came after the pre, this assertion of how human language and action intersect with consciousness, is difficult to work through, as essentializing is how humans argue against each other and against nature.

Object Oriented Ontology and the reliance on Heidegger is itself a violence, or a least a form of “symbolic annihilation,”¹⁹⁵ because despite myriad indigenous world views that support an animate living world, the arguments must still be translated into the style that is re-affirmed by disciplinary tradition. Suzanne’s origin-less-ness is to say *why search for the start* when the start means doing violence to the natural world and those around us. Why do we need to know the pre? It’s just a category that humans invented, after all. Becoming unmoving and craggy like certain

¹⁹⁴ See “C. Critique” and “O. Ontologies” section of *Accumulative Un-alphabetized Index of Themes* in the introduction.

¹⁹⁵ I first encountered this term at a lecture given by Michelle Caswell at the Henry Ransom Center in Austin, Texas, it is credited to a 1976 paper by George Gebner and Larry Gross, titled “Living with Television,” elaborating on representations of women in the media versus total absence of representation: “Representation in the fictional world signifies social existence; absence means symbolic annihilation,” 182.

rocks.¹⁹⁶ Suzanne and I are also troubled by the *fixed*-ness of academic argumentation that reaffirms knowledge as a linear extension of progress based temporal configurations. E.g. tomorrow if we were to find something troubling about one or another artist, poet, philosopher, we would probably want to revise, redact, think through and remain accountable to the collective errs staged by humanity. But we also would probably want to think through and above and below what appeals to us about particular subjectivities at a particular point, where we resonate with one or another persons words or artworks.

Once we find that a “thinker” has particular politics, how can we not see everything they have done as under the influence? Sara Ahmed suggests that the personal is always a layer within how we conduct research or create discourse. Acknowledging accountability and messy histories isn’t a fix, but is suggestive that human ideologies are dangerous through use, the grimace that discomfits knowledge. There are plenty of thought heroes, why rescue and continue to elevate those who are so difficult? Excuses become conveniences. Walter Benjamin’s historical materialism is important to unsettle these problems, because everything is interrelated, there is no outside. There is no escape from the political or social, even if more subtly invoked through the micro-aggressions of exclusion or negative inclusion. Is there safety in the doodle, the light gesture, as an anti-imperialist trace? Probably not. But it can help us cope.

SIFTING IDEAS

HLP and I sift through the ideas and the histories of the ideas and the attendant personae. These sifts are actualized in her gestures as an artist and educator, the little notes and papers that ripple out from her being. The methodology of mutual study and learning is echoed in her material forms. What makes a particular thinker appealing, an idea, a statement, an artwork, is not just about the being, but also how they are *read*. Ideas appeal to rationalist desires to figure it out, to chase the plastic carrot of knowing. Suzanne’s lines are valid forms of communication. Her work

¹⁹⁶ I send Asa Mendelsohn a text message while working on this essay stating “what is time.” He responded “water.” Cross reference from Introduction.

speaks to the challenge of how to validate the undervalued, while avoiding another gesture of hierarchical raising. Non-compliance is a potential no invoked to refuse. Refusal to scale, refusal to over determination, refusal to hierarchy, refusal to rising. Easier said than enacted. Having forcefields to understand the parts of language that are oppressive. Understanding that grammar is itself in the service of over determining the unfolding of ideas. Suzanne introduced me to the poet and artist Cecilia Vicuña, who wrote the phrase “maximum fragility against maximum power.”¹⁹⁷ Vicuña’s poetry is a concise interaction with language, aware that using the tools of the dominant can turn you into an imperialist. The fragile against power is a subversion instead of a competition. Why not present little fetishes and duck-like forms, confuse the tendencies, give a little of what lacks. Soft subvert.

THE FLAT FILE

Suzanne once told me that she would like the entire accumulation of her life’s work to constitute one sculptural gesture, fitting entirely in a single flat file.

This follows suit with Herrera Li Puma’s discomfort with imperialism enacted through takeovers of space. It is also a continued thinking through how even smaller gestures, like making a drawing, can be an implied act of power, since intellect and art weave into how humans culturally present themselves to the world. Even in the small gestures, this anxiety over imperialistic tendencies is intertwined with the pleasure of making. Virginia Woolf’s short story, *Solid Objects* tells of a man who diverts a promising career as a rising politician after missing a meeting because he rapidly exits a train due to registering a glimmer out of the corner of his eye, becoming fascinated by a distant object, later revealed as a pottery shard stuck in the dirt near the tracks. He begins to collect little discards, populating his mantle and home with them. He is more enthralled by simple material encounters with these items, either overlooked or deliberately

¹⁹⁷ Cecilia Vicuña, *Quipoem* (Hanover & London: Wesleyan University Press and University Press of New England, 1997).

discarded, than the specter of success. A friend visits and attempts to decode his behavior, to convince him to rejoin productive society, disappointed by this enchantment's ability to counter social norms of ascendancy. Woolf's story punctures the misunderstanding of the productive logos as an ideological position, versus the enchanted, meditative, unproductive and chance based experiences of life.¹⁹⁸

The subtle moves and small gestures, including whatever exists in-between, constitute an irrevocable attachment of my subjectivity to Suzanne's. To write about her, is yet another anxiety, as language framing is a form of genius making, canonizing. It is also an imposition of an interpretation upon her. I am objective only insofar as I am outside of her, but my subjective attachment to her works is too deep to quantify, part pleasure in image and form, part love of her personhood and ideas. Leo Steinberg addresses this problem of Art history in "Objectivity and the Shrinking Self," the second to last chapter in his book *Other Criteria*. He describes the difficulty of interpretation ever being an objective act. This push through the discipline of art history, into selfhood constituted by the artistic poetic soul, exists somewhere else than in the taxonomy and description of the sciences. Objective knowledge, empirical data, is always filtered through subjective selves. A given feeling on a particular day could shift the object of research, as could a specific meal or the feeling of being in love. The body is a distorted lens through which everything enters. Discipline poses an attempt to remove as much of the personal, subjective as possible to reach a quantifiable and detached conclusion. How do we choose what to dedicate our time to? The act of choosing is itself a marker of our subjectivity. Choosing fragments over a career. Beneath this is the deepest unease of empirical and rationalist ways of knowing, that we might actually always seek that which we hope to find, that style appeals to us as much as

