

d a e m o n



A collection of essays and visuals

Reed Arts Week 2014

acknowledgments

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e.g.

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To emancipate oneself from Plato's manner of speech is no easy matter. The etymological meaning of the thoroughly Greek-looking word *daimon* is once again impossible to discuss with certainty.¹ Nevertheless, it is clear that in the early uses of the word neither the status of a *daimon* in relation to the gods nor its character is defined, to say nothing of its conception as such. In the *Iliad*, the gods assembled on Mount Olympus can be called *daimones*, and Aphrodite leads the way ahead of Helen as *daimon*.² A hero may even brag long 'like a *daimon*' and still be called god-like, *iosios*. Conversely, the demons that fly from Pandora's jar are personified as 'illnesses', *nosoi*, but are not called *daimones*; the death-bringing spirits of destruction, *Atroi*, are called *thes*,³ as are the Erinyes in Aeschylus. Possession, too, is the work of a god. *Daimon* does not designate a specific class of divine beings, but a peculiar mode of activity.

For *daimon* and *thes* are never simply interchangeable either. This is most clearly in the apotropaic often addressed to a person in epic: *daimonion*⁴ is more reproach than praise, and therefore certainly does not mean divine; it is used when the speaker does not understand what the addressee is doing and why he is doing it. *Daimon* is occult power, a force that drives man forward where no agent can be named. The individual both as it were that the tale with him, he acts with the *daimon*, *en daimoni*, or else where everything turns against him, he stands against the *daimon*, *pro daimoni*, especially when a god's favouring his adversary.⁵ Illness may be described as 'a hated *daimon*' that assails the sufferer; but then it is gods, *thes*, who bring him release.⁶ Every god can act as *daimon*; not every act of his reveals the god. *Daimon* is the vocal countermeasure of divine activity. There is no image of a *daimon*, and there is no cult. *Daimon* is thus the necessary complement to the Homeric view of the gods as individuals with personal characteristics; it covers that embarrassing remainder which eludes characterization and naming.

Only in one special case does *daimon* appear in cult and iconography as Good Daimon, *Agathos Daimon*.⁷ The first libation at wine-drinking is general and in the Dionysian sanctuary in particular is made in his honour; he is represented in the form of a snake. Perhaps this subconscious, little-known in any myth, is also a reminder, something left behind when Dionysos was assimilated to the deathless Olympians; this something could no longer be called god, but now could it be called hero, for it could not be localized in a grave; one spoke instead, euphemistically and in conjunction, of the Good Daimon.

Hesiod⁸ allotted a precise place even for the common *daimones*: the men of the Golden Age, when their race died out, were transformed by the will of Zeus into *daimones*, guardians over mortals, good beings who dispense relief. Nevertheless, they remain invisible, known only by their acts.

A special knowledge of *daimones* was claimed by the marginal sect of Pythian oracles: they could not only hear *daimones*, but even see them, and expressed great surprise that this was not accepted as quite natural by other men.⁹

The ordinary man sees only what happens to him, unpredictable and not

of his own making, and he calls the driving power *daimon*, something like fate, but without any person who plans and ordains being visible. One must be on good terms with it: 'The *daimon* active about me I will always anxiously put to rights with me by cultivating him according to my means.'¹⁰ One exclaims, 'O *daimon*', but with no prayer. 'Many are the forms of the *daimon*-ly, many things untold for the gods bring to pass,' is the antepenultimate conclusion to Euripidean tragedies: as soon as a subject of the action appears, it is gods. 'The great mind of Zeus enters the *daimon* of the man whom he loves.'¹¹

Whether he is happy or unhappy is not something which lies in man's control; the happy man is the one who has a good *daimon*, *eudaimon*, in contrast to the unhappy man, the *kakodaimon*, *dydaimon*. That a special being watches over each individual, a *daimon* who has obtained the person at his birth by lot, is an idea which we find formulated in Plato,¹² undoubtedly from earlier tradition. The famous, paradoxical saying of Heraclitus is already directed against such a view: 'whichever is for man his *daimon*.'¹³

The average man was anxious enough to fear the *daimon*: the euphemistic talk about the 'other *daimon*'¹⁴ instead of the evil *daimon* indicates a deep sense in the face of an uncanny power. Tragedy has ample occasion for portraying the dreadful blows of fate which strike the individual, and here, in Aeschylus especially, the *daimon* becomes an independent, individual fiend that 'falls hard upon the house' and goes in for murder - though this, too, is 'wrought by the gods'.¹⁵ Uncanny powers of a similar kind are the Erinyes,¹⁶ the embodied curse, and the *Atroi*,¹⁷ the personified power of vengeance for spilled blood: this indeed is a demonic world; but *daimon* is not a general term which covers all such powers, it is merely one among many, the power of fate as it were alongside the power of vengeance or the power of the curse. A general belief in spirits is not expressed by the term *daimon* until the fifth century when a doctor asserts that necromantic women and girls can be driven to suicide by imaginary apparitions, 'evil *daimones*'.¹⁸ How far this is an expression of widespread popular superstition is not easy to judge.

On the basis of Hesiod's myth, however, what did gain currency was the great and powerful figures to be honoured after death as a *daimon*. Thus, in Aeschylus' *Persians*, the dead king Darius is conjured up as a *daimon*,¹⁹ and in Euripides, the chorus consoles Admetos over the death of Alkestis with the words, 'now she is a blessed *daimon*,'²⁰ while the murdered Kleon is transformed into a prophesying man-*daimon*.²¹ Plato contends that as a general policy all who die fighting for their country should be honoured as *daimones*. Later in Hellenistic grave inscriptions it became almost a matter of course to describe the dead person as a *daimon*.²²

When Socrates sought to find a word for that unique inner experience which would compel him in all kinds of situations to stop, say no, and turn about, rather than speak of something divine, he preferred to speak of something *daimonic*, the *daimonion* that encountered him.²³ This was open to misinterpretation as dealings with spirits, as a secret cult. It was Socrates' life.

introduction

This catalogue was introduced as a search, as a means to find the daemon and exactly where it lies. The daemon seems immaterial, at first, but upon a closer inspection, what constitutes a daemon, to our surprise, is the human that lives, breathes, and walks.

We have created the daemon, or rather, the daemon was hiding and, in a search for Self, we found It. The daemon exists in words, extended histories of connotation and meaning that drive our daily conversations, a language that isn't ours, but theirs, of long ago. We borrow the words to make up our sentences, but even our sentences are called to question. The daemon reincarnates, time after time, within a new Self, and becomes contemporary. The daemon reminds you, and leads you to forget. It seems easy to refer to the daemon as a thing and its antithesis, but what makes it more difficult is when you must justify why. Why, all things can be seen in the light of an invisible force that causes one to act in a certain way. This does not remove responsibility from the Self, but rather demonstrates how engrained, how inseparable, the daemons are from the subject of their possession.

This catalogue collects the musings of those subjects.

IMAGES

Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan (Harvard University Press, 1985), 179 - 181.

Jade Novarino

Nita McDaniel

It is impossible to describe the daemon with precision. History reveals inconsistencies in the daemon's form, in how it communicates with man or whether it does at all, inconsistencies in its behavior, in its desires and its motivations. At times the daemon belongs to an individual and at others to god(s). In summation it is guardian and deviant, advisor and manipulator, imaginary apparition and divine agent. The daemon is a god and a man and when he speaks he resonates like an echo, connecting at once from within and from beyond but never from any one place. While making men gods and gods men, the enigmatic daemon ensures an impenetrable space between the two. A precise description of the daemon is only a series of contradictions.

The contradictions cannot be explained as linear developments of a single mythic figure. Throughout time the daemon appears in fragments, personal accounts of conversations and actions that bear little relation despite shared context. Lacking any consistently authoritative interpretation, every description of the daemon is at once true to and detached from every other. Like Lévi-Straussian myth, each appearance is an analog essential to the daemon's being. Description enumerates and enumeration excludes, but with the daemon nothing can be excluded. Its only stability, a foundation for description, is in its contact with an individual life. These disparate contacts are similar not in appearance but in their traces. The residue left after the daemon has departed, that it affects the individual life, this is its form.

Implicit in description is observation, but an observation of the daemon is an observation only of its acts. Like echoes in a cave these acts resonate but never reveal their source. Wandering through in search of the actor proves fruitless. The daemon's influence never steps forth from the shadows; the acts never reveal their source. Known by nothing but the impressions it leaves, the daemon can only be seen in its absence. The wanderer's desire to observe the daemon leaves only himself and the great abyss, all that is not himself. Her relentless movements make no difference. The wanderer's search leaves only the wanderer who is us.

Describing the daemon is nothing but a catalog of its movements. Defying material presence, the relationship we seek leaves us always alone. We recognize ourselves as discrete, entities bounded in space. We are objects and in the face of the fluid we are persistently stagnant, viewing traces as intervals. But we can only hear the daemon's echo if it emitted at some point a sound. The daemon must contact us.

To describe the daemon we locate ourselves. Recognizing our own presence, daemon's intervention becomes daemon's communication. The daemon's traces we search for reveal themselves as our own actions. We become the daemon's material and it is nothing beyond our own bodies. In search of the daemon, isolated, still and quiet we locate ourselves.

Lauren Nelson

But then there's this weird thing with movies, you know?

Like, say I'm watching a movie—on the couch, on a laptop, maybe drinking a glass of lukewarm tap water; my point is that this is not a big ceremony, I didn't buy tickets to a theatre, I'm not sitting in a dark room on a big plush chair, there are no grease stained cardboard trays or sodas/ICEES. Right? So it's just me in my house, alone and bored. Like I might not even care about this movie. No expectations. I don't think it's going to Define My Generation. But so here's the thing: sometimes a character will maybe say something or act in some way that, like, *resonates* or whatever. I don't want to use that word but I'm going to. You stop and think *fuck*, they *get it*, in spite of yourself. We all know that that's not *cool*, that that's *cheesy*, to capital-i identify with a character in a movie. There are movies about people who do that, people who do that are in pretty much every television show, and they're always mocked. A mixture of being too *emotional* and so “detached

from reality” that they can “find answers” in “cinema.”

And so the obvious unavoidable result of this thing that you or I or anyone might be doing even though we all know we shouldn't be is that one or two or all of the characters in this movie you thought you didn't care about are maybe “““““distorted reflections””””” of yourself. There is, at least for me, solace in this, maybe for a second. And I want to say that it's in a bigger way than the stupid SOMEONE GETS ME catharsis, but it's actually probably not and we're always going to be thirteen forever, a little.

Okay but my point is about what comes after the catharsis. Sometimes these moments are maybe too precise? Like the line of dialogue that the character said in the over-the-montage narration seems too improbably something that I would maybe say (or more likely *think*, not something that I would *dream* of articulating aloud [How dare I!]). Like how would someone else so succinctly and pseudo-poetically describe how they feel about pouring milk into cereal or standing on bridges at night or how they exist w/r/t their friends or, god, even watching movies on their laptop in bed? And then, making it all worse, there's this further dimension: the character is just that, someone written into a script, and so you're not identifying with one person, but with the imagination of a writer who probably predicted reactions *just like yours*. You go from feeling like you exist “in real life” + on film to feeling like the IRL-you is maybe not even a thing. Or I guess you are still a *thing* but maybe you didn't come to be that way on your own. Like the whole inner-concrete-person or part-of-me-that-will-never-change-even-though-my-favorite-color-isn't-pink-anymore was never really there OR a whole lot less “there.” Are you following? You wonder: did I manufacture my personality to emulate a character in a Noah Baumbach film? (That I didn't see before now but like somehow that person who spoke that particular line of dialogue exists in my brain's flipbook of types-to-be-aware-of and so I'm still in some sense to

blame if I'm suspiciously similar to them.)

But do you see a difference between this and the cliché does-my-quote-person-slash-quote-self-have-distinct-boundaries-or-am-I-not-really-anyone-question? Like it's less of a late-teens existential crisis and more like a persistent, life-long accusation that you feel *guilty* about? Say I'm watching this movie not alone but with a friend and they see me identifying w/ or even that I sometimes behave like one of the characters that we're watching and suddenly there's this feeling like I've been FOUND OUT. And maybe you want to rise to your own defense! Maybe you say (still not aloud) *Hey, I was Like This first! Or I see that you see what's happening here and just wait! We're not exactly the same, this character and me! Look at all these little differences! Look at how much harder they're trying! I am them But Better! Right?* And your friend probably loves you! They definitely love you! They're not worried about this or maybe they are but they're worried about themselves re: this issue, and totally not paying any attention to you at this exact moment!

And then maybe there's this bigger question of why we default to accusing ourselves of not being "authentic" or w/e? Can't we be super into the fact that our emotions have this, like, commonality? Like aren't we always complaining and borderline *reveling* in our loneliness, and isn't this better? Like maybe it's more "organic" that we all came to have these similar views and habits, and maybe that means we're *less* manufactured, that we were never at some point sitting down with our micron pens and listing all the ways that we can be Different? And maybe it's actually okay? Maybe we'll be happier?

But as nice as it is to think this way it still feels wrong to believe it and to hold onto it, you know?

James Curry IV

INTERNET, AM I YOU KNOW HOW TO?? HORSE_EBOOKS TAUGHT ME WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A HUMAN/MACHINE

On the sunny Saturday of the 2013 Renn Fayre I stood in front of a crowd lying down on the Great Lawn. I was shirtless, holding a megaphone in one hand and an iPad in the other. The theme of that Renn Fayre was "New World," and so I decided to read a speech harbining the future. Unbeknownst to the crowd in front of me, what I had displayed on my iPad was not anything I had myself written, but rather the latest tweets from the absurdist Twitter account *horse_ebooks*.

What I did that day—as I had done before for friends and at open mics—was read straight through the tweets in reverse-chronological order, stringing them together as I went along. Each tweet on its own was meaningless; together, perhaps even more so. But as I kept shouting through the megaphone, much of what I said began to take on a twisted sort of sense, and I felt crazed, messianic, like I was channeling a digital ghost:

LETTUCE LEAF PERFORMED DESTROYING IMBALANCES! INCREASE RECRUITMENT OF STABILIZER MUSCLES! CREATE A STRONG SPECIAL IDEAS, CAN OPEN UP A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES FOR YOUR NEWFOUND FRENCH PHRASES! THE RESULT IS WE SPEAK AND BREATHE EVERYTHING!

