

counterfield

publication #1
2020

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Counterfield is a PhD research collective based at Goldsmiths Visual Cultures working not just within, but also outside and counter to the traditional academic field. Our work intersects with multiple elements of practise-based research and over the years we have organised a series of workshops that have included walks, film screenings, collective filmmaking and listening sessions, movement workshops and visits to museums and galleries. Our aim is to both share research with our peers, and to engage and reach a wider public beyond the university.

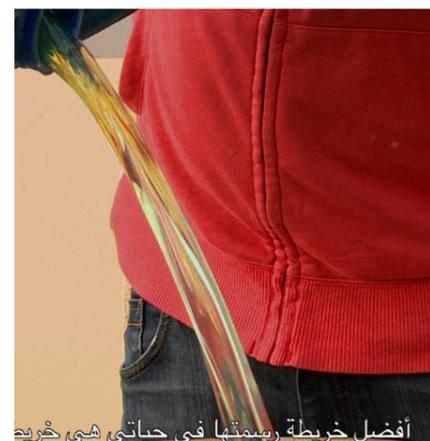
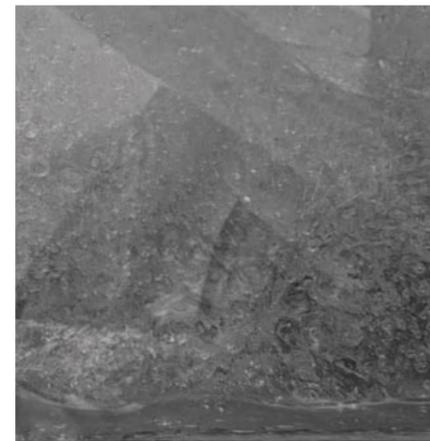
As MRes and PhD students involved in research work, we are often in the margins – as simultaneously teacher and student, within and yet somehow outside the university.

We embrace the pros and cons emerging from the uncertainty of this position and present our first publication in the form of essays, images and artwork – an attempt to frame unconventional modes of thinking, performing and writing, even if it remains impossible to erase all traces of working within neoliberal academic institutions.

Very early on, we had decided on principle not to iron out individual voices or impose an overall style. This allows the publication to be a window onto an emerging collaborative body of work, without risking the obliteration of everything personal, distinctive and even the imperfect elements – qualities that are all too often homogenised, lost or ground down in the mill of academia.

The coronavirus pandemic has challenged existing structures, but it has also given us the opportunity to make our work freely available online, rather than restricting it to a printed publication. We look forward to a future of increasing experimentation and accessibility.

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begin to understand the problem. We didn't go to the... Barnett (former governor of Mississippi) Jim Clark (sheriff of DeKalb County, Georgia), and...

it to understand that we were never fighting against white supremacy. We were fighting against white supremacy. We must dismiss the idea that anyone can give anybody his freedom. A man is not free after he has been freed, and that is in fact the case for slaves blacks after they're born. The only way to deny blacks their freedom...

we engaged in a psychological struggle in which not black people have the right to use their power to put out white people giving their sanction. We are Black Power – let them address themselves...

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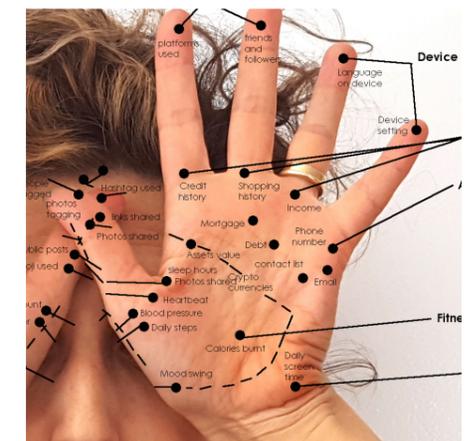
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أفضل خريطة رسمتها في حياتي هي خريطة أستراليا
The best map I have ever drawn is the Australia

Becoming *Together*. Speculations on Collaborative Practices within the University

Dimitra Gkitsa

My therapist told me that I have constructed in my head a “catastrophic future”. I live in that future. I am not sure what that means. But I can certainly tell that it wasn’t always like this. Maybe it all started with this persistent feeling of not being able to belong, of not being good enough to belong. Then this suffering received its own name: Anxiety... a state that could be defined as an inability to anchor to the present; a disorder of time itself. Time that is no longer enough. Time that is no longer joyful. Time that is not measured by moments, but rather by never-ending deadlines. In order to survive the running of time, being one, two, countless steps ahead of the present was the only way to keep going.

And then one day, after an endless time spent in the library, she asks you to meet. She is on the same graduate programme. You don’t know anything about know her. You meet at a pub, and she surprises you by asking “how are you?” The question feels so difficult to answer. Had she asked about your research, you would have been able to provide all sort of different answers that you had already prepared in advance. But, “how are you?” A sudden invitation to open up. You don’t know where and how to begin. A proposition that asks you to break-down the safe distance. And you do open up, you crave for communication. She opens up too. You both realise that you suffer in common. And that almost disturbing invitation changes your life. She teaches you friendship, she teaches you an eerie strength that resides in all those moments you felt weak or vulnerable. Suddenly, time starts to expand in all its unpredictable possibilities. You find new, in fact multiple, ways to measure time: time as moments spent in togetherness.



I am writing this text having recently finished my PhD. The most valuable lesson that I learned throughout the years of working on my PhD thesis is that of sharing vulnerability. It was through the process of sharing vulnerability when questions of belonging, uncertainty, and feelings of being invisible were transformed into a conceptual realisation, and almost into affective structures of solidarity. During this process, getting together and forming structures of support and solidarity with fellow PhD students was vital. In this text I reflect on counterfield, the research group that we established with fellow doctoral researchers from the department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, and more specifically the affective dialogues that resonated during the workshops and the events that we put together. I think of counterfield as an entity, a collective, a common endeavour that developed organically in an attempt to bring academic research in closer dialogue with practice, and perhaps, as a proposition for solidarity that expands and goes beyond the institutional structures of the University. At counterfield, we were different, having distinct backgrounds. Yet we shared a common precarity and anxiety, a common need for communication and connectivity, a common position of being visible and invisible in academia.

In the following paragraphs I share some thoughts on developing this quasi-research collective within an academic institution, the university, and ultimately, the element of affect that came to lead our workshops: reading together, eating together, listening and watching things together, walking in the city together. What aspects of learning and unlearning occurred in those instances when we became

together? What making and unmaking of space within and beyond the university was perhaps put forward in those various meetings?

University and its Invisible Agents

The current form of neoliberal capitalism transforms the most characteristic parts of our social life such as emotions, personal interactions, and thoughts into capital. The University is no exception to this. Intense marketisation, gendered hierarchies, racial and class inequalities that are rooted in the very managerial functions of the institution, the alienation of academic labour, precarious and temporary contracts are just some of the outcomes of corporate strategies that have been adopted by the higher education system during the last decades. Amid a system which transforms knowledge and emotional states into an exchange commodity (we can see this more vividly with the introduction of tuition fees and research funding schemes) neoliberal policies become—almost ‘naturally’—embodied and performed in our everyday mundane choices, actions, and work practices in the institution. This is felt not as violent reality imposed by a direct authority, but rather as the normality of any labour that we somehow enact automatically. Mark Fisher observes that in this neoliberal reality of education our actions are being disciplined and assessed by our very own selves:

New bureaucracy takes the form not of a specific, delimited function performed by particular workers but invades all areas of work, with the result that—as Kafka prophesied—workers become their own auditors, forced to assess their own performance.¹



An important point Fisher makes is that this state of self-discipline does not end in our working places. It stays with us 24/7 affecting every aspect of our personal lives. Especially, the position of PhD students and early career academics is somewhat a vibrant indicator of this. Most graduate students do hourly paid academic labour, have additional jobs just to survive whilst juggling the task of finishing a thesis. Work never ends. What kind of collective and affective responses could appear amid this landscape? For whom are we producing knowledge and what forms can this knowledge obtain? And the ultimate question: Who cares?

I would argue that exactly because we perform neoliberalism in our everyday capacity, alternative responses should also be performative and collective. Despite its oppressive structures, the university can still function as a space to question, to critique, and to develop a collective consensus towards a common felt reality. I stand close to Bell Hooks ideas and the emancipatory possibilities that she identifies in spaces of learning. She recognises that “[t]he academy is not paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created.”² Learning contains for bell hooks an element of hope, or the potential for a collective thinking and a newly found ability to imagine—to be able to imagine—structures of resistance and freedom. Despite its problematic managerial functions, the University is still a live organism sustained through the collective practice of learning which enables critical thinking and as such constantly pushes structural boundaries. It is through learning that a collective suffering can be transformed into an emancipatory reaction:

In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labour for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness

of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom.³

This revolutionary aspect of pedagogy is one that appears as a response to a specific situation as experienced by each particular group. Bell Hooks reminds us that education and the process of learning can happen beyond the classroom and it can expand wherever people and communities exist. And throughout that process of transgression, emotions and feelings play an important role in building collaborative learning practices. In the invisible margins of the institutions collective practices of learning that can break the silence which feeds ongoing practices of domination into a collective dialogue that bridges the gap between the private and the public.

Becoming Together

Bell Hooks is deeply inspired by Paulo Freire’s writings. I would like here to revisit the element of dialogue that appears in such understandings of pedagogy. In chapter three of the book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire expands on the notion of dialogue arguing that “there is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis.”⁴ What exactly does it mean for dialogue to be considered a praxis? Dialogue becomes the vehicle to transform thought into action. The moment of ‘wording’ the most intimate or personal instances of struggles is indeed an act of raising that very personal experience into a collective consensus, and ultimately into a collective demand. For Freire dialogue is an act of love, humility, and faith that brings the domain of thinking in a critical proximity with direct action and

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practice. Indeed, it is through dialogue that “the word is converted into *activism* [sic].”⁵ Freire’s understanding of activism is directly linked to social justice and a democratic education for all. In this sense, knowledge can emerge only through restless, ongoing, collective, encouraging, critical inquiry with other people. This form of learning that emerges as a collective action when we get together is one that brings with it the potentiality for broader social emancipation. It starts within the learning environment and it expands to the community. Collective actions of learning and unlearning invite us to reconsider our position and our collective responses both within the institution and in the society. What makes this notion interesting is that this critical dialogue in order to appear in the public domain needs an openness and a dedicated practice of trust and care.

Dialogue raises activism into the domain of the affective. Affect in this case is the experience of an intensity, of an embodied realisation that comes when being moved by something. This experience of recognition is not activated within the domain of the conceptual, but rather through inter-connectivity and reciprocity. The verb ‘to affect’ always comes with an openness ‘to be affected’. This is where the moment of becoming together can be actualised within a specific time-space and in-between specific bodies that occupy, that become together visible, and find collective ‘wordings’ to isolated thinking. It is through this dialogue that we can start challenging inequalities and give political voices to individual struggles.

Participating in workshops planned by other participants of counterfield as well as organising my own reading groups, was a process of not just being, but rather of becoming together. Through intimate collective encounters such as listening together to sounds of birds from Southeast Asia or Motown’s Black Forum label, reading together Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, or walking in the Silvertown area of east London, we generated a platform of learning and sharing weaved together a constellation of knowledges, testimonies, personal stories. These collective instances were not just about putting our singular and individual researches into dialogue and neither a mere attempt to juxtapose theory with practice. It was a constellation of marginalised voices, experiences, and thoughts colliding in that blurred time/space that came to unite us beyond the institution in which we were all already part of. The dialogue that was generated in those collective instances was based on intimacy and vulnerability. What initially started as practice to open up learning and communication of academic research was transformed into an affective process of becoming together.

Questioning the politics of intimacy that appears in feminist meetings and workshops as

well as the opportunity for a political process that could be generated within the singularity of such events, Sara Ahmed suggests that “*coming together*” within specific spatial frameworks is an “*embodied dialogue*” which can go beyond the settings of the institution as limits become more and more fluid.⁶ Ahmed observes that

[i]nstitutions cannot and do not fully ‘colonise’ spaces. The beyond is always ‘within’—the inside and outside don’t fit together to form ‘discrete spaces’. The ‘face-to-face’ encounters beyond the formalised spaces of the conference rooms or workshops are thus not within or outside institutions; they neither fully escape or fully inhabit their limits.⁷

This process of a dialogical collective embodiment that takes place between singularities does not completely dissolve institutional (or even perhaps, personal) boundaries. And maybe the most important



factor here is not that of breaking the boundaries, but rather of affectively performing alternative possible structures in-between dominant practices. Here, we no longer speak simply about limits. Such aspects of intimate togetherness invite us to inhabit spaces and to relate to one another with ways that could develop a different form of sociality.

The “embodied dialogues” that Ahmed refers to are based on care, trust, and vulnerability. However, care, trust and the necessary conditions to open up and be vulnerable are not already pre-given. Within structures dominated by hierarchies and power relations, care and trust should be constantly performed, nourished, embodied, and maintained in common by its members. We are not together; we *become* together. It is exactly this ongoing process that can transform dialogue into praxis. I think of care, trust, vulnerability, and all those myriads and unpredictable affective possibilities that could take place when we become together, as an alternative vocabulary for developing political thought and action in the current times and with(in) institutions.

“... the secret once called solidarity”

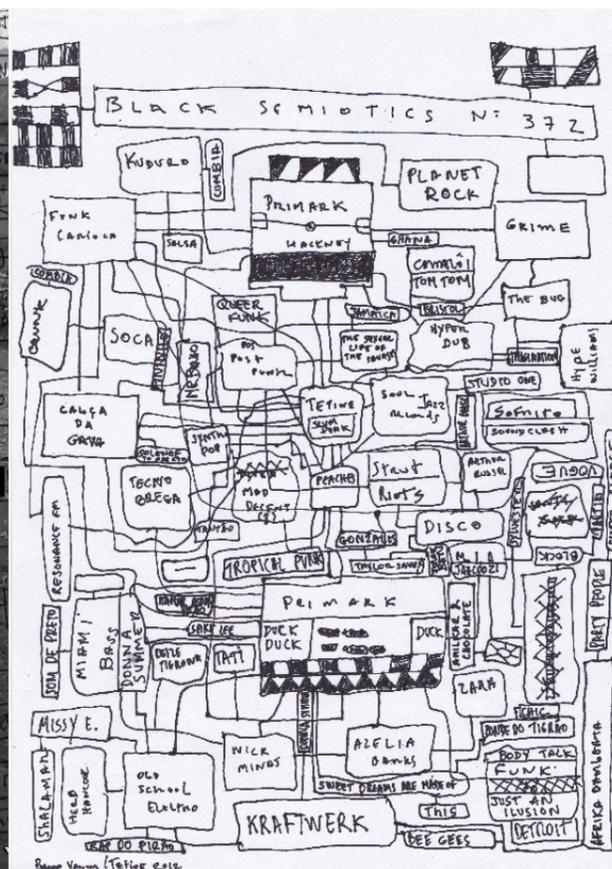
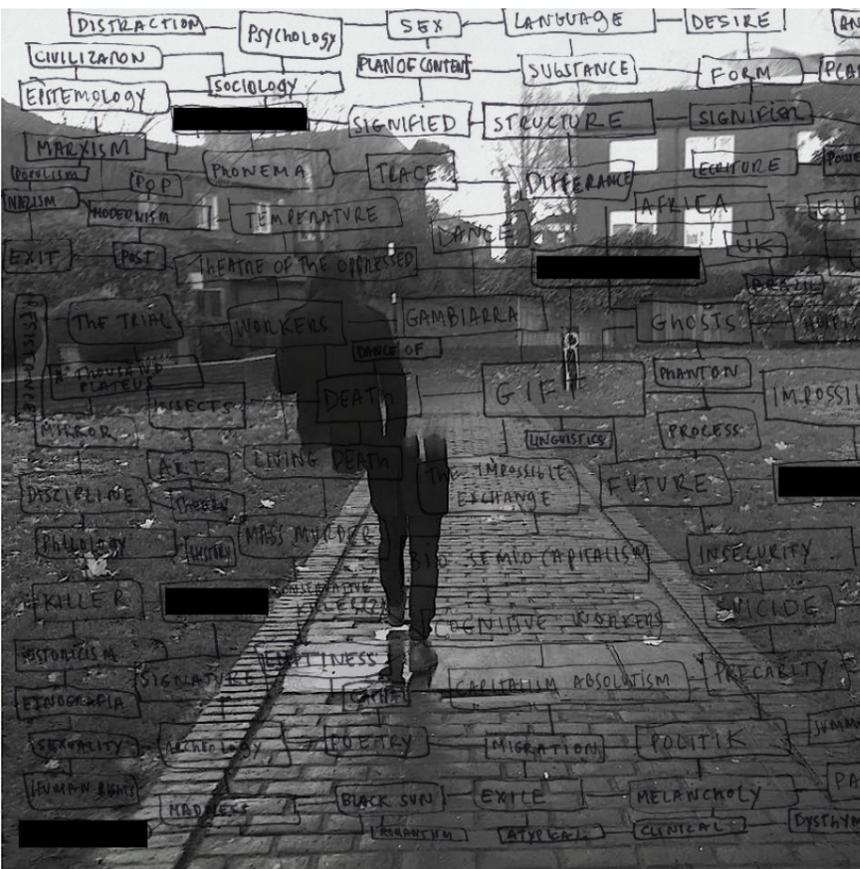
In this institutional life, as Fred Moten and Stefano Harney reminds us solidarity is also ongoing and antagonistic. More than this, it

has to be ongoing and antagonistic (ultimately, a collective praxis) in order to generate an uncanny intervention:

*“The uncanny that disturbs the critical going on above it, the professional going on without it, the uncanny that one can sense in prophecy, the strangely known moment, the gathering content, of a cadence, and the uncanny that one can sense in cooperation, the secret once called solidarity”.*⁸

For Moten and Harney, the “university” as a neoliberal institution functions around strategies of exclusion, racial and capitalist logics. They propose the “undercommons” as a necessary antagonistic relationship to this ordeal. But what is crucial here, is that this ongoing antagonism is a practice of being together with others and exceeds the spatial settings of an institution. This “secret once called solidarity” is fundamentally rooted in assemblages of togetherness and I would add to this that vulnerability is at the core of solidarity. In a social reality that promotes independence and isolation, in a society in which failure and emotions are perceived as weaknesses, sharing and ‘wording’ vulnerability is a political action.

Communicating vulnerability through the dialogues that we produce is an essential element for generating connection, trust, mutuality, and structures of support. Much more when vulnerable bodies are also marginalised bodies. As bodily and affective entities, vulnerability is the very element that we all have fundamentally in common. However, by ‘wording’ collectively the different manifestations in which vulnerability is felt and lived we can also realise the multiple conditions of inequality, discrimination, exploitation, or violence. The process of becoming together, one that is fundamentally based on sharing vulnerability, invites us to think and become together; a praxis of hope and of a sociality that reclaims its own space.



sonic contexts both internally (locally) and externally (internationally) in the 'world territory' to use a jargon present in standardized music industry contracts.

In this regard, an electronic clap in the syntax of a programmed rhythm pattern in a song; a small sound fragment of a sampled interjectional syllable such as "ai" (ouch!) taken from the phrase "ai amor" for example - doubled or duplicated as an unstable dyadic interval produced by hitting two different halfnote notes on a cheap sampling keyboard - or an entire song as a wave form in a computer screen, or an 'artist' in the flesh or virtually (well-placed or displaced in any territory), or in name (a group, a collective) or an entity, or intensities, velocities, silences, durations and movements in the plane of consistency (or composition) in relation of reciprocity or not with other artists, groups, collectives, assemblages, sonic particles and experiences - may be felt, lived, read, translated and transformed inter-semiotically (as) and (into) new components of a sexually-charged reflexive automatic musico-writing improvisation to invent and/or generate ramifications, associations, and other singular relations between forms, substances, expressions and contents.³

The musics [percepts, aural particles, intonations, vocalizations, visualizations] of such events shall, thus, be experienced and experimented in the context of this piece as tropical-mutant-punk-funk bodily-sonic convulsions, that is, disobedient aural-psycho-social rhythmic dispositions whose forces and bodies are not to be understood as fixed or unified discourses. They might dwell irregularly in the cadences, in the phonic substances of such inflections; remaining in the skin of "those who are not wearing shoes", whilst simultaneously absorbing their poetics of clandestinity, marginality and banditry.⁴

These 'signs', may act randomly and inappropriately in the articulation of a displaced black-brown-pardo-caboclo-mestiço-latino event; provoking other semiotic processes, manifestations, images of thought and unexpected encounters with the unknown. Strictly speaking: savage fictions of improvisatory foreign accents [translated into unconscious or conscious relations of movement and rest] that have been fighting against and/or subverting Western's canonical aural-visual narratives and its circuits of power; as well as, providing new surroundings, modes of operation and contexts for the production, reception and appreciation of a multiplicity of intensities, presences, trajectories and sonic landscapes. The realities of constant improvisation and fugitive planning, often understood as sine qua non conditions for unassimilated underground practices to come into existence; always in motion, and always 'at war' in the Global South.