¹⁹⁸ Along the same lines of anxiety for Suzanne at producing anything, lest it take up space or elicit dangerous ideas, I have a deep continuing anxiety with the charming ghost of Virginia Woolf, who wrote about life and phenomenological experience in incredibly lucid ways, but is known to have treated and spoken of her servants badly. Servants who allowed the illusion of her genius to become, for even during wartime she and her husband Leonard always had a few servants to tend their meals, their house, their cleaning so that they could write.

message, influencing the encounter from the beginning due to how we decide what is the object of our study.

CONGRUENCE

The letter is the poets lifeline. The poem is the earth's circulation.¹⁹⁹

But why call the personal a digression? Why is it that the personal so often enters writing as if we are being led astray from a proper course?²⁰⁰

The positive side of knowing one lacks total objectivity, is that the “personal” is central rather than what leads astray from the “proper course.” I’ve called the personal connection we feel towards friends, lovers, artworks, poems elsewhere affinity or forcefields. This could also be called congruence. Primarily this is a means of approaching what one feels drawn to, acknowledging the personal, deviating from the forced categories of taxonomy, admitting that taxonomy too is always personal. Feeling the resonant joy of encountering something that has similar energetic vibrations, not because it fits a pattern or category but because it is.

Suzanne’s letters frequently include some delicate arrangement of paper almost too fragile to touch, and such as in a recent case, where Suzanne was so enthralled by the packaging on a pair of discount long underwear, that she sent it to me with a letter. It consisted of a semi transparent white tissue paper folded perfectly around matte grey cardboard. Suzanne said she tried to picture the person making these beautiful airy folds in a factory. It would be impossible to imagine Suzanne going into any material circumstance without wondering about the very nuances of every aspect, including the meant to be ephemeral throw away parts of the packaging to a box of underwear. The letter is written on the cardboard insert, folded back into the tissue. This circumstance is indicative of HLP’s practice as a whole, the noticing of the soft circumstances, the accidental or incidental is the important, once it is actually seen, acknowledged. An embrace

¹⁹⁹ Cecilia Vicuña, *Quipoem* (Hanover & London: Wesleyan University Press and University Press of New England, 1997), 23.

²⁰⁰ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 23.

of fragile suspensions. It's not just an enfolding, but being moved by it. It can come via intended to be disposable consumer packaging. She notes how strange this mass-produced, corporate consumer object is, when delicately wrapped. A trace of the nuance of touch, the act of folding delicate material that had to have been performed by human hands.

The diagram with the letter showing the folds is itself evocative. On the far left a drawn rectangle is encased by corners that are rounded. The center of the diagram has a version of the object that reveals the folds of the tissue, little dotted lines for the folds, more soft rectangles within the one larger one. On the far right, the folds are rendered more solid, traced back over for emphasis, making smaller compartments repeated in shapes. Three versions of the same unfolding, scratched back into the object to repeat and emphasize its magic.

THE DODO BIRD IN DEFIANCE OF ITS OWN TAXONOMIC CATEGORIZATION

A few years ago, Suzanne told me about a reader she was making with a friend, it would feature a diagram of a dodo bird on the front. Or was it us that were supposed to make the reader? My memory is unsure, but what I do remember is the exchange of diagrams of a dodo explaining how it defies its taxonomic classification as a bird because it cannot fly. I remember feeling both like the dodo bird and within it. If I only had wings maybe I'd be more understood in my classificatory category. Alternately, identifying defiantly with the dodo's un-classification. Each day we play at wanting to be understood and not caring.

SHAPETHROWING AND FORCEFIELDS

Doodling against polemics. Doodling against sureness. Doodle on the tossing of ideas letting none of them be rendered too representationally serious. Shoes, Derrida, cyclical sensitivities, Gayatri Spivak, listening, Sherlock Holmes, polysemy, Poe, back pain, cat pee, Colonialism, therapy, making, laundry, de/anti/post Colonialisms, poems, Lacan, scratches, Sandwiches, menstrual huts, Echo, grammars, frail objects, frailer drawings, frailest feelings. Refusals.

p.s.

in the "fourier" chapter of his book on sade/fourier/loyola, barthes says wonderful things about fourier's political utopia based not on "politics" but "domestics"--in other words, a vision for utopia that comprehends the politics of "domestics." the politics of pleasure and desire that always already are implicated in any politics at all but which are always effaced in the classic articulations of the domain of the political. (he begins the chapter with a discussion of eating melons and couscous)

in the beginning chapter of F/S/L, barthes writes this, which reminded me too of some of the things i felt today, in the transmuted living room (a reinvented and rearticulated social habitat?)