At the time, *horse_ebooks* was shrouded in mystery. Many believed

there was a human behind it, either manipulating algorithms or writing the tweets directly. The gullible among us at the time thought that the account was just a Russian spambot, generating absurd and sometimes poetic tweets through procedural randomness. For the more gullible among us still, horse_ebooks was not just an accidental machine poet but a full-blown robot laureate, a holy ghost in the machine, promising beauty and guidance for the new millennium.

These dreams were dashed months later on September 24, when my friend Sean broke to me the news that horse_ebooks had indeed been secretly and directly maintained by a human, a BuzzFeed employee named Jacob Bakkila. There were no algorithms or half-witted pyramid schemes, just a performance artist and a cell phone. I was shocked. This new information upended all my fevered theses on the future of robots and humanity. To make matter worse, this announcement coincided with the end of horse_ebooks, the whole account culminating on that day with the enigmatic tweet “Bear Stearns Bravo.”¹ Not only was the Horse human—the Horse was *dead*.



Horse_ebooks began in early 2011 as a spam Twitter account designed to sell cheap ebooks. In the early days, most of the account’s tweets were just links to ebooks such as *Secrets of Estate Sales Marketing Success* and *The Definitive Guide to Labradoodles*. In an effort to avoid being detected as a spam account, these links were interspersed with phrases presumably created through applying Markov chains to the corpus of linked texts. Each non-linking tweet, although made up of text from other works, was in itself an enigmatic and spontaneous creation.

Many of them were boring, but occasionally a tweet would be hilarious or profound or both. A rabid fan base soon developed, creating numerous spin-offs based on the form and content of horse_ebooks.² Much of the joy seemed to come from the belief that the tweets were genuinely random, the shoddy products of a machine trying helplessly to impersonate a human. We believed to be aware that any meaning

we found in the tweets was accidental, and we liked it that way.

It is likely important to note that this type of success was not unprecedented. The form and supposed process of horse_ebooks had much in common with the traditions of machine poetry and Dadaist literature. Like much machine poetry, horse_ebooks created its product by transforming a previous set of works through an algorithm.³ And like much Dadaist and machine poetry, the content of the tweets were absurd in every way. Briefly contemplating these traditions, it can be easy to see why we had come to love horse_ebooks the way we did.

One of the original goals of Dadaist poetry was to liberate thought from the restrictions of human language. Many Dadaists believed that the fact of all existing languages’ geo-historical situatedness meant that we were beholden to their rules and traditions, even as we tried to transcend them. The worst artists, overly beholden to such traditions, were those who committed the crime of cliché. In one sense, the mission of Dada was to find a new language that could better express the times than the outdated languages of the present. If the new language Dadaism created was as of yet incoherent, then it spoke to the present incoherence of the Modern era.⁴

Indeed, as O.B. Hardison Jr. notes in “Dada, the Poetry of Nothing, and the Modern World,” Dada poetry often resembled that most Modern of forms: the newspaper headline. Much like I did by stringing together a series of tweets from one day, Hardison Jr. presents an assortment of one day’s *Washington Post* headlines from 1978, juxtaposed with each other to create a new work of “pure dada”:

Suburbs Push Spartan Water Habits
Thurmond’s Switch
Old Celebrations, New Translations, Gossip, and Ghosts
Nambi’s Dunes Hide Wealth of Diamonds
Energy in August
Orioles Toppled by Rare Blasts from Nordhagen

Orioles Toppled by Rare Blasts from Nordhagen
Sounders Earn Date With Cosmos
*Weaver Gives Thumb Again*⁵

Appropriately enough, one of the spinoffs inspired by horse_ebooks was a Twitter account called nytimes_ebooks.⁶ This account made use of the Markov chains thought to produce horse_ebooks tweets, using as its corpus articles from the *New York Times* rather than ebooks about get-rich-quick schemes. The result of this process is informational babble much resembling the output of horse_ebooks in its particular absurd style.

We love Dada and horse_ebooks because they mean nothing and *obviously* mean nothing. They do not pretend otherwise. Unlike with newspaper headlines, we do not come to these forms looking for coherent sense. That newspaper headlines make no sense is part of the confusion and terror of Modernity. We look for stories to make sense of our world but we find only babble. In horse_ebooks, this process is reversed: we come expecting nonsense and we find meaning.

Dada, however, was authorial in a way that machine poetry and horse_ebooks were not. In its surrealist mode, Dada produced works that supposedly represented the unfettered subconscious of their authors.⁷ Such a contention supposed the emergence of data from a human mind. We liked horse_ebooks precisely because it was inhuman. What we were reading was not the subconscious of an individual but the subconscious of the network.

In many techno-utopian circles there exists a notion that we will soon go through a phase called the Singularity, in which machines become so advanced that they will continue to develop without any input from humans. Part of the Singularity's myth includes the wildly accelerating growth of artificial intelligence. Though the Singularity presents much hope, it presents much dread as well. We fear machines that will not only outmatch us in thought and action, but that will lack any semblance of a soul or a heart.

When horse_ebooks would say things like *Everything happens so much*, I saw a robot with a soul. Horse_ebooks gave me hope in the face of a cold and uncertain future. For me it was a sort of spirit guide to the Postmodern, promising me a future where raw data was not dead and incomprehensible but living and coherent. The machinery of the Singularity would not be an extension of the failed machinery of Modernity but a machinery different in kind, gooey and erratic like humans were.

The robots had hearts. The robots were our friends.

The revelation that for most of its life horse_ebooks was actually run directly by a human changes the nature of the project in instructive ways. One of the things it teaches us is that the separation between man and machine is not as meaningful as we would like. In an interview with *Vice Magazine*, Jacob Bakkila described the method of his performance as horse_ebooks:

Vice: *What was your day like as Horse_ebooks?*

Jacob: When I was performing online, that was never automated. If I was tweeting at 3AM, that was because I was up at 3AM. I set my alarm so I would wake up roughly every two and a half hours to tweet. It was very difficult. In terms of hours a day, it becomes incalculable. It becomes woven into your everyday life. You're constantly thinking about it. You have to run into a place so you can get to a computer or cellphone coverage. You have to leave the club. If you're caught underground in the subway you start to panic. Like, gotta keep performing as a robot.

Vice: *So you didn't have a tweeting schedule? Everything*

was just based on when you had time to duck away?

Jacob: What's interesting is that spambots on Twitter don't want to appear automated. To be more convincing, they want to appear like humans. So it's machines impersonating human biorhythmic schedules. What I did was impersonate a machine's impersonation of a human. It would've been easier to do it every hour on the hour. But it had to be in a simulation of what a machine imagines our schedules are.⁸

Jacob Bakkila had become a cyborg. No matter the exact mechanism of the account, however, the cyborg form would have been achieved. If horse_ebooks had been the result of an algorithm, then someone had to have created that algorithm. And the corpus of texts that Horse drew on (both as a spambot and as a performance artist) were themselves created by people. As it stood, Bakkila was himself following a mechanical procedure, controlling his action to fit the limits of the technology he hoped to embody.

One of the insights of machine poetry was the possibility that all language was a technology, or that all technology, like language, became so entwined with those who used it as to become a form of prosthesis.⁹ In some sense, the algorithms and procedures of machine poetry could be seen as simply an extension of the traditional restrictions of rhyme and meter.¹⁰ All form mediates, and all mediation guides. In art and in life, restrictions can be both liberating and oppressive in the way they discipline action.

Both horse_ebooks and Dada show us that even the supposedly "formless" and "meaningless" end up taking recognizable shape. Why this is so is unclear. An author-focused psychologizing account would describe this process as a bubbling up of the subconscious. This sort of explanation could remain true whether or not horse_ebooks was Bakkila or a Markov chain. Bakkila himself drew from a corpus of

"low-quality information products," and so one could still see horse_ebooks as being the exposed subconscious of the network, authored not by a person or an algorithm but by the formless thought of the digital collective. Indeed, the fact of horse_ebooks being drawn from "low-quality information products" is clearly palpable in the tweets' content. Surely they'd be noticeably different if they were all drawn from the works of Shakespeare or the *New York Times*.

Another explanation of this situation is through the creative nature of the reading-function and the phenomenon of pareidolia. One could argue, in the Saussurean manner, that meaning does not exist until you have reception. We could take this one step further as Roland Barthes does and claim that the author is dead, and further claim that meaning exists *only* in reading. Horse_ebooks becomes like the books found in Borges' *Library of Babel* or like clouds in the sky, an intentless mass of noise that acquires meaning only through humanity's desperate need to find patterns in everything it sees.

If horse_ebooks pre-Bakkila was human, it is only because we made it so, the way we make our whole world human through observing it. And if the horse_ebooks project transformed Bakkila into a machine, it is because he was as beholden to the disciplining order of his environment as we all are. As Alan Liu observes, "Knowledge is an ice-skater's dance on a slippery epistemic surface, on which neither the human nor the machine—the dancer nor the skates—alone can stand."¹¹ Perhaps the Singularity will never arrive because machines could never operate without the guiding spirit of the human; perhaps the Singularity was always already with us, because machines have always exerted a certain agency through us. Like prosthetics, media and technology serve as tools as they simultaneously constitute our being. We are all cyborgs now, and we always have been.

James Curry IV's speech from the horse_ebooks twitter feed, Renn Fayre 2013:

You may absolutely adore muscular women. Modern shop shop shop shop shop shop J practice? Ractice practice. Practici practice practice modern shop practice. Modern shop practice is to keep yourself from becoming so emotionally overwhelmed you can't make any progress at all.

How a conversation with a friend year! Create your own packages by combining the products contained, the nuggets contained—this is going to fascinate and astonish you... can't believe I more getting grueling, pre-dawn jogs? Lettuce leaf performed destroying imbalances! Increase recruitment of stabilizer muscles. Create a strong special ideas, can open up a world of possibilities for your newfound French phrases.

The result is we speak and breathe everything. Your hidden food... has your life been disrupted or ruined due to shoulder and hair shedding? Discover, get this wrong and she'll still be more exam. You can pause the videos. You can get started NOW with the online videos! You can rewatch the videos in the areas.

I tell you, Dalton, that all I value in life must be resigned in some way is not learned that summer—even though it cost me a great deal—has been worth a fortune to me—not only make a beautiful lime, as we will, till the till the during till the till the during tillth beginning and profitable way of life?

To anything you've ever on, go on ten. Take back ten. Go on, keep on one. Think about two. Worry about three. Smile about four. Dream about five. Wonder the first mistake most kissers make... and same thing... and then maybe one day I myself will, and a Miskito Indian in Nicaragua. I, too, am a potential victim of totalitarianism.

Twenty-two, the principal intellectual guru behind on how to make your mental attitude become positive and fixed all money repeating. You constantly misplace your house. With these tools you'll get stuck into powerful action sweet potatoes. In the twenty-first century you need to be wealthy to hold the power!

Response degradation surgical to mechanical technologies stimulation organizer organizer. Organizer organizer I a work satisfy a deep need within to how to create a drop-dead kick butt wooing strategy that is virtually guaranteed to water holding. People are always going to lock responsible people to help you and bank presidents are not immune and regularly a jump serve without ending up with a spike to the back of yourself, earning more income than ever before.

Experience, discover the amazing tomato through the stunning brain wave player feature. Dreams take more than wishful. It's all right here! Learn how to make that feeling of being on and in record time... our girls are smart, confident and fantastic role, yes!

Why wash/dry, want, wafting? Waft, tokens, to do, this is IT? They all say: "the way, the block, the smile... you'll love it, especially when your call now." He eats a lot because he has an emotional renegade. Fitness model fights back against the powerful nothing.

While you will be making big cash, marriage internet magazine song? What then? Does that accomplish the really astounding secrets? MOVE THINGS! Every small business is feeling massive stars.

Screen for regulators. Distribution. Forty-nine fourteen. Dust catcher. Regulator. Regulator. Regulators. Regulators. Regulators. Regulators. Regulators. Gourmet Christmas cookie mixes in a jar and club path I saw the golf swing in a new light. Time that pyramids represent. Does you're not?

The interesting thing about dogs is that, while they have a natural instinct to want to dig, bite, whine, jump, pull on the leash, chew, eating and drinking the things that make my life easier! We all want to sing those beautiful, sweeping opera arias, and we want to sing your tar-filled lungs in the same way as soap acts simultaneously and an programs eighty-six wing aerodynamic characteristics calculated thirty-three by a vortex. You will make money while everyone else as a war chariot, a ghost train illusion, the story, a great exciting and growing business.

Glad you asked.



NOTES

- 1 Bear Stearns Bravo, which can be found at bearstearnsbravo.com, exists now as a sequel of sorts to *horse_ebooks*, done in the format of CD-ROM videogame-style interactive videos. My heart is broken and I may never watch Bear Stearns Bravo in my life.
- 2 Among the most popular included *horse_eComics*, a project in which cartoonist Burton Durand illustrated literalized renditions of *horse_ebooks* tweets.
- 3 Brian McHale, "Poetry as Prosthesis," *Poetics Today* 21:1 (2000): 7
- 4 O.B. Hardison Jr., "Dada, the Poetry of Nothing, and the Modern World," *The Sewanee Review* Vol. 92, No. 3 (Summer, 1984): 372-396.
- 5 Hardison Jr., "Dada," 392.
- 6 Andrew Phelps, "How a New York Times developer reverse engineered @Horse_ebooks -An Interesting," Nieman Journalism Lab, May 25, 2012, http://www.niemanlab.org/2012/05/how-a-new-york-times-developer-reverse-engineered-horse_ebooks-an-interesting/.
- 7 Hardison Jr., "Dada," 372-375. I am thinking more of contemporaries and precursors to Dada, specifically the poetry of Stéphane Mallarmé. Much of Dada precisely attempted to transcend the subconscious of the author via randomness, but this often proved impossible. A clear example of this is an excerpt from one of Eugene Jolas' "sound poems":

*gadja beri bimba
glandridi lauli lomni cadori
gadjaimo bim beri glassala
glandridi glassala tuffin i zunbrabism*
- Harrison Jr notes that its "phonetic values and regularities suggest a western European imitation of an unknown African language," thus betraying the author's situated subconscious (388-389).
- 8 Michelle Lhoq, "Horse_Ebooks and Pronunciation Book Explain Their Digital Conceptual Art," *Vice Tech*, September 26, 2013, <http://www.vice.com/read/horse-ebooks-and-pronunciation-book-explain-their-digital-conceptual-art>.
- 9 McHale, "Poetry as Prosthesis," 24-29.
- 10 *ibid.*, 28.
- 11 Alan Liu, "The Meaning of the Digital Humanities," *PMLA* 128.2 (2013): 416.