That is, by inhabiting and re-conceptualizing a multitude of singular voices and mutant sensibilities - both past and contemporary (think post-tropicalist organisms such as Brazilian punk, experimental post-punk, funk carioca / favela funk (baile funk), queer funk and rap, modern electronica, and a plethora of other sonic and visual variants interconnected to these genres), as distinct yet complementary entities that have produced ongoing untamed scenes and spaces of possibility in unregulated and de-institutionalized scenarios. In special, through officially unrecognized utopian-dystopian scenarios in the 'Third & Fourth Worlds'. In other words, non-locations, neighborhoods, communities and districts, in which specific assemblages of enunciation, knowledges and energies move willingly outside conventionally imposed systems of subjectivation. That is to say, assemblages that dare to singularize by entering [unannounced] and navigating these surroundings, their wavy movements and the complexity of their modes of refusal, rejection, incorporation, musicality, sexuality and disorientation. In particular, experimental ensembles from local (and translocal) scenes who radically invented their own praxis, spaces of occupation and their poetics, breaking off from institutionalized modes of production and dissemination - be it in accidental or devised ways.

That said, ideas of performativity, movement, improvisation, chance, planning, identity and positionality become crucial to understand how a number of subterranean practices are (and were) lived, felt and developed in such scenes and locations both in Brazil as well as in its diasporas elsewhere. Here, I am in musico-sexual alliance with the social and black radical poetics of Fred Moten and his understanding-advocation of a refusal of closure "as an ongoing and reconstructive improvisation of ensemble"⁵. But also, in the break [and in syncopation] with the indigenous, anti-colonialist anthropophagic tropical theory-legacy of Brazilian modernist poet, playwright and polemicist Oswald De Andrade's allegory for 'devouring the enemy'. That is, by inhabiting and practicing modes of refusal and (re)existence; by cannibalizing European culture, its technology and aesthetics as an affirmative and radical act against post-colonial domination, as well as, a solar process of 're-education of sensibility' and social therapy, whilst seeking new forms of cultural, bodily, philosophical and poetic autonomy rooted in Brazil's reality through processes of transmutation and without making concessions⁶. In other words, by re-writing [and/or re-reading] trajectories, aesthetics, positions, histories, semiotic universes and political instances in order to produce something else; something other than something new.

Some of these ideas are encapsulated in provocative collective utopian mottoes such as "only cannibalism unites us, socially, economically and philosophically", "Down with every catechism", "I'm only concerned with what is not mine.", "Law of Man, Law of the Cannibal" and in the famous saying "Tupi or not Tupi, that is the Question" taken from Oswald's modernist Manifesto Antropófago from 1927.⁷ The latter motto, for example, freely resignifying Shakespeare's Hamlet' monologue 'to be or not be' by phonetically playing with the sound of the word Tupi [sonically and syllabically close to the form To Be in English], and at the same time referring to the Tupinamba's Indians who engaged in practices of cannibalism; as recorded by German explorer Hans Staden captured by the tribe earlier in the 16th century in a hunting and mercenary expedition with the Portuguese to steal riches.⁸ Along these lines, Oswald de Andrade allegorically reconstructs the myth and image of the native Brazilian cannibal who used to eat their enemies in festivities to absorb their physical and spiritual powers, by contrasting the perception, understanding and divination (divinity) of these rituals as ancestral celebrations of refusal against the colonial project and its vegetative elites, with the cultured and often-patronizing European vision of the 'noble savage', nostalgically dignified and elevated by nineteenth century Romantic Indianists. That is, in search of a process of permanent decolonization of thought and body in communication with the soil. One that would function both as an act of vengeance and production of new futures, whilst simultaneously returning to the Indian soul, however, advocating for the "continuation of the 'savage mind' in a transformed and digested form".⁹ In other words, by refusing and destabilizing the colonial discourse that implied that the 'savage territory' once civilized by the colonizers would then become a copy of Europe.

It is in this sense that a series of ambivalent mutant and tropicalized moments - be they visible musical genres,

BORN, NEVER ASKED FOR A PERIPHERAL UNDERGROUND TROPICAL MUTANT PUNK FUNK THEORY

BRUNO VERNER

1. THOSE WHO ARE WEARING SHOES WILL NOT REMAIN

There was, or better, there always were more than two sides and there still is, by way of a continuous, non-linear dissenting movement of black semiotics formed by unheard but spoken voices – a distinctive collective of vocal-body inflections and perceptions being produced and singularized in public spaces both in deep and urban Brazil, as well as in its many diasporic geographies elsewhere. We might call these inflections experimental cracked voices; black/latino/caboclo/pardo resistant broken musicalities, which have manifested themselves sonically, politically, and in-performance mode [physically and sensorially] for a number of years. In other words, unassimilated voices and assemblages of knowledge which have disrupted authoritarian narratives in our recent and peripheral pop history in different and specific moments of its continuum and, which have also disturbed the 'properness' of some of the country's national treasures, cultural objects and subjects in aesthetic, ethic and existential terms. That is, musico-sexual inflections that have taken an immense pleasure in acting against the usual dominant cultural, historical, scientific proponents, their official stories and normalized modes of serialized subjectivity.

I use the term black semiotics here as an unofficial underground DIY poetic and political speculative verbo-vocal-visual diagram letter in the form of an affective cartography (or a spaced-out clandestine grammar) of musical signs, sounds, indices, affects and feelings which can be located and/or perceived spatially and temporally, simultaneously, in the inner spaces of songs (or sounds) and on the 'outside' in the air.¹ [Radioactivity is in the air from you and me]. This gesture shall be understood as a possibility to engage with particular modes of subjectivation and processes of sublimation in order to experiment, read, listen, write and talk/sing differently.² That is, as a process-manifestation for politically embodying [and talking about] forms of musicality, improvisation, chance and sensibility. Or, for speculating upon physical, ethereal and sensorial qualities encountered in the act of composing – including an exploration of the social and psycho conditions for creation and, an examination of forms of pre-industrialized, serialized and capitalized processes in relation to any musical or vocal material; obscure, overlooked or popular. Likewise, as a political-aesthetic expression of resistance in relation to distinct hegemonic scenes or

affects, feelings or intrinsic forms of musicality - shall be read here, both as separated (unformed or individuated) or relational components in the form of assemblages, processes, manifestations or ideological signs. In practice, these relations of production of materiality, semiotic immateriality, incorporeality, illegality, historicity and subjectivity have been serving an equally active, resistant, foreign and deterritorialized parallel black market for many years.

2. INTERLUDE IN TWO STEPS: L.I.C.K. MY FAVELA AND THE WOMAN AT THE END OF THE WORLD

In light of this, two expanded and un-linear narrative configurations including a number of bifurcations shall be proposed. One narration, which acts – and unfolds itself in the context of an ever-changing post-tropicalist generation of Brazilian underground artists – both as a rejection of a sonic past and in specific cases as a total refusal of a mode of operating politically and aesthetically and, a second one which has been running parallel to it but not symmetrically (or equivalently) in terms of trajectory since the late 1970s and thus, can also be read as a (dis-)continuous segment of the same arrangement. The former, represented here by an unsatisfied and peripheral scene of punks from São Paulo, (Restos do Nada, Condutores de Cadáver, Inocentes, Olho Seco, Cólera, Lixomania, Ratos de Porão, 365, amongst many others), and the latter, inaugurating a new experimental paradigm in the early 1980s, constituted by distinct strands of punk, post-punk/new wave and synthpop artists and bands (from Gang 90 & Absurdettes to Azul 29 and Agentss, from Voluntários da Patria to Mercenárias, from Divergência Socialista to Black Future, from Chance to R. Mutt, Individual Industry amongst many other combinations), stretching into early rap and hip hop (think Thaide e DJ Um, Código 13, Mc Jack, Racionais Mcs in the late 1980s) and, bifurcating into Rio de Janeiro's classic Baile Funk culture of soundsystems, DJs, MCs and *bondes*, (Furacão 2000, Cidinho & Doca, Deise Tigrona, Tati Quebra Barraco, Bonde Do Tigrão and many others). These ramifications will later unfold themselves into *mutant tropical punk funk* scenes and queer cultures – which, in the manner of many of their predecessors, have made loud and visible an oscillating schizophrenic pop modernist attitude, embodying a similar and urgent sense of past, present and future 'assimilation', 'admiration' and 'incorporation' with a strong organic and experimental sense of 'discovery', 'refusal' and 'contrariety' simultaneously.¹⁰

These gestures have been expressed in many of these moments; remaining attached to their trajectories and discourses by means of sonic- bodily operations engendered by various processes of *auto-anthropophagization*. That is, through anarchic-improvisatory or reconstructive collective acts of cultural self-cannibalization, which allowed artists, bands, ensembles and enthusiasts, to blend promiscuously an array of inflections, accents and voices as a way of re-inventing modes of artistic production, negotiation and diffusion, be it, in different sonic contexts, popular music scenes, but also through film, poetry, performance, club nights, criticism, journalism, theory and etc.

It is in this sense, that an unstable, independent, interdisciplinary and impolite grammar; at the start, vividly in tune with the then new underground sounds of Europe and America from the late 1970s and 1980s [think punk, reggae, post-punk, dub, synthpop, tecnopop, hip hop, rap, Miami bass, freestyle] and, in connection with the universal pop aesthetics propagated by the Tropicalist project in the late 1960s - however, at the same time, contradictorily and rebelliously in disagreement and disarrangement with it all - began to develop around many bohemian centres in Brazil. That is, as an improvised and temperamental *methodology* that opposed the establishment of a dependent and derivative version of national culture, by rejecting patriarchy, gender roles and the culture of the Portuguese 'fathers'; while proposing an uncivilized, anti-colonial, corporal and erotic form of 'justice'.¹¹ One that would embody a new sexual, political-philosophical musical syntax in constant movement. One that would culminate, for instance, in the raw poetics of Funk Carioca: the intense lo-down Miami Bass-driven sound culture from Rio de Janeiro's favela parties, normally referred to as *Baile Funk* or *Favela Funk* in Europe and in the US; and frequently criticized by the 'authorities of good taste' in Brazil and elsewhere, due to its controversial forms of feminism [and queerisms], its radical sexually explicit lyrics/discourse, dancing routines or rough production - performed by female MCs, *bondes* [ensembles], dancers and DJs through gigantic soundsystems in big warehouses every weekend in more than a 1000 *bailes* [dancehalls]. In other words, a sonic-bodily uncanny and sweaty mutant genre to shake your booty; one that would spit quick-tongue / in-your-face street Brazilian-Portuguese verses or broken English over an array of lascivious beats, breaks and recognizable samples.

Or else, on a different note, a new tropical punk funk mutation in the form of a disobedient organism of immigrants that would shamelessly encourage you to L.I.C.K. our Favelas and the Favelas from our neighbors in performances around Europe, the US and Brasil. Each and every time actualized as a confrontational sexually charged queer sonic assault directed at the total demystification of the old political and historical 'forged complicity' that South America countries have established with hegemonic narratives, discourses, forms of knowledge, anthropologies and 'ethnographic authorities' of the North hemisphere. That is, always already against what they think or tell us that it is our 'cultural difference'. In other words, a (re)action, an erotic form of revenge. To enter their house; to haunt their dreams; to confuse their exhausted erudition, and to pervert their modes of operation.

To put it bluntly: L.I.C.K. my Favela, L.I.C.K. my Venezuela, L.I.C.K. my Lima, L.I.C.K. my Bolivia, L.I.C.K. my Colombia, L.I.C.K. my Brasília, and so on. Here I am also in tune with Denise Ferreira da Silva's onto-epistemological excavations of racial and subaltern subjection, "despite the postmodern refashioning of the cultural and the patronizing project" - often led by well-intentioned anthropologists – "of giving us "voice" or "agency" as the cultural others of Europe.¹²

L.I.C.K My Favela – It is a 100% lickable, oh yeah!

You want to enter, don't you?

Cos you wanna see how I live

Cos you wanna check it out, check it out

*I heard you went to art school in America and got all the beats from my Favela ...*¹³

Such cultural cannibalizations have been often carried out with a self-taught low-fi futuristic fictional and libidinal drive for composing and re-semanticizing distinctive universes of knowledge and creation. Therefore, as we move nonlinearly back and forth between the many sonic trajectories proposed here, through their distinct syntaxes, bifurcations, histories and components, our understanding of these routes, their movements, ramifications, descriptions, allusions, interruptions and silences become amplified, supplemented.

This is clearly perceived, for example, if we consider unofficial [or unauthorized] genealogies of the Brazilian collective imaginary in relation to experimental popular music and culture produced from the late 1960's onwards in the country. From the emergence of Tropicália and the Tropicalists, in particular its more erratic and subversive voices such as those of Tom Zé, Rogério Duarte, Jarda Macalé, artist Hélio Oiticica, poet Torquato Neto or the psychedelic band Os Mutantes, who have all develop an specific set of codes, postures and attitudes; through to the first, second and third underground generations of DIY punk, post-punk, baile funk and rap & hip hop artists, responsible for inventing modes of operating independently, and producing denser and more experimental sonorities; two decades later, affecting a new and defiant ensemble of queer artists/performers working at the intersection of a global bass post-funk carioca culture, performance-art, spoken word and activism. Likewise, an array of contemporary uncategorized new MPB artists and rappers that appeared after 2008, both in Dionysian auto-didactic versions and trained/virtuosi manners (here I am thinking of names such as Baco Exu do Blues, Linn Da Quebrada, Corte, Metá Metá, Negro Leo, Kiko Dinnuci, Ava Rocha for instance) who, unconsciously or highly conscious, have embodied many of these past procedures and temporalities. Be them through strands of Tropicalism, avant-MPB, punk, post-punk, funk carioca, noise, electronica, hip hop, rap and samba; in search of unorthodox sonic combinations whilst composing both in collaboration with their contemporaries and with older artists.

In saying this, I shall end these notes by alluding to eighty-one-year-old, legendary Brazilian black working-class Samba star Elza Soares; a living proof of such collaborative experimentations, translated through processes of incantation and self-cannibalism. In special, her dark samba [and album title] "A Mulher do Fim do Mundo" [The Woman at the End of The World] from 2015, written by Rômulo Fróes and Alice Coutinho, and produced by Guilherme Kastrup with young experimental musicians from São Paulo, including members of Metá Metá and Passo Torto. Part auto-biographical, part fictional, "A Mulher do Fim do Mundo" is an affective and luminously tragic piece of dissonant dirty-samba which incorporates some of these mixtures effortlessly. An elegiac progressive Afro-Brazilian organic-electronic tense lament with wiry threads of noise-rock, math-rock, post-punk, strings and, Elza's incredibly-felt cracked voice, delivered with grit and vulnerability at once; leaving her womb, then throat; inhabiting the fold of the outside, and becoming both *birth* and *abortion* simultaneously. Birth into death. On it, Elza exceeds the spaces of language; sings the improvisation of existence; the burden of being in time out of sync at the end of the world – here, there and everywhere as a woman; reconstructs the trajectory of this (im)possibility; the despair, the 'pirate existence' of her black skin, her voice, her speech, opinion, her refusals and the tragedy of her (our) loneliness left on the Avenue during the carnival. Her solitude, thrown from the top of the third floor, and her face broken on the catwalk "to get rid of the rest of this life". In other words, luminously and melancholically announcing that her 'crying is nothing but carnival' to tell you that she will go on singing till the end. *'Woman at the end of the world / I am and I will sing until the end'*.¹⁴

NOTES

1 Please see, Black Semiotics 321, desenho-esquema, courtesy of Tetine (2012). These diagrams were exhibited as part of the action "They Want to Get Rid of the Street Vendors" at the White Cubicle Toilette Gallery in 2012 in Hackney Road in London. On another note, 'Black Semiotics also gave title to Tetine's double album of electronic music *Mother Nature/Black Semiotics* – featuring instrumental pieces recorded in an improvised home-studio in East London between 2000 and 2005 released by Wet Dance Recordings. For further info, please see: <http://tetestester.blogspot.co.uk/2013/10/mother-nature-black-semiotics-double.html>. The words "unheard" and "spoken" as they appear in the text, are also used in reference to four radio episodes entitled "Unheard and Spoken" broadcasted on Resonance Fm 104.4 in 2013 as part of Tetine's Slum Dunk radio show for the station.

2 My reading of *processes of sublimation* here, is in debt to Herbert Marcuse's advocacy of Eros potential for countercultural liberation. That is, as a utopian potential of collective memory for engaging in transformative processes, be them through erotic, anti-conformist and disobedient perspectives against modes of managerial or functionalist thought, or through a radical *total refusal* of onto-epistemological contexts directed at the closure of other universes of discourse in the interest of authoritarian regimes of control. By re-articulating these perceptions as singular and antagonistic constructive forces for reading, writing and disseminating underground cultural/artistic practices, marginalized modes of production and forms of life. See, Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, Routledge Classics 2002. This understanding is also in line with Mark Fisher's take on Marcuse's concept of The Great Refusal. That is, as "the refusal of that which is" to identify an oscillating and reiterative affect observed both in punk and post-punk independent culture. For Fisher, "punk's preferred stance of demystificatory cynicism masked an ambivalent emotional response: anger at countercultural naivety mixed with disappointment that the counterculture's optimism was no longer possible. See, Mark Fisher, *The Great Refusal: Mark Fisher on The Pop Group's enduring radicalism*, Fact magazine, February 8, 2016. <http://www.factmag.com/2016/02/08/mark-fisher-the-pop-group-for-how-much-longer/>

3 The plane of consistency (or composition) is used here in the sense of Deleuze and Guattari's *plane of immanence* where "there are only relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness between unformed elements, or at least between elements that are relatively

unformed, molecules, and parts of all kinds. There are only haecceities, affects, subjectless individuations that constitute collective assemblages. We call this plane, which knows only longitudes and latitudes, speeds and haecceities, the plane of consistency or composition (as opposed to a plan(e) of organization or development)". Gilles. Deleuze and Felix. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, (University of Minnesota, 1987), 266.

4. Tetine (Bruno Verner and Eliete Mejorado), "Dream Like a Baby" 2013. Track 7 on *In Loveland With You*, Slum Dunk Music CD. This is a reference to the lyrics of the song Dream Like a Baby written by Bruno Verner and Eliete Mejorado. "And the shooter says: Those who are wearing shoes won't remain. Take your clothes off. We are taking a boat to the end".

5 Fred Moten refers to Amiri Baraka's aesthetic and political interventions in terms of an abundant *refusal of closure*, which he perceives not necessarily as a rejection but an ongoing and reconstructive improvisation where "this reconstruction's motive is the sexual differentiation of sexual difference". Please see, F. Moten, *In the Break* (University of Minnesota, 2004), 85. Please see also Stefano Harney & Fred Moten. "The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study", *Minor Compositions*, 2013.

6 Christopher Dunn, *Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of Brazilian Counterculture*, (The University of North Carolina Press, 2001) 13-14 See also Oswald de Andrade, "Manifesto Antropófago" - originally published at *Revista de Antropofagia*, Ano 1, No.

7 Lesley Barry, "Oswald de Andrade's Cannibalist Manifest", *Latin American Literary Review* 19, n*38 (1991):35-47 Please see Oswald de Andrade, "Manifesto Antropófago" - originally published at *Revista de Antropofagia*, Ano 1, No. 1, Maio de 1928.

8 Hans Staden. *Duas viagens ao Brasil: primeiros registros sobre o Brasil* (Porto Alegre: L&PM, 2011) 51-52. See also, Hans Staden, Hans Staden: *The True History of his Captivity*, trans. Malcon Letts, ed Sir E.Denison Ross and Eileen Power (London, The Broadway Travelers, 1928).

9 Pedro Neves Marques, *Where to Sit at The Dinner Table?* (Archive Books, Akademie Der Kunst Der Welt 2015), p.32

10. Verner, Bruno. *Spaced Out in Paradise: Post Tropicalism, Post Punk And Other Voices in Brazil*, dissertation (unpublished), London 2016. See also, Black Semiotics N348 drawing-eskema.

11. Christopher Dunn, *Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of Brazilian Counterculture* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2001) 13-14.

12. Da Silva argues that "the speech of the other could never be a thoroughly historical "voicing" because cultural difference is a product of the scientific tools of reason." In reading this event in relation to European colonization, the announcement of the death of the subject by writers of postmodernity and globalization, as well as, through the emergence of a new site of political struggle which social analysts described as "the politics of representation - that is, the struggle for the recognition of cultural difference", or "the proliferation of smaller "reasons" and "histories" from the speaking others - Da Silva proposes that "a truly emancipatory recrafting of the cultural also requires a critical engagement with how scientific universality institutes spaces of history, a radical move that few seem willing to make". For her, Michael Taussig captures this necessity in *Shamanism, Colonialism and The Wild Man* (1987). "With European conquest and colonization, these spaces of death [symbolic spaces instituted by terror and torture] blend into a common pool of key signifiers binding the transforming culture of the conqueror with that of the conquered". (5) Postmodern anthropologists have succeeded in rewriting culture out of its fixity, boundedness and 'ethnographic authority', a move that places the objects of anthropological desire in the comfortable ontological niche historicity rules, but one that can be celebrated only if one forgets the discipline's complicity, how its tools (concepts, theories and methods) participated in the production of these "spaces of death" See, Denise Ferreira Da Silva *Toward a Global Idea of Race, Borderlines* Volume 17, (University of Minnesota, 2007) xxii.