"...at times the pleasure of the Text is achieved more deeply (and then is when we can truly say there is a Text): whenever the 'literary' Text (the Book) transmigrates into our life, whenever another's writing (the Other's writing) succeeds in writing fragments of our own daily lives, in short, whenever a *coexistence* occurs. The index of the pleasure of the Text, then, is when we are able to live with Fourier, with Sade. To live with an author does not necessarily mean to achieve in our own life the program that the author has traced in his books [...] it is not a matter of making operative what has been represented, not a matter of becoming sadistic or orgiastic with Sade, a phantlasterian with Fourier, of praying with Loyola; it is a matter of bringing into our daily life the fragments of the unintelligible ('formulae') that emanate from a text we admire (admire precisely because it hangs together well); it is a matter of speaking this text, not making it act, by allowing it the distance of a citation, the eruptive force of a coined word, of a language truth; our daily life then itself becomes a theater whose scenery is our own social habitat...."
(Roland Barthes, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, 7-8)²⁰¹

Above is a response from Suzanne after seeing an exhibition our friend Natalie Beall and I organized in the living room of an apartment I was moving out of. Most of the work was constructed of the little domestic remnants that one tries to sort in a move. What is trash, what stays, what moves. Nothing is trash. Suzanne's words come from years of correspondence, in letter, email and text message form, the most recent of which survive phone meltdowns and data purges. In their accumulation of intimacy they are no less important though not transferable to a documentary form of permanence. I'm struck by the breadth of topics and what it means for us to try to bring these *texts* alive. Digging through for affinity and realizing the dangerous concepts: the Lacans, Freuds and Heideggers. All the texts we dig through together to find little glimmers of potential utopias that might just be a living with all the troubles, something that brings the

²⁰¹ Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, "Cohabitation with Things/Domestics (Re: NP-CZ Exhibition in Sunset Park, with All the Remnants of the Apt. before Moving to SD)," July 22, 2012.

poetics of the domestic and the political in closer relation. The problems of subjective genius interiority as it rustles against social communal lives, explanations launched against unwieldy subjectivities via a framing of deficits, haunt on in our archives and our selves. On good days, the most serious of ideas facilitates our falling down into laughter, to “convulse” as Benjamin says of it,²⁰² a ruptured response to the seriousness and stability of ideas.

In an early email correspondence from our relationship, I find the source of our shapethrowing in response to Suzanne’s email above. Our discussion centered around my misunderstanding of a term used by a mutual friend, oral historian Sara Dziedzic. She saw this type of thinking out loud, “shapethrowing,” with others as something that is prevalent in the way sharing knowledge becomes elaborated in the context of nuanced, and attempting to be more sensitive, academic historicizing. The dominant tendency she noticed is how polemics and rhetoric are used by one to prove the other wrong, thereby elevating an idea as the authoritative truth. Shapethrowing is her proposed (and witnessed) alternative where each side takes the idea as shape and makes it into another shape, returning it back with accumulative responses. Suzanne and I shapethrow. Suzanne’s duck like shapes continue the changing movements of our thoughts and correspondences. Accumulating lines. Through this intricate forcefield of shared interests changing knowledges proliferate.

²⁰² See Entry 1: *Logical Horses: or Several Historical, Aesthetic, Allegorical, and Mythical Vignettes*.