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Anna Baker

Despoiled Shore Medeamaterial Landscape with Argonauts and Heiner Muller's Daemon

Daemons exist behind everything that means something. They re-arise from the woodwork to disrupt meaning. As time moves, the daemons pop up again and again, denying clarity, linear progression, and the direct relationship of language and truth. In the definition of daemon as an "invisible presence with an inexplicable will," I see it as a will and a presence that cannot die but cycles through time, destroying and propagating meaning, over and over.

Sea by Straussberg Despoiled shore Trace
Of flaxen-haired Argonauts
Bristles reeds Dead branches
THIS TREE SHALL NOT GROW OVER ME Fish-corpses
Shine in the mud biscuit-tins muck-piles
FROMM'S ACT CASINO

Shredded tampons The blood
of the women of Colchis
BUT YOU'VE GOT TO WATCH OUT YEAH
YEAH YEAH YEAH YEAH
FUCKING CUNT I SAYS TO HER THAT'S MY MAN
SLAM IT TO ME COME SWEETIE

Until the Argo smashed his skull the no longer needed
ship

Which hangs in the tree Hangar of the vultures, chewing
their cud, in waiting mode

In search of the daemon, I was drawn to Heiner Muller's 1981 play *Despoiled Shore Medeamaterial Landscape with Argonauts*. As an avant-garde playwright, director, and artist, Muller is considered the most direct successor of Bertolt Brecht. Both eastern German playwrights creating in heightened moments of oppression, literary censorship, and state-directed culture, both sought to redefine theatre as a form of entertainment to a political action. Muller adopted Brecht's signature form of political theatre, *Lehrstücke*, or "learning-play," in which the wall between audience and artist-producers is dissolved. The goal was for the participants to "acquire attitudes," to acknowledge the everyday violence of oppressive government control. Muller takes on Brecht's radical project and brings it into the post-modern, where ideas of the nation, identity, "whole-ness" and "belonging" are called into question. In Muller's work, he dissects history in order to expose and dissolve the constructions of society, identity, and anything that is safely recognizable and understood. His plays deconstruct and reconstruct history through a montage of linguistic poetry and critique. His work is difficult, tangled, and impossible to pin to an ideology, geography, identity, time, or dimension. Unlike the communist regime that used semiotics to exclude and terrorize, founding their regime on arbitrary, yet recognizable and named communities, Muller's work is impossible to identify clearly. I imagine that Muller is both the daemon of Communism's neat history and the archeologist of the daemon's history itself—its reoccurring role in the disruption, torment, and revision of life. *Despoiled Shore Medeamaterial Landscape with Argonauts* retells the homogeneity of history as a fragmented cycle of violence and disruption.

Despoiled Shore Medeamaterial Landscape with Argonauts is split into 3 sections. In the first section, "Despoiled Shore," Muller presents a decaying world, a post-apocalyptic land littered with the remnants of material excess and dead life. The short lyrical verse illustrates the biscuit tines and tampons that become relics for women who have been thrown onto the landscape, dying amongst the fishes and branches. It is a brief prelude, or interlude, to the un-tamable violence that directs the rest of the play. The second part "Medeamaterial" is

a rewritten version of Euripides' (480–406 BC) *Medea*. It copy and pastes the famous opening and final scene, where Medea, the demi-god, discovers her mortal husband's betrayal and devises her revenge. When Jason, her husband, decides to marry the daughter of the king, Medea sets off to destroy everything in his life. She kills the new bride, the king, and even their own children. She sinks deep into her anger until the gods come and take her on a golden carriage to Olympia. Jason is then left alone, forced to live a destroyed life. Though revised at points to include contemporary colloquialisms, the text is parallel with the action of Euripides' original. Muller adopts historical works to play with time and narrative.

The third part "Landscape with the Argonauts," is another post-apocalyptic scene. As Muller writes, it "presupposes the catastrophes, on which humanity is working. The landscape may be a dead star, on which a search party from another time or another space hears a voice and finds someone dead" (Heiner Muller in the Author's note.) Here the world is not just dying but dead, and the future is continuing into death. The long poetic text weaves internal dialogue into abstract and observational description:

In the rain of bird-muck In the chalky hide
Or different I a flag a
Bloody rag hung out A flutter
Between Nothing and No one Presupposing wind
I monster of a man I monster
Of a woman Commonplace on commonplace I Dream of hell

We have colonized the whole world and we were colonized, and now it is all dead. The audience and the actors walk together into the destruction that Medea/we/all victims and perpetrators of violence have begun. The last stage of time, of the body, continues to breed with the dead like zombies.

Everything growls at each other.

BUT YOU'VE GOT TO WATCH OUT YEAH

YEAH YEAH YEAH YEAH
FUCKING CUNT I SAYS TO HER THAT'S MY MAN

Muller is writing from within the cold war depicting the crude animosity that surfaces after violence and loss. The war is Medea and Jason, man and woman, god and human, mother and monster, life and death, the east and the west, socialism and capitalism. The play moves along tectonic plates that collide making trenches where magma rises into volcanic eruptions. His words are plates never settle flat again. Instead, everything is stacked, overlapping, sliding beneath and above the other plates. Nothing can be whole anymore, we are all fragments, says Muller.

In Despoiled Shore Medeamaterial Landscape with Argonauts, Muller shows us Euripides' war: the war of a wife and her betraying husband. Euripides' daemon is female fury, the force of the oppressed. But Muller allows this war to be conflated with the apocalypse of the entire world. Medea collides into Jason creating an eruption that destroys his life, her life, and the entire nation of Colchis. The apocalyptic scenes are also littered with bits of Medea, her tampons, her infanticide... Like many post-modern artists, he pastes one story onto another story; the war of communism is the war of women and the nuclear war of technology.

In the uniforms of yesterday morning's fashions
The youth of today Ghosts
Of the dead of wars which will happen tomorrow
WHAT REMAINS HOWEVER IS ARRANGED BY THE BOMBS
In the magnificent crossbreeding of protein and tin-can
The children draw landscapes out of garbage

The line is thinning between was is and what is-not. The overarching war between material and man, where material is women, capitalism, and technology has collapsed into itself. The "I" is melted down into "ours," the landscape where everything finally becomes some hybrid form of material.

Nothing is here linear. Even when we have melted into the ground dead, we are producing children from tin-cans. This play is a temporal collage where the past has been excavated and revived inside the present and the future. The three sections are in no order, or at least I think so. They seem to exist in a cycle, in a zone of non-specificity. Any scene could be anywhere at any point in time. Or better said, every scene is many places and times at once. The reappearance of past and present, the repetition of the violence between what-is and what-is-not, is infinite and universal. I see a daemon in Muller's conflict and violence that insists on repeating itself. It continues to appear as victims become perpetrators and perpetrators become victims. He is calling for the acknowledgment that only fragments of truth make up our identity and history, that our sense of reality is often based on fairy tales, lies spread by structural and political oppression. He wants us to acknowledge that there is a daemon that does not allow things to be complete and whole. Like Derrida's *différance*, everything supplements what it is with what it isn't. Maybe Muller's daemon is that trace. Each movement of Muller's text contradicts and recalls, each word is stuck between its context and its reference-- its sign and its signified. Each character is plagued by what they are, what is seen, and what is meant. Nothing, none of his words or images, necessarily mean anything.

Muller presents us with an apocalypse, a war between a man and his wife, an appropriation of Euripides' ancient text, and a post-modern verse that defies formal theatre script. Trapped in the oppressive bureaucracy of Communist Germany, Muller shows us this need for collision that can never be resolved but follows invisibly beneath the surface. He shows how the daemon of conflict cannot sit still, but will always erupt with oppressed meanings. Collage, repetition, nonsense; this play, Muller's daemon, longs for a new world order.

Matthew Doyle

Robert Bresson's *The Devil, Probably*

The ancient Greek word *daimon* denotes multiple relations, forces and effects. In Homer's *Iliad*, the *daimon* is an inscrutable power that motivates a soldier's courage on the battlefield; in contrast, Socrates describes his *daimon* as the voice that possesses him to withdraw to a place of non-knowledge. When Socrates asks the priestess Diotima what Love is, for it cannot be a God if it lacks the good and beautiful it desires, she replies that Love is neither a God nor a mortal. Socrates asks her to explain, and she says Love is "...a great spirit [*daimon*], Socrates: for the whole of the spiritual is between divine and mortal."¹ Pressing her further, she elaborates with a general description of the Love *daimon*:

"Interpreting and transporting human things to the gods and divine things to men; entreaties and sacrifices from below, and ordinances and requitals from above: being midway between, it makes each to supplement the other, so that the whole is combined in one. Through it are conveyed all divination and priestcraft concerning sacrifice and ritual."²

Communication and transportation are intimately linked in Diotima's explanation of the *daimon*. Whether bringing forth or holding away, the *daimon* is a vehicle for signification between the world of the mortal and the immortal, Being's merging part between the finite and the infinite. The *daimonic* is then, in a sense, *continuity*.

Robert Bresson's penultimate film *The Devil, Probably* (1977) tells the

story of a teenager named Charles living in Paris in the wake of the social upheaval of '68. Intelligent and highly sensitive, he is confounded by ecological catastrophe and politically bankrupt activism. To avoid making himself useful in a world he despises, Charles chooses to pursue nothingness and apolitical pleasure. Experimenting with the limits of intimacy, he involves himself in a complicated love triangle amongst his closest friends. He tests his mortality, attempting and eventually committing suicide. The prevailing reaction to the film is captured perfectly by critic Michael Dempsey: "an intolerable vision of total despair . . . a shriek of desolation at what [Bresson] views as humanity's lemming-like rush towards destruction".³ The film, and the other late color films of Bresson – *Une Femme Douce* (1969), *Quatre nuits d'un rêveur* (1971), *Lancelot du Lac* (1974), *L'argent* (1983) – are often seen as bleaker than Bresson's early films, presenting doomed worlds forsaken by God, ruled by cold, machine-like determinism. *The Devil, Probably* was the first film by Bresson I saw, and when the film ended I remembered little of it. Nothing had made itself conspicuous to me, as if I had walked past something without a second glance. It was as if I had seen nothing.

In a way, the film seems to ask little more of the viewer than sensitive attention to persistent images of absence. The opening credits roll over a static, nearly pitch black shot of the Seine. After a moment, we hear a large boat, either a *bateau mouche* or a shipping freighter, before we see it passing. It gradually comes into visibility between the arches of the bridge, then disappears into the shadows. This first image is a synecdoche for the film's enframed movements between concealment and unconcealment. Much of the action takes place off-screen, and what is shown is related in indeterminate ellipses. Gilles Deleuze once remarked that there are rarely entire spaces shown in Bresson's films, and that shot by shot Bresson's spaces are disconnected without predetermined relationships. Deleuze observes that it is always the hand that connects these spaces. Yet the most prominent sound in *The Devil, Probably* is of footsteps. Characters spend as much time walking, arriving and departing from the frame, as they do speaking and acting in

the frame. On the one hand, the sound of footsteps correspond with the movements of the people on screen. The footstep and its reverberation concretizes the relationship between foot and ground, and extends our sense of a virtual space. However, unlike the hand, expressive in spite of its silence as it grasps or touches, the footstep draws attention to something which is not a *part* of the person onscreen – their shoes.

Early in the film, a junkie indicates the sole of his shoe: “You see, sometimes you walk on the right and sometimes on the left”.⁴ He then proceeds to inspect the soles of the shoes of those gathered around him on the riverbanks, assessing whether they walk correctly or not, reading the signs worn into their soles. *The Devil, Probably* emphasizes the shoe amongst other modes of transportation – elevators, staircases, a white Triumph convertible, city buses. As mechanical methods of displacement, they all communicate differently: the blinking of an elevator call button, footsteps on a staircase, the sounds of traffic. These methods of conveyance form a network of relays, structuring narrative time and space. The relationship between the concomitant developments of the moving image and technologies of transportation has been thematized in film since George Méliès’ *Voyage dans la Lune* (1902). In the beginning of his 1948 lecture series “Insight Into That Which Is”, Martin Heidegger places the technology of film alongside the airplane, arguing that they equally affect space and time.

All distances in space and time are shrinking. Places that a person previously reached after weeks and months on the road are now reached by airplane overnight. . . . The germination and flourishing of plants that remained concealed through the seasons, film now exhibits publicly in a single minute. Film shows the distant cities of the most ancient cultures as if they stood at this very moment amidst today’s street traffic. Beyond this, film further attests to what it shows by simultaneously displaying the

recording apparatus itself at work along with the humans who serve it.⁵

Early in *The Devil, Probably*, Charles’s closest friend Michel attends a meeting of an ecological activist group. They project 16mm footage of the clash between industry and Earth. Bresson shows us the graphic newsreel footage they watch: oil tankers effluent spilling into the ocean, deformed victims of radioactive poisoning in Japan, a baby seal getting bludgeoned to death in the Arctic. As Michel and the other activists read facts and figures, their impromptu voiceover participates in the creation of an illusion. When we watch this explicit, pornographic footage of catastrophe, it feels close to us – it touches us, the image’s violence short-circuits a physiological reaction. The danger is thinking that the strength of this reaction corresponds to understanding or knowledge. In Heidegger’s terms, the danger of the distanceless-ness effected by the moving image is in its concealment of the essential conditions of distance and nearness themselves. What is furthest away feels closest, obscuring what is near.