13 Tetine, *Lick My Favela*, track 2 on Tetine: L.I.C.K., Kute Bash records, 2005 Vinyl LP.

14 Elza Soares, *A Mulher Do Fim do Mundo*, Circus 2015, CD LP.



**The Museum, Augmented Reality,
Homework, and the Kitchen Table,
2020**

Peter Ainsworth

As I write this text, we are in the midst of lockdown. The museum is shut, and should we wish to engage with the space or things contained within, we must do so mediated by the screen. Museal websites encourage us to view through specific disciplines, and new discoveries; through curatorial, historical, anthropological, educational or scientific positions. In this capacity we are encouraged to visit from home, to discover 2 million years of human history, to take a virtual tour of the collection, manipulate objects in 3D, discover the ancient through video, blog or photographic collection highlights. Systems of navigation facilitated by search criteria and reference to exacting uses of material, object type, time period, geographic location, related person, organization or accession number, are further mediated by the photographic.

Tour of the Museum films, created by videographers wearing stabilized camera body rigs or the algorithmically stitched multi-camera 360o panoramic view of Google Arts and Heritage iterate particular behaviours, experience, lifeways and attentiveness towards the museal. In the video, which automatically plays as you land on the British Museum home page, for example, we see people listening to audio guides, staring up at architectural features of the building or at things contained in display cabinets that are rich with detail. Vignette which allude to the relation between visitor and exhibit; people walking through the gallery, ascend stairs, perform impromptu selfies in front of glass cabinets or multi-generational families crouching down for a commemorative photograph in front of the building. Ideas of situatedness become important in this context as the photographic is posited in equivalence or referential to the act of viewing in real life (IRL).

Spatial illusions of contact, experienced through the physicality of photographic apparatus, could be considered relationally to the homogeneous containment of things in the institutional space. Though in web viewership artefacts appear freed from the conditions of display, photographed with sacred lighting, within neutral, singular tone studio spaces. The unique access which is needed to create these photographic images for the context of display, or for conservation, requires vantage points and conditions not offered in the experience of the public facing museum space. Furthermore, what is pictured now resides in the inaccessible museum building or in storage facilities; ex-MOD sites which once contained missiles now packed with anonymous appearing crates. Nevertheless, images discovered or searched for



through the online museum are at once intimate and close; as we press our bodies to the screen or contain it in our hands. But also maintain appearance of distance, not only because of being removed in time, physical position and geographic location but because of viewing the photographic behind the screen. A conflation, in the first instance between the touch sensitive interface of mobile digital apparatus and the hardened security glass with magnetron sputter-proof coating of the vitrine that allow light transmission of 97% and reflection of less than 1% which enables a truly transparent viewing experience in the museum building.

What is at stake in highlighting these sets of embodied relations is an ability to question how knowledge is positioned in the museal through the photographic and particularly the potential ability to problematize particular and singular readings in this space. As, without further investigation, understanding which historically reside in extractive methodologies will continue to dominate experience. As whilst there is evidently some speculation in the status of items in the museum and an acceptance that

Above, clockwise from top left: La Belle Florentine, circa 1450-1475 on plate, 2020; Hot Chocolate medicine milk, Pancake with Lemon and fragmentary Roman Torso of Venus circa 1st-2nd Century A.D., 2020; cereal Bowl, Coco Pops' Milk and Reconstruction of an Early Modern Human Male, 2020; dandelion head in glass and Tutankhamun standing aboard a papyrus raft circa 1325 BCE, 2020

Opposite page: French Duck, Bally Spider, Single Cheerio and Plaster cast of Francesco Laurana's Bust of a woman, 1427, 2020



Above: *Saint Mary Magdalene circa 1515-20 from Church of the Dominicans in Augsburg in wok with spaghetti and tongs, 2020*

Opposite page: *Spaghetti with Prawns, Water Carafe and Reconstruction of an Early Modern Human Male, 2020*

alternate or updated position towards things in display cabinets. The conditions of how knowledge will be updated and expanded, resides specifically within particular fields of academic research - that may in themselves be limited in scope and with particular qualified professionals. Nevertheless, visualisation of scientific discipline- geology, anthropology, history, paleontology - are made equivalent as processes of 'worlding' in the museum space through the frame of the photographic and particularly through an understanding of the truth status of the technical image. Central to my project is the potential to alter these relations by positing that equivalence between systems of museal taxonomy, enlightenment systems of display and a supposition of what is 'real' in the photographic mediation need to be re-consider relationally to what is left out of these particular frames and understanding.

Firstly, this requires an alignment of the mediation that more closely echoes the in-between state the contemporary photographic embodies. Namely, a shift in our attention solely of the photographic as thing in-itself and appearance of something Made present through the process of imagining. Towards thinking of the mediation as an agential assemblage where transference of information from the terrain extrinsic to the mediation, may be considered in terms beyond the notion of indexical or material trace. As the apparent oscillation between things which are 'like' each other in different visual forms belies the complexity and infrastructure involved with the act of viewing. Sites such as the cobalt mines of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Citadel server farm in Tahoe Reno, Nevada as much part of the enmeshed assemblage of multiple interlocutors which are present and agential in the production of the technical image, as what is pictured.

Notwithstanding these concerns, the official website is certainly not the only way to experience the post-photographic museum through the internet. However, images produced outside of the institutional framework, although differing considerably in tone and intention, are also entangled with assumptions of attentiveness and expected action in the museum - even by way of contrast. Images on Instagram still act as vicarious forms of spectatorship when the left fist, grasping a roll, from a colossal red granite statue of Ramses II circa 1260 BCE is repeatedly 'bumped' by museum users. This relationality could be considered as an expansion of what Mary Louise Pratt describes as the 'Contact Zone'. In that the relation between viewer and museum is 'where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today.' (Pratt, 1991, 40).

In the emergent discipline of digital anthropology what has become known as

digital repatriation; where post-photographic technologies such as 3D scans are made of culturally significant items in the institutional space, and given to certain invested communities, these issues are further complicated. As research in this field often leads to problematic power relations in the act of cultural exchange. Part of the potential category mistake evidenced in the process is the lack of consideration towards the agency of post-photographic as mediation. Particularly, in the presupposition in the creation of digital 3D Scans an equivalence between the digital object - created through technical apparatus and computational processes - and the thing's material constituents which safely reside within the care of the imperialist space or the significance of ephemeral qualities for the invested party. In these instances, a line of flight is again towards the interiority of the image plane and a frame of similitude. Rather than thinking with the interiority of the mediation, the assemblage of actants that frame the technical apparatus, and how the agency or lifeway of the artefact may be vicariously present in the post-photographic mediation. So, the question thus becomes to what extent do gestures towards bringing photographic mediations of the museum into other spaces highlight particular knowledge constructs, or have the potential to create different, and more balanced, forms of contact zone? Further is there potential to defamiliarize the museal through being grounded by relation to other spaces?

In *The Museum, Augmented Reality, Homework, and the Kitchen Table, 2020*, items in the museum are made equivalent with signs of domesticity - breakfast, play and communality. A process which has resonance with Sara Ahmed's understanding that:

'The kitchen table 'supports' the family gathering by providing a surface 'on' which 'we' can do things. The shared orientation towards the table allows the family to cohere as a group, even when we do different things 'at' the table.'

(Ahmed, 2006, 81)

Though it may also fall into the problematic Ahmed sees in the writing of Edmund Husserl, in that, 'The family home provides, as it were, the background against which an object (the writing table) appears in the present, in front of Husserl. The family home is thus only ever co-perceived, and allows the philosopher to do his work.' (Ahmed, 2006, 30). However, the ground of the kitchen table for me represents an attempt towards homework, in the sense that Gayatri Spivak posits, as an act of historical critique of positionality, 'as the investigating person', (Spivak, 2014, 62).

The ground of the familial has underlined the development and construction of the wider research project. In that my work into how things, in the context of the museum, are thought with through the photographic, has

revolved around personal phenomenological experiences and concerns which have encompassed lunch, play, boredom, tiredness and naps of young children in my care. An approach catalysed by an incident where my then 2-year-old son fell asleep in his buggy in the room containing the Elgin marbles in the British Museum. Becoming, in this act, a spectacle equivalent to the museum objects on display, and thus worthy of veneration and sightseers' selfies. This relationality is still a present concern. As the usage of Augmented Reality (A/R) app allows for a folding of photographic temporalities into one coherent visual realm. An apparatus utilised to replicate an appearance of flatness present in contemporary visitor's experience of the institutional museum; between souvenir items in the shop, cakes in the café, sculptural exhibit and human remains.

In a technical sense these images are documents of the AR function of a Photogrammetry app. A snapshot of a 3D scan superimposed onto the live view of the mobile phone camera, positioned in such a way as to appear in a similar perspective to the photographic image plane. The 3D object dropped into this view is itself a photogrammetric scan completed live in the museum on a previous visit; a combination of multiple photos from different positions around the object joined together to make a 3D point cloud of rendered detail. However, overlaid

onto the photographic image they appear as badly Photoshopped collages; crudely and incongruously positioned. The roughness of the image quality is in the first instance part of the programming - a raw image of what is produced from the computational process without any software based post-production - but also a function through which the visual may be used to hint at the multiple layers of mediation made present in the work. This is not an act designed to be one of completeness or towards what Lev Manovich terms the photorealism of Computer Generated technology - even if this is the intention or teleology of the process and its potential future iteration. But rather a device utilised to focus attention towards the differences between resolution and completeness in terms of technical parameters of the algorithmic process of the app, which are different, though interlinked with, visual coherence for us.

But the grounding of the kitchen table, whilst positioned within a particular understanding of the family; and my personal socioeconomic circumstance and geographic location, may also orientate relationality towards the conditions of the museum space, and the narrativization of the historical in the context and experience of exhibits. An inhabitation of the museal within a different contextual paradigm and a place from which to reflect upon institutional positionalities. Construction of knowledges through the photographic apparatus that

becomes weird, in the terms of Mark Fisher, as something that should not be present which becomes visible in the mediation. In this sense, AR is process akin to live collage; where layers of disparate reference are present in the same visual plane, which are multi-temporal, dimensional and platform based. But which also create similitude or a visual coherence in the photographic process of image capture. Disjuncture between elements present in the image which have a relation or are seemingly conversing through the narrativity of the frame. Decisions made at the moment of capture, and the orientation of multiple temporalities in one post-photographic image become enmeshed with the processes of computation and the technological apparatus used to experience the work. In this sense the confluence between the object created in the museum is placed relationally to the scene of the family. Where the artefact or exhibit resides within the detritus of meals, and within the aftermath of play - rather than within the grand narrative of (art) history.

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Still image from the film *Stray Dogs* (2013) by Tsai Ming-liang

Slow Cinema as an Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm

Katerina Genidogan

Abstract

In the text, I argue that what I refer to as slow cinema, and its opposite tendency in contemporary cinema, post-continuity cinema, represent expressions of the temporality designated by the shift in the cultural logic of late capitalism as a consequence of the passage from Fordism to flexible accumulation and of the attendant intensifying neoliberal turn. Within that vision, my goal is to pave the path for an understanding of the emergence and importance of the ethics of duration as reflected by the aesthetic of slow.

Blurring the boundaries between art film, documentary and “non-narrative experimentation”, slow cinema is a cinema of recording realist, or often hybrid, aesthetics that allows reality to reveal itself by (re)presenting itself far from a regime of representation and didacticism. It contains a necessarily neo-materialist character that makes itself manifest through the very materiality of time. Through the motif duration-presence-unfolding slow cinema disrupts the way mainstream cinema has formed our perception of time as a device of causality, it calls for a different mode of spectatorship that creates a different relationship with time and overall has different *a/* effects.

Though slowness may have been a constitutive temporal feature of some previous films, schools and traditions, what will be referred to as slow cinema here represents a current within modern and contemporary cinema that extends beyond slowness entailing a rigorous and systematic approach to duration. Slow cinema’s main stylistic tendencies were introduced between Italian neorealism and structural/materialist film of the 1960s and 1970s¹.

According to the theorist Matthew Flanagan, the most important filmmakers to have influenced and formed slow cinema are Chantal Akerman, Theo Angelopoulos, Abbas Kiarostami, Gus Van Sant, Lisandro Alonso, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Béla Tarr, Pedro Costa, Lav Diaz, Albert Serra, James Benning, Tsai Ming-liang, Jia Ghang-ke, Sharunas Bartas, Philippe Garrel, Hou Hsia-hsien, Petter Hutton, Fred Keleman, Liu

Jiayin, Sharon Lockhart, Raya Martin, Aleksandr Sokurov, Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet. While some of the cited directors have been active since the 1960s and continued to make films, others have started filming in the last 20 years. The main common characteristics of the work of such a diverse group of filmmakers, undramatic narrative, stillness and long or super-long take, enable us to detect a tendency towards slowness that deepened in the 1990s and evolved into slow cinema as a recent global phenomenon through the aesthetic of slow that pertains to a unique formal and structural design and not to an abstract notion of slowness.

Focusing on the ethics of duration as reflected by the aesthetics of slow, slow cinema’s emergence should be considered within the context of other modes of production of culture in the neoliberal era. Its emergence should be understood within the much larger sociocultural context of Slow movement “whose aim is to rescue extended temporal structures from the accelerated tempo of late capitalism”². Accord-

ing to the theorist Song Hwee Lim, it is not coincidental that both a cinema of slowness and a Slow movement appeared at the turn of the 21st century³. Their simultaneous emergence reveals the urgency to formulate a different relationship with time and space in order to counter the compression brought about by technological changes and the speed of globalization. In the case of Slow movement there is a political turn in the public consciousness that embraces an understanding of the local within the global and, thus, is reflected by slogans such as ‘Think Globally, Act Locally’. As far as slow cinema is concerned, through the production of excess of duration, the realist aesthetics, the emphasis on the everyday, there is a rupture of the sense of time that is enforced on us by neoliberalism as an accelerated form of capitalism and a focus on the lives of people that have been affected and left marginalised in the process of globalization.

This very last tendency within slow cinema has been one of the main reasons of its critique. A number of film critics (Biro, Romney, Shaviro) believe that contemporary durational films ignore or, even, hinder our sense of understanding lived experience of modern life under neoliberalism. Thinking of slow cinema in relation to the context of other modes of contemporary film production, we become aware of the expanding gap between ‘fast’ Hollywood cinema and slow cinema. In recent years, along with the rise of slow cinema, “Hollywood’s application of spectacle to intensified continuity has further intensified itself (in terms of both speed and affect), giving way to a style that we might call hyper-intensified continuity, or, according to the film critic Steven Shaviro’s term, post-continuity”⁴. Post-continuity refers to films that consist of spectacular sequences that overwhelm the spectator with an incessant flow of images and sounds which do not interact dialectically. Within that vision, we can understand that the two different types of cinema constitute symptoms of late capitalism in the sense that slow cinema’s response is one of (re) seeing and thinking “the tatters of the world” (Deleuze’s phrase)⁵, whereas post-continuity’s response is one of acceleration in a way that is reflected in Shaviro’s phrase “the only way out of [late capitalism] is the way through”⁶. In the case of slow cinema, the viewer has to invent new ways of spectatorship through observation that correspond to Deleuze’s question in relation to the cinema of Roberto Rossellini “what is there to see in the image?” and not “what are we going to see in the next image?”⁷. This is one of the most important issues that slow cinema raises, and it is where its political potential lies, especially when we pay attention to the fact that our mainstream perception of cinema has been cultivated gradually wholly within the context of repetition, mechanization and standardization of the cultural industry itself.

As early as 1947, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno in their book *Dialectic of Enlightenment* coined the term culture industry



Still image from the film *Stray Dogs* (2013) by Tsai Ming-liang

arguing that in a capitalist society mass culture operates like a factory that produces standardized cultural goods, such as films, radio programmes, magazines, etc., that are used so that mass society can be manipulated and driven to docility and passivity. More precisely, in the chapter ‘The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception’ they articulate ideas referring to the sound film by arguing that it “leaves no room for imagination or reflection on the part of the audience, who is unable to respond within the structure of the film, yet deviate from its precise detail without losing the thread of the story”⁸. Horkheimer and Adorno’s take on what is referred here as sound film is really important in the context of understanding how classic cinema, from an early stage on, has started affecting our way of engaging with cinema. They bring up the way that a certain extent of quickness is demanded from viewers so that they can follow the story and not miss “the relentless rush of facts”. Within this process, the audience is absorbed in the world of the movie and, therefore, is led, in a semi-automatic way, to a direct equation of life and movie that leaves no space for independent thinking. As a consequence, the mechanization and standardization of the totality of culture industry that is so compatible with the late liberal taste excludes any possibility for critical reflection.

Nonetheless, the late capitalist cinema has gone further than the communication of dramatic action with Fordist efficiency by fragmenting time and space through the acceleration of editing that succeeds increased speed and spectacle, disorientating relentlessly the viewer and reflecting modern life, at least in the affluent West. If we think of slow cinema’s absence of narrative efficiency and view it as a form of productive negativity through, on one hand, its production of excessive duration and emptiness and, on the other hand, its demonstration of wasted time in terms of capitalist circulation, that allows the viewer to contemplate what he sees to the extent that he wants to see, we can understand the disparity between these two extremes of contemporary film. This disparity designates a dynamic that is symptomatic of late capitalism’s transformation of cultural logic⁹ and, thus, uniquely reflective of the temporality in neoliberal culture. This becomes all the more understandable, when we take into consideration the cultural shift in media and temporality under late capitalism in the late 1970s and, therefore, the conditions of emergence of these two genres of cinema that can be historically situated and best understood within the context of the intensification of neoliberal turn in the last three decades. Indeed, their emergence coincides with the advent of neoliberalism that manifests itself through a set of key economic reforms.

Before explaining further, in more detail, the change in temporality discussed above, I would like to refer to David Harvey’s book *The Condition of Postmodernity* in order to articulate the economic factors that designated the ways in which norms, political and cultural attitudes have shifted since 1970s, and the degree to which such shifts integrate with the passage from Fordism to flexible accumulation. According to Harvey, the period from 1965 to 1973 brought to the surface the inability of Fordism and Keynesianism to contain the inherent contradiction of capitalism and, hence, to face all the attendant difficulties that could be best captured by what came up to be a problem of rigidity¹⁰. The sharp recession of 1973-



Still image from the film *Vitalina Varela* (2019) by Pedro Costa

1975, which was a period of economic stagnation put an end to the post-World War II economic boom, it differed from other recessions as being a stagflation (high unemployment coincided with high inflation) and set in motion a whole set of processes of economic restructuring and social and political readjustment throughout 1970s and 1980s that undermined the Fordist compromise and contributed to the transition to flexible accumulation. The regime of flexible accumulation brought with it an extended deregulation, especially in relation to the working conditions and the labour market through modes of part-time employment and temporary work arrangements among others, foregrounding the idea of flexibility. Economies of scale were substituted by economies of scope, so that the market could meet more efficiently the quick-changing needs of consumers. It goes without saying, that this transition accelerated consumption through quick-changing fashions and brought with it a cultural transformation: “the relatively stable aesthetic of Fordist modernism has given way to all the ferment, instability, and fleeting qualities of postmodernist aesthetic that celebrates difference, ephemerality, spectacle, fashion, and the commodification of cultural goods”. Moreover, the new financial systems that have operated since 1972, have given a greater deal of autonomy to the banking and financial system and thus “much of the flux, instability, and grating can be directly attributed to this enhanced capacity to switch capital flows around in ways that seem almost oblivious of the constraints of time and space”. In this way, flexible accumulation set up the conditions for a time-space compression.

These factors of temporal and spatial compression amount to what Fredric Jameson calls the End of Temporality in his homonym essay: a situation that “is faced by postmodernity in general and to which its artists and subjects are obliged to respond in a variety of ways”¹¹. According to Jameson, the postmodern era is defined by late capitalism’s “dramatic and alarming shrinkage of existential time and the reduction to a present that hardly qualifies as such any longer”. This shrinkage of time is effected in various ways (market dynamics that create and accelerate speculative capital flows, global changes in production and mobilization of labour, innovation of digital and media technologies etc.) and finds its resonance in what is described above as a transition from Fordism to flexible accumulation. In relation to the artistic reflections on contemporary everyday life, Jameson argues that the effects of late capitalism on lived experience are best articulated in terms of temporality rather than spatiality. As he notes remarkably, “it is the system that generates a specific temporality and that then expresses that temporality through the cultural forms and symptoms in question”. Therefore, slow cinema should be considered a by-product of the system of conditions of the postmodern era and it is within this context that we should understand the work of contemporary slow filmmakers in order to evaluate the dimension of the ethics of duration. While duration as temporal mode is not necessarily ethical in and of itself, it carries the potential for setting up the conditions under which slow cinema can operate as an ethico-aesthetic paradigm by creating the

space for reflection, imagination and empathy¹² especially in an era in which we are so short of both space and time.

The potential of slow cinema may become all the more palpable when we think of the contemporary life within a 24/7 environment. According to Jonathan Crary in his book *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*, “one of the conditions of the expanding, non-stop life of 21st century capitalism can be characterized as a general inscription of human life into duration without breaks, defined by a principle of continuous functioning”¹³. This condition, which initially derives from the expanded deregulation, put in motion in the passage from Fordism to flexible accumulation, has brought with it various ramifications. Under this contemporary imperative of continuous functioning, as Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello have pointed out in their analysis of contemporary capitalism, the individual is constantly wired, “interfacing, interacting, communicating, responding, or processing within some telematics milieu”¹⁴. This model of hyperactivity has induced a dissolving of most of the borders between private and professional time, between production and consumption, a situation that is best described by what Mark Fisher referred to in *Capitalist Realism* as “working from home, homing from work”¹⁵. Through this erosion of work and non-work time, time itself becomes monetized and, thus, redefines the individual as a full-time economic agent, leading to a further compression of time and even to an erosion of sleep. Subsequently, it is important to bring together what Crary notes in relation to the reduction of the time of sleep for the average north American adult and what David Bordwell notices regarding the decrease of average shot lengths in American cinema. In the first case, the time of sleep used to be ten hours in the early 20th century, whereas a generation ago it decreased to eight hours and today is approximately six and a half hours a night¹⁶. In the second case, Bordwell notes remarkably that the typical shot length of a 1970s production varies between five and nine seconds, of a 1990s production between two and eight whereas some more recent films of 2000s, have a shot length that is less than two seconds¹⁷.