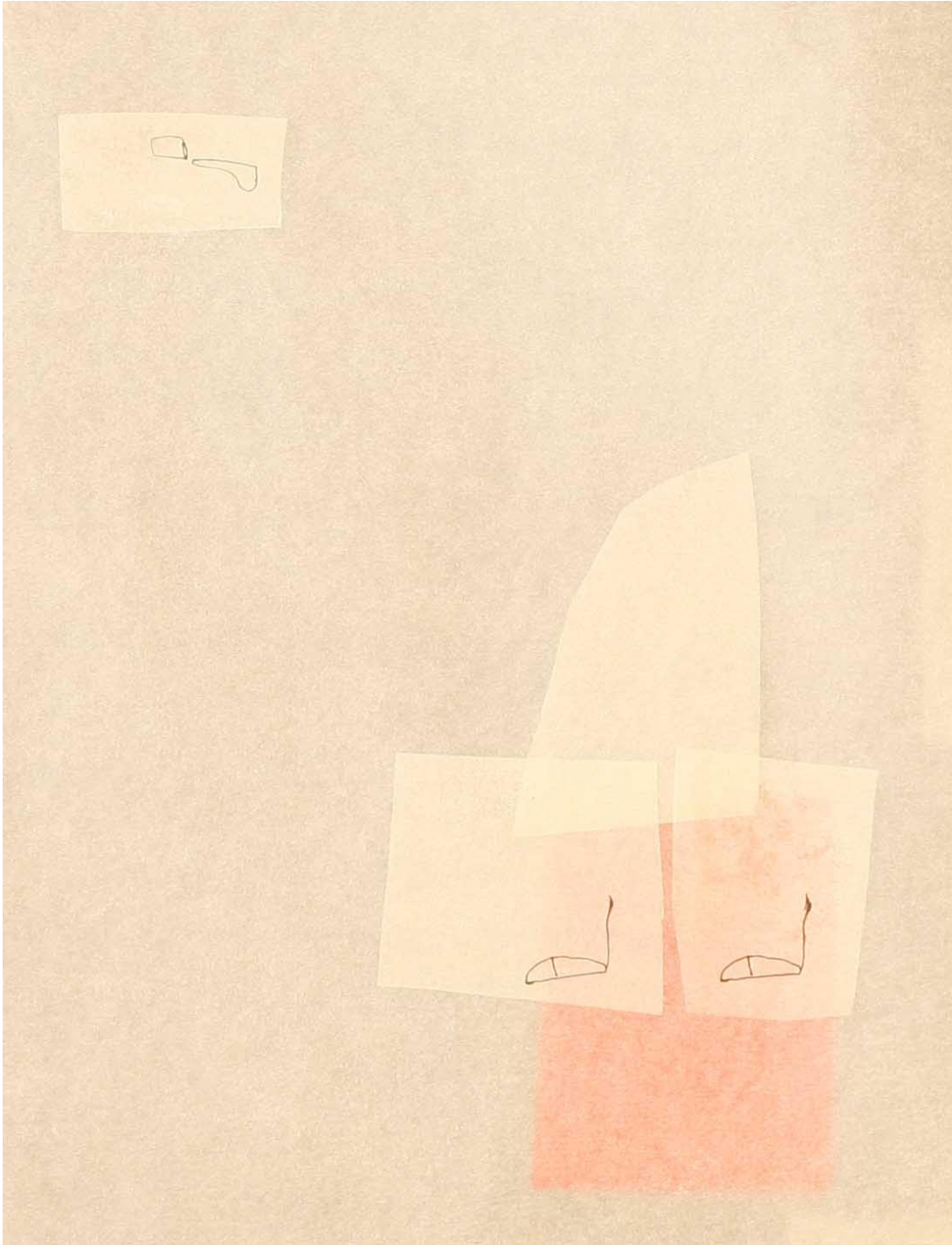


Figure 7: Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, Detail of *untitled*, from series (*plurals*), 2012. Collage, silkscreen and drawing on tracing paper. Photograph by Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, 2012.

NEED I SAY MORE

To write *about* serves systematization, no escape from linguistic imperialism. This document could serve as a desire for transition, a moving out of and letting go of the energetic imperative to explain:

a wave or rain-drop on the left, four lines to the right, and two wavy lines arching above

To just state, is still to state. As per the Purifoy epigraph, and subsequent discussion of it in my introduction, the audience seeks “from the horses mouth” what a material art act means, but is seldom satiated by the response, particularly if it does not match the assumption or the logical system most dominant at that moment, or whichever system or world view is nestling within the mind of the observer. Purifoy also says: “I am a liaison between you and the world you live in.” What would it mean to leave the discipline behind and enact? To fulfill desire rather than narrate damage. Almost invisible pleasures. Duck dodo doodles. Wave rain drops. Four lines to the right. Two wavy lines arching above.

Sleep, No work. Busy but lazy. Sleep. Resistance!

Intuition?

The cosmic

reuse

slight
scratches



Figure 8: Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, (untitled), 2016. Screenshot by Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, 2016.

“In search of a language without violence.”

What about the lens of application? How is theory filtered through subjectivity? Invisible delicate language. Seeing and reading or not seeing and not reading.

Squiggle lines and dots. Passing a paper from one person to another.

A hope the receiver will understand it, accept it as a communication. Wavy lines are made, and then they are passed along.

CONCLUSION

I know I woke up today and was like I have got to stop using that other language// i just have to say it like i feel it—here are the strings, here are the clouds...²⁰³

²⁰³ Text message from Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, February 27, 2019.

In one of my most recent exchanges with Suzanne, I said that I hoped in the next phase of my life to “land on a dirty but soft pile of laundry.”

She responded with a drawing:

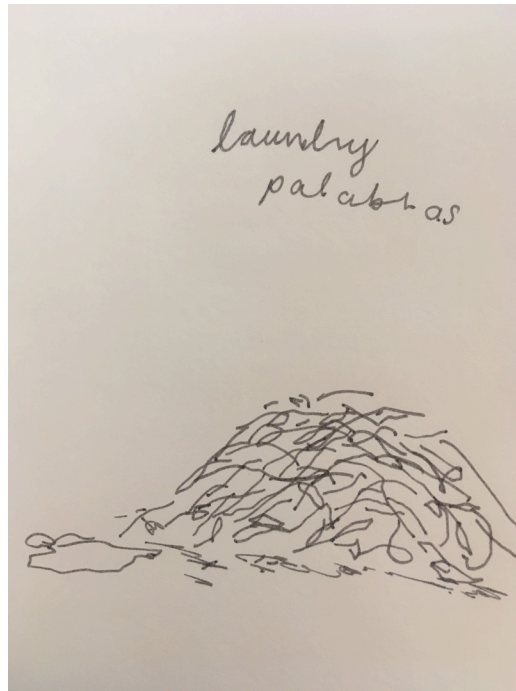


Figure 9: Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, *Laundry Palabras*, 2018. Photo by Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, 2018.

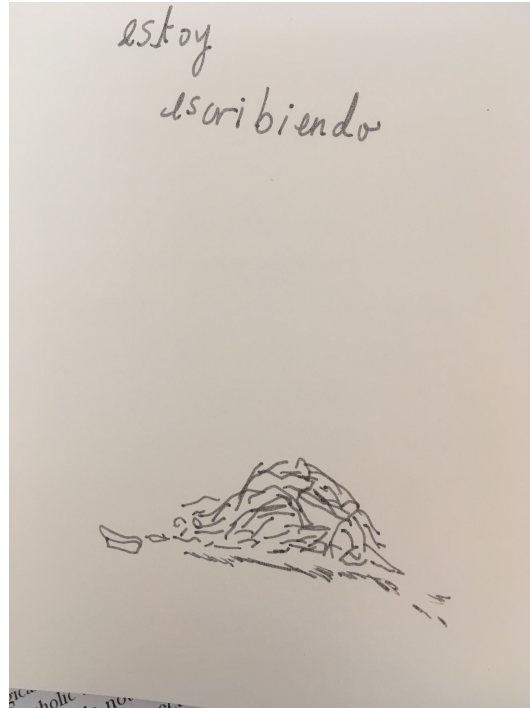


Figure 10: Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, *Estoy Escribiendo*, 2018. Photo by Suzanne Herrera Li Puma, 2018.

Laundry Palabras. *Estoy Escribiendo*.²⁰⁴

Freaky families extend from the art to the personal and between. These are networks without a preconceived order, the dodo bird of disorder hopping along the sea edge and forest floor, a form of aesthetics and world making sneaking about within the fissures of the rigid and forced institutional, taxonomical designations.

A lifelong attempt at finding ways to frame no endurance as a positive.

If we have failed to prosper
or rather become prosperous
in the sense that one earns silence
on the federal holiday of one's choice,
if we have failed in that,
in prospering according to proper functions
of the glands of capital,
it is called poverty.
In the above example of hypotaxis,
weren't you her man?
Her man of opportunity.