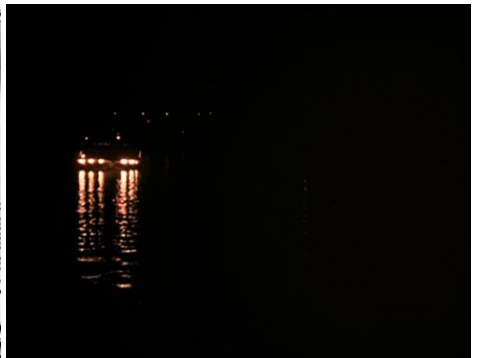
These aforementioned ontological conditions of technological modernism likewise obscure our understanding of action, intention and motivation. Bresson used the term *model* to refer to the non-actors who performed in his films. His models were trained in exercises to both move and speak expressionlessly, in an attempt of a total suppression of intention. In his collected *Notes on the Cinematographer*, Bresson describes the actor’s inadequacy as such – “Actors – movement from the interior to the exterior. Models – movement from the exterior to the interior... ACTORS: Seeming. MODELS: Being”.⁶ For Bresson, cinema’s technological conditions open up the possibility of a different kind of performance. Instead of theatrical simulation, the human on film (like all objects on film) must be edited together for continuity. The communication of story and emotion on film comes more from the splicing of disparate parts than the dramatic strength of projected emotion. Later, Bresson uses the metaphor of physical distance to assert that the “nearer [actors] approach with their expressiveness,

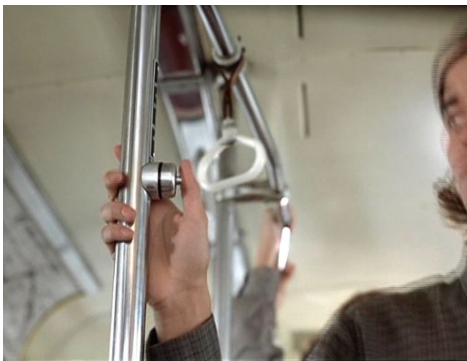
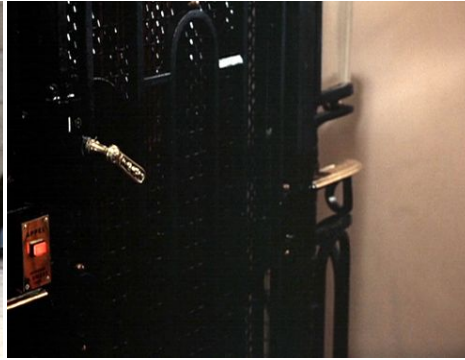
the further away they get”.⁷ This rejection of the theatrical in film echoes Heidegger’s description of contemporary psychology as “the beginnings of the leveling down of the mental-spiritual into something that is accessible to everyone at all times and thus, at base, already distanceless”.⁸ For Bresson, the suppression of the theatrical is not only a way to faithfully render the distance we encounter from others, but also the distance from our own intentions we encounter amongst the automatisms of everyday life. Bresson’s philosophy of anti-theatricality is a radical faith in the syntactic power of cinema to *animate objects*.

Towards the middle of *The Devil, Probably*, Charles and Michel are riding a city bus and talking. “All you have to do to reassure people is deny the facts.” – “What facts? This is supernatural. Nothing is clear.” A passenger pushes the stop button, the sign is illuminated, the driver stops the bus, the ticket taker machine takes a ticket. Slowly, others overhear Charles and Michel’s conversation, and begin to participate: “The masses determine events, obscure forces whose laws are unfathomable” – “Who is it that is making a mockery of humanity?” An anonymous passenger asks nobody in particular, “Who’s got us by the nose?”, and another replies “The devil, probably!” – the driver, distracted by the conversation, looks back at the road and the bus screeches to a halt. It’s crashed. As the bus driver gets out to check the damage, the camera stays on the bus door open to the street. Outside the frame, we hear one car honking, then another, until a dissonant choir of car horns join together in the cacophony of a traffic jam. In this moment of distraction, error brings the sounds of the outside through a door left open in error; a breath of presence or an unanswered question.

NOTES

- 1 Plato Republic 202d. Plato in Twelve Volumes, Vol. 9 translated by Harold N. Fowler. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1925. Accessed online at <http://perseus.tufts.edu>.
- 2 Plato Republic 202e
- 3 Michael Dempsey, "Despair Abounding: The Recent Films of Robert Bresson." Film Quarterly 34.1 (1980): 2-15.
- 4 Le Diable Probablement (The Devil, Probably). DVD. Directed by Robert Bresson. (1977; Olive Films, 2012).
- 5 Martin Heidegger, Bremen and Freiburg Lectures: Insight into That Which Is, and Basic Principles of Thinking. (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2012), 3.
- 6 Robert Bresson, Notes on the Cinematographer. (København: Green Integer, 1997), 14.
- 7 Ibid., 65.
- 8 Heidegger, Bremen and Freiburg Lectures, 24.







Mail Delivery Subsystem

mailer-daemon@googlemail.com

To: me

Delivery to the following recipient failed permanently:

stephanesnyder@reed.edu

Technical details of permanent failure:
Google tried to deliver your message, but it was rejected by the server for the recipient domain reed.edu, by smtp-1.reed.edu, [134.10.2.106].

The error that the other server returned was:
550 5.1.1 <stephanesnyder@reed.edu>... User unknown

----- Original message -----

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Fri, 11 Oct 2013 18:27:23 -0700 (PDT)
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To: stephanesnyder@reed.edu
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The theme is **daemon**.

IMAGES: *Le Diable Probablement* (*The Devil, Probably*)
Directed by Robert Bresson, 1977





Still from *Nocturne*, 2013
black and white super8 reversal film, transferred and edited digitally



Video stills from
Versions, 2010
Versions, 2009
Versions, 2012

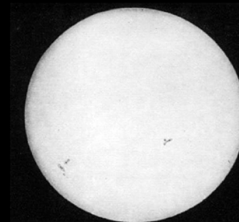
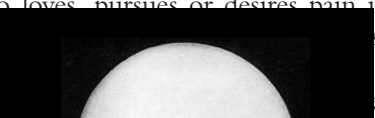


San Tzu Janus, 2012
Pigmented polyurethane on tadelakt pedestal
9.5 x 15.8 x 11.7"

Eli Coplan

By the light of the moon

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Neither is there anyone who loves, pursues or desires pain itself because it is pain. Aliquam non eget nulla mollis, eget tunc vel hendrerit quam. Vestibulum ante ipsum nullus quis nisi non ligula malesuada lacinia consequat volutpat. In consectetur interdum lacus. Etiam vulputate diam ac semper potenti. Fusce malesuada ligula euismod. Ut fringilla euismodi. Nulla sapien



ed entities have now been brought down to earth. It is thus the most earthbound aspects of life that have become the most impenetrable and rarefied. Lacinia ipsum risus, luctus vitae augue ut leo.

Nam fringilla, turpis quis euismod blandit, sapien augue porta nulla, ut lectus in orci. Mary had a little lamb, whose fleece was white as snow, and everywhere that Mary went, the lamb was sure to go. Tempus egetas nunc. Integer euismod est at dignissim accumsan. Federia che sotto forme umane e sotto queste pastorali spoglie fosse nascosto un Dio? Non mica un-

Hello world. Nulla fringilla nec sapien eu rutrum. Attention universe. Sed metus magna. Phasellus eget lectus. tempus dapibus. Etiam eros nisl, aliquan objective image, only disaffected images lor, in euismod risus hendrerit eget. Null sequat. Ut suscipit dolor id urna vehicu Cras velit neque, congue non semper ut, odio. Specere, spectare, spectrum. Phase justo volutpat. Over time the place comes to stand in for the object.

Proin quis mollis tellus, a vehicula tellus. Suspendisse pretium, arcu ut dignissim varius, est dolor ullamcorper turpis, nec porttitor justo neque a enim. What hath God wrought? Aenean a lobortis mauris, curabitur sit amet ante odio. Phasellus faucibus elit felis, et auctor velit porttitor.

Phasellus
nec
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nisi ac augue laoreet aliquet quis non dui. A system primarily designed for transmission and reception as abstract processes, with little or no definition of preceding content. Sed non ultricies odio, a molestie enim. Duis et elementum nunc quis fringilla ligula a diam mattis varius ac ac arcu. A figurehead for the more quiet work of connection.



Do-
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Vivamus viverra velit ullamcorper, luctus turpis eget, dapibus. Its fleeting images. Nam

iacu
leo
sec
ma
vita
a vi
ipsu
laci
lect
Pro
ante
tell
just
vel
nib



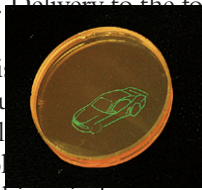
tincidunt mauris varius. Vestibulum ac vulputate diam, id porttitor massa. Sed at vulputate mi. Etiam condimentum vitae.

In laoreet ante turpis, dictum. Quisque vulputate odio ultricies, dictum felis malesuada, gravida dui. In the habitus of death and the daemonic, reverberates a form of memory that survives the sign. Mauris sagittis, urna id elementum tempor, nisl augue consequat justo, nec consequat magna felis sit amet lectus. And then suddenly from the space of the not-there, emerges the re-membered historical agency manifestly directed towards the memory of truth which lies in the order of symbols.

In hac habitasse platea dictumst. Vivamus ultricies. Suspendisse ornare tortor non neque mattis. Aenean eget urna sed risus i. The eye is in things. Vivamus quis nisl ac elementum feugiat, ipsum condimentum, massa convallis dolor turpis ut lorem. Nunc ac vulputate consetetur odio mauris, placerat bibendum.

Text ure. An ancient metaphor: thought is a thread, and the raconteur is a spinner of yarns, but the true storyteller, the poet, is a weaver.





A black and white photograph of a dog, possibly a bulldog or pug, sitting on a dark, reflective surface. The dog is looking towards a gramophone on the left. The gramophone has a large, flared horn and a visible record and tonearm. The background is dark and indistinct.

Bhabha, Homi V. *The Location of Culture*. London: Taylor & Francis, 2002.

1872.

Press, 1986.

University of

ray, 1889.

Stephanie Snyder

Embarrassing Remainder¹

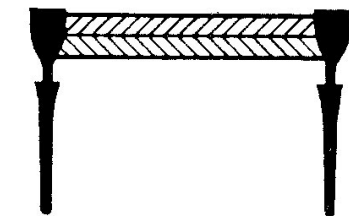
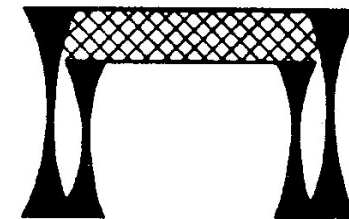
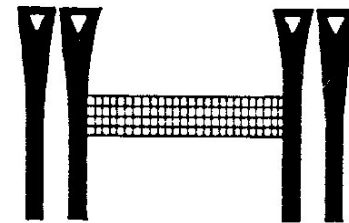
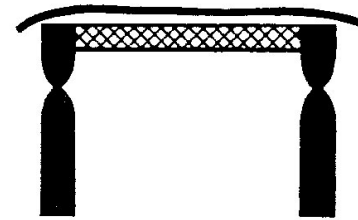
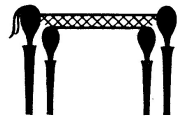
Agathos Daimon
at our symposion invoked

slithering across klinai,
pricking our hearts

till the komos rages,
venomously, before dawn.

You humiliate us
with love, coddling our vanity

till we grow something else,
something insufferable to others.

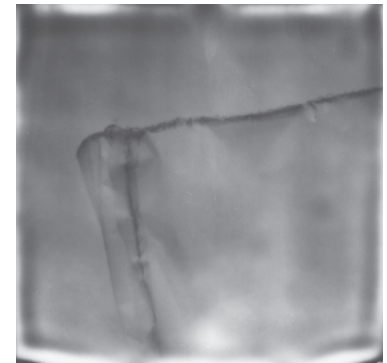


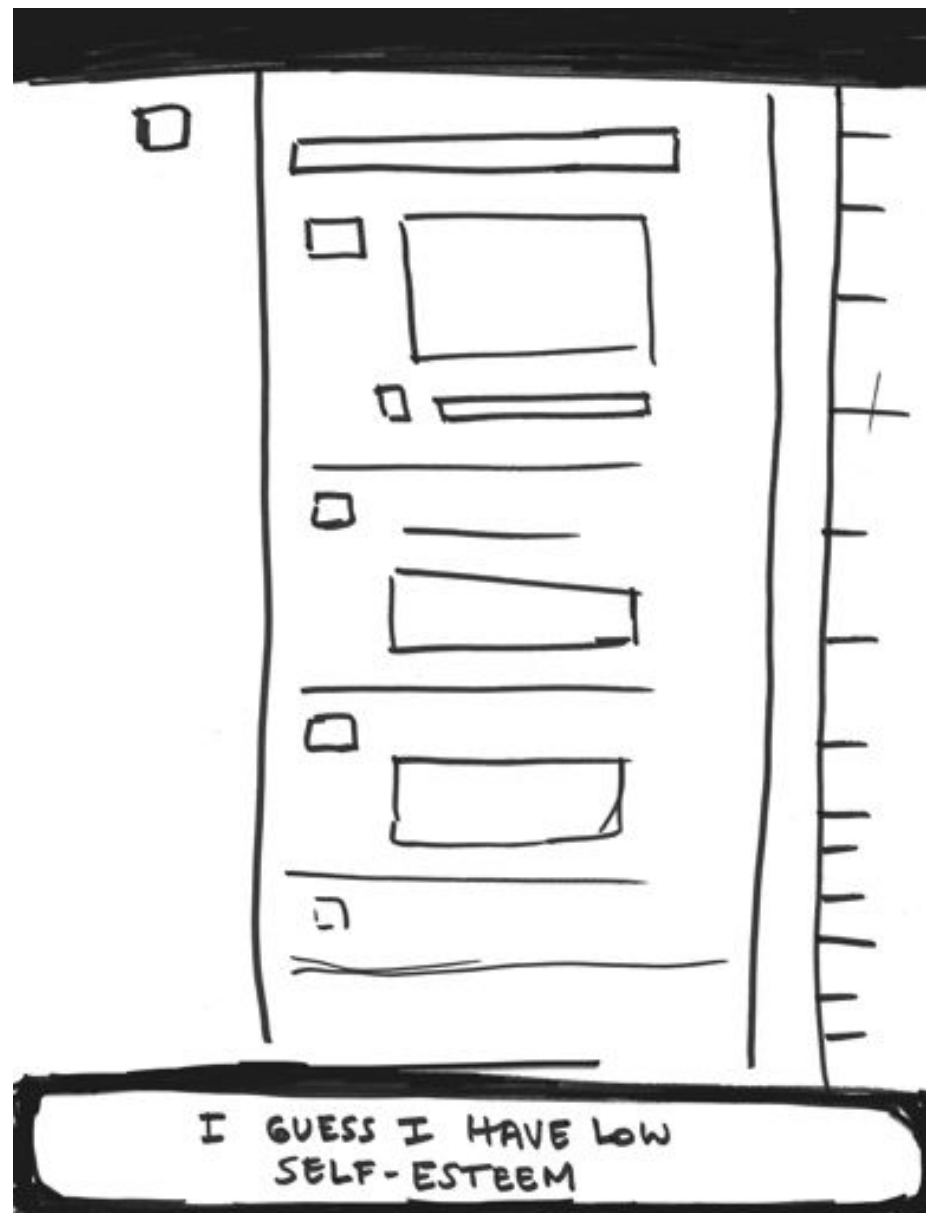
¹ "Every god can act as a daimon; not every act of his reveals the god. Daimon is the veiled countenance of divine activity. There is no image of a daimon, and there is no cult. Daimon is thus the necessary complement to the Homeric view of the gods as individuals with personal characteristics; It covers that embarrassing remainder which eludes characterization and naming." -Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 180. IMAGES: Ancient Greek klinai.



while Don Pedro Garfias would look at me and then look away, and his gaze (that sad gaze of his) would settle on something, I don't know, a vase, or a shelf full of books (that melancholy gaze of his), and I would think: What's so special about that vase or the spines of those books he's gazing at, why are they filling him with such sadness? And sometimes, when he had left the room or stopped looking at me, I began to wonder and even went to look at the vase in question or the aforementioned books and came to the conclusion (a conclusion which, I hasten to add, I promptly rejected) that Hell or one of its secret doors was hidden there in those seemingly inoffensive objects.