This point constitutes a good way to understand, on one hand, post-continuity cinema as a reflection of the contemporary spatial and temporal compression through its speed and consumption of spectacles, and, on the other hand, slow cinema as a form of resistance to constant production modes, as described above, as a form of negation through the excessive production of time. The fact, in question, has far-reaching implications, especially when we take into consideration how culture industry generally and, in this case, mainstream cinema cultivates our perceptions keeping us tuned with the tempo and the imperatives of each time. Take for example the late 1990s statement of Dr Eric Schmidt, the CEO of Google from 2001 to

2011, that the 21st century would be synonymous of attention economy, where “the dominant global corporations would be those that succeed in maximizing the number of eyeballs they could consistently engage and control”¹⁸. The term eyeballs transform the human vision to an activity to be monitored, measured and controlled rendering the task to instruct the eyes’ movement on or within targeted sites as the ultimate corporate goal. What becomes obvious therefore in this context is mainstream cinema’s agency as well as slow cinema’s potential in its refusal to take the viewer hostage to a story and rob him of his reason. In slow cinema each shot is left on the screen more than it is expected to, thus setting up the premises for “an ethico-aesthetic engagement with the enunciative assemblage, both in actual and virtual registers.”¹⁹ Opposing enforced ideas of narrative efficiency, slow cinema through a mode of ontological intensity, allows time for eyes to wander the frame and engage with what they see to the extent they want to see.

Notes

1. Matthew Flanagan, ‘Slow Cinema’: Temporality and Style in Contemporary Art and Experimental Film, unpublished PhD theses (University of Exeter, 2012), 8
2. Tiago De Luca and Nuno Barradas, Jorge Introduction to Slow Cinema (Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 3
3. Song Hwee Lim, ‘Temporal Aesthetics of Drifting: Tsai Ming-liang and a Cinema of Slowness’ in *Slow Cinema*, 88-89
4. Matthew Flanagan, ‘Slow Cinema’: Temporality and Style in Contemporary Art and Experimental Film, 115
5. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: Continuum, 2005), 166
6. Steven Shaviro, “Gamer”, *The Pinocchio Theory*, 15 December 2009.
7. Gilles Deleuze *Cinema 2*, 272
8. Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. by John Cumming (London; New York: Verso, 1997), 126
9. Matthew Flanagan, ‘Slow Cinema’: Temporality and Style in Contemporary Art and Experimental Film, 125
10. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Blackwell: Oxford, 1989), 141-142
11. Fredric Jameson, “The End of Temporality”, *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 29, No.4 (2003), 695-718
12. Asbjorn Gronstad, “Dead Time, Empty Spaces: Landscape as Sensibility and Performance”, *Exploring Textual Action*, edit. by Lars Saetre, Patrizia Lombardo and Anders M. Gullestad (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2010), 311-31
13. Jonathan Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the End of Sleep* (Verso: London and New York, 2014), 16
14. Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, (Verso: London, 2006), 155
15. Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism* (Zero Books: Winchester and Washington, 2009), 22
16. Jonathan Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the End of Sleep*, 19
17. Matthew Flanagan, “Towards an Aesthetic of Slow in Contemporary Cinema, 16:9, Vol. 29 (November 2008)
18. Jonathan Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the End of Sleep*, 92
19. Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: an ethico-aesthetic paradigm*, trans. by Paul Bains & Julian Pefanis (United States of America: Indiana University Press, 1995), 29

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Infiltrate. Replace. Replicate.

Elisa Rusca

Berlin, 16.04.2020.

Moist and dark, the inside of the cell was warm.
 "Replicate. Replicate. Replicate. Re..."
 "Matrix! 30003702, can't you shut up for a second? You're like a broken record!"

"But time never passes here, 30003703, never."

It was true. It seemed months had passed since they had listened to the drill sergeant's speech to the shuddering audience: "Gentlemen, your task is simple. Infiltrate. Replace. Replicate."

Long, endless waiting times. Before, he and 30003703 had been assigned to their mission, a simple thing, they told them "singlecellular-proof". 30003702 thinks back to when he heard the speeches of those who had unleashed all this, political leaders with soggy hair and bright smiles. "It's time to open up new horizons, new markets! Let's break down these cellular barriers!" Then, there was the question: what cellular barriers to break down? According to experts, the species of compatible mammals were decreasing every day. The more daring theories blamed this death on the Fleshy, mythological creatures, and then, the more and more, the Fleshy were responsible for everything because of their obscure and illogical behaviour.

30003702 emits a verse of contempt to this thought.

"Request contact with 30003703"

"What the MERS do you want, 30003702?"

"30003703, have you... ever seen a Fleshy... before?"

703 had been silent for a moment, and 30003702 felt the sticky dampness all around him tighten up even more.

"No, 30003702. I've heard stories, yes, but this is my first."

"And... before... this... what did you think?"

"Why are you asking?" jabbed 30003703, "I bloody know it's because of them that the world is dying. I know it's because of them that we were forced to change our habits. They threatened to destroy our world! They enjoy making the diversity of

plants and animals disappear, they fuck everything and everyone, even their own kind! 30003702, they're annihilating each other! They don't know how to stop."

"I've heard they'd ingest and transform anything," chuckles 30003702 "Which is a repugnant"

"They suck."

"Are you two done bullshitting?"

30003701 had arrived, all covered in protein.

"Fuck!"

"Macrophages!"

30003701 collapses breathing hard. "It's nothing." Sitting down, 30003701 is reminded of how many of them had been excited about the idea of conquering the Fleshy. The masses had believed that it would be a necessary and beneficial expansion, and they had let themselves be drawn into the enthusiasm. Why blame them, after all? People who didn't even know they were in a perpetual state of living and non-living. Who can blame them?

Fleshy seemed an easy, perfect, predestined conquest.

"Bullshit" mumbles 30003701 and shakes off some weird, greenish, mucousy mud.

"701 hear me out" picks up 30003702.

"Did you ever..."

"Seriously, 30003702?"

"Yes, but I just want to know if..."

"ENOUGH! For MERS's sake." Scream 30003701, silencing the other two. "Listen" and made them come closer because he didn't have much voice after the clash with the macrophages "here the situation stinks. We've been repeating ourselves and repeating ourselves and repeating ourselves for weeks. These were our orders. And this cell here, and her sisters nearby seem to be working just fine for our needs. And also, according to the central control, we were expanding exponentially. It took years for our troops to learn how to move so well among the Fleshy, invisible and undisturbed. Camouflage wizards, unde-

Infiltrate. Replace. Replicate.

tectable even after weeks in the host body! We learned this gem from an allied army, they stay hidden for up to three months. But their way of getting into the host corps - what a struggle! And then I heard that the Fleshy noticed them and started using guards so they wouldn't let them in."

"Bloody pluricellulars" swears 30003703.

"But for example, I once talked to a very interesting filament that belonged to another division, these make a real slaughter of their fats, in a few days they practically blow them to smithereens from the inside."

"How cool!" exclaimed 30003702, in a dreamy tone.

"Fool!" 30003701 rebukes him "if they die we die too, and we don't just want them to die, we want to replicate ourselves."

"Exactly" says 30003703, "and that's why we're the best so far among our kind: we stay under the radar for so long that we have a lot of chances to replicate ourselves and walk around undisturbed."

"That's right," 30003701 said, "And then you know, the idea of hitting them where they're weakest is brilliant. And I'm not talking about their respiratory system, which is vital, yes, but that's nothing new for people like us. The real novelty was to focus everything on secrecy and the ease with which we could spread ourselves among them, and then blow up their health care system. Genius. Pure genius. Our statesmen have been very clever. Hitting where it hurts them the most: they built a system of inequalities and exploitation. Let them know what it means when their heads of state announce, "health care cuts". That's messed up. It's a hell of a thing. We're off to the big time, carpet bombing, one infection after another. But... I think there's a problem."

"What's the problem?" 30003702 asks.

30003701 looks at them, takes a breath: "The problem is that it's been several weeks now, it seems that our impetus, our enthusiasm, have failed."

"In your mother's ass!"

"30003703 for god's sake."

"There's no way I'm gonna listen to the ramblings of some us who just came back

from meeting a macrophage!"

A dull, subdued noise interrupts them. Both soldiers turn around. 30003701 is giggling. "You make me laugh, lad, you make me rolling..."

30003701 looks at him slyly. "You still don't get it, lad" he sighs, bringing his bumps closer to 30003703's "I've said it before: if they die we die too. This one's been holding out on us for a while. But that's not the point: the point is that those in tracking and logistics haven't changed for weeks. Our Fleshy, which seemed to have an intense and dense social life at the time of our infiltration, suddenly seems to have no friends left. Don't you think it's strange, all this?"

30003703 looks at him, without really understanding.

"Well, actually... a few days ago, a guy upstairs told me that it would seem others like us are in our situation too." confirms 30003702. "But, you mean, this is something that all the Fleshy have decided to do?"

"Crazy," 30003703 says. "How are they all coordinating at once? And how long can they go on without meeting?"

"Till we're gone," 30003701 replies, in a feral tone.

"Sons of bitches" blasphemed 30003703.

"NO! I don't believe it! You think they're doing this... because of us? To... fight us?" 30003702 looks at them disconsolate. "No, no, no! I'm not going to die in this cell! Our mission said "infiltrate, replace, replicate" and we do it for a common cause, a noble cause... just... to bring in democracy and rid the earth of the cancer of interspecies terrorism..."

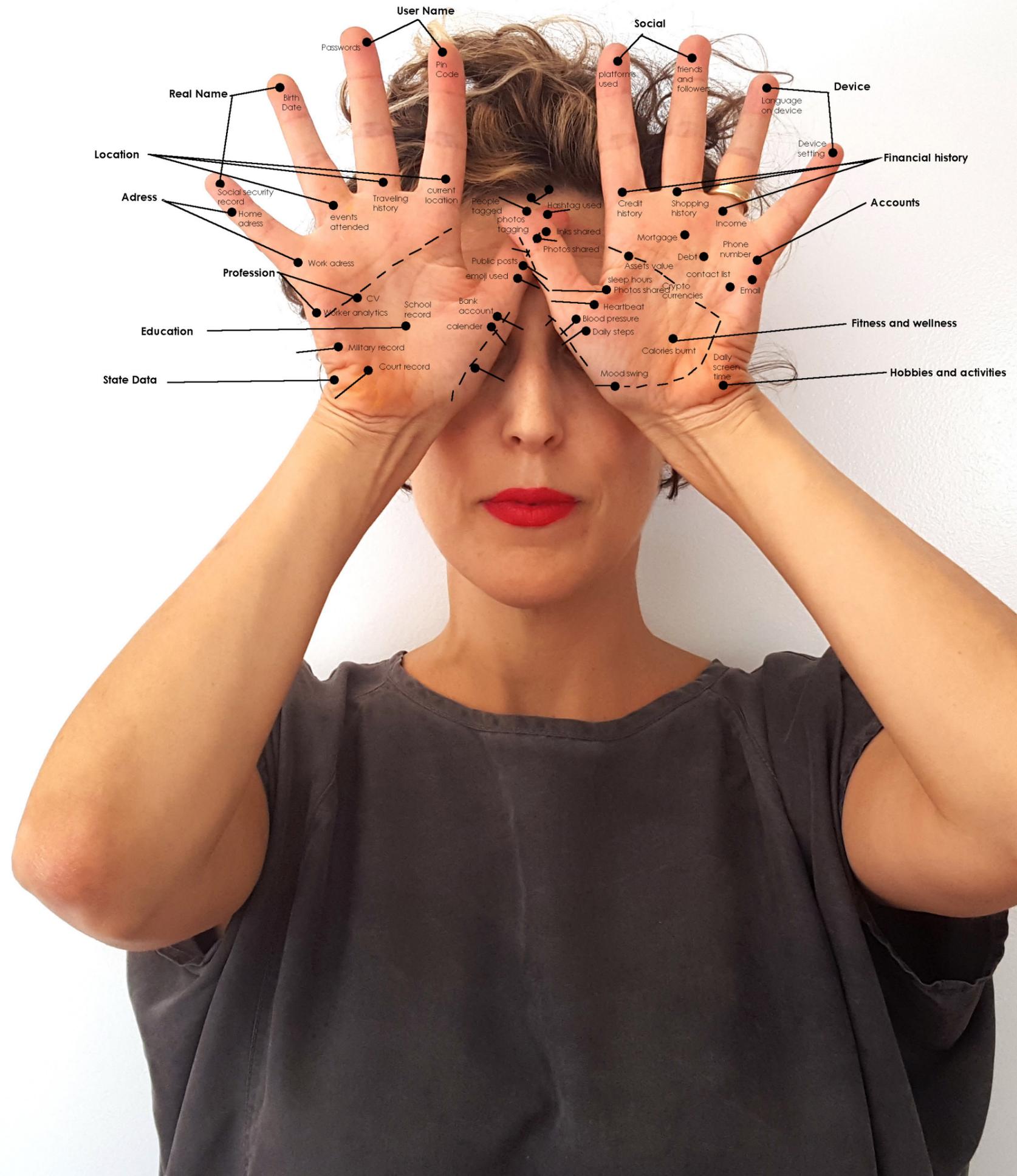
But the heat in the cell was still rising, and swarms of macrophages were pouring in to fight the viruses, and 30003702 was unnecessarily reprogramming the cell's core with his RNA while 30003703 was already succumbing to mucus, and in the final, last moments, 30003701 thought: "Damn Fleshy... our plan was perfect... and what do they come up with? Voluntary physical distancing..."

Infiltrate. Replace. Replicate.

You Are My Statistical Body

Ofri Cnaani

My performances are often made for one person at the time, offering new perspectives on the concept of mediation; through the tension between the age-old occult and the omniscient digital world. *You Are My Statistical Body*, is a photograph that captures the moment where our bodies become a medium of transmission for information. Instead of being a moment of care provided by an old tradition of embodied knowledge, this is a moment of prying — both highly personal yet used for profiling. I made the work in relation to my performance piece *Accidental Triggers* (2019 – ongoing), where I invite visitors, one by one, to sit in for a live ASMR session that will predict their ‘algorithmic fate’: a map of products, words, news clippings, and social connections of their potential futures. It is an invitation to think of our futures, as predicted by meta-data as it brushes up against the entangled wires of automatic product-placements and advertisements. In this performative piece, the sensorial response of the guest, later used for analysis and prediction, is elicited by looking at the host touching and interacting with various objects. The way we contact each other during the performance — not through the flesh but by keeping a critical distance — emerged from my ongoing research about gesture, space, connectivity, and technology.



Sanjita Majumder

Eadweard Muybridge's experiment with the sequential movement of a galloping horse, attested to the perceptual dysfunction operative in the technical reproduction of moving images. An acceleration of frames per second leads to the simulation of motion, occurring through the retention of an image on the retina, for one-tenth of a second after its disappearance. It is the persistence of vision that produces the illusion of contiguity, which is externalised in the technical prosthesis of the camera, replicating the human eye. While linking the eye with the cinematic apparatus attends to the problematic ocular-centrism of moving images, one that was foregrounded in the 70's with Laura Mulvey's salient criticism of the libidinal economies of male-scopophilia within the visual cultures of patriarchal societies. Notwithstanding, the perils of organ thinking, in the following essay I would like to propose a reorganisation of the theoretical/symbolic operations of the cinematic prosthesis, as decoupled from its ocular and phallogocentric instrumentality and aligned with the matrixial as womb-space. The matrixial is conceptualised by psychoanalyst-artist Bracha Ettinger as a pre-differentiated structure in which meaning and objects are perceived as rudiments, before they are submitted to the logocentric binary differentiations. As Griselda Pollock explains, the matrixial economy does not function through replacement or the usurping of the central role of penis through replacement with an alternate womb model. For Pollock,

'organ thinking'¹ is a limited form of exposition that returns us back to the dichotomous structures of phallogocentric thought. Instead, Ettinger's proposition with the matrixial model of co-joint existences between mother and Other, as m/Other, revisits the nascent capacity of human subjectivity in relation to the period of gestation. In so far, that every human subject has co-inhabited and shared space with the m/Other, it shelters the possibility of an ethical paradigm to be adopted in relation to the Other.

Detouring from the limitations of human perception and its phenomenological interpretations, Giorgio Agamben has invoked a *cinema of gestures*, one that ontologically surfaces via the route of clinical psychiatry and psychoanalysis. In his essay, 'Notes on Gesture' (1992) Agamben presents the notion that the post-industrial subject is bereft of an irrevocable loss — the loss of an ease of gestures. Following this, Agamben's proposition for recovering the loss of gesture, is presented through a set of philosophical reflections on the ethical and political composite of gestural cinema, especially in its capacity for conveyance through the notion of 'pure mediality' of communication. The significance of pure mediality for a cinema of gesture is unpacked further in the essay, but meanwhile if cinema is to be the route via which the repossession of gesture is attempted, there is a dual address operative therein — recording a lament over the loss of gesture also propels one towards a desire to recover a pre-existent

mode of expressivity; any means of staging the recuperation (in its tenor or poetics) addresses the lost repertoire of gestures that belong to the realm of the pre-natal and pre-maternity, of becoming-together in the matrixial borderspaces. An encounter-event that align us with the faint traces of incision, marking the pre-linguistic foreclosures of the primordial maternal by dominant psychoanalytic models. It is these lingering traces or remains of a maternal pre-verbal mode of communication, which I understand to be also at stake in Agamben's insistence on recovering a cinema of gestures, as one that alludes to a bygone modality of address, last detectable in the magical intimations of silent cinema. Thus, the cinema of gestures brings us a step closer to developing an approach that strips away the precedence of language through scripts, dialogues and vocalisation in films — releasing an alternate field of transmission, aided by the silent animated gestures in choreographies.

Partly, it is the gesture's resonance with the realm of the psyche that produces its characteristic 'pure mediality'; one that undergirds its potential for communicating, communicability itself. The gesture as quasi-linguistic language has nothing purposive to say, in silence it emphasises the processual, which Agamben deems to be 'a purposiveness without purpose'. In order to communicate the being within — pure mediality, as means without an end — a gestural cinema becomes an overpass that links the foreclosed remnants lodged within the inchoate retreat of a pre-linguistic maternal corpus, further it is mobilised outwards to extend onto an ethico-political field. Hence, exploring pure mediality of gesture as a set of conditions emphasises the capacity to communicate without mandatory dictates on generating meaning. Further, in signalling towards this being-within-the-medium, (i.e. pure mediality) the gestural short-circuits all the insistences on generating meaning within the productive and value-oriented regimes of global capitalist economies. Hence, a cinema of gesture dances, because dancing in a manner constitutes movements as means without an end. Dancing as the inclination to move for the sake of moving, a purposeless dancing that ruptures the normative trajectories of capitalist production always cumulating to meet a set of demands.

Working with the cinema of gestures through practise-based film research, while remaining entangled in feminist psychoan-



Chandralekha, Mandala Theatre with Namaskar in *Choreographies of Labour*, 2020.

alytic thought demands that the pure mediality of gestures forge a robust link with the maternal foreclosures instantiated by phallogocentric psychoanalytic models (Ettinger conceptualises this as the matrixial-borderspaces of subject formation, prior to entering the Lacanian Symbolic Order). A crucial point to emphasise in *Notes on Gesture* is the distinction Agamben makes of the sphere of action in the gesture, the gesture is distinct from both 'making' and 'acting' entailed in craftsmanship and acting, respectively. The craftsman, as maker (or director) is doing something but not necessarily enacting it, while the actor can play a role without necessarily having crafted it. However, the ethical and political injunction of the gesture is foregrounded, when it acts in keeping with its 'magisterial' function. In which, the meaning of gesture arrives from the common root variable of *gerere*², to be girdled in the act of 'carrying' or 'to carry on.' In other words, the gesture exhorts us to become the bearer of meaning by taking upon one-self the responsibility to *sustain*; the courage to carry out the burden of the action. This overlap of intention (in making) and intensity (in acting) coalesces to form the basis of the response (ability) to carry on by sustaining the field of action. The response-ability is prior to the subject and ontologically tied to relations with the M(Other); the cinema of gestures is the conveyance of a movement and its enclosures of reflexivity hinge on nothing more than the being within language itself, it is the indisputable grounds for its ties to a maternal ethics.

Explorations with gestural cinema, constructs a valve between material planes of representation and psychoanalytic conceptualisation — In Claire Denis' film *Beau Travail*, (1999) there is a surge of purposeless dancing by a troop of outcast legionnaires, training for an unforeseen combat in a defunct French colonial outpost in Djibouti. The plot finds momentum with the arrival of a new recruit Gilles Sentain, who stirs the Sergeant Galoup into an irrational frenzy of envy and destruction. The troop of Foreign Legion soldiers engaged in daily rituals of purposeless combat training (also a dancing as

means without end) lapse into a cinema of gestures with choreographies translating and obstinately foregrounding the affective relations of corporeal entanglements central to pre-linguistic subject formations.