²⁰⁴ Translation: laundry words, I am writing.

So-called prospering.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ Simone White, *Dear Angel of Death* (Brooklyn, NY: Ugly Duckling Presse, 2018), 15.

END

It seems to me that one ought to rejoice in the *fact* of death—ought to decide, indeed to *earn* one's death by confronting with passion the conundrum of life. One is responsible to life: it is the small beacon in that terrifying darkness from which we come and to which we shall return.²⁰⁶

Haunting is both acute and general; individuals are haunted, but so are societies. e.g. The United States is permanently haunted by the slavery, genocide, and violence entwined in its first, present and future days. Haunting doesn't hope to change people's perceptions, nor does it hope for reconciliation. Haunting lies precisely in its refusal to stop.²⁰⁷

As per the quote at the very start of this project by Frantz Fanon, I worry about positing “timeless truths.” I suspect publishing is trapped in amber, fixing the conversational and expressive tool of language with the potential for permanence. The pluralistic approach of “other truth(s),” nestles within embracing craft, poetry, doodling as forms of keeping on and making it through life. Art as a component of a potentialized worldview where each present-ness in the now streams from the last. The pretention of sureness in the illumination of truths is dangerous, suggesting that somehow ideas, aesthetics, politics, cultures are static. Any belief becomes dangerous when wielded for harm, or scaled to largess. Even poetry and art, because they both can work in the service of social masters, as do the disciplines when competition for expertise overtakes the vibrant curiosity to be “of knowledge.” This is stasis proposed by hegemony, fixity. This might sound like a philosophical treatise, and maybe in part it is. But it's also an attempt to trouble and stay with the trouble of art making, enjoying and supporting other artists for the sake of what James Baldwin called the “small beacon in that terrifying darkness.” Art in the service of success and capital can't get to that dimensionality, but the seed is always there for the potential to be social, to heal, to converse through material instead of language. I still can't reconcile with myself, that my own dismantling does not avoid canonizing or categorization, I defacto re-mantle, name and canonize artists by talking about them at all, and legitimize myself by obtaining a

²⁰⁶ James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (New York: The Modern Library, 1995), 91.

²⁰⁷ Eve Tuck and C Ree, “A Glossary of Haunting,” essay, in *Handbook of Autoethnography*, ed. Holman Jones Stacy Linn, Tony E. Adams, and Carolyn Ellis (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), pp. 639-658, 642.

doctorate as an artist. The bind continues. Mentioning no one would be defeat as well, so I leave with the incommensurability I feel at having conducted this seven-year performance piece called a PhD in Art Practice, an exercise “about knowledge.” I hope to continue moving towards being “of knowledge.”²⁰⁸ What I arrived at was engaging artists and thinking about how and what they wanted written about them, as a participant in their lives rather than a removed observer, while also ruminating on the role of categorization and aesthetics in service to disciplinary fixations.

A personal spectre remains that I had to write and format this document. Why? Even in my own refusals, I have re-performed the expectation. Convincing an audience to bear witness to categorization serving to support hierarchicalization and canonization, which in turn leads to divisiveness, jealousy, accumulation of property, and on as it ripples out from social life to art. That I had to do most of it, except where I went rogue and poetic, in the language of theory, history, academics, reveals that the requirement is to speak the language to enter the halls. Does it alter the course? As I exit this document I think again of Virginia Woolf’s *Solid Objects*, and Ursula K. LeGuin’s *The Ones Who Walk Away from Olemas*. In Woolf’s story, the lawyer sees a glimmer in the dirt as his train is about to depart, missing the opportunity for a successful career. Ever since I read Woolf’s journals I also see the subtext in her stories, wonder where her maids and cooks are when she writes, think about the inheritances that pay for the maids, the rent and so on. As Audre Lorde points out, it’s not just a room of one’s own, but also the paper and the typewriter one needs, the art materials and supplies, and time. More broadly, the conditions, to make art. LeGuin’s story is a social allegory, about a society that is perfect on the surface, with the requirement that a child be kept in chains beneath the city. This secret is revealed to each citizen of Olemas, most feel guilt, but decide to continue on knowing this is the condition of their surface happiness. Some walk down the road that leads out of the city, out of the gates when they learn of the smokescreen. When is the now of walking out of the city gates, of missing the train

²⁰⁸ Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer, *Lee Lozano: Dropout Piece* (London: Afterall Books and MIT Press, 2014). Lee Lozano wrote that she sought to reject “suck-sess,” and become “of knowledge.”

on purpose, paying attention to what others ignore, refusing to support a society that exploits? It occurs to me, that writing should be abandoned altogether in the future, or at least the pretense that it could ever approach “timeless truths.” Maybe the greatest act is to walk away from the achievement of speaking the language learned. It is also abundantly clear that walking away isn’t death, it is alternative to, as long as alternatives exist. That maybe as Lorde points out, we can all write poetry on our lunch breaks, while we all struggle to get by. There are those who do other things on the margins, rendered invisible by the system that wishes to ignore them and their potential for changing things through less violent, less hierarchical means. Or, they choose invisibility as a cloak of safety from the prying evil eyes of capitalism, speculative real estate, jealous accumulations of property and fame. All of the enclosures that are armaments of “civilized” life, everything within the gates.