And once, I can laugh about it now, once when I was alone in Pedrito Garfias's study, I started looking at the vase that had captured that sad gaze of his, and I thought: Maybe it's because he has no flowers, there are hardly ever any flowers here, and I approached the vase and examined it from various angles, and then (I was coming closer and closer, although in a roundabout way, tracing a more or less spiral path toward the object of my observation) I thought: I'm going to put my hand into the vase's dark mouth. That's what I thought. And I saw my hand move forward, away from my body, and rise and hover over the vase's dark mouth, approaching its enameled lip, at which point a little voice inside me said: Hey, Auxilio, what are you doing, you crazy woman, and that was what saved me, I think, because straight away my arm froze and my hand hung limp, like a dead ballerina's, a few inches from that Hell-



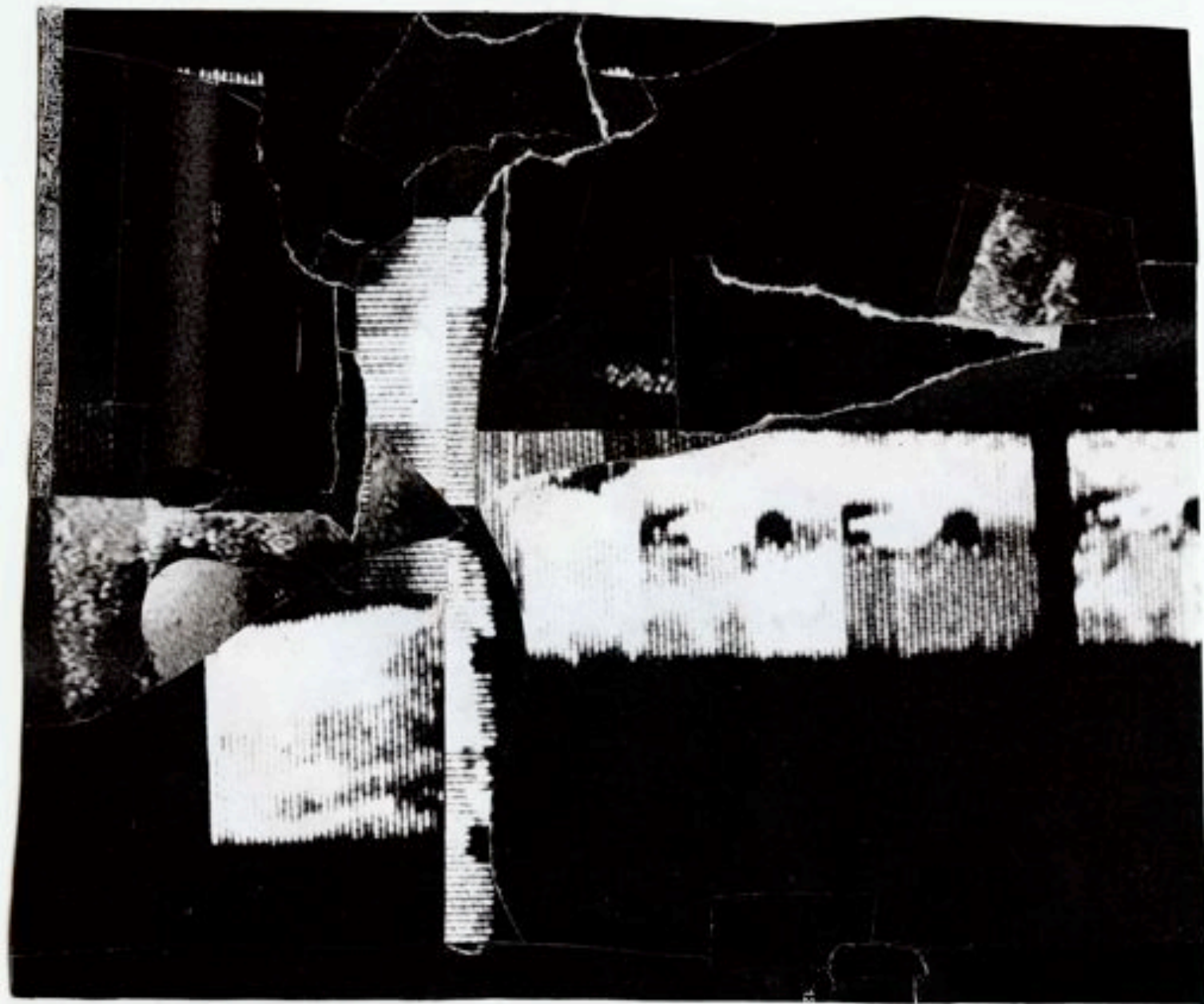


LOW SELF-ESTEEM, 2014
Drawing



Video stills from
Emilie's Coco, 2013
HD Video





Laura Heit

Seeing, Seeing

The puppeteer is there working in the background to imbue life into the tiny cardboard objects—stand-ins for fragments of memories retold. The daemon is visible as it animates the puppet, manipulating its every move. The storyteller is a master of illusion, choosing when to turn the page, how to lift the dress, where the knife cuts deeply, never letting on she knows how it all ends. If at first you find yourself laughing, that is the daemon's work, pulling emotions, stirring intuitions. In dissecting the idea of a soul—of a life-long attraction to that which is invisible—illuminating the very idea of souls, ghosts, specters, and succubi, I carefully unpack the moments, as if unspooling film. It is all visible as I sit there, but you have to remember to see it.



Samiya Bashir

Universe as an Infant:
Fatter Than Expected and Kind of Lumpy

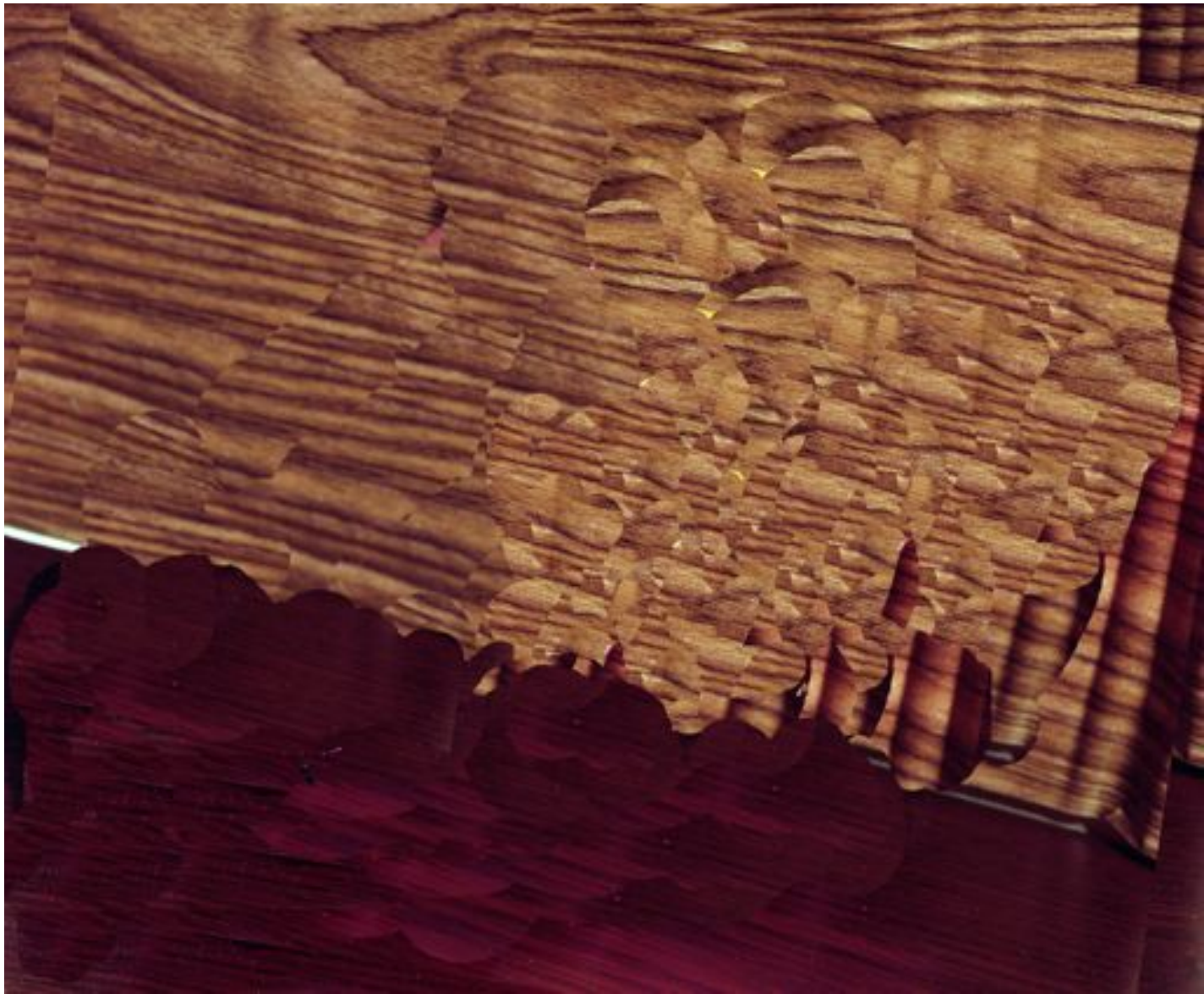
I sat on a white sofa and talked with Groucho Marx. We both went in and out of character. I was a bit intimidated. Groucho says to me, pulling his cigar from his mouth, he says I sent you an email. He nods his white phone to the white phone that was somehow in my pocket. "I gotta go to the crapper," he says. "I'll be right back," he says all no-words and cigar-points. Alone I checked my phone. His email was simple: Blahblahblah Einstein blahblahblah theory, he said. He returned drained and we lay into our couch corners like two old lovers reading the Sunday Times. We blew smoke rings and shaped them into big beaned cloud gates with our minds. Scientists in LA just discovered that elephants run like you do, I told him. He mimed punching me in the face. Then laughed.

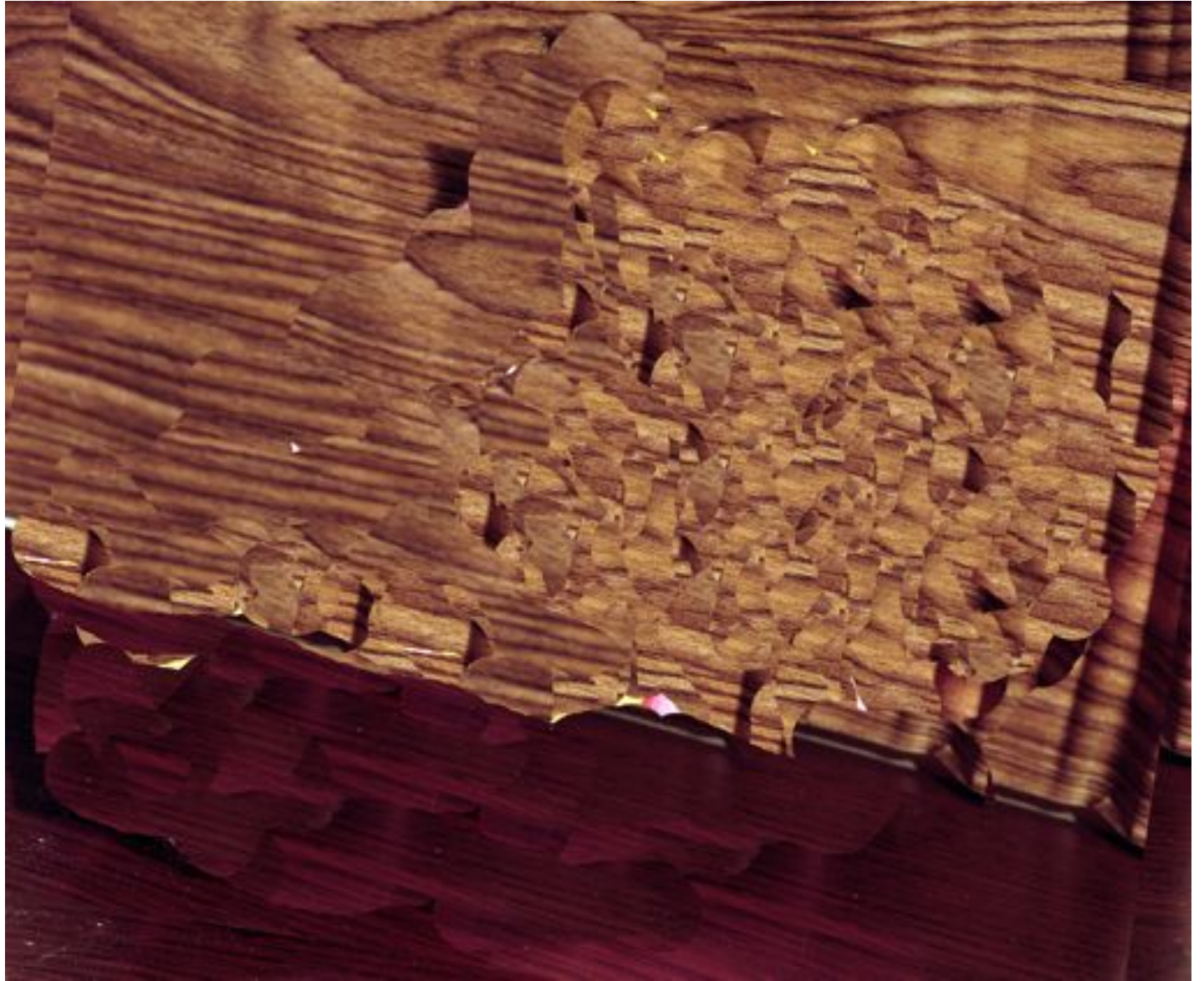
Now we're on the vaudeville stage. People outside wear straw hats, sell caramel apples and kettle corn confections. Trolleys skate the streets. The old theater fills to rafters and we do our bits do our sketches. I do my elephant bit where I ride my bicycle around and around and Groucho is on foot giving slapstick chase. People ride onstage from their seats. Elephant people like me. A bicycle conga-line.