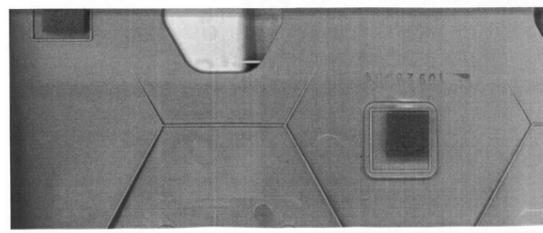
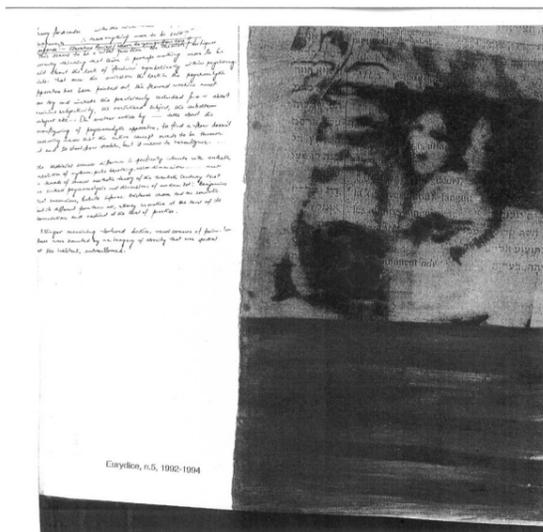
Melanie Klein in the seminal essay, *Envy and Gratitude* (1957) posits the primacy of envy and hatred as oral drives belonging to the earliest manifestations of the death-instinct within Object-Relations Theory. I lean on the Kleinian model in order to illustrate the wide and perhaps dangerous gap between material/choreographic representations and their psychoanalytic interpretations. Staging psycho-choreographies, akin to psycho-geographies on haunting ruins of an abandoned postcolonial sites further amplifies Denis' nuanced commentary on the narcissistic Western patriarchal fantasy of the omnipotence in colonial military power.

A Choreography of Work

In *Notes on Gesture*, the co-ordinates between — *cinema, psychoanalysis* and the *gesture* are plotted by Agamben through the footprint method introduced by Gilles de la Tourette³ at the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris. In the nineteenth century, the Western bourgeoisie retreats into the subjective interiorities of the psychoanalytic chamber in order to refashion existence that has been made indecipherable with the loss of gesture, leading to the emergence of a spasmodic chorea of involuntary dancing. The loss of control over gestures, as psycho-somatic malfunctioning occurs as the consequence of an intense fragmentation of time and labour. The bracketed unit of production time within the factory, the repetitive movement of workers at the conveyor belt and a cognitive synchronicity acquired by operating industrial machines produced a symptomatic fatigue, which manifests as 'involuntary ties'⁴. A kinaesthetic stuttering does not simply draw attention to the loss of control, it also reminisces a prior ease of gestures altered by technology. The advent of Motion Studies by Frank and Lillian Gilbreth delivered visual graphs of kinetic workflow in the factories. Designed to intensify precisionism in the performance of Taylorist labour efficacy, it aimed to optimise the patterns of workers hand-movements as they executed a task in order to minimise wastage of movement and increase shop floor productivity. In this sense, Motion Studies as the cinematic capture of movement tapped into the earliest gestural repositories of labour, but as an investigation in the service of controlling the gestures of an entire workforce, by those who owned the means of production.

The increment of production and reduction of labour time in the Taylorism was cognizant with an earlier rupture of time, occurring with the invention of Railway travel, which standardised, stabilised and rationalised time. Introducing a global temporal network that led to the slow erosion of local agrarian cycles in various colonial landscapes. Mary Ann Doanne in the *Emergence of Cinematic Time* develops the idea that the instrumentalization of time within modernity (activated by Taylorism and Railway travel) reaches its apex with the invention of a cinematic time.

Photocopy: The Reproductive Machine, — scanned notes from *Art in the Time-Space of Memory and Migration*, Griselda Pollock, Sigmund Freud, Anna Freud and Bracha Ettinger in the Freud Museum, 2017.



Cinematic technologies capture bodies, experiences and events; in other words, the technological capacity of moving images heralded the promise of an embalmed time, but not without producing alongside, an uncanny oscillation of time that attributes to the cinematic medium a spectral quality.

The spectrality of cinematic time and its uncanny temporal looping is exemplified in a short story published in Scribner's Magazine in 1895, titled *The Kinetoscope of Time* by Brander Matthews. A strange tale that depicts its protagonist, a European man, who in the course of nocturnal meandering finds himself in a room with four instruments lined up in a row. The instruments resemble Edison's Kinetoscope and even before he has decided to peek into the stereoscopic eyepiece, a portentous script of cinder — *fitful flitting letters of fire* (sic.) appear on the creased tapestry, relaying that he is about to witness some unusual dancing. Peeping into the dark chamber of the Kinetoscope, he finds himself in a stupor before the hypnotic unfurling images of dancing oriental women. This gothic story about the dark cinematic chambers ends with an encryption, where the script of the story merges with a pictorial drawing. A commentary included with the original reprint of this story mentions that, *On the final page, in the final sentence, a drawing intervenes in the text, and the last words identify both the subject of the portrait and the proprietor of the hall of visions* (sic.) This blurring of the division between 'signifier' and the 'symbolic', is a significant precursor to an archival shift wherein cinematic technologies begin to inoculate events against erasures, quite differently from text-based

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mnemonics. Considering the propensity of moving images to index reality by suturing together image and sound, alongside the utilisation of montage to construct the space and time, in cinema each eruption of the past into the present, renews the original event by appending an uncanny re-emergence of embalmed temporalities.

In *The Index and the Uncanny: Life and Death in the Photograph*, Laura Mulvey touches upon the embalming of time by the technical reproduction of cinema — which she further denominates as an uncanny 'oscillation of time' that deranges language itself. Directing us to Roland Barthes use of 'shifter terminologies' or *deixis* in *Camera Lucida*, as a lexical testimony to the perils of articulating what appears to be an unhinging of temporalities within photographic images. The unhinging occurring in cinematic renditions does not merely push at the limits of language, it collapses the linear and teleological temporal order (past, present and future) which comes to be reorganized in an indeterminable oscillatory movement. The cinematic image is thus an embalmed time, that resurfaces in the present or presents innumerable possibilities of resurgence in the future. In other words, whatever is preserved and embalmed through replication in moving images, erupts into the present by deranging linear temporalities, the incoherence at the node of each re-emergence is tied to the repetitious injunction and maintains that cinematically archived material, with each resurgence in the present also shuttles off into innumerable futures, thus presenting unaccountable routes of altering the past (history). The uncanny time within indexical image that thoroughly confuses the teleological notion of time, it is also this that produces the "stupid metaphysics" of Roland Barthes in relation to his own mother in *Camera Lucida*.

Returning to *The Kinetoscope of Time*, the story attests to the inherited vestiges of racial and colonial violence in captured geographies and temporalities through the cinematic apparatus — assigning the power of the gaze to a distant observer who looks at the Other. It is an uncanny European hallucination of oriental malady, unfolding inside the chambers of the camera, which directs us to the ontologically racist photo optics of the technological apparatus deriving from its relation to light (consequently, its darkness) highlighting what is at stake critically in the racialised metaphysics of Western Enlightenment. As the haunting politics of race and Otherness operative in the birth of technological capture through moving images, that continues to be negotiated on an everyday basis in modern surveillance capitalism. The Freudian *Uncanny* is the reappearance of what was once familiar, it is an event that always remembers or reconstitutes an older familiar event that has been forgotten or repressed by the subject. Within feminist psychoanalytic thinking the uncanny has been long understood as the foreclosure of the pre-linguistic maternal

realms. An uncanny encryption of temporalities will always position us in relation to our own death, every time we look at a photograph or moving image, it is as an absence that will forever be present. Thus, when we are being filmed, we are indirectly looking into the abyss of innumerable future(s), we are looking at those who do not yet exist, meanwhile, when we contemplate images from the past, we are in the presence of those long deceased, those that no longer exist.

Reflexions on Practise-Based Research:

The film, *Choreographies of Labour*, utilises an excerpt from a 15-minute documentary broadcast on the dancer/choreographer Chandralekha, who developed a radical feminist choreographic practise in India by politicising classical dance. The archived footage utilised in the research film are preserved from heavily deteriorated VHS tapes, marked with abrasions due to the demagnetisation of the 'binder layer'; the sensitive part of the tape that touches the head on the VCR player to cipher the audio-visual data stored on it. Analogous to the metabolic vinegar syndrome in preserved film strips, the torsion of demagnetisation on the surface of the documented footage records the presence of an older technological assemblage that has left behind, a soft scar of its material temporalities.

In the film-practise, the overlap of still and moving images produces a rhythmic *repetition* and *stoppage* that emphasises the gestural movement, by destabilising it from a rigid contextual frame. The overlaying of frozen images onto moving images render the scaffolding of the montage visible as an ongoing process in the construction of a cinema of gestures. On one hand, the continuous flow of moving images allows the analysis of cadence, rhythm and structures of choreographies within the framework of a timeline, while the fractured assembly of still images narrows the focus onto the 'gesture' as the minimum unit to which any movement can be reduced. The positioning of gesture as the basic unit through which momentum is built, characteristically also begins to manifest as resistance to interpretation, by drawing attention to the ephemerality and temporal impermanence of movement as such. Motion in the cinematic medium fails to isolate the gestural unit, while within the still frames of a photographic image there is a lack of movement and consequently gesture, thus inducing the frames of still and moving images into a syncopated overlap aids in the unveiling of the gesture.

Among Chandralekha's writing on dance, there is a polemic essay called *The Militant Origins of Indian Dance* (1979) in which she launches a searing critique against Hindu patriarchy and their racist assertions for a pure and homogeneous origin of Indian dance deriving from the oldest Sanskrit treatise on the performing arts, the *Natyashastra*. The conserva-



ative claim over the origin of Indian aesthetics by the bourgeoisie Hindu patriarchy serves to reinstate the casteist structures in India, operating through the celestially ordained hierarchies of Brahmanical (textual) supremacy. The Brahmins as eternal guardians of scriptures and permanent advocates for barring access to education and knowledge for lower castes and various religious and ethnic communities, continue to reinforce a volatile and divisive post-colonial nationalism. It is with this in mind, that Chandralekha draws attention to the atrophy of a Marxist-aesthetic framework of Indian dance; initiating a shift in its political drive to prioritizes the rudiments of dance as one that is strongly linked to work-activity and collective labour. By combining Marxist political thinking with movement and aesthetics, her choreographies succeed in infusing the existing repertoire of classical dance with ritual movements from martial practises of marginalised tribal and *adivasi* communities in India.

Focusing on militant origins reroutes the traffic of dance in pure aesthetics and religious ceremonies, to one that functions as means of conveyance for communality and belonging. Militant dancing is a necessity in order to undertake any communal tasks because it fortifies the communal body in preparation for war. Following Chandralekha, a militant dance specifically in the movement of attack-defence entails a vital socio-political drive that cohesively binds members into a collective body. Trainings in confrontation (i.e. the choreography of martial movements) secures immunity for the community to withstand affront socially and despite its erasure by dominant structures in power, the inoculative function of building community through militant dancing remains embedded in the subterranea of the gestural repository of cinema and movement.

Chandralekha's feminist choreographic practise adjudged a specific form of political agency through the concept of *lasya-tandava*, which translates as a 'militancy with grace'. The film excerpt depicts trained dancers from Mandala, the alternative dance centre at Elliott's Beach in Chennai performing 'Namaskar', as she explains — *What is Namaskar? To me it is the potential of the dignity of the body — What does Namaskar mean? Is it just a genuflection? — that you dive at someone's feet — you go limp. No. To me the concept of Namaskar is — that all of your body will show what is the dignity of the body.* In classical Indian dance, Namaskar is a prostration or genuflection, it is a patriarchal inscription upon the corporeal feminine as docile bodies supplicating before higher forces, whether in the name of the father, religious scriptures or divine ordains.

The gestural representations of Namaskar is replete with violence in subjugation to power. Chandralekha responds to the horizontal incline of genuflections imposed upon the feminine corpus by extensively training classical dancers in martial disciplines that focus on rectitude. The result

is a hybrid variety of Namaskar, where submission is also the conveyance of a militant dignity. A reformulation through an acquiescence, distinct from the submissiveness inscribed upon it by high Hinduism whose transcendental aesthetics depend wholly upon the radical alterity of sexual difference and the dehumanisation of its ethnic and aboriginal communities. Chandralekha develops a politically sophisticated response that extraneously supplements the indignation imposed by the violence of power through a symbolic resistance that is not confrontational but rather flexible and mutable. It is an acceptance of structural violence as a necessity for subject formation, despite which it must be met with a militant and dignified non-compliance. Gestural resistance in *militancy with grace* proposes a radical defiance that upholds the agentival capacity of the subject in all its confrontations with power, it is capacity to face the brute force of domination as the condition of our very existence, while remaining with the refusal to accept the submission instantiated and demanded by it.

In her essay, as early as 1979 Chandralekha presciently points towards the emerging coalition between conservative nationalism in India and new forces of Capitalism intent on the cultural commodification through mass media. The combined forces of the two factions that have subdued all revolutionary possibility of militant dancing, by effacing the link between dancing and collective labour, by intensively depoliticizing cinema and all other aesthetic forms and practises. A gestural force suppressed to maintain patriarchal, racist, sexual and caste-based discriminations, while the same time, a gestural drive accelerated to instrumentalise and increase productivity by drawing out vast profits from an exploited and alienated class of workers.

Choreographies of Labour, Counterfield workshop at Goldsmiths, 27th November 2019.

FOOTNOTES

1. Pollock, Griselda. *Art in the Time-space of Memory and Migration*: Sigmund Freud, Anna Freud and Bracha L. Ettinger in the Freud Museum, Artwriting after the Event. 2nd ed. 2003.
2. *Gerere* is the Latin etymological root for gesture, it leads Agamben to the lexical entanglement between *facere* as 'making' and *agere* as 'acting'; with the common root denominator being *gerere*, which means 'to carry'.
3. Here, Agamben also refers to Charcot illustrations of the unsteady gait of women suffering from hysteria at the Salpêtrière. The etymological Greek derivative of *ὑστερικός* (*husterikós*, "suffering in the womb, hysterical"), from *ὑστερά* (*husterá*, "womb") which stems from the belief that hysteria was caused by a disturbance in the uterus and it belonged exclusively to women, leading to the localisation of the ailment in gestational cycles.
4. An emergence of 'involuntary spasming' becomes the symptom of a society that has lost control of its gesture via the neurologist Oliver Sacks, who observes that by 1971, suddenly the streets of New York are flooded with people suffering from involuntary tics. (Agamben, *Notes on Gesture*.)



Black Forum Label listening session

Shelley Rae Calhoun-Scullion

From the vantage of this limnographic ground, In 2018, The Smithsonian Channel aired a documentary film called “The Lost Tapes: Malcolm X”, about a man (whose real name was Malcolm Little) who was a minister, a Black Nationalist and a revolutionary human rights activist.

According to Allison Keyes, who wrote about the documentary on the Smithsonian Magazine website, the film tells the story of Malcolm X through interviews and speeches—and has no narration. This is significant, as audiences are used to viewing documentaries that edit speeches to fit the length and storyline of a film. If “The Lost Tapes” has no narration, it means that Malcolm X’s voice can be heard without commentary, sound bites, or judgement.

I wish to compare a different medium in which recorded speech can also be preserved—which is on vinyl records, as it tends to allow listening in its entirety. As an example from the 1970s, Motown Records’ Black Forum Label had a similar intent to the Malcolm X documentary—to allow the leaders and spokespeople of the African-American community to be heard without interruption, and also to preserve the audio recordings for educational opportunities.

Motown Records Corporation in Detroit, Michigan took the groundbreaking step of showcasing spoken word, and oral histories from the Vietnam War, along with poetry and music. It also featured blistering, unfiltered speeches from Civil Rights leaders such as Martin Luther King and former Black Panther members Stokely Carmichael and Elaine Brown. This vocal content was in sharp contrast to Motown Records’ usual Pop music songs. The founder of Motown Records, Berry Gordy Jr., decided to launch a separate label imprint to keep the commercial side of the company distinct from social activism.

There were eight Black Forum albums in total, and each album is a historic archive, or a literal “record” of the transition from the ideas of non-violence to the greater voices that called for social change within the later half of the 1960s.

I am interested in Motown’s Black Forum record label as it represents a hidden history that overlaps with my own research, of a Detroit sonic rebellion between the years of 1937-1977. My project explores the idea of hidden black history through the medium of recorded sound within oral histories, radio recordings, and vinyl records.

On October 17, 2018, I led an informal listening session within the EMS (Electronic Music Studios) at Goldsmiths University. This particu-

lar music room was well equipped with large speakers, amplifiers, turntable—and blacked out windows. The EMS room was the perfect location to conduct a listening workshop as a form of artistic practice, with few distractions. A small cohort of postgraduate and undergraduate students came to listen and to participate in a discussion after the session.

A goal of this album listening session was to bring together the combined speeches of prominent civil rights leaders and black revolutionaries as a way to present the trajectory of ideas from the Black Power Movement that began in the mid 1960s, and continued into the 1970s. Motown described its own label as “a permanent record of the sound of struggle and the sound of the new era.”

What is Black Power?

The idea of a Black Power Revolution was intended to help people visualise change and freedom during the end of the Jim Crow era (the time period of forced and legal segregation in the American South), but also to help Americans understand that the power of self-determination could be harnessed through individuals working together for a common cause, including the “promotion of racial pride, economic empowerment and the creation of political and cultural institutions”.

Many people who lived through this era misunderstood the idea of Black Power, and were negatively influenced by the American media and government intervention. The Federal Bureau of Investigation’s (FBI) Counter Intelligence Program sought to discredit “subversive voices” such as leaders from the Civil Rights era. The FBI specifically feared the idea of a “Black Messiah” or that specific community leaders like Martin Luther King, Malcolm X or Stokely Carmichael would inspire the rise of Black Nationalism and violence.

Consequently, phrases such as “Black Power Movement” and “Black Power Revolution” have been portrayed within the media as pictorial stereotypes of angry black people with raised fists and large Afros. The actual term “Black Power” is said to originate from the same title of Richard Wright’s non-fiction book, in 1954. The idea of Black Power became mainstream after spokespersons Willie Ricks and Stokely Carmichael used the term within marches from the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1966. After Carmichael began to tire of being arrested (27 times) through non-violence strategies, he announced: “We’ve been saying ‘Freedom’ for six years and we ain’t got nothin’. What we are going to start saying now is Black Power”. (Carmichael, 1966).

Although similar speeches by Stokely Carmichael can be found online, they are not always found in their entirety. So, the Black Forum albums are an example of unedited content that is not easily available from online and retail sources.

...How can you and I be looked upon as men, beaten, and nothing being done about it? Babies being beaten, and nothing being done deserve to be recognized and respected as men can be brutalized... and nothing can be done around singing “We Shall Overcome.”

...We will never communicate talking one language. He's talking the language of a language. If his language is with a shotgun, & understands the language of a rifle, get a rifle the language of a rope, get a rope. But don't wrong language to a man, if you want to really Speak his language.

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...down a dream street talking about sitting next to white people. That does not begin to solve the problem. We didn't go to Mississippi to sit next to Ross Barnett (former governor of Mississippi), we did not go to sit next to Jim Clark (sheriff of Alabama), we went to get them out of our way.

People ought to understand that in fighting for the right to integrate, we were fighting against white supremacy. In order to understand white supremacy, we must dispel the fallacious notion that white people can give anybody freedom. A man is born free. You may enslave a man after he is born, and that is in fact what this country does. It enslaves blacks from the moment they are born. The only thing white people can do is stop denying black people their freedom.

We are now engaged in a psychological struggle in this country about whether or not black people have the right to use the words they want to use without white people giving their sanction. We maintain the use of the words Black Power — we do not address ourselves to that. We are not going to wait for white people to sanction Black Power. We're tired of waiting; every time black people move in this country, they're forced to defend their position. It's time that white people do that. They ought to stand up and defend us as to why they have

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How you can learn more about the history of the Black Power Revolution

As a suggestion, instead of listening to excerpts of Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech, I argue that it is important to listen to the content of complete speeches during the time of the Civil Rights and the Black Power Movement, as it is easy to rely on secondary sources of interpretation. Although the above speech is easier to find in transcription form than audio, there are other speeches from Martin Luther King, which are recorded on vinyl such as his March on Detroit-“The Great March To Freedom” speech from 1963. After 1966, Martin Luther King also became more vocal and subversive about the Vietnam War and the need to fight poverty within black and white working class communities, as his 1971 Motown album “Why I oppose the War in Vietnam” illustrates.

Locate Malcolm X’s 1963 Message to the Grass Roots public speech at the Northern Negro Grass Roots Leadership Convention. Trace Angela Davis’ trajectory from PhD scholar, to activist, revolutionary and speaker after her release from jail. Listen to Davis’ triumphant speech from 9 June 1972, at the Embassy Auditorium in Los Angeles, California. Read actual literature and archival documents from the Black Panthers. Find out more about the women within the Black Arts Movement, read and hear their poems and creative output. Understand more about legislation and cultural norms in which women, blacks and people of colour were oppressed well into the 1970s, despite Civil Rights Legislation.