The settler, having settled for politics, arms himself in the name of civilization while critique initiates the self-defense of those of us who see hostility in the civil union of settlement and enclosure. We say, rightly, if our critical eyes are sharp enough, that it’s evil and uncool to have a place in the sun in the dirty thinness of this atmosphere’ that house the sheriff was building is in the heart of a fallout zone.²⁰⁹

I read *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State* while writing this series of entries. What strikes me continually is the primitivizing of less-hierarchical or egalitarian societies, a way of closing the game in the favor of the dominant by claiming their methods, politics, social organizations, customs, religions, and even art are indicators of progress, the dangling carrot of teleological argumentation (e.g. how Eurocentric institutions and cultures established and continue to maintain cultural power).²¹⁰ Even if othered societies and peoples had their own empires, they are erased or cast as needing to be democratized. In explaining how systems develop there is a violence within the very idea of development because it suggests change is unidirectional and not a complicated web and growth that could be a set of ongoing problems not

²⁰⁹ Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (Wivenhoe / New York / Port Watson: Minor Compositions: Autonomedia, 2013), 18.

²¹⁰ Frederick Engels, *The Origins of Private Property and The State* (New York: International Publishers, 1972).

a progress. Aesthetics is not excused, it plays part of the “culture game,” as it relates to social life. This is the “hostility” of “enclosure.” Erasing the bodily labor everywhere required to build so-called civilizations, and high art along with civilization is implicated as a measure of ascendance. The house of the “sherriff” in a “fallout zone.”

The clinging to order versus chaos is rests inside the structures. After an argument about empiricism with a scientist neighbor, in which it was said to me that “the problem with artists” is their subversion of and acknowledgment of many possibly meanings, what Bracken and linguistics call “polysemy,” what I call “the wiggles,” science emerges as a form of authority that through “knowing” and being able to prove facts gathered, argued, and agreed upon from the sensuous world approaches the “timeless truth,” Fanon worried about. Our exchange ended with a slight moving towards center: “...honestly I haven’t really though about why I cling to things like accuracy and “correctness.” Response: “I know why cling, I try to be empathetic to that. It’s a chaotic world and accuracy and correctness are some ways we try to deal with chaos. I have my own attempts to control, even in wiggles, so I have to be accountable and admit that.” This conciliatory move between neighbors could open up space for more, but it would require every neighbor to understand the dichotomy between their worlds created by desires for comfort, security, love, life and freedom.

The “cacophonous” grouping of writings here are likely to be categorized as not-quite history, auto-ficting, poetry or prose. The what is of what it is. Subjectivity seeps through. From my subjectivity, a forced “contemporary nomadic” living in many cities and countries, aware of being tagged “cosmopolitan,” aware that cosmopolitanism is a form of erasure for those who stay put. A long financial teetering pulled the ground out from that “cosmopolitanism,” revealing how fragile it is. My hybridity of self and my many forms is not an escape, it is a problem that will continue on and is inseparable from how I think and write. It is also why I search for the many, the plurals changing questions rather than the single static answer. I hope to keep up with the

philosophical challenges, as they shift and arise new, troubling the idea that one position or set of experiences is somehow better than another. The what is of what it is that leads us all to leading very messy and interesting lives, art being a component to that messiness as a testimony to living.

These discourses have informed the production and legitimation of art throughout history. Works are canonized in the hope of preserving their creativity and uniqueness, to reinforce (solidify) their distance from outsider art: the art from nonwhite women and men. Access is a threat to whiteness when whiteness requires the exportation (and denigration) of color.³ The purpose of canonization is to create "the" standard for all art, attempting to retain the work's life long after its death, enstating an elite, incestuous circle of "fine art," demarcating high from low art and culture. Yet canonized art is threatened by the inherent dynamism of outsider art as a consequence of where it is created (on/ in/ through the margin) and its necessity to engage in continuous struggles with the canon for survival. Historically speaking, when the third world artists borrow from the first world it has been called colonialism, but when the modernists borrowed from Africa, for example, it was an enrichment of the vocabulary of the fine arts.⁴ Whites and whiteness can no longer be exempted from the comprehensive racialization process that is the hallmark history and social structure.⁵ Modernism dictated and furthered notions of patriarchy and whiteness in the arts through its marriage to the scientific method, rationalism, and Utopian aesthetics. Seeking TRUTH (objectivity, clarity, purity, reduction). A principal attitude of modernism was to posit artworks as the products of an autonomous, disengaged form of labor and consumption, freed from normal social commerce by virtue of their status as objects designed for visual pleasure.²¹¹

Thus Montaigne, still adhering to the older astronomy, could consistently describe man's dwelling-place as "the filth and mire of the world, the worst, lowest most lifeless part of the universe, the bottom story of the house." How, then, he demanded, could a creature native to it and fellow-lodger with "the lowest of the three orders of animals" (i.e., land animals) dare in imagination "to place himself above the circle of the moon, and reduce heaven under his feet"? "By what authority," asks Montaigne, can man assume that "this admirable moving of heaven's vault, the eternal light of these lamps rolling so proudly over his head, ... were established and continue so many ages for his commodity and service?" (footnote 6).²¹²

Every seed is a space ship, a nomad planet waiting to sprout.

The seed has waited all this time to seed.
Sprouting and waiting they are.
Some wait three thousand years, others a few minutes.
Keepers of an inner time, they know when to jump.
Some have parachutes, others weight.
Every seed is a space ship, a nomad planet waiting to sprout.

²¹¹ Leila E. Villaverde, "Border Crossings: The Act and Implications in the Production of Art Vis Ávis Patriarchy and Whiteness," *Counterpoints* 73 (2002): pp. 41-58, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42976121>, 47.

²¹² Arthur Oncken Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1936), 102.