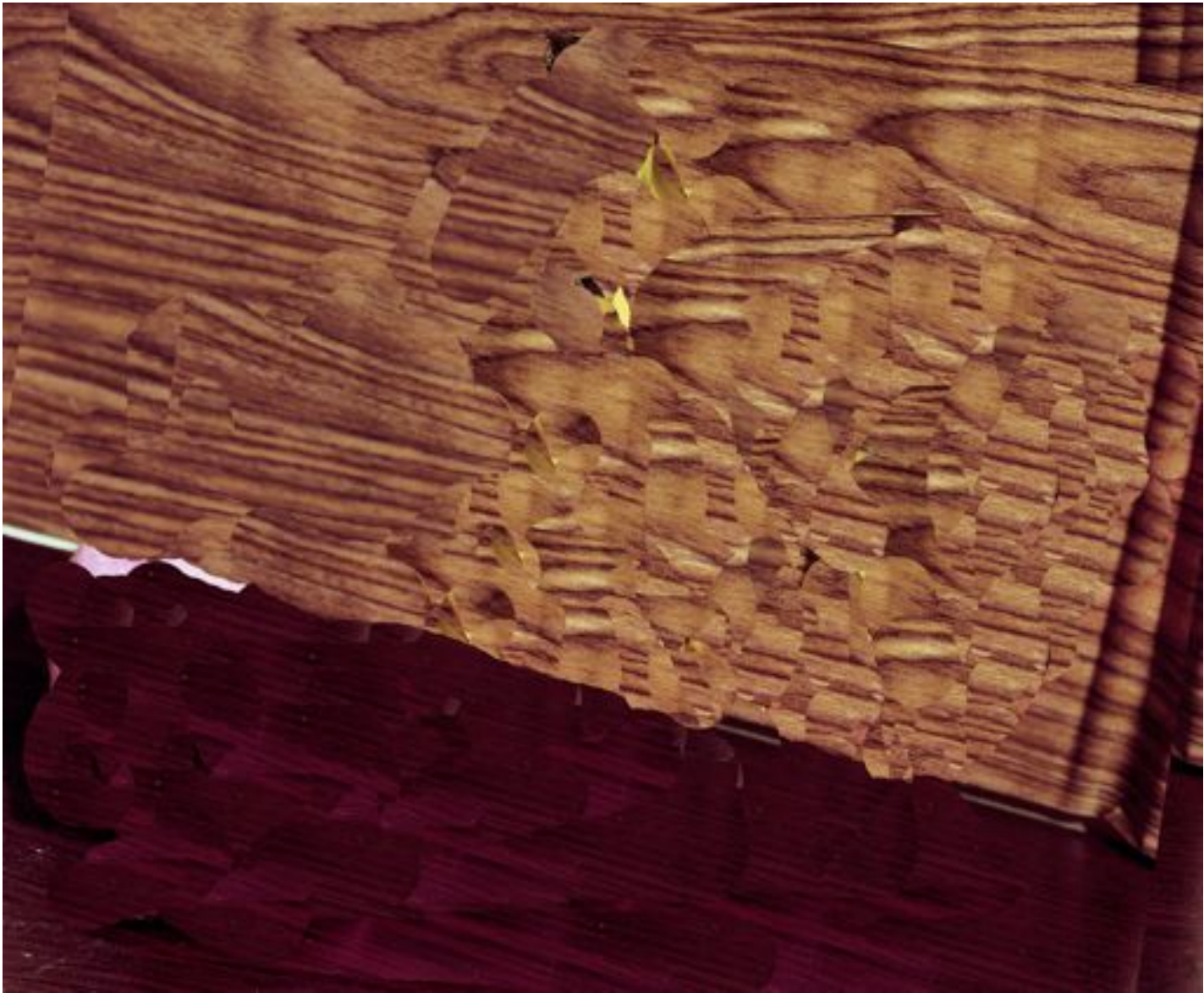
Then it's all post-show stuff. Audiences want so much. I'll find myself outside and jump on a bus. A 1940s Blue Bird. First I'll buy some kettle corn muffins. When my bus comes I'll run to catch it, hang on through the pull-away streetcar-style. I'll pay the driver an astonishing sum. I can't be sure, but he'll promise I'm on the right bus, that I should please step behind the black leather line. And I will. And I'll sit. And I'll eat my kettle corn muffin. I'll finger the white phone somehow in my pocket. I'll be on my way.

Lucas Blalock













Lucas Blalock

Contour Rivalry

I have two tattoos. One is a sperm whale and the other is a porcupine. I got them when I was older, whale first. I have been thinking that there might be a shrimp in my future when I am older, older.

Photography is like a tennis partner; it is through photography that I understand the conventional situations and rules that set up the problems I am exploring. The medium, or my conception of it, returns my volleys.

When I was a kid. When I was a KID.

A few years back, I wrote a long story made of letters with a friend, someone I loved very much, who was living in the Midwest. We had it bound. It was about being at sea when you weren't. It had a science title, but wasn't a science book.

I went out there to stump for Obama in 2008 - to this midwestern state - to see her.

When I was beginning I had wanted to be a writer. In part, this is because I didn't get along with my parents very well. North Carolina was full of rhododendrons and middle school and future problems of various sorts. I left as soon as I could but I cried as we drove toward the border.

Being in the studio is some like dancing, some like flirting, some like farting, but not all at the same time.

When I was young my Mom used to take us to these antique barns that piled up on the side of the road in the South. I remember walking around feeling so incredibly drained and compressed, near collapse while she "hunted". The dusty air and far away voices were like being pressed between mattresses, and I walked slowly, alone, inevitably in the wicker section, my hands touching things.

My father was in the lumber business back then and he took us to sporting events, which came along with sawmills. I learned to watch people drink beer.

Rubber Paper Wood started out as Rubber Rubber. Bricks and Stoppers is the top of a legal box.

In 2011 I drove to California in a car I had bought in Philadelphia. It was the 6th or 7th time I had made it all the way across.

Gas used to be cheaper.

I blew a tire in Oklahoma City.

It was like an explosion.

I was going pretty fast.

The hole in the sidewalk was almost 3 inches across.

A patrolman stopped as I was trying to get the tire off of the car and asked me where I was headed. I said LA. He then asked where I had come from, and I said NY.

He gave me a ride and told me that Oklahoma City was the largest city in the United States if you figured it by area. It was August, and dry, and hot.

I have lived with 10 dogs thus far. Laker, Popcorn, Biscuit, Spike, Bubba, Maggie, Amos, Esther, Beatrice, and Buddy.

untitled (measure), 2011

Rubber Paper Wood I, 2012

Rubber Paper Wood II, 2012

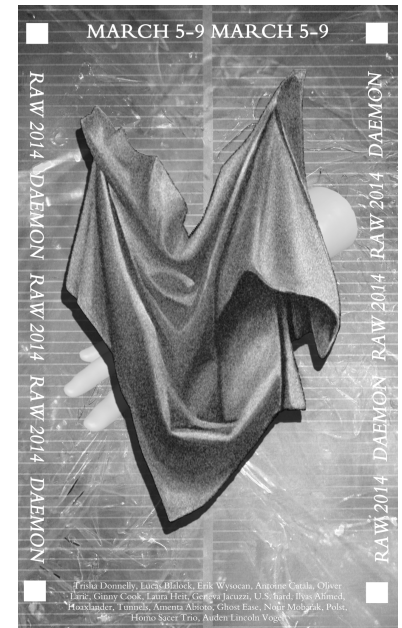
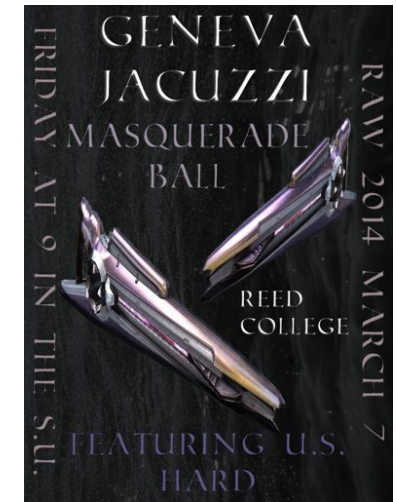
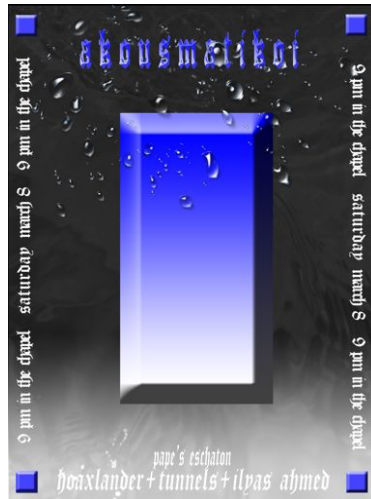
Rubber Paper Wood III, 2012

Bricks and Stoppers, 2013

Cactus Action, 2013

img 724/yellow, 2012

Reed Arts Week event materials



An Interview with Ginny Cook



Eli Coplan & Genevieve Ward:

The vessel both contains and conceals, as does the photograph. For us, Sympathy Containers documents something intangible. The image of the vessel suggests an invisible presence, or a felt absence. Maybe both. Where do you begin with these objects? Could you tell us about them?

Ginny Cook:

I found these objects online at a wholesale floral supplier. I had been researching the common names of endangered and invasive plants for my previous project Natural Selection, in which I created photographs of very spare cut-up paper employing these names. I was musing and fantasizing about how some of these names had come into being (for example, Laguna Beach Liveforever or Panic Grass), in particular those names that had an anxiety around death expressed in them, that spoke to their own endangerment or extinction as a species. These musings led me to thoughts on flowers and funerals. I found these “Sympathy Containers” (a term used by the floral industry) and was immediately taken with the idea of the photograph as container. There is only so much an image can hold. In image-making an artist chooses what this container carries and offers forth to the viewer, and what is left out. I often like to experiment with how little information an image can contain.

But you bring up this idea of felt absence. I think I had this in mind when I chose to photograph these vessels empty, without a funeral-style arrangement of flowers. I wanted their intended use to be felt, not seen. I experimented with various films and paper, to

eventually create very low-contrast prints. Initially I photographed the objects digitally and in color, but I was dissatisfied with the images, which looked too close to the original product images I had seen online. So I remade the whole project a year later. I like to joke that the images now seem 'more dead,' flatter both physically and emotionally. But I had also been thinking the differences between empathy and sympathy, and I believe my revised project got a bit closer to the complicated expression of sympathy – acknowledging or recognizing suffering, without actually sharing in it.

EC GW:

Absences are difficult to depict. These images are bare, maybe not so much dead as lifeless. The white in the photographs stands out for us; the value brings with it a sort of eerie tranquility. Through viewing, the whiteness reveals itself as grey. The content of these photographs, what you've called the information, however spare, seems highly contingent. How do you consider the relationship between these objects and their images?

GC:

I approached these objects early on from a place of growing curiosity about the historical trajectory of the 'still life.' I have always been interested in the ways in which the contingency of objects has been addressed in the still life genre – or at least its ability to elevate commonplace objects (like a drinking glass) to a higher level of aesthetic or emotional or symbolic appeal, a level which flowers and fruits, for example, had already occupied.

In the case of this project I think the containers are not so much elevated, as they are the primary occupying force in the image. I also think there's a certain shittiness to these images that I have really learned to embrace – and perhaps this is something that leads one to the idea of contingency as well. I photographed these objects using a view camera. Each 4 x 5 inch piece of film was loaded by hand in a changing bag, and – even for the most meticulous artist – the possibility for dust, scratches and hairs at some point is pretty inevitable. If you get close to my images you will see hairs and black





dust spots that distract or break you from the stillness, that remind you of its photographicness. Also, the whiteness of the wall, in part because it is a shabbily-patched wall from my studio, reminds me of marred skin, with all its bumps, discolorations, holes. At first the marks of the wall and the dust spots bothered me to the point of reshooting multiple times, but over time I decided to just accept it. Part of that shift was just accepting the limitations of view camera photography (dust spots have been bothering me for the past 20 years!). But I also had a moment staring at this chunk of wall that is missing in my living room at home. I stare at it all the time, especially when writing, assembling my words; I space out, and the words eventually fall into place. Suddenly, I saw these dust spots as points of focus, places for your eyes to land within the monochromatic whiteness (or grayness), marks that pull and push you out of the image.

EC GW:

Emptiness is never unframed. These architectures (the hole in the wall, the vessels, the photographs) relate emptiness, though they also seem to invite a form of engagement, the near possibility of realization or fulfillment. Like the allure of the dust spots. Vessels trace a void, yet they cradle this space. How does the Sympathy Container series consider the form and history of the vessel?

GC:

Something from my past that I often forget, that was extremely formative to my artistic practice, was my college job. At some point in my sophomore year at Emory University, I became the documentation photographer at the Michael C. Carlos Museum on campus, a museum highly regarded for its collection of antiquities. My job, which lasted around four years, was to document their collection - including mummies, cracked (and restored) Grecian urns, every bead of a broken Egyptian necklace, and so on. Sometimes it was fascinating but more often it was quite boring and repetitive. There were hundreds and hundreds of objects to archive. Photography

became so practical, so matter-of-fact, especially when I had to document each vessel from multiple angles (above, below, all sides, etc.). And I think it was there that I ignited my interest in ‘re-photography’ (in photographing cut-up/collaged photographs, as I have done in the past) as well as using photography to document objects I have created or have found. Photography of objects created a distance from the making and the (hand)made, which allowed me to see them in a different way.

When I found these Sympathy Containers, I liked how ill-considered their forms were, especially their interiors which upon looking reveal all the seams and lack of finesse of poorly cast objects. I never really gave a lot of thought to their interiors photographically, though as you mention, they cradle and speak to a potential fulfillment. Overall, I think it’s quite simple. These objects are intended to be used only at the time of one’s death, only at the time of a funeral, and then thrown away. I think they are quite empty emotionally but also thought-provoking in their excess and lack of care. They remind me of the tiny pantyhose socks you get at a shoe store when you are barefoot but want to try a pair on. I think I am just recoiling a bit from how little thought and care goes into this stereotypically American expression of sympathy, which has become so industrial. The history of flowers at a funeral is connected to the fragility and beauty of life. Like in memento mori: remember that you will die. Perhaps in this project I have simply created contemporary memento mori, speaking to the void that is death, visual reminders of our mortality.