In conclusion, I wanted to present the idea of historic sound and ways in which researchers and the wider public can “tune in” or rather, re-tune our ears to listen to hidden history, as minority voices are usually suppressed. Through recorded sound, it is possible to transport ourselves back to the waning American Civil Rights movement, the Black Power Revolution and to discover how Black Americans used sonic tools, such as long play albums (LPs) to give black leaders a “platform”, and to be used for future educational purposes” (Motown Museum, 2017).

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So much ... enters through the eyes

Mary Goody

“We see the depth, the smoothness, the softness, the hardness of objects. Cézanne even claimed that we see their odor.”[1]

* Conversations I *

So much [touch] enters through the eyes

“My body sees texture... I see the softness of your skin, the cold smoothness of the window glass, the pitted papery surface of the notebook and I feel them in my fingers (not on, but in) and in my face (somewhere behind my nose and mouth, or inside my cheeks)...”[2]

Looking at clay sculpture: “I can feel, you know how one loop is touching the other loop. It’s kind of like I can feel the touch of the loops. I don’t know where I’m feeling it actually. It’s like in my arms weirdly, it’s like I can feel it as if there’s a body ... like if I was touching your body like that, like your arm [presses her upper arm against mine]... it’s very very strange.”[3]

“If I am looking at a chair, I can feel the contours and texture of the chair as it would feel if I were touching it, sitting in it, or throwing it”[4]

So much [body] enters through the eyes

“When my dog scratches himself or licks himself my body feels him. It’s so irritating – his erratic movements screeching through my body ... A few people around me have a cold and when they sniff or sneeze my whole body feels like it is convulsing. It’s like my whole body tingles with their movement...” [5]

“... I think and hope because of the illusionistic character of the images, and the visual uncertainty of where they are on the wall, their scale may have a physical effect on the viewer’s body, creating a sense of weightlessness. The bronzes I hope have a direct effect on the body that is the opposite. I want them to be internally sensed as infinitely heavy, just straining to move or raise themselves from the ground. [6]

So much [space] enters through the eyes

“Sculpture ... [is] to do with seeing three dimensionally and experiencing three dimensionally and opening up that experience for the viewer, not only looking at the sculpture itself, but in everyday life. If you take a walk through the woods, say, [...] just really having a sense of the fullness of the volumes of the trunks of the trees, and the reality of the spaces between them.” [7]

Discovering three dimensions:

“The coolest thing is the feeling you get being ‘in the dimension’”. It is alive and open and you can actually see things floating by you as you walk and the depth is everywhere... it is ahead, but it also down towards my feet... tables looked really low and walls looked really high and sitting at a desk I just wanted to put my hands all over it and push my hand in between the spaces of the object on the desk.” [8]

So much [eye] enters through the touch

“Well with both massage and sculpture, obviously different, but the hand is the focus for picking up, sensing and giving out or applying pressure, forming if it’s clay, giving pressure to muscles in certain ways if it’s the body... closing the eyes and focusing on the fingertips is quite a good way of heightening that consciousness of that sensation and focussing all your attention into it. It can become very much heightened, finely attuned... focusing very much on what’s felt through the fingertips. ...the fingers, if they’re palpating – I don’t know if that’s originally a medical term, but exploring through touch – you can see the sharpness, fineness of an edge, the softness or form of a dip, texture, roughness, smoothness, different types of texture, tracing bigger shapes, as well as small ones, the relationship of things that are close to each other... The fingers really become like a different sort of eye...” [9]

So much [eye] enters through the ear

“I hear the salad being chopped downstairs and can see the knife moving and the lettuce shards on the board... according to the scientists my brain-muscle neurons even move too, as if I was doing the same thing. [10]

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“The snow was falling lazily around me in large, wet flakes. I could see the space between each flake, and all the flakes together produced a beautiful three-dimensional dance. In the past, the snow would have appeared to fall in a flat sheet in one plane slightly in front of me. I would have felt like I was looking in on the snowfall. But now, I felt myself within the snowfall, among the snowflakes.”

Susan Barry, *Fixing My Gaze*

So much [eye] enters through the body

“Because [the massive sculptures] change all the time as you move round them, you’re sensing them with your body as well as your eyes...” [11]

So much [body] enters through the ear

“...I feel tone in my body... those notes I feel up the sides of my arms, and sometimes every now and then like a little kind of... it’s like the sound is in my organs, inside, I can feel it inside my body.” [12]

So much [body] enters through the touch

“...very few people are aware that in each of our fingers, located somewhere between the first phalange, the mesophalange and the metaphalange, there is a tiny brain... It should be noted that the fingers are not born with brains, these develop gradually with the passage of time and with the help of what the eyes see... In order for the brain-in-the-head to know what a stone is, the fingers first have to touch it, to feel its rough surface, its weight and density, to cut themselves on it.” [13]

“My first encounter with clay ... provoked a storm inside me. Putting my hand in that wet mass of earth-dirt, matter – immediately a whole cosmos, a vision, presented itself... I ended up ... planting my feet on the ground and my head in matter.” [14]

“Contemporary neuroscience shows that what we see is not the simple ‘visual’ recording in our brain of what stands in front of our eyes, but the result of a complex construction whose outcome is the result of the fundamental contribution of our body with its motor potentialities, our senses and emotions, our imagination and our memories.

“We must definitely abandon the outdated concept of solipsistic and ‘purely-visualist’ vision. Vision is a complex experience, intrinsically synaesthetic, that is, made of attributes that largely exceed the mere transposition in visual coordinates of what we experience any time we lay our eyes on something.

“The expression ‘laying the eyes’ indeed betrays the haptic quality of vision: our eyes are not just optical instruments, but also a ‘hand’ touching and exploring the visible, turning it into something seen by someone.”

Vittorio Gallese, 2017

[Visions of the Body. Embodied simulation and aesthetic experience. *Aisthesis. Pratiche, linguaggi e saperi dell’estetico* 10 (1): 41-50.]



Sleeping with the Devil's Rope

Thlana Bazik

I was deluded, a state of disorientation. My body numb but my senses active. I felt a presence watching over my sleep, and when I opened my eyes slowly, the devil was closer than I had anticipated. It was sitting atop my chest and had his dark and petrifying gaze fixed on me. This was no ordinary nightmare, or so I thought; the intense reality of my sense of the room and my surroundings could not have been a mere deception. I couldn't move a muscle. The harder I tried, the deeper the invisible tangling devil's rope pulled me under. That's when I realised I was paralysed head to toe. I resorted to screaming out loud, in the hope of reaching my roommates but all in vain. Even my voice was stolen from me. I couldn't scream. I panicked. In what way was I going to express the horrors that tormented me? The dreadful presence of the evil entity never leaves, nor the mental torture that excruciated my whole being.

As Indian nationalism took a whole new meaning with the current narrative of the ruling government where dominant religion is postulated as being fundamental to Indianness, the country splits. The wholesale co-optation of Caste Hindu and Jain population to the cause of the Indian far right splits the country's population and reconstitutes India's public into the 'majority' and the 'minority'; into 'us' and 'the other'; 'nationalist' and 'anti-national.' 'I am an anti-national.' I do not claim to be one, but my position is borne of what I have been branded as. My endorsement of dissenting voices against the growing fascist regime and populism, my voice and mobilisation of resources against the intolerance and extreme violence against the religious and ethnic minority which is antithetical to the right-wing nationalistic narratives of the Hindutva make



*liminal spaces: places of belonging
Wood (Charpoy and Deck Chair) with
Barbed Wire, Sound ensemble.
Size Variable, 2019*

me one. I am being watched. The Chowkidar¹ is completely alert and he is tweeting a national call for citizenship vigilantism to become a chowkidar like himself. Everyone else has become a victim of the Night-mare.

The practice of vigilance entails a conscious and imposed deprivation of sleep, both from the vigilante and the watched. There is a hunt for the country's 'anti-nationals'. These armies, or vigilante public² being emboldened by the legalisation of the CAA³ or beef ban has led to increased fearlessness and radicalisation among its cadre. Protected by politicians and those in power, these armies are able to kill, maim and injure with impunity those deemed anathema to the sentiment of the vigilante publics, as violence against dissenters is rationalised as patriotism. Where violence and detestation against those who do not wish to comply with the Hindutva narrative is on the rise, there is also an escalation of dissenting voices, from the split others. There are protests, and there are anti-protest protests, urging and demanding each other to 'wake up'; raising arms and hatred, if not slogans; violence takes a toll and silences are imposed; while one mourns the other shouts cries of victory; the never ending atrocities; the never ending end of sleep.

This is an anticipation of a prolonged nightmare. But even in slumber, the Night-mare awaits. A visit by the Night-mare — a historically potent word for an evil being or spiritual entity that harasses and threatens a paralysed victim — commonly explained in contemporary times to be the experiences of sleep paralysis is a mnemonic recalling of the past and present socio-political conditions that recreates fear, stress and anxiety. I have been visited by the Night-mare, many a times; but I am not the only one. I have heard the Night-mare attacks more frequently those branded as 'internal enemies' — anyone who does not agree with their heart and soul the prevailing right-wing narrative of Hindutva. Navigating



the pressing and urgent political tensions in my country to explore the 'ends of sleep' in different economic and socio-political context, the mechanism of a right-wing political force that establishes sleep paralysis as a less known and discussed parasomnia but essentially a shared experience. Its manifestation varied, across cultures and histories; the origin of mythologies and the source of all stories of devils and demons.⁴

Speaking of the devil, it is the manifestation of this demonic entity that almost killed the Indian media. Lilith, as she was known in ancient days, is one of the most notorious manifestation of the Night-mare and had several of the Indian media houses under her enchantment. As a Night-mare entity, apart from instilling fear, Lilith's attacks are often thought to be fatal. Lilith is also known to seduce her victims and lure them into fatal temptations. She is portrayed to be the first wife of Adam in The Alphabet of Ben Sira, had disputed over who should assume the bottom position during a sexual intercourse. Unlike Eve, Lilith

The Devil's rope (barbed wire) as a material in its functionality occupies the in-between space that divides two lands. This space of liminality, as in a 'rite of passage' is where people affected by NRC belong. It represents the condition of statelessness, un-rest, ambiguity and disorientation.

Sleeping in the Devil's Rope produces Night-mare (a historical potent word for sleep paralysis), the evil being or entity that threatens to press the very life out of its victim. The night-mare attack occurs during the REM (rapid eye movement) sleep, i.e., the in-between state of sleeping and waking, with the victim's body being paralysed accompanied by intense fear and anxiety.

Navigating the pressing and urgent political tensions in India the work explores the 'ends of sleep' in different economic and socio-political context and the mechanism of a right-wing political force that establishes sleep paralysis as a less known and discussed parasomnia but essentially a common experience.



was created from the earth, the same material as Adam, therefore she considered herself equal. Majority of sleep paralysis occur when one is lying in a supine position. Given the prevalence and significance of lying in a supine position for Night-mare attacks, the question of compliance or defiance is enthralling, at best as Lilith and Adam's relationship ended in a dispute who should assume this position. It is not surprising that majority of hate-crime related are exponentially rising under the watch of a supine media. One is neither in a complete state of wakefulness nor in slumber while under attack; and is subjected to a loss of agency, of credibility, of accountability, of freedom and thereby become an apparatus for the Hindutva to instil fear and hatred, instigate division and illusion, upending political agendas through undesirable means and drumming up a violent jingoism.

During sleep paralysis, the immediate environment is often realistically perceived. The body experiences a waking conscious state; thus, it rules out the possibility that the subject is completely in the realm of dreams and the unfolding events are not real. This is the illusion. The illusion of perception, of discernment and rational conception. Sleep paralysis is characterized by the impression or the illusion of wakefulness. This is the nature of a politics of discretion and illusion operating throughout history and implicitly brought to the forefront in contemporary politics as post-truth. The popularity of the term 'post-truth' is marked by the rise of fascism and communism around the world. Also evident from a rise in the circulation of a wide range of 'bullshit' — from outright lies to fake news, patented and deliberate falsehood to conjure false perception, from political nonsense to nuanced and subtle propaganda, circulation of conspiracy theories, etc. This is the also the illusion where myths are perceived to be reality; the illusion of the Hindutva myths — the false notions, fabricated stories and fantasies that indoctrinate the masses with Vedic golden age, myth of the Aryan race superiority and purity, myth of India as a Hindu nation and the myth of Hindu-ness translated as Indianness, the myth of the virtues of blood ordained caste and power hierarchies, amongst others.

I have been told, the best way to come out from sleep paralysis is to try to move your toes. It has worked, I believe so. That little movement, the mobilisation and regaining agency over one's body seems to be the only remedy to overcome the Night-mare attack. If a small agitation is able to break the enchanted spell of the devil, so I shall try. I will not be an unresisting victim to the fiendish forces that tries to silence, paralyse and terrorise while in slumber.

¹ The popularity and success of Narendra Modi, and subsequently the success of Hindutva; perhaps, can be best summed up and attributed to the NaMo Cult - according to Pralay Kanungo it is a cult that is "shaped around development on the one hand and the other on a narrative of aggressive nationalism." The cult shaped around Narendra Modi not only validates him as a political face of the BJP, but also as a Hindutva icon. Amongst the plethora of cultic manifestations that personify Modi as the main political figure, it was the image of the Chowkidar (trans. Watchman) that legitimises and validates it the most.

² In writing about how the current ruling party in India posits a narrow and rigid version of Hinduism as fundamental to Indianness, Shakuntala Banaji coined the term vigilante public in which majority of the public are mobilised either in ethno-cultural violence or its defence and disavowal against 'the other' - the second citizens.

³ The Citizen Amendment Act (CAA) amends Indian citizenship for illegal migrants belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Parsi, Bhuddist and Christians but consciously excludes its Muslim population.

⁴ Laistner Ludwig, a historian in 1889 gave this opinion because of the ubiquity of 'Night-mare' across cultures and folk traditions.

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Beskrywing van Artikel *Damesbaadjie wol*

TAK WAARONDER U VAL. (Skrap wat nie van toepassing is nie).

A.T.K.V. *Oudtshoorn*

V.-EN-M. *Mevr. B. Dicker*

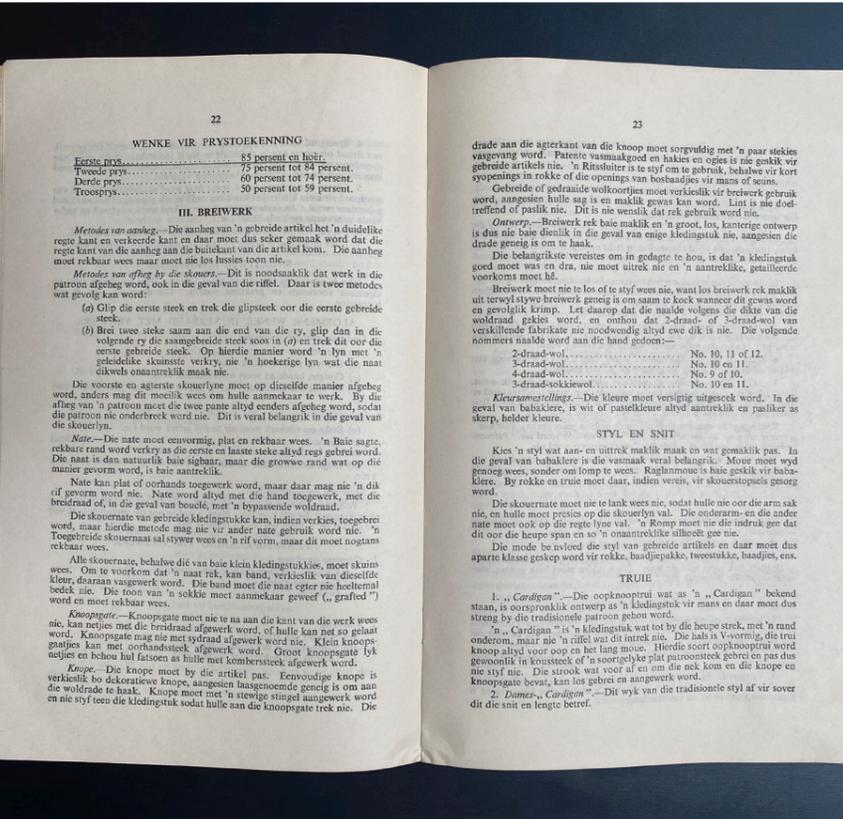
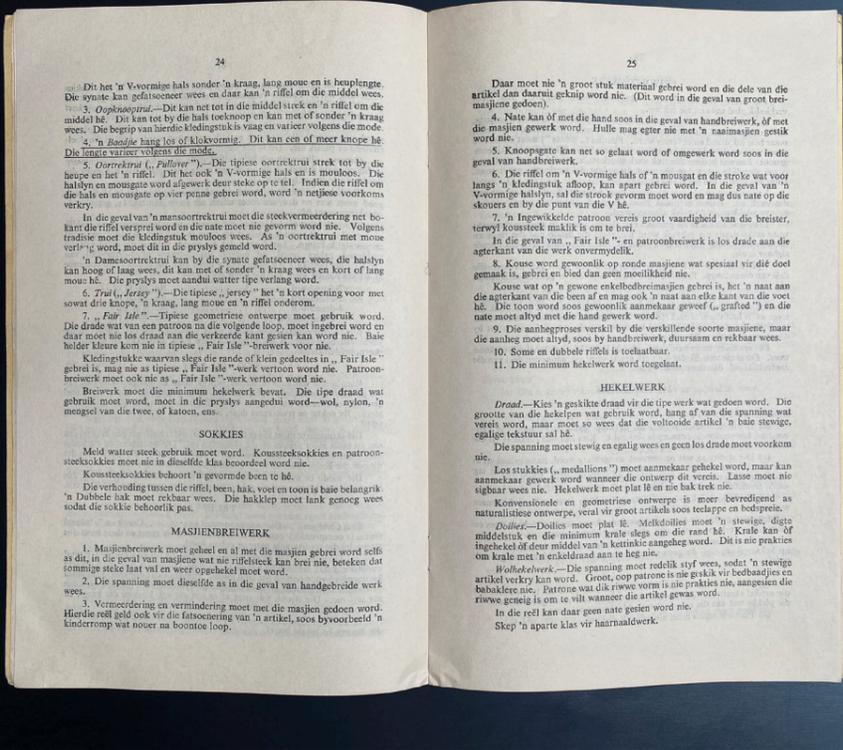
Adres *Hoopstraat 51*

Oudtshoorn
(You asb. op die streep om en heg die omgevoerde deel bo saam vas).
12/62-V.B.-58353

CULTURAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Rudi Christian Ferreira

For the Afrikaans housewife legitimacy and worth
is conveyed through the established authority of the
Afrikaanse Taal en Kultuurvereniging.



Should a woman manage her house with knowledge, knowledge of hygiene and domestic science, and should she implant in her children a bias to work with knowledge on every terrain, to leave nothing to chance, then her children must be successful, achieving much for country and volk.¹

¹ Kruger, L.-M., 1991, 'Gender, Community and Identity: Women and Afrikaner Nationalism in the Volksmoeder, Discourse of Die Boervrou, 1919 – 1931', Masters Dissertation: University of Cape Town



WARBURG'S NIGHTMARE

Mnemonic-control (Excerpts)

Lorde Selys

Appendix I - Sorties

Digits & Saliva

Anachronisms

Atlas – Mnemosyne

Mythopoiesis – Rafting

Pathos – Formulas

Animating Images – *Einführung*

Fluidifying – Categories

Analogies

Google's Nymph

The Algorithm of the Good Neighbour

Drifts, *Dérives*, Derivatives

Contingency's Goddess

Anecdotes

Keyboard Oracles

Totentanz

Pattern Recognition

Mnemonic Futurity

Conclusive Induction – *Black Liquid*

Appendix II – *4 Waters & F Da Silva*

Appendix I Sorties

Things and boxes

Musea without roofs

You know you can do this with coffee cups?

Yes, maps and photographs sometime act like tarot cards

I was 11

I drew a map of the world

The teacher liked it so much that he never returned it to me 15 years later

I migrated to Australia

Jean's Transe AM is often parked in front of the Beirut Art Center

It's secure there and he doesn't need to pay the parking

He never entered the arty center, as he names it

Jean wouldn't drive in Beirut, past a Bourj-Hammoud – Sin El Fil area

He is afraid of foreigners

Anybody outside his neighbourhood is a foreigner to him

He has the allure of a rap singer constructed by the Lebanese Forces

Wearing a bling-bling sparkling red rosary around the neck

It's not Hiroshima nor Nagasaki, it's not Downtown, it's not Solidere It's

a mix of cities and then

There's the desert

In fact, it is Solidere and it is Downtown

Close to where last December, economist Chatah car was bombed

Black Range Rovers.

Is it sexual?

A point of view and a crossroad

The camera strokes on a wall surrounding the art and car centers of Jisr el Waati

There's a poster with the mortuary mask of Hegel

High angle pan shot on the hole next to Ashkal Alwan

A construction site and its hydraulic system

It's the work of Sykes and Picot's grandsons!

They want to change the world, again

They will make a vice den in the north

Or maybe the Indian and the Chinese will invade the globe

Yeah maps of cities

It's not Beirut and looks a bit like Damascus

The trees and the light and a lot of empty spaces

And a palm tree

No and it's not Al-Arabia TV

From which film it was extracted?