Santiago, 1971.²¹³

A Diary of Objects for the Resistance

After the attempted coup of June, 1973, I began keeping a journal of debris, little prayers;
The diary of a life in liter.²¹⁴

²¹³ Cecilia Vicuña, *Quipoem* (Hanover & London: Wesleyan University Press and University Press of New England, 1997), 29.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 34.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- “Acts of Survivance.” *Survivance*, April 20, 2016. <http://survivance.org/acts-of-survivance/>.
- Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Alfred, Taiaiake. *Peace, Power, Righteousness: an Indigenous Manifesto*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Appadurai, Arjun, ed. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Arke, Pia. “Ethnoaesthetics.” *Rethinking Nordic Colonialism Act 5: Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden* (2006): 1–17. <https://doi.org/http://www.rethinking-nordic-colonialism.org/files/index.htm>.
- Baldwin, James. *The Fire Next Time*. New York: The Modern Library, 1995.
- Battles, Matthew. “In Praise of Doodling.” *The American Scholar* 73, no. 4 (2004): 105–8. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41221340>.
- Benjamin, Walter. “Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia.” In *Walter Benjamin. Selected Writings*, edited by Howard Eiland and Michael William Jennings, 207–21. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings 1927-1930*. Vol. 2, Part 1. 4 vols. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005.
- . *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. London: Verso, 2009.
- . *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings 1927-1930*. Vol. 2, Part 1. 4 vols. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005.
- Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 2008.
- Berliner, Paul F. *The Soul of Mbira: Music and Traditions of the Shona People of Zimbabwe*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993.
- Boahen, A. Adu. *Topics in West African History*. Longman/ Pearson Education, 2012.
- Boggs, Grace Lee, and Scott Kurashige. *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2012.
- Boyer, Anne. *A Handbook of Disappointed Fate*. Brooklyn, NY: Ugly Duckling Presse, 2018.

- Burdette, Hannah. "Literary Contraband: Indigenous Insurgency and the Spatial Politics of Resistance." *Revista Canadiense De Estudios Hispánicos* 39, no. 1 (2014): 273–301. <https://doi.org/10.18192/rceh.v39i1.1670>.
- Byrd, Jodi A. *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
- Cheng, Anne Anlin. *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation and Hidden Grief*. Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Conrad, CA. *While Standing in Line for Death*. Seattle: Wave Books, 2017.
- Cooper, Brittney. "The Racial Politics of Time." TED, 2018. https://www.ted.com/talks/brittney_cooper_the_racial_politics_of_time?language=en.
- Cramer, Lauren, June 20, 2017.
- Cuthand, Beth. *Voices in the Waterfall*. Penticton, BC: Theytus Books, 2008.
- D'Aguiar, Fred. "Wilson Harris ." BOMB Magazine, 2003. <http://bombmagazine.org/article/2537/wilson-harris>.
- de la Mettrie, Julien Offray. *Machine Man and Other Writings*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Deloria, Philip Joseph. *Playing Indian*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007.
- Dundes, Alan, ed. *The Evil Eye: a Folklore Casebook*. New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1981.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin White Masks*. New York: Grove Press, 1967.
- Farred, Grant. *Martin Heidegger Saved My Life*. Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 2015.
- Federici, Silvia. *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*. New York: Autonomedia, 2014.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Vintage Books Edition, 1994.
- Friedlander, Eli. *Walter Benjamin: A Philosophical Portrait*. Harvard University Press, 2012.
- Google Definition Search. Accessed June 21, 2017. <https://www.google.com/#q=barbarism>.
- Gordon, Avery. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.
- Gordon, Avery. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

- Graeber, David. *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004.
- Haraway, Donna Jeanne. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.
- Harney, Stefano, and Fred Moten. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*. Wivenhoe: Minor Compositions, 2013.
- Harney, Stefano, and Fred Moten. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*. Wivenhoe / New York / Port Watson: Minor Compositions: Autonomedia, 2013.
- Harvey, Graham. *Animism: Respecting the Living World*. London: Hurst & Company, 2005.
- Herrera Li Puma, Suzanne. "Cohabitation with Things/Domestics (Re: NP-CZ Exhibition in Sunset Park, with All the Remnants of the Apt. before Moving to SD)," July 22, 2012.
- Herrera Li Puma, Suzanne. "Re: Laundry," October 8, 2018.
- Herrera, Suzanne. "Print Echoes." In *Contemporary Print Handbook*, edited by Cara Benedetto, 69–85. New York: Halmos, 2016.
- Horton, Scott. "Nerval: A Man and His Lobster." Harper's magazine, October 15, 2012. <https://harpers.org/blog/2008/10/nerval-a-man-and-his-lobster/>.
- Howe, Susan. *The Difficulties*. Vol. 3. 2. Viscerally Press, 1989.
- Jemisin, N. K. *The Killing Moon: Book One of Dreamblood*. Orbit, 2012.
- Kelley, Robin D. G. *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2002.
- Lehrer-Graiwer, Sarah. *Lee Lozano: Dropout Piece*. London: Afterall Books and MIT Press, 2014.
- Li Puma, Suzanne Herrera, February 27, 2019.
- Li Puma, Suzanne Herrera. "Re: Draft Stages (Always and Forever)." *Re: Draft Stages (Always and Forever)*, October 29, 2019.
- . "Re: Possible Press / Haunt Vol. 2 – Now Online." *Re: Possible Press / Haunt Vol. 2 – Now Online*, October 5, 2015.
- . "Re: Some More Storytelling." *Re: Some More Storytelling*, June 8, 2017.
- Linda, Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. 2nd ed. London: Zed Books, 2012.
- liquid blackness, March 8, 2017. <http://liquidblackness.com/research-projects/>.