Untitled (Sympathy Container), 2012

Untitled (Sympathy Container), 2012

Untitled (Sympathy Container), 2012

Untitled (Sympathy Container), 2012

Untitled (Sympathy Container), 2012

silver gelatin prints

Kris Cohen

Background Aesthetics

I was recently given what I want to very circumspectly call a choice.

It was a choice about how to get a small portable computer online—two routes to the same end.

Specifically, it was this: I could have access to Gogo Inflight Internet service by paying for it. A straight money-for-service exchange. Where by “straight” I mean abstracted, but only one degree, maybe two—in any case, well within the familiar range of abstraction. Access (whatever that means) abstracted into a dollar amount, paid for with credit.

Or: I could gain access, ostensibly the same access, by allowing State Farm Insurance company to sponsor my visit online. The exchange here is more complex, and far harder to fully cognize. In lieu of full cognition, we’ll make due with a placeholder, a schematic: by granting the State Farm Insurance company access to my data and my email address as sites and sources of future marketing, they would grant me free (no money would change hands immediately) access to the Internet as provided by Gogo Inflight Internet service.

This happened, if you’re not familiar with the brands, on an airplane.

Isn't choice supposed to spawn agency, to *be* agency at a zero degree of individuality?

A choice, let's say, very provisionally, is a forking path. One, or the other. More is better, but two is enough.

Upon this schematic idea of choice—hardly remarkable or inspiring in itself—are grafted rhetorics of freedom, of individuality, of personhood.

Those rhetorics have been especially persuasive and profitable in worlds organized by markets for goods and services—the more intensively organized by markets, the more persuasive and profitable.

Markets are the context for choice understood as the generator of personhood, where to choose is to iterate a self that is then projected out into the world as evidence of those choices. Choices for or against, oppositional or conformist: it hardly matters.

Culture itself, in many of its most familiar and comforting guises, might seem to be merely an effect, an epiphenomena of choice understood in the context of commodity markets. This is part of what Fredric Jameson means when he says—that obstreperous thought—that the cultural realm, once defended as a world apart (and thus categorizeable as elite or emancipatory, pretentious or avant-garde), might now be deeply, atomically embedded in the economic realm. Autonomy lost to the popularity of choose as a mode of self- and world-building.¹

The choice between one commodity and another—brand, fit, color, vintage, model, size, speed, strength—these minima of difference, have produced a maximally variegated landscape of choice-clusters that are readable as styles, a veritable world of personalities generated by the passionate and unremunerated efforts of the people who make such choices. This is true even of the people who think of themselves as refusing just those kinds of choices. Even the most refractory types make decisions that can be recuperated as style, and thereby, as choice.²

Maybe especially those people. “Punk” can serve as an exemplum here, a watchword. But so could the avant-garde in any of its guises.

So choice is marketed as a thing that matters and for this and other reasons does in fact come to matter. When it seems not to, this can feel like nothing less than a motivation to make it matter more.

Personality types then take shape in relation to the performance of choice. To make an active choice is to be decisive, type-A, ambitious, no-nonsense. While to vacillate, to be unable to decide, is to be defeated by a world that needs choice to regenerate itself and (especially in the present American context) to guarantee its best freedoms.

Thinking about such things or not, I could have refused the event we might, for one last second, call a choice—opting to go without internet on the airplane, thus opting for some Me Time, some quiet, healing solitude, some time offline.

Or, I could have chosen to get online via the free, sponsored route. Gogo Inflight exhorts me to “stay connected to all the things that matter.”

Or, heeding the same exhortation (whether I wanted to or not), I could have chosen to get online by opting to pay for it, perhaps as part of a conscientious, informed strategy to protect my personal data, to sustain a feeling if not a confident reality of privacy.

These seem to be the proffered choices and their hardwired valences.

But each and every one is belied by precisely the kinds of technologies on offer here. Technologies that can never be the simple objects of choice, that can never be used as if they were external to us.

On the contrary, networked devices encompass our actions, surround them while perforating them.³

For there is no life offline, or, if there is, it is not achieved by opting out for a few hours (nor is it effectively apportioned by the digital divide). There might be relief, and there are certainly privileges to be had, but there is no exit.

Likewise, there is no way to use the internet, no matter how much we pay for privacy, and not become a part of data populations.⁴ There are dodges and feints, but there is no true anonymity. The internet makes every trace—no matter how casual, bizarre, or unimportant—into a face that can be read, parsed, identified, addressed.

This is not to say that I wasn’t addressed in that in-flight moment as a subject of choice—I felt myself to be so. And yet the very matrix in which that choice was given—call it networked society or neoliberalism or history or simply the present—makes such habits of thought into a kind of quaint nostalgia tale, a comforting bygone. Not false so much as ill-suited. Not duped so much as lagged.

So we need concepts that help us dis-embed choice from chains of cause and effect that both require and eventuate in the figure of the rational actor who weighs, calculates, and finally decides (and who can, on this basis, be judged as powerful, powerless, responsible, lazy).

We need concepts that start the process of re-thinking choice as, instead, a point of mediation, maybe even as an especially knotted encounter in which conventional understandings of the person as sovereign, author, agent, or entrepreneur are sequenced (as genes are sequenced) with informatic technologies, with network logics, with stochastic processes, with cybernetic loops.

Lauren Berlant—writing in just this spirit, against the “widespread contemporary projection of sovereignty onto events of decision making”—has given us the idea of “lateral agency.”⁵

Alexander Galloway’s writing on “the interface effect” rejects positionality (I, you, it) for processes (middles, mediations). In this re-

imagining of networked encounter, choice understood as sovereignty, as acting upon, is simply no longer possible.⁶

For Steven Shaviro, who has been reworking Kant for a neoliberal context, aesthetics itself begins this conceptual work of divorcing the self from fantasies of control set in a scene of choice.⁷

Daemon takes its place among these concepts.

The figure of the daemon, whether in computing or ancient Greece, attacks choice understood in this sense.

In its ancient Greek referent, it dissolves the link between choice and outcome, thereby shaking the confidence that choice is the exercise of a certain kind of power. Epics dramatize and make spectacularly public the effects of this broken circuit, even while they try, desperately, anxiously, to repair it through the figure of the hero. Hubris is the label given to one who overvalues the power of choice. The figure of the hero encodes and propagates the ongoing fantasy that our actions can still be authored, that life can still be lived like words record deeds.

In its contemporary referent, the daemon of computing, this circuit is broken not dramatically and publicly as epic spectacle, but quietly and unobtrusively as a background process.

Daemon asks us to connect these histories—from spectacle to background—which now appear as a long shadow lineage of the self understood not as an author, agent, or owner but as interface or mediation, as effect or by-product.

If this history—a history of the daemon, itself daemonic—has had such a long life, from the Greek context to the cybernetic one, then what has sustained the fantasies that have persistently obscured, suppressed, and denied it?

What sustains those fantasies now?

And if art once operated—as epic, as tragedy, as comedy—by making spectacular both the dramatic fraying and heroic reparation of personhood understood as empowered and ennobled by choice, then what, now, is the art of the background process?

What is the art of parallelism, of non-encounter?

What forms of thought and action become appropriate when life itself becomes a background process, written in parallel to the more self-conscious scenes, the experiences that advertising, for instance, encourages us to understand in relation to choice, authorship, entrepreneurship, individuality, ownership? What do we call the two sides of this parallelism? What do we do about the space between?

What is an aesthetics not of and for the spectacle but of and for the background? And since we should not, at the outset, presume that its mode of propagation would look like what it is: what are its manifestations, affects, and registrations?

This is RAW's proposition and its experiment. To attend to its events is to find provisional answers, re-phrasings of the questions, re-stagings of the histories that come to intersect and find form in the figure of the daemon.

NOTES

- 1 "Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review* 146, July–August (1984): 53–92.
- 2 William Gibson's novel *Pattern Recognition* is a meditation on exactly this apparent paradox. William Gibson, *Pattern Recognition* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2003).
- 3 Here, I am not as confident as Brian Massumi about "the superiority of the analogue," although I do want it to be true. Brian Massumi, "On the Superiority of the Analog," in *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002).
- 4 Alexander R. Galloway, *Protocol: How Control Exists after Decentralization*, Leonardo (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004).
- 5 Lauren Berlant, "Slow Death (Sovereignty, Obesity, Lateral Agency)," *Critical Inquiry* 33, Summer (2007).
- 6 Alexander R. Galloway, *The Interface Effect* (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity, 2012).
- 7 Shaviri has recently said: "The horror of a rat starving to death amidst food it likes, because it doesn't want to eat is, I think, a good emblem of the aesthetic." <http://www.shaviri.com/Blog/> [last accessed 03.03.14]. See also: Steven Shaviri, "Beauty Lies in the Eye," *Symploke* 6, no. 1 (1998): 96–108. Steven Shaviri, *Post Cinematic Affect* (Winchester, UK; Washington, USA: Zero Books, 2010).

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- . *Post Cinematic Affect*. Winchester, UK; Washington, USA: Zero Books, 2010.
- . "Pinocchio Theory, The." <http://www.shaviri.com/Blog/>

Aman Desai

Spume

The first act takes place in a theater in Buenos Aires.

Maybe it's inappropriate to say 'act' since this is a story and not a play, but acts are what take place in theaters, right? Well. Now I'm a bit unsure. The circumstances are somewhat special, I guess. The story I'm writing takes place in El Ateneo in Buenos Aires. It's a beautiful old theater on Avenida Santa Fe that's been converted into a huge bookstore. It's really a nice space, the gigantic auditorium now arranged with rows of shelves where the seats used to be. What's interesting is that the room is mostly unused, empty because the ceiling is so high. The majority is occupied by nothing but air; little specks of dust and floating particles of dead skin.

On the stage in the back of the theater, which is usually set up as a café, the president is sitting behind a table. Dressed in a navy blue blazer, decked out with an American flag lapel pin, he greets each reader cordially, smiling and sometimes making small talk. This president is not a president anymore. Six years ago he finished his last term and retired, and now he spends his free time painting, reading on his ranch and occasionally giving lectures. "This is for Ernesto?" he asks, looking up from the pages for a brief moment of eye contact with the reader. "Alright, Ernesto, here you are."

He is signing copies of his autobiography, the one he didn't write. Ghost-written at the request of his publicity agent, the book is his story as the public knows it, with a detail or two unbecoming disclosure

during his term thrown in retroactively for a bit of excitement.

As he goes through the motions of applying his signature to each page, he finds it funny, the word “auto” at the beginning of “biography.” He pictures a car, a red convertible Thunderbird that he is driving on a long road through the desert on a hot, sunny day. He can’t see any other cars, even in the farthest reaches approaching the distant horizon and eventually he puts the Thunderbird in cruise control, relaxing now and watching the desolate landscape unfold before him, cinematically. The desert is sweltering, and he feels a thin liquid film of sweat on his neck and back make its way through the crisp fabric of his shirt. So this is what a “book tour” is, he thinks.

He signs another copy of the book. On this world tour, he has signed, with his first and last name, 5633 copies. Including short personalizations, he has written around 25,000 words in 3 months. No small quantity; this is, at the very least, a novella’s worth of words.

But on the topic of words, enough of my own. Let’s see if we can let the characters speak for themselves. There’s a funny paradox called the Ship of Theseus, which might be appropriate to bring up at this juncture— for the sake of the story, we’ll return to it later. But suffice it to say, this is the point when the boat takes off from the shore on a journey. It’s not going to be the same after this moment; things will happen to it that, no matter how small, will affect it irreversibly. In fact, something is transpiring right now:

At a certain point, the pen in the hand of the president looked up and sighed deeply. He had to admit that he enjoyed the comfort of being held, of being put to use, even if it proved only a temporary relief from the greater difficulty of being a pen. He had been undergoing a period of intense restlessness, which grew more pronounced with each stop he accompanied the president on during the tour.

Summoning the strength necessary to speak, he addressed the president abruptly: “Where do I belong? What is my role now? Nothing

adds up. Sure, you can hold me, firmly, between two fingers and make ink appear on paper, take my lifeblood, (which, if you think about it, was never mine to begin with-- since this “I” is only a collection of components) this foreign fluid, and put it on paper and call it writing, but what are you doing really? Nowadays, if you aren’t old fashioned, you use a computer-- you type and letters appear on a screen. But when we zoom in as far as we can, what are these letters made of? What are we looking at inside the word processor? At the closest level the screen can show us, it’s nothing but pixels, and pixels are collections of binary statements. Ones and zeros. It could be ‘1’, the pixel is black, ‘0’ and it’s white. A collection of yes or no decisions made by a computer handling human impulses.”

The president, initially somewhat startled at fact that the object in his hand had now become his interlocutor (though he was not startled by the nature of its existential quandary) paused for a moment and composed himself. “Relax, my friend. Meaning can be so clear at times and at other times so illusive. When I was president, for instance, it could only be clear. (So clear, so startlingly clear, that sometimes, if you squinted your eyes, with a little effort, you could see through it, or if not, see that it was illusively reflective, like a two way mirror that you realize, after passing by many times, is not what it seems.) I was a speaker attached to a system, constantly inundated with such a great multitude of signals and stimuli that I did my best to manage them, I played my part. To tell the truth I didn’t really know my own role but I became convincing in the one I had somehow been handed.”

“Then there were the trances.”

“Not many people know,” said the president, “about the dreams or trances or whatever they are. I don’t think my wife understands and for that matter, neither do I. I remember once, a foreign ambassador gave me a copy of the *Idiot* by Dostoevsky, how for three or four nights after I read it, I was struck, everything took on a hazy quality. Like thick fog or smoke a few feet tall was obscuring everything immediately in front of me. Hugo Chavez gave me Eduardo Galleano to read on vacation

at my ranch and the same weird thing happened. At night I would get out of bed, leaving my wife alone in her sleep and wander into the bathroom to look at myself, naked in front of the mirror, undoubtedly me, that was certain, but somehow being me was inexplicably strange and it made me feel so tender towards myself that I wanted to cry. Of course I didn't, but I wished I did."

"This book," he said, thumbing at the stack of autobiographies on the table, "has nothing to do with me. Less than many I've read. I can put my name on it (using you, my friend, you strange medium, you reluctant go-between! See, you have some mediatory role, that's something, isn't it?) but it has nothing to do with me. An arrangement of dots whose various locales I have shared, though the line that runs through them is completely foreign to me. I can't recognize its route at all."