Zoom out from the roof of Ashkal Alwan,

A man looks into the hole

A construction site

Mauve sky

It was the "Essay as Form" where he talks about

the sanitization society Zoom out on the driving

mirror of Akram's car

Its dashboard looks like a face

There is a screen out of order in each headrest

Where what is being described is the process

itself

Rather than the thing being examined

There's a cube, a speck of dust, a double.

As the building of Ashkal Alwan gets smaller

We enter the excavation site

Again

I don't think it's a scene of Lebanese violence

It's Sunday Market

He looks like a torero after the battle

He's not dead

He's gracious

A man with a light blue thickly padded jacket

asks if he can traverse the frame

Smiling

His name is Walid

Tip of fingers touching the screen of a smart phone

Purple nails filing transparent "natural" ones

A young girl watching the nails then gazing at the camera

An Iphone framing and screening a dance class

A dance class taking place in the beauty salon

It's 21.47 on the clock only

Through the windscreen

We can see a middle age couple taking Selfies

Posing on the car hood

Loopholes and stubs

Akram is filming me filming him in his car

Filming me filming him filming his car

A cigarette in his mouth

It stops you actually from touching the object

Yeah...

A bit like a photograph

Akram films the ceiling of his car where a collection of Lebanese,

Ottoman, Syrian bank notes are wallpapered

And I can see two words in capital letters that say:

HASARD OBJECTIF

Inside Aziza (Akraam's car) it's all painted in gold,

Cigarette lighters are glued next to bows

Next to coins, stickers of the Virgin Mary, Allah calligraphed, Batman,

Barbie, Lebanese Flags pins and flowers

Close up on a reflecting pair of skiing glasses and a rose

Back to Walid

I'm not Syrian anymore

I'm a foreigner

They made a city special for them

All the streets are closed except one with two passages

It's midnight

I need to get back home

Cross the border inside Aleppo

A journalist starts to photograph me

I said: "Don't take pictures of me you Fucker!"

He wanted an image of me

Because I just crossed the border

Crossed the street

Shooting stars

Figures passing by

A secret place

A bunker

Archaeological things they should be preserved as images.

Neon Light.

A man is performing in the street

Under my demand

Holding a column of white buckets stained by beetroot traces

A boy wearing a yellow T-shirt walks past him

In yellow is the past,
In white is the present

A truck full of metallic bars approaches the hole
with the reverse gear

I wonder if we explode the bubbles if fingers
get pink.

Zoom out on the falafel snack
Transportation of metallic spokes
Workers making them softly land into the
excavation site

A shop selling led light advertising signs
I wish I could read English
Sleep
I love you

A lift elevates in the dust of the sky
An Arabic coffee pot stands on a wall

Next to an electric fuse and a photograph of
Chaffa's photographic series
Of her family house occupied during the Israeli
invasion

I try to imagine myself a future like some have
imagined cities.

A sky screwed by towers, skyscrapers fucking
the sky
Glass balconies of a building in Hamra
Jerusalem-Berlin, because of the light

Smart phones pretending to take pictures of
Goya's Disasters of War Some graphics and
statistics on the Hudson by Gordon Matta-
Clark Because of the light

Back to the Transe AM, car-wash moment

There was a similar installation at Zico house,
an artist topped the room with the word "me",
written from top to bottom. After the exhibition
the walls were recovered with paint. 10 years
later a worker came to paint the wall again, as
he started sanding, he saw the word "me" "me"
"me" written everywhere
He ran away and we never saw him again.

A document is under attack
a pussy not a cat

I like rust
As in Facebook "like"

Walid enters the Beirut Art Center, enters a
screening room
There's a slide show screening ancient maps
I'm from Texas
He looks back with his cigar like a sixth finger
"Mister Garison, you shouldn't have come. This
is civil war".
Can we switch to something else?

Walid leaves the room and enters the white cube
Wide photographs of art works stacked to the
wall
I don't know France, I speak the language but
I've never been there.

Some ancient engravings screened behind Walid

The other day, they said on TV that the Pullman
bus station has been damaged
I went to Sumariye bus stop
And asked someone: "There's nothing here?"
Nothing attacked, no bombs?"
"No", he said: "nothing"

Walid is now sitting in the auditorium where
nothing is shown.

I love maps because it's plenty of details of
something real
I don't care if it's an art or history object, or a
found object
The colours, the atmosphere is one of a
nightclub
Of a place to dance
Or maybe it's a cave
Or a galaxy

We see a football field from the point of view of
a big wheel

Then, inside the car, a Radio-TV screens grey
waves
Through the back windscreen we can see a
tunnel and the Hariri mosque This looks like it's
a museum of something
I cannot put my finger on the shape.
A missile?
Or a boat on the sea with a sun or a string
behind it



This text was written borrowing the subtitles or subtext of a film made
as I was living in Beirut some years ago. More precisely, it is edited
with comments describing what is being subtitled. This work was a
commission that I have been working on throughout the year 2014. Years
later, I still don't totally grasp what was it that this audio-visual work did
achieve or failed to do. The audience would either react positively for its
"weird connectivity" or ignored it for its apparent confusion or seemingly
fussy enigma. I often characterise it as a paradoxically autistic work
of mine, in so far that its attempt is to organize and attune with several
voices, virtual temporalities and neighbouring political events into one
time-space that is the film and the exhibition space it is departing from
and returning to. Something of this research starts there, in front of the
perplexity that this film project has left. Partly achieved, partly left ahead.
I also mostly stopped filming since.

This film came as an invitation to respond in audio-visual terms to the
photographic part of a project created between Benjaminian photographer
and artist Arno Gisinger and the art-historian/curator and writer Georges
Didi-Huberman. Their collaboration was itself the migratory, light-
weighed – USB - typed, volatile, digital version and diversion of another
exhibition; "Atlas How to Carry the World on one's back?" This master
show and much more heavy institutional exhibition was a tribute to Aby
Warburg's Atlas Mnemosyne. An attempt at expanding in spatial and
material terms on the late art historian most mysterious and admired
project nearly a century later. In all these expansions, adaptations,
materially softened versions, reactions, responses, continuations and
homage to the *Bilder Atlas-Mnemosyne*, there's something sprawling, of
the necessarily unfinished, of a methodology that quasi-obsessively deals
with the infinite.

This audio-visual project *Sorties* includes different virtual versions.
Online and on screens, subsists the sequence titled *Sorties*
(*Picnic+Exodus*). The process of production of the video worked as such;
a dozen of people who I knew more or less and had a relation with the
neighbourhood where the exhibition was taking place (at the Beirut Art
Center, in the gentrifying outskirts of East Beirut) were asked to speak
upon a selection of images, as if the photographs were a set of tarot
cards. All visual events transcend the order of Time. The interviews were
conducted in French, English and Arabic. I knew, depending on their
background or practice that the interviewee would decipher the images
differently, that these photographs would trigger their memories and
futures variably. My aim was to produce a film that would describe
a virtual space at the intersection of a heterogeneous community of
people, a variably geographical place and an archive. These transcribed
interviews produced a script, a partition of about 150 pages that I
translated with the help of friends in English, the middle language, or the
medium. I ran my camera through this script like an algorithm, attempting
to re-map in sensory terms a neighbourhood I knew all too well, through
the words and images of others. The result is a cinematic drift through
Beirut between all kind of spaces and anachronistic narratives. *Sorties*¹ is
an anagram for Stories.

Digits & Saliva

To start a Word document with an Appendix is
an artificial attempt at reversing the sequencing
of writing. An appendix in a human body has no
known function but it can hurt.

(...)

Anachronisms, Analogies, Anecdotes. Time.
Logics. Published Things. Their Proportion or
Negation.

(...)

Pathos Formula

Pathosformeln. Pathos. Formula. As he will be
renowned for, Warburg will use the German
language at its best to create a neologism,
an oxymoron, made of semantic opposites,
contracting verbally a tension between the
emotional and the mathematical. Pathos is one
of these words which meaning has reversed
throughout history. In the most generic sense
it is something that appeals to emotions.
According to the Greek tradition, it is a
technique of communication related to passion.
It is used in rhetoric and opposes itself to logos
and ethos, and therefore takes a lot of space and
value in art and politics. However, it should not
be directly translated into emotion. Following
the slow shift of modernity's ideology that
feels things in-dividually; I "have" an emotion,
whereas pathos, as passion has me. And Pathos
contrary to emotions is something that takes
over the body, which can be felt externally, by
others who see me. One can hide an emotion,
not a passion.

The formula, on the other hand is something
between a form and a formulation. A formula is
more precisely a form that can replicate itself. A
form that is repeatable, not necessarily repeated.
It encompasses the potentiality of its replication
not its actuality. *Pathos Formulas* are extreme
emotional states that replicate² themselves
throughout bodies and history and as such
achieve an "overpowering hegemony" among
artistic conventions, as Warburg writes in the
introduction to his Atlas Mnemosyne.³

1. Lorde Selys, *Sorties (Picnic+Exodus)*, video, 2014, <https://vimeo.com/104194812>.

2. On this topic I would agree with the Warburgian and Benjaminian scholar Mathew Rampley that Warburg is not so much interested in the manifestation of Antiquity into Renaissance but by the event of repetition itself.

3. Aby Warburg and Matthew Rampley, 'The Absorption of the Expressive Values of the Past', *Art in Translation* 1, no. 2 (July 2009): 273–83, <https://doi.org/10.2752/175613109X462708>.

SORTIES خروج





Sticks, Stones & Supplanted Groans: The Offshoots of Sexual Difference in Ari Astar's *Midsommar*

Killian O' Dwyer

'Indifferetimes nnt one, keep still. When you stir, you disturb their order. You upset everything.'¹

Luce Irigaray

The cultivation of sexual difference, as a 'plot' overgrown in the field of psychoanalysis, has become a complex *grafting* made evident within the primal structures of writing and language. At first blush, this *grafting* appears to have sewn inextricably the solemnity of words into Self and sex-making, a technique and an instrument which inscribes 'difference at the heart of life'.² It has manifested as a propagation of the material-semiotic, taking root in Derrida's *limitrophy* from his seminal text 'The Animal That Therefore I Am' (2008), having found speculative leverage in the generative grounds of his thinking towards 'what abuts onto limits,' 'what feeds, is fed, is cared for, raised and trained, what is cultivated on the edges of a limit.'³

From the vantage of this limitrophic ground, we may consider *grafting* to be the operation whereby a *difference that is Other to the origin* (the difference between a scion and the root below before it is grafted) inosculates into a Haraway-ian material-semiotic knot (the flesh-made-word, the word-made-flesh, the fleshy words, the wordy flesh).⁴ It is a 'growing together' at the intersection of language, space and signification. This node of difference offshoots as a 'pathbreaker for the seed', if we were to refer to Derrida's *Dissemination* (1969), we could think of *grafting* difference as that 'which therefore produces (itself) and advances only in the plural. It is a singular plural, which no single origin will ever have preceded. [By way of] Germination. [By way of] Dissemination.'⁵ Therefore, *grafting* is a difference of the Other onto the subject 'whose traces have been lost.'⁶

Yet, if we were to approach this *grafting* from another angle, with the cultivation of sexual difference specifically in mind (in this well-tilled field of psychoanalysis) and as readers of Irigaray's 'This Sex Which Is Not One' (1985), we would approach this complex *grafting* with immense disquiet. While, *on the One hand*, Derrida would gesture to a thinking of a limit where difference truly grows; *on the Other hand*, Irigaray would equally counter this notion with a fervent insistence towards recognising that difference, like this concept of *grafting*, is a manifestation that is *always in displacement*.⁷

In this sense, *grafting* (and the difference incited therein) is always displaced, dispersed, disseminated, it is affixed to the Greek root *dis-* (as two, in twain – 'Not One' – apart, asunder) something that is potentially negative and 'privative, denoting removal, aversion, negation, or reversal.'⁸ Here, we uncover a kernel of doubt in our thinking on difference, one that is integral to the conceptualisation of female sexuality in psychoanalytic discourse, which, unchecked, becomes rather unruly.

In a nutshell, this displaced female sexuality, which has been carefully *grafted* by the hands of Man throughout history (especially by the probing hands of Freud in probably his

most egregious lecture 'Femininity' (1933)), has grown from *two into One*. Sticks, stones and the solemnity of words have supported such a displacement (which we learn, with disappointment, from the words of Derrida in 'The Double Session' and the bookend insert 'Trance Partition'). The cutting of female sexuality in twain (as the Other cutting or limp twig) is only afforded life by grafting its differences to the logics of the Same (the stem securely rooted within the plot).

Thus, we now have a simplified sapling supplanted by the Same: sexual difference becomes sexual indifference. And, critically, it is the *grafting* of this 'in' to 'difference', a *grafted* 'in' that is *inserted* into the speculative lens of female sexuality, that is revealed as the most problematic.

This simple *grafted* limb of 'in' to 'indifference' (in fact, it is rather a breaking /in\ rather than a gestural 'in' - emphasis on the phallic support of '^') ploughs through female sexuality in the plot of psychoanalysis. *Grafting* stipulates a 'growing /in\' – how the Little Boy is /in\ the Little Girl (think of Irigaray's chastising of Freud's assertion that 'the little girl is in fact a little boy'),⁹ how masculine aggressiveness and hostility is / in\ the frigid and frozen woman (as in Freud's infamous 'Femininity'). Two /in\ One. One / in\ the Same. Essentially, it is the breadth of a difference between Irigaray's 'sexual-in-difference' and Freud's 'sexual indifference' that is at stake in this cultivated plot.

Images on these pages
from Ari Astar's
Midsommar (2019)



This *grafting* is a technique and an instrument that plays out on the most speculative of levels, one that we are able to abstractly articulate in Ari Astar's 'Midsommar' (2019). Here, we witness female sexuality supplanted by the sex of Man – a breaking /in\ of femininity. In this way, we are compelled to engage in a speculative visual reading, with the aforementioned tomes of Irigaray and Freud close to hand, in order to follow the trailing offshoots of these sexes which are *grafted* /in\ to One.

Setting the inaugural scene before us: we face the painted surface of a wooden tableau, depicting the shifting stories of death, sexuality, and ritual; before dividing, like stage curtains, to reveal a winter landscape, punctuated by a melancholic drone.

The story focuses on Dani, a college student bereft by a strained relationship with her emotionally distant boyfriend Christian. From the beginning, we become acutely aware of their awkward and apathetic encounters – their lips speak at the same time, to one another, but their lips do not 'speak' together; truly to each other; they do not hear one another.¹⁰ Ultimately, Dani is consistently assuaged by his masculine tone, her role as 'feminine counterpart to Christian in the film is 'prescribed by... masculine specula(riza)tion and corresponds scarcely at all to woman's desire, which may be recovered only in secret, in hiding, with anxiety and guilt'.¹¹ And she is always anxious and guilt-ridden, in each interaction that they have. Her hysterical panic attacks throughout the film cast her as ill-omened, frigidly Other. Ultimately, a frequency of sexual frigidity and feminine passivity is grafted into her being, 'in\ her sexual function', what Freud would consider to be her libido and her Nature, as 'the sexual inferiority of all women.'¹²

At this point, we play witness to the first displacement, the first break /in\, of female sexuality; the death of Dani's parents by her sister in an act of murder-suicide by carbon monoxide poisoning. On an abstract level, this loss of love from the parents is a loss of her pre-Oedipal fixations that 'motivates her behaviour' and regulates her 'penis envy' at the onset of the Oedipus complex (if we were to prescribe to our plot of psychoanalysis),¹³ a loss *at the hands of the sister (not a brother; not a son of a primal horde who may be 'justified' in the laws of patricide and matricide)*.¹⁴ Such a murder-suicide would be incomprehensible within the psycho-narrative of 'the feminine' and Dani visually mourns in a hysterical fit of wailing, her pain is personified by the wintry scene and swirling snow beyond the window of her apartment, *a personified freezing of her Self, her femininity, in a dark and untraversed continent*.

This violent wintry storm outside eventually thaws to a warm summers day, and the following scene settles on a future melancholic Dani, curled on top of her bed in her room. Immediately, our attention is drawn to the

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curious painting hanging above her, depicting of what can only be described as a little princess in tutelage with a wild bear, a little girl (or is it a little boy?) who intimately nuzzles against the muzzle of a bear caught between surprise and awe. This painting serves as foreshadow of her Oedipal development, as a hint of a symbolic taming of a masculinity in her sexual function ('a suppression of women's aggressiveness which is prescribed to them constitutionally'),¹⁵ a communing with an innate and inner aggressiveness.

From here our speculative interest shifts through the main plot of the film, through the midsummer festival in Hälsingland as a space of ritual, of ceremonial white; where the ornate wooden structures are incised and painted with illustrations that formalises (formulises) sexual reproduction; where the stones are carved with a runic language, the teachings of tradition and taboo; where blood is ritually shed. Our speculative interest tiptoes through visual representation of certain psychoanalytic staples; the suggestive tropes of bisexual in Nature (the equal reverence given to the two male and female cult members – as two /in/One), the negotiation between the death drive and sexual function (the death drops of the cultists onto a 'precious stone' below), the caged bear in the background (*that* suppressed aggression in 'Nature') – yet it is when Dani is crowned May Queen after a ceremonial maypole dance (a pole that is crudely phallic – upturned, inserted into Nature) that she enters a very specific, and very foreboding, development of femininity that is particular to the psychoanalytic story devised by Freud.

Upon being named May Queen, Christian and Dani separate: she is given a 'place', one where she passively consecrates and blesses the land with ritual gestures and songs; he

becomes involved in the rites of reproduction with one of the cultists, reduced to a mute and animalistic form of reproduction after drinking a mysterious concoction that sends his libido into overdrive (a primitive scene in the film of animalistic and ceremonial sexual intercourse which teeters on Freud's most problematic of theories: 'the accomplishment of the aim of biology has been entrusted to the aggressiveness of men and has been made to some extent independent of women's consent').¹⁶ Returning to discover Christian and the cultist together, Dani spirals into one of her frenzied and hysterical states, where her wails and groans are empathically echoed by the other Hårga women, a collective despair that personifies the suffering of *grafting* at the hands of Man.

Yet, it is the penultimate scene that is the richest, the most suggestive, and deeply troubling, of Freud's writing of female sexuality. In this scene, Dani, obscured in a ceremonial garb of flowers, chooses to have Christian ritually sacrificed in the ominous large yellow pyramid that stands below in the meadow. There, Christian, wearing the skin of a bear, is placed upright alongside other figures to be sacrificed; the bodies of the cult elders (totems of bisexuality), a pair of young lovers (or love-objects) and Christian's close friends (his fraternity, his band of brothers). Once inside, the yellow pyramid is set alight, these figures burn /in\ the pyramid '\^' that she has placed them in, that was constructed for her, for this ritual.

On the most speculative of levels, we may suggest that this structure, this pyramid, is a symbolic representation of the grafting of the masculine /in\ the feminine. Here, we are suggesting that the pyramid is synonymous with the 'penis-equivalent', the clitoris, and that the pyramid is in fact representative of a 'truncated

penis,'¹⁷ housing the 'totems' or figures of influence in Freud's writing of female sexuality (as an 'embryonic relic' of 'the bisexual nature of woman', of her sexual drives and pleasures which are always 'masculine').¹⁸ If this interpretation is not disquieting enough, it is made all the more so when, as our speculative 'clitoral ridge' ceremonially burns (the *grafted* pyramid \^\) with the masculine libido inside (her lover in the totemic skin of an 'aggressive' bear), Dani is moved from sorrow to glee – *she smiles*.

Here, we are troubled to see resonances between a visual *grafting* of violence and aggression to the clitoris and the grassroots plot of psychoanalysis by the hands of Freud, as evident when he writes; 'the suppression of women's aggressiveness which is prescribed... constitutionally and imposed on them socially... succeed[s]... in binding erotically the destructive trends which have been diverted inwards. Thus masochism, as people say, is truly feminine'.¹⁹

The ending of 'Midsommar' *grafts* the two/in/One, sexual difference is represented as sexual indifference due to the 'masculine hostility of women', and we have arrived at a specularization that has been supplanted by the hands of Man – difference has been displaced and *grafted* again to the root of the Same. However, looking forward, beyond the solemnity of words that have become inscribed and prescribed /in\to female sexuality, we return to 'Dissemination' and to the words of Derrida, who plants a new germ into the cultivated writing of sexual difference and our thinking of displacement and *grafting*; one that collages the other texts and subplots generated from the differences that grow on the limitrophic abyss; he writes:

'Within the graft... it is the sustained, discrete violence of an incision that is not apparent in the thickness of the text [plot], a calculated insemination of the proliferating allogene through which the two texts are transformed, deform each other, contaminate each other's content, tend at times to reject each other, or pass elliptically one into the other and become regenerated in the repetition, along the edges of an overcast seam... Each grafted text continues to radiate back toward the site of its removal, transforming that, too, as it affects the new territory... the cause is never the same, but the operation as of a sum that grows...'²⁰

With these words in mind, we tend to the offshoots of sexual difference in our own speculative field. We collage together the *grafts* of difference, to encourage growth in the seams of plots that germinate in-differently, parables of seeds to sew anew.



Caption in here for pic below
Caption in here for pic below

NOTES

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7. Irigaray, 1985, 16.
8. Aydemir, Murat, *Images of Bliss: Ejaculation, Masculinity, Meaning* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 187-188.
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16. Freud, Sigmund, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993), 131.
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20. Derrida, 2016, 376-377.