- Liter Thru Dorker Vibes. *Diska Limba Man*. Vinyl recording. Bi Russell Records, 834 W. 131st Street, Compton, CA, 1979.
- Lopez, Rick Anthony. *Crafting Mexico: Intellectuals, Artisans, and the State after the Revolution*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Lopéz, Rick A. "Nature as Subject and Citizen in the Mexican Botanical Garden, 1787–1829," 2012. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt180r1mz.7>.
- Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Freedom: The Crossing Press, 2001.
- Lovejoy, Arthur Oncken. *The Great Chain of Being*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1936.
- Lowe, Lisa. *The Intimacies of Four Continents*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2015.
- Major, Clarence. "Doodle." *From Now On: New and Selected Poems, 1970-2015*, n.d. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt17573vh.42>.
- Maloney, Clarence, ed. *The Evil Eye*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1976.
- Marcos, Subcomandante. *Professionals of Hope: The Selected Writings of Subcomandante Marcos*. Brooklyn, NY: The Song Cave, 2017.
- Marx, Karl. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. Wildside Press, 2008.
- Mungoshi, Charles. "Kind of Drought." *Poetry International*, 2008. <https://www.poetryinternational.org/pi/poem/11931/auto/0/0/Charles-Mungoshi/A-KIND-OF-DROUGHT/en/nocache>.
- Myers, Fred R., ed. *The Empire of Things: Regimes of Value and Material Culture*. Advanced Seminar Series. School of American Research Press, 2001.
- Myles, Eileen. *Afterglow: (a Dog Memoir)*. Grove Press UK, 2018.
- Nechvatal, Joseph, Michelle Fisher, Dan Schindel, Jack Sjogren, Jon Hogan, Deena ElGenaidi, and J. Faith Almiron. "Revisiting Le Corbusier as a Fascist." *Hyperallergic*, July 15, 2015. <https://hyperallergic.com/221158/revisiting-le-corbusier-as-a-fascist/>.
- Oguibe, Olu. *The Culture Game*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004.
- Orwell, George. "Benefit of Clergy: Some Notes on Salvador Dali," 1999. http://www.orwell.ru/library/reviews/dali/english/e_dali.
- Ovid. *Metamorphoses*. Translated by A. D. Melville. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008.
- Oxford English Dictionary. Accessed June 21, 2017. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/15380?redirectedFrom>.
- Pensky, Max. "Method and Time." *The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*, 2004, 177–98. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1017/CCOL0521793297.010>.

- Pietz, William. "The Problem of the Fetish I." *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 9 (1985): 5–17. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20166719>.
- . "The Problem of the Fetish II." *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 13 (1987): 23–45. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20166762>.
- . "The Problem of the Fetish III." *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 16 (1988): 105–24. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20166805>.
- Ponge, Francis. *The Voice of Things*. Translated by Beth Archer Brombert. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1974.
- Price, Sally. *Primitive Art in Civilized Places*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- Propp, Vladimir. *The Morphology of the Folktale*. 2nd ed. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2009.
- Reynolds-White Hawk, Dyani. "Unexpected Parallels: Commonalities between Native American and Outsider Arts." *Wicazo Sa Review*, Special Issue: American Indian Curatorial Practice, 27, no. 1 (2012): 47–61. <https://doi.org/10.5749/wicazosareview.27.1.0047>
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/wicazosareview.27.1.0047>.
- Robinson, Cedric J. *Black Marxism: the Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- Roget, Peter Mark. *Thesaurus of Words and Phrases*. Edited by John Lewis Roget and Samuel Romilly Roget. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1941.
- Russ, Joanna. *How to Suppress Women's Writing*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983.
- Russ, Joanna. *The Female Man*. Boston: Gregg Press, 1977.
- Russell, Charles. *Self-Taught Art: the Culture and Aesthetics of American Vernacular Art*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. London: Penguin Books, 1991.
- Sharpe, Christina. *In the Wake*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016.
- "Shona People." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, May 9, 2019. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shona_people.
- Sirmans, Franklin, Yael Lipschutz, Kristine McKenna, Lowery Stokes Sims, Dale B. Davis, Fredrik Nilsen, and Noah Purifoy. *Noah Purifoy: Junk Dada*. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2015.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. 2nd ed. London & New York: Zed, 2012.

- Smith, Paul Chaat. *Everything You Know about Indians Is Wrong*. 1st ed. (Indigenous Americas Series) . University of Minnesota Press, 2009.
- Swift, Jonathan. *Gulliver's Travels*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Tate, Jitendra S., Sergio Espinoza, Davontae Habbit, Craig Hanks, and Dominick Fazarro. "Military And National Security Implications Of Nanotechnology ." scholar.lib.vt.edu. Virginia Tech University, JOTS v41n1, 2015.
<https://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JOTS/v41/v41n1/tate.html>.
- Taussig, Michael T. *I Swear I Saw This: Drawings in Fieldwork Notebooks, Namely My Own*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- Tuck, Eve, and C Ree. "A Glossary of Haunting." Essay. In *Handbook of Autoethnography*, edited by Holman Jones Stacy Linn, Tony E. Adams, and Carolyn Ellis, 639–58. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016.
- Tuck, Eve, and K. Wayne Yang. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–40.
- Tuck, Eve. "Biting the Hand That Feeds You." YouTube, August 12, 2015.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXEEzqIjA3I>.
- Uehling, Greta Lynn. "The Lay of the Historic Land." In *Beyond Memory: the Crimean Tatars' Deportation and Return*, 24–47. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Vicuña Cecilia. *Quipoem*. Hanover & London: Wesleyan University Press and University Press of New England, 1997.
- Villaverde, Leila E. "Border Crossing: The Act and Implications in the Production of Art Vis Ávis Patriarchy and Whiteness." *Counterpoints* 73 (2002): 41–58.
- Vizenor, Gerald, ed. *Survivance: Narratives of Indigenous Presence*. University of Nebraska Press, 2008.
- Vizenor, Gerald. *Hotline Healers: An Almost Browne Novel*. Wesleyan University Press, 1997.
- Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic ; Spirit of Capitalism*. Translated by Talcott Parsons. London and New York: Routledge, 2001.
- "What Is the Official Definition of Homelessness?" National Health Care for the Homeless Council, n.d. <https://www.nhchc.org/faq/official-definition-homelessness/>.