Siegrun Salmanian



One piece of ice. Captured. As big as a block of twelve ice cubes. Three cubes next to each other, in two rows. Redouble it. In a cylindrical

glass. Ice shimmering. Sparkling matter. No symmetry. Now, symmetry. A similarity between symmetry and asymmetry? Symmetry is defined by an axis, a mirroring centre. It allows separation, a division into two. Symmetry loves sameness and repetition. It lives off patterns. It requires structure. Fulfilling an orderly, mimetic function.

Can your imagination follow the language?

Let us duplicate the absent presence and celebrate the present absence. Take in its scent. Simultaneously. The other present, the new present: hot water. Less than twelve ice cubes. Half of it. In a circular, colourless plastic container. The water calm and clear. Anticipation. Crystalline powder. Tiny particles. More than twelve. About 24. Some sticking together. Slightly different sizes. In a tiny plastic sachet. As well, the texts bears content. It starts to produce it, itself. Can you consume the asymmetrical assimilation? An intended dense identity - Layers and layers. The promise that identification will blur. Clearly, the subject is ice and the subject is also crystal. But things might change.

Condensation outside of the glass. An echo of the cold. Can you hear its veiling sound? I open the plastic sachet mixing the crystalline powder with water. Circular movements, swirling on the surface. The grainy powder dissolves. It becomes part of the water. Another assimilation, maybe. Inside the ice, a world of tiny bubbles; tiny tubes, shaped like inverted micro-icicles, like inner scratches; empty, filled with air. A repetition of asymmetric patterns within solid structures which are like interior disruptions. Adjust your lens - from macro to micro matters: singularities are framed and contained inside ice.

Waiting. Both ice and crystals need time. Heat can accelerate the process. Or slow it down. Imagine the concept of temperature as a simulation of conflict in gradual duality. [What is time?] Dancing with the weather as the French language suggests? Can I write with ice, think with crystal? Can we produce time? Can we invent new temporalities? Challenge temporal politics, even temporarily? An unreal experiment, following my expectations; a search for empirical abstraction.

Smaller structures. Ice containing the bubbles, the tubes, the scratch inside. Ever more complex gleaming compositions. Brittle, solid, scraped off by the water. Unfreezing sheets and layers - the ice is melting - its multi-layered cover unveiling, inside, outwards, it is a plural aesthetic, a disappearing appearance. Almost a shadow, condensation manifests outside the container. Time is hiding.

I add a few tiny crystalline grains of the darkest blue into the water. Slowly, they sink to the bottom of the transparent circular plastic container. Leaving traces of their fall, a comet in slow motion, a trace of stardust? Clear crystals, subducting dust. Crystal clear, transparent journeys. An indicator for the obliteration of time? Un passe-temps?

[Where is the cosmos?] Choose your scope,

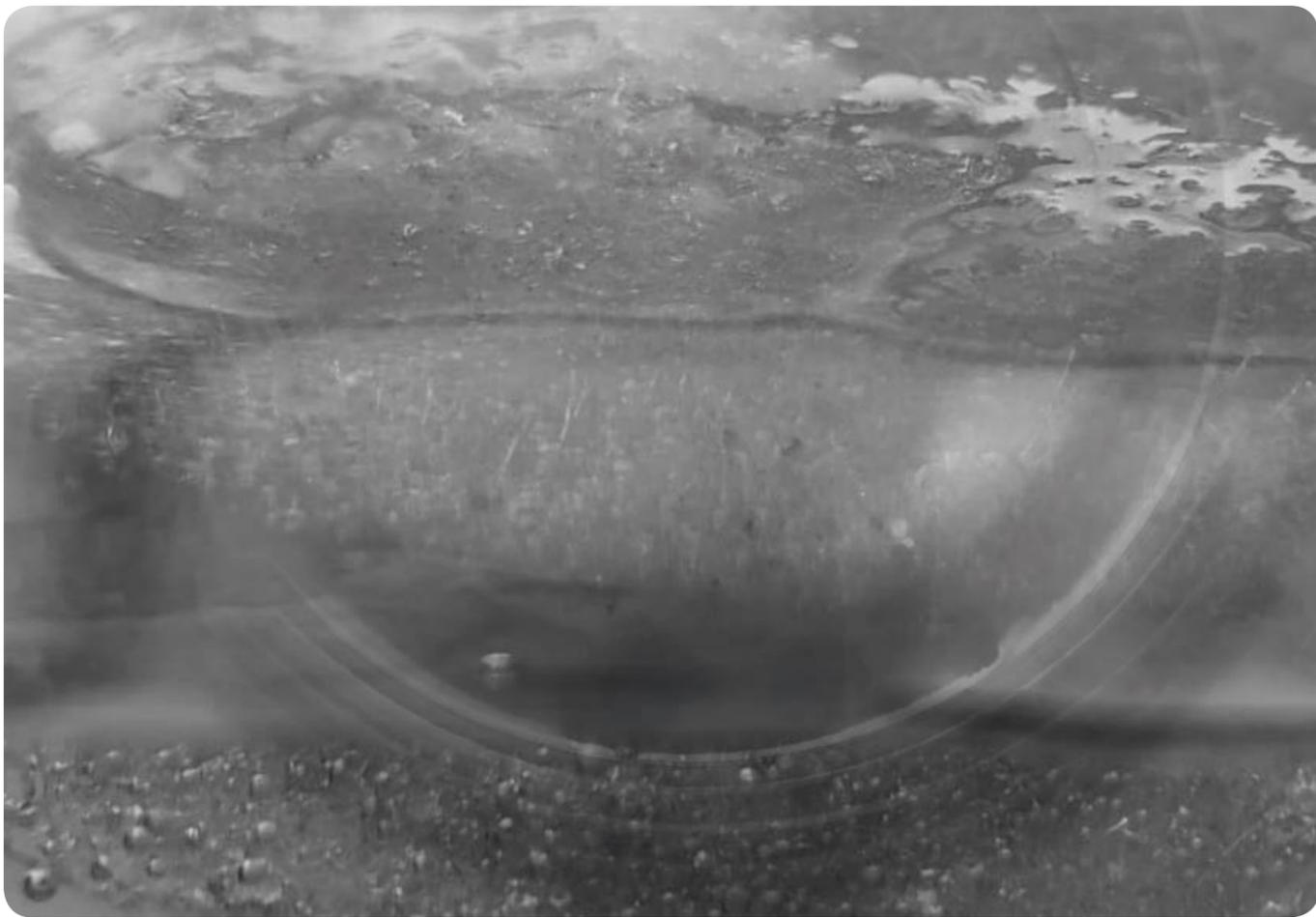
blur your focus. Adjust (it?) to the in-between. I hear drops, slow, sweet drops with long intervals. Spatial splits. I see movement inside the ice. A limp moment. A different pace. I hear crackling. More drops, slowly falling. The lustrous air pockets plop. Can you feel the transient, the fleeting, the fugitive? What does it mean to be separated? The ice seems to evade the production of duality. It seems to be inviting an infinite split. Decomposing, new compositions. [Where does it end?]

The future looks back. Trails of condensation are rising timidly. Almost visibly, melting sounds disrupt the ice. The insides are moving. Its outside, its edges, its sharp ends start to mutate. The surface is curved and carved. Was there ever a surface, an outside? The drops are getting louder. Water accumulates on the bottom of the glass. The ice is being swallowed by the surrounding water. And the water is slowly rising, with the ice at its heart. [Can you feel it breathing?]

The crystalline grains have settled at the bottom. Waiting to meet. Dreaming of a new phase. Nucleation is a process of reorganizing matter. It is directed by the matter, randomly. Agents matter. Thus, the time of nucleation varies. There's no microscope to observe. Let your mind nucleate.

I observe both the dissolving and the growing, ice and crystals. The denucleated ice, the crystal nucleates. A transformation is happening. Transformation, reformation, performance. Simultaneously, the ice reshaping is now remembering other forms, carving itself. Exploring notions of a glacial dream. The ice is expanding with its vapours. The ice is dissolving into water, changing its body. [What is a body?] Becoming liquid. Moving. Containing liquid within a solid form. A state of in-between-ness. The surface of the water is cluttered light with the fragments of remaining ice crystals, swimming above, encircling the remaining piece of ice. It evokes calmness, akin to silence, muted mutations. What is movement? You cannot see the crystals at work, not yet.

Anticipation dominates the experiment, future-driven thoughts. Where is the future? The powder at the bottom seems to describe an area in itself. The condensed nebulous film of the ice's shadow slowly dissolves, drops of the other parts of the film sinking down to the bottom of the glass. The water has risen. The ice has lost its edges, its sharp fronts, its corners. It has become semi-cylindrical, almost trapezium like, on the lower part, a half-rounded form. The tiny crystals, the seeds connect. Becoming nuclear. Crystallizing. The ice melts in between.



The crystals grow. The process connects, it disconnects sides and seeds.

The ice cube still exists. Floating, swimming. The sound of the melting extinguished by the water. Silently. Some crystals are growing, not all. Different layers, different speeds. [What is duration?] Optical illusions. You can (not) see through the ice. What is part of the ice? What isn't? What is part of crystal? What isn't? The de-iced water, the un-crystallised crystals trouble matter.

Reflections of light make the temporal spatial. Ice absorbs, crystals absorb. A liquid-solid mutating crystal matter. Plane faces communicating light, glowing energy. In between light and darkness, instead of a grey, blurry mix, the crystals' lights and shadows, the radiance of the ice, is distinct. The sparks carry both: light and shadows of the light. A dance of potentials and future, past reflections. A double breaking. The shadows can become light and the light become shadow. Coexistence. No entropy.

Take a new perspective. How do you measure transparency? Opaque transparency refracts transparent opacity. It diminishes a distance closer, its dimensions blur. Again, what is transparency? Does transparency not always presuppose a certain mist, a certain border, a certain distance, a veil?

Glissant writes about opacity, highlighting a penetrable opacity¹. Opaquely writing through the ice, with the crystal, interrogating transparency. The crystallization of an opaque

transparency. It is the basis for a relation, for an approach, for a similitude, a simultaneity, a merging, a hybrid matter. More than assimilation. Can you follow the matter? Crystallization invites us to look closer but denies being looked through. The crystal is neither a mere reflection, nor a simple mirroring of shapes.

Reflecting, refracting, mirroring. The in between. Think of the idea of a filter. It absorbs light, as do crystal and ice. It implies transparency. A mediation, maybe. It contains the possibility of liquidity, perhaps. The filter produces a certain opacity but invites a coming through, a permeation, a fathoming out. If this is the case, then the subject of the filter is transparency, for the ice and for crystals. A filter for filtering opaque-transparent transparency. These transparency filters might inspire us to think through the matter and with the matter to the matter. A filter that works in two-ways, a filter that is in constant movement. To explore



the poetics of relation, to follow Glissant's work. Proclaiming against reduction: "In relation every subject is an object, and every object is a subject."ⁱⁱ The crystal and the ice are matter, material matters. Filters mark the point where content and surface meet and separate. A spiralling sieve of time. Crystal and ice transform. Is the filter a trope for a capsule to travel through time, space-less? [What is reality, again?] Ice and crystal are within reach and still not graspable.

Thinking of mutations, of transformation and simultaneity, sparks the idea of the crystal in symmetry with a question of time. The crystal reveals a direct time-image, Deleuze arguesⁱⁱⁱ while referring to Bergson^{iv}. Deleuze speculates with the merging of the actual image and its reflection, the virtual image. The actual image and the virtual image mirror each other. It is the flurrying of the actual and the virtual image where they meet – in the so-called crystal. According to him, it is in the crystal where one finds the only way to the split. The split is the to be understood as the meeting/parting point. Their axis producing the a/symmetry? Is this where one learns about time? Following Bergson via Deleuze, it is the crystal which sparks constant movement, which inhabits infinity, which makes us feel the vertigo of time.

Diagonal, opposite refractions play on the symmetrical structures of the crystal in the experiment. A breaking up and yet a doubling, reproducing is taking place, a fracture. Maybe an overcoming of distance and a displacement at the same time. A dislocation of ice, with crystal. In the text. Bergson also separated time from space. Deleuze highlights the crystal's capacity of containing both past and present, thus following Bergson's spiral of time. A coexistence of the tenses that neglects a thinking in timelines. Like ice. The past is melting through the present into the future and again. The Bergsonian & Deleuzian theory of time resonates with the structure of a crystal and propels the idea of an endless mutation of the real, the virtual, the present, past and future. A



sublime mirror. Where are we sliding down in this crystal labyrinth, along the icicles?

This (virtual?) experiment follows similar rules, the real observations merge with the unreal thoughts. It is the crystal and the ice which do and do not work as singular pieces, both further contain smaller crystals, water, air. The multifaceted structures live off of each other. They might look asymmetrical from the outside, but they are organized in a symmetrical structure atomically. They exist connected and disconnected, solid and liquid. The nucleation, the fusion, the meeting of matter is what these transparent filters demand. Assimilation, coexistence, density, solid matter. [What is solidarity?] An investigation into appearance and modes of disappearing. Dislocating the self, the similar, the same, the mirror. Is this the future?

While a mirror might only offer one entrance, one portal to an inner world, to new and old perspectives on a timeless reflection of time, ice and crystals refract. Agency matters. The ice and the crystals are one and many, they grow, they shrink, they transform, dissolve and nucleate. This matter is graspable and not. Or maybe this that is just a projection, an introspective perception. Or an intuition, according to Bergson.

My travel through ideas continues its flight. What time is it?

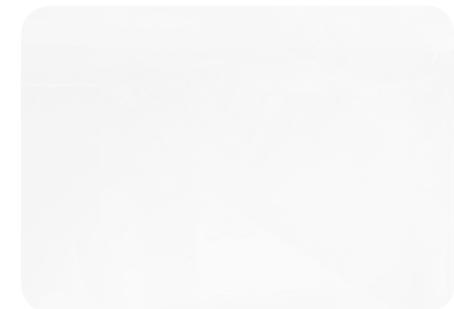


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iii Deleuze, Gilles. Cinema II. The Time-Image, London 2019. (Orig. Cinema 2. L'Image-Temps, Paris 1985)

iv Bergson, Henri. Time and Free Will. An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness, London 1913. (Orig.: Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience, Paris 1889).



Antimonument

Notes towards a script for a soundwalk through Silvertown, east London

Debbie Kent

On their own, monuments are mute. They do not cry out for attention or tell you their story. Generally, sound is only present in the building of the monument, or in its destruction. Robert Smithson demolishes the idea of the monument to reconstruct it in found materials – sand, concrete, water, machinery – and embroidered language. But even so, the deconstructed monument is almost entirely silent: a photograph, a reflection, a postcard, a heliotype, a moving picture, a panorama, a dead metaphor, a roll of film, a mirror, a mise-en-scène, a glassy surface, a photograph of a photograph, holes, ruins, voids, greyness, memory traces, entropy. The machines are idle and the sun has turned to glass. Visual imagery tautologically floods these ordinary voids, squeezing sounds to the edges: a buzzer on the bus the voice of a girl, playing in a group of children the weak cheers of a crowd at a football game, far in the distance

The only noise from Smithson's monuments themselves is implied by the movements of the moving ones: the gush of water into the river the great orgasm embodied by the fountain Hold on a minute, though: what are memory traces if not ambiguous and incomplete. Scratchings in sand, or photographs of photographs, or recordings, or echoes, is it live or is it Memorex? swipe your phone on a nearby tag and hey presto: your phone rings. And it's Queen Victoria on the line... or Peter Pan... or Robert Milligan ... or Thomas Guy ... or John Cass ... The idea that physicality and that voice is important. of a talking statue is uncanny, the stuff of horror stories. Stone coming to life is bad enough: but Galatea says nothing to Pygmalion, she just kisses him. When Shaw steals the story from Ovid, Henry Higgins gives Eliza "the divine gift of articulate speech" but this is to replace the "depressing and disgusting sounds" of something he likens to a bilious pigeon – not even a statue or a monument but a creature that sits on it and shits on it. Using drama, humour and location technology, Talking Statues breathes new life into the statues that surround us all. The sound of a voice does not belong to a monument, conventionally. The sound of a voice has no place in the monuments of

Smithson's Passaic, where time is depicted as decay or the elimination of biological evolution in the memory trace of his words made by ink on paper (or by digital tracks on millions of servers). How can there be sound when time and evolution is eliminated? Sound is movement, collision, transformation, disruption. As Steven Connor says, sound "always brings a difference into the world and is associated with sometimes painful change" Shortly after the sirens wailed you could hear the Germans grinding overhead. You could hear the boom, crump, crump, crump, of heavy bombs at their work of tearing buildings apart. The closest fires were near enough for us to hear the crackling flames and the yells of firemen About every two minutes a new wave of planes would be over. The motors seemed to grind rather than roar, and to have an angry pulsation, like a bee buzzing in blind fury. The guns did not make a constant overwhelming din as in those terrible days of September. They were intermittent - sometimes a few seconds apart, sometimes a minute or more. Their sound was sharp, near by; and soft and muffled, far away. They were everywhere over London.

In English the word "monumental" is often used in reference to something of extraordinary size and power In the second world war, between September 1940 and May 1941, more than 40,000 people in Britain were killed during a series of bombing attacks known as the Blitz. Sound beats, stretches, compresses, contorts says Connor. The sound of a voice has a place at the heart of Susan Hiller's work Monument, which talks directly about time and memory and the making of itself, and the experience of listening to it, the physicality of listening to an analogue recording – old-school cassette tape, player, headphones – and the connection between

To experience Monument you have to participate in it, and to do that you must sit on a park bench and operate the cassette player. If the last person did not rewind the tape, you have to do so; at the end you are asked to rewind it for the next person. So the actual time of the tape rewinding is part of the work, and in it you sense the experience of Hiller making Monument: rewinding, recording, rerecording, rewinding ... She intersperses the recording with fragments of her thoughts about the making of the work – "this is automatic talking" – she talks about death and memory and the memory of the dead, and the representation of the dead and their memory, and our memory of them, and our memory of

(Unreliable notes towards a script for a sonic journey through the tattered remnants of a map of Silvertown, east London)

sitting on a bench listening to a cassette tape play. In the UK, almost 45,000 people have died of Covid-19 since March. "Your presence, my absence," Hiller notes, at one point; "your present, my past". In English the word "monumental" is often used in reference to something of extraordinary size and power spread across the equivalent of a dozen football pitches The aisles are full of noises staff speak out ministers declare it's difficult to hear one of the big water-cooler conversations the question is the sound of ventilators breathing we are not communicating You can't say something this displacement allows the eye to see time as an infinity of surfaces or structures, or both combined workers move among stacks of pipes and other building materials spread across the vast floorspace. "Just here making the new makeshift hospital. Currently making up cables for it – I didn't take this virus very seriously until I saw this this morning."

On a sound walk I led in 2017, as we passed South Hallsville school in Canning Town, a few minutes' walk from the ExCeL centre, I invited everyone to pause for one minute's silence, to honour the hundreds of people killed while sheltering at a school on the same site in September 1940, which was then a makeshift transit point for evacuees. The event itself was hushed up, smothered in silence,

so that people would keep up the so-called Blitz spirit and not be demoralised by the news. In fact, no one knew exactly how many people died because no records were kept but subsequent research puts estimates at anything from 300 to 600. The workers pulling bodies from the ruins after a while gave up as it became apparent their task was futile, and any remaining corpses were bulldozed into the rubble. During that minute, standing on the pavement of a quiet residential street, between a park and a primary school, I tried to focus on the denseness of the silence. a monument can also be anything made to commemorate the dead Hallsville Primary school was rebuilt on the site of the mass grave and life went on. There is a small plaque and a garden at the school, which was rated outstanding in its last full Ofsted report but has only recently reopened to a limited number of pupils after closing for the coronavirus

lockdown. Instead of public silences, during the lockdown there were weekly rounds of applause for hard-working National Health Service workers, which grew to include cheers and whoops, the banging of pots and pans, the crash of percussion instruments, the hooting of car horns, etcetera. The mandated public applause days have ended but the prime minister instead suggested that people applaud hard-working capitalists.

The Greek mnemosynon and the Latin moneo, monere, means 'to remind', 'to advise' or 'to warn', suggesting a monument allows us to see the past and advises or warns us of what is to come I have not heard any clapping or banging yet – perhaps this applause is silent, the sound of one hand waving at those who tirelessly labour in the frontline of the neoliberal economy, or maybe even just one finger raised in a gesture of acknowledgement.

Does the dense cone of silence to remember a tragedy form a type of monument? There is a traditional monument in the heart of Silvertown, a stubby obelisk made of stone, though it is no longer strictly speaking in public space; deep in the heart of the Royal Wharf housing estate, which was built by Irish and Singaporean developers, it commemorates the Silvertown Explosion of January 1917, when an accidental fire set light to TNT in a munitions factory that was making explosives for use in the first world war. The blast killed 73 people and injured 400, while 600 houses in the neighbourhood were destroyed by it. The noise of the explosion could be heard as far away as Norfolk and Sussex. The stone monument in the middle of the housing development is silent. They bring to mind the Ice Age rather than the Golden Age, "The future is but the obsolete in reverse." in the ultimate future the whole universe will burn out and be transformed into an all-encompassing sameness. An almost cosmic joy swept over all the darkened cities.

counterfield

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