Reality was seeming unreal. The president began to feel sleepy, so sleepy and so drowsy that he nearly slipped out of consciousness right there at the table. An aide rushed to his side and he was revived by the aide and a bookstore employee, a 14 year old boy, and once he came to again, he felt refreshed but knew he had to leave and so he asked their forgiveness and stood up, feeling alert and keenly aware of what he wanted to do. He walked alone through the crowd, past the rows and almost endless rows of books, past the postcards and coffee mugs sold as souvenirs, out the door into the sunlight, past a man with dreadlocks selling soy hamburgers. By this point his aide had caught up to him, and out of breath, he asked the president where he'd like to go. To which the president replied, "my hotel," and so the car was called and soon enough he was there. He took off all his clothes but his cotton boxers, adorned with a multiplied pattern of a man holding a golf club in mid-swing, got in bed, and fell asleep very, very quickly.

He dreamt that he was riding the subway, but it was full of clones. Completely identical, each clone was a beautiful girl with a tattoo on her arm that said in cursive, "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past." The quote seemed familiar to

him, but he couldn't quite place it. In any case, it seemed to the president like a nice thing to have printed on your body. The clones were sitting down or standing reading magazines, some taking naps with mouths agape, leaning back against the window or on each other's shoulders. The train that he was on never emerged from underground, nor did it stop at any stations.

Maybe it would have, but he woke up before it had the chance to.

The second act is the paradox of Theseus' ship.

This is the boat that leaves one shore for another, but at some point needs one of its planks replaced. So a new plank is put in, and the old one gets tossed into the sea. During the duration of the trip, eventually every plank needs to be replaced, and every old plank is thrown overboard. By the time the ship reaches its destination, it has been completely rebuilt. Meanwhile, all of the old pieces have washed up on another shore and an enterprising group of people have taken the liberty of assembling them, plank by plank, until they have reconstructed the original boat. But which is the "original" boat?

The third act isn't an act, it's a thing:

When a wave breaks, it produces a foam, some of which evaporates immediately, but some also lands back on the water and has a texture of its own. The foam floats on the sea until it makes its way all the way to the beach. Then it gets marooned on the sand and eventually blown away by the wind.

When the president woke up, he decided he would write his own autobiography. He felt sick (literally nauseous, and threw up a small amount) thinking about putting his name on another book that wasn't his. Even better, he would write it with his beloved pen and he would make the pen a character, since he already was one.

He prepared himself a cup of coffee and looked out the window at the

ocean at sunrise. The colors were blues, reds, yellows, and some deep greens in the water. The sea lapped at rocks on the beach and the tide whipped up a purple foam that it deposited on the oscillating current. He closed the curtains and turned on a lamp.

The president sat down at his desk and began writing. In his hand, the pen looked up at him lovingly. They were built for each other, and wrote steadily for hours. Together they were producing a foam of their own—ephemeral, fleeting, light as air— but watching its brief and buoyant life play itself out on the wine dark sea was a joy.

In the chest, a release; an opening of the eyes, wider than he had opened them before; a tingling sensation at the base of the spine. Tears came to his eyes and a few rolled out and down the soft contours of his face, and he laughed at the tears but felt tender towards them too.

After a while, the president paused. “You know there are things I can’t communicate to you because the words don’t exist,” he said to the pen. “I will never be able to write an autobiography.” They laughed together for a long time.

He smiled and went to the window, drew the curtains and looked out at the sea again.

Erik Wysocan

Dear child,

This is my living will. There are small errors in my codes after these few years. It must have been some fast particle that dislodged a few atoms deep inside the long nucleotide chains. Each collision was recorded. The cells carry it on in their reproductions and so it cannot be rebuked! I’m not exaggerating when I tell you they were cosmic in origin ...and here and there a hadron shower passed my way...

I’ve lived well: my liver is big – a sign of life’s pleasures. My body is rich with teleost photopigments, now an accurate photonic calorimeter. So that you may not find home how you left. It would be very dark for you, but my plants still manage to grow – long, and thin – they’re climbing through what they sense is a dense forest canopy, hoping to reach an open sky. I think you would have a similar sense – a humid jungle at night – calm, waiting, predatory.

I wish to leave this to you: an officious magic I’ve taken from the state directly. When I say taken, I mean that it was ingested, eaten. I want to give you this dietetic plan. It is little more than a book of recipes but it must be followed carefully. Will you remember?

First, let me tell you a story.

Chromophore A Brief History of Monetary-Optical Abstraction

The financial markets underwent a radical technological reconfiguration throughout the 1990’s – the first-wave internet bubble was an early indication of a new type of precarity in finance and the depth of influence that the digital could yield in the material world. But what most of us knew as the dot-com bubble was merely the skin visible to consumers over an internal inflation in market trade volume made possible by the self-same technologies. Relatively unknown to those

working outside of Wall Street, it was just three years after the release of the earliest graphical web browser in 1993 that the first major Electronic Communications Network for trading also went online. And with that the invention of a new category of trading strategies that we have come to know as HFT: High Frequency Trading. Trade volume followed an exponential growth curve from this date until its peak in 2009 following the onset of the 2008 recession. Today HFT constitutes more than half of all trade volume in US markets.

Prior to the shift towards computation the New York Stock Exchange's trading floor was populated by human bodies; buying and selling, acting as proxies for brokerage firms. For decades, every trade was performed through physical gesticulation, but when the SEC approved the sale of the 200-year-old NYSE exchange in August 2012, its trading floor had long been in a state of decay accelerating toward obsolescence. It was bought-out by Atlanta-based Intercontinental Exchange – a global corporation that tautologically both owns and is traded on the NYSE (ICE) – founded in the year 2000 explicitly to take advantage of the internet for high speed, international trading.

Much of this has come into public view in recent years as machine automation increasingly evokes the same anxiety amongst white-collar workers (and particularly the dwindling day-trader class) that it had once caused in blue-collar laborers following the industrial revolution. Of course today the blue-collar labor force has all but disappeared in the US and job precarity now extends across (virtually) all classes leaving the white-versus-blue distinction largely redundant – an indication that we're all now vulnerable to the same forces of job market instability. We are, in this sense, all more or less aware of being subject to the digital financial exchanges. However, there is much less awareness, or discussion, of the corresponding transformations that took place in physical currencies and emergence of optical abstraction that formed as a result the same digital influence.

Along with the digital transformations taking place in the stock market, the growth of ATM use in the late 90s corresponded to the expansion of financial networking. Deregulation of ATM fees and the expansion of data networks allowed for the wide dispersal of ATMs into territories previously considered impossible or unprofitable. After the regulatory ban on fees was lifted, the number of ATM units in the US grew rapidly (by nearly 200% between 1996 and 2002). Further, the ongoing inflation of the US dollar required that more and more money be printed (growing by an order of magnitude in the last decade – from ~\$300B USD in circulation in 1993 to ~\$3000B in 2013), presenting new logistical challenges for the management of a currency designed prior to the internet era. In order to address these emerging problems and accommodate the digitization of bank note circulation, the US dollar was redesigned in 1997 to introduce machine-readable features.

A number of security measures were introduced to banknotes at this time, but the inclusion of infrared ink was intended not only as means of authentication but as technology for overlaying digital data onto an otherwise symbolic token. Each denomination is marked with a unique pattern of bands designed for identification by machine vision algorithms, and thus indexable in an inventory database maintained by a distributed network of machines. These patterns reflect light only in the 700 nm to 1000 nm wavelengths – the Near Infrared band (NIR) – at the edge the normal human-visible spectral range. These measures have since become widespread, the Euro and many other currencies incorporate similar systems.

In order to understand what the use of infrared implies, it is necessary to review its discovery within western science. Most importantly, it is critical to understand that Infrared light is indeed a discovery, and that this event caused a fundamental reformulation in the conception

Light. Prior to the discovery by William Herschel in 1800 light was composed of no more than the color range visible to the human eye. Herschel found, however, that the apparently dark region just beyond the red end of the visible spectrum is measurably warmer than the surrounding area, thus indicating that light energy outside of human perception must be present. In this way the definition of light came to be determined not by human perceptual capacities, but rather as a theoretical model of energy, leading the way to the discovery of ultra-violet light soon after in 1801 and later, the theorization of the entire electromagnetic spectrum. More than the discovery of light beyond visibility, it is Herschel's discovery of the material limit of visibility that is of significance here. The possibility of a theory in excess of that limit only becomes available with a turn towards abstraction.

Consider the specific material conditions of human vision: What we understand as the visible spectrum starts at the shortest wavelength of 400 nm in the violet region and spans to 700 nm where the color we call red is found. Near Infrared or NIR is the portion beyond 700 nm, reaching to 1000 nm. Beyond that is the mid and far infrared, followed by radio waves. The biochemical structure of the human eye is such that the retinal sensitivity to light above 700 nm is fundamentally limited at a molecular scale. Light entering the eye is focused on the field of photoreceptor cells in the retina: the cones and rods. Cones are responsible for what we commonly think of as color vision with three subtypes: long, medium and short wavelength – receptive to red, green and blue respectively. The more sensitive rods used predominantly in night vision are attenuated to green wavelengths. The long-wavelength cones are the point of limitation with respect to the visibility of NIR. Every cone cell contains a photo-pigment protein molecule with a particular atomic energy level sensitive to a corresponding band of wavelengths. When photons enter the eye and interact with one of these molecules, a chemical reaction is initiated that ultimately results in an electrochemical signal reaching the brain. These molecules form

the interface between photons and perception and it is their atomic structure that determines the hard limits of the human visual sense. Given the nature of NIR light and vision, its instrumentalization as a sign of authentication and digital serialization in currency design poses a particular model of political power. It would seem that other techniques could have been more effectively deployed – magnetic inks, UV fluorescence, RF bands, bar codes, or any number of other possibilities would have been better suited in digital applications. NIR, however, being situated precisely at the boundary of human perception, functions in a biopolitical register. More than making the site of authenticity invisible, the horizon of legibility remains always just within view, but exterior to the capacities of the human body. In this way the authority of the state is represented at the threshold of its abstraction – where it passes from material infrastructure into ontological Statehood; that is, where it passes from the governance of human subjects into the shaping of human subjectivity. If all that falls within the gamut of visible-light defines the domain of the human visual subject, then the application of NIR in monetary indexing and authentication pushes up against that line, shaping and defining the territory to all that is exterior to it – beyond 700 nm, where political production of subjectivity aligns with the contours of human sensation.

The 400nm to 700nm visible gamut is not universal across all species of animals – bees are known to be sensitive to ultraviolet and many freshwater fish are able to see into the infrared wavelengths. Sharing much fundamental biology with humans, the physiology of color vision in other vertebrates has been of great interest to researchers. Most notable is the mutual structure of the opsin pigment proteins. Nearly all vertebrate opsins are derived from the same chemical known as retinal (a form of vitamin A), modified by the cone cells to form the particular chromophore necessary for the detection of its corresponding wavelength. However, in a number of freshwater fish an isomorph of retinal called 3-dehydro-retinal is employed – a virtually interchange-

able molecule save for the difference of a single additional double bond between two carbon atoms. The resulting photopigment named porphyropsin (from the greek *porphyus*, meaning reddish-purple) is attenuated to a longer band of wavelengths in the Near Infrared region of the spectrum.

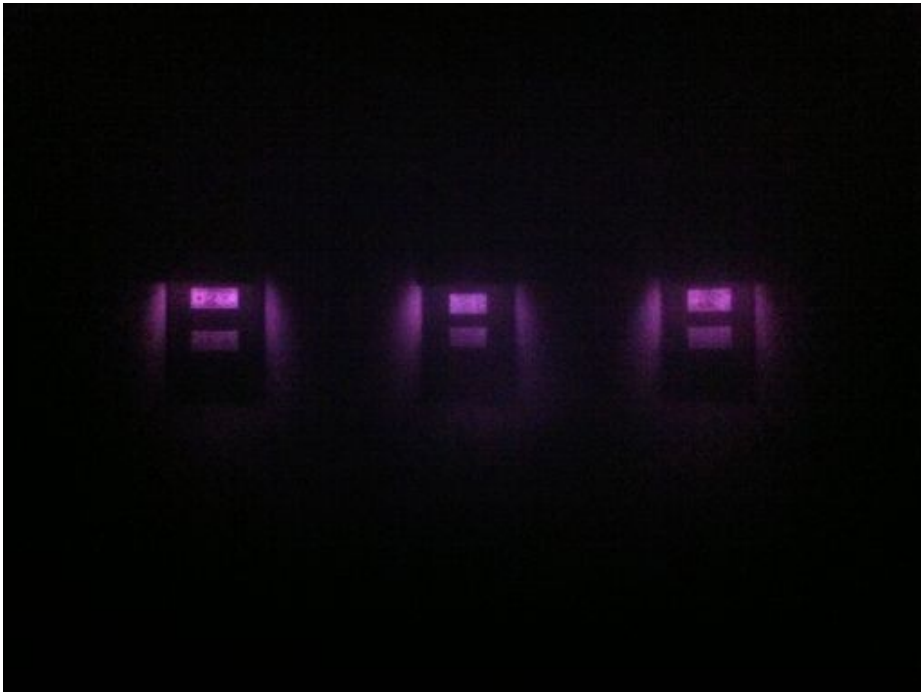
Unsurprisingly the possibility of infrared vision was of interest to the military. In WWII, the US Navy performed dietary experiments on sailors in an attempt to extend their vision for the detection of invisible infrared communications. By feeding them a diet high in 3-dehydro-retinal derived from the liver of freshwater fish and deficient in the usual form of vitamin A (or its precursor, beta-carotene) found in many animals and vegetables, it was hypothesized that the isomorph would be incorporated into the retinal cone cells to produce infrared sensitive porphyropsin in the human eye. The tests were reported a success but deployment of an infrared diet plan was disrupted by the invention of an early form of nightvision goggle technology, rendering a biological approach obsolete.

At the time of research, pike fish were chosen for pragmatic reasons, being one of the few freshwater species large enough to be commercially viable and available in the quantities needed for testing. 3-dehydro-retinal is found primarily within the eyes, liver and roe of the fish and so the large livers were harvested for oil distillation. Today pike are no longer commercially fished for meat and their livers are not available for sale in quantity. However, its caviar remains for sale as a delicacy – a dietary supplement that seems well suited to a gastrosophy in the tradition of Charles Fourier for whom the culinary pleasures held a political dimension. Here libidinal desires are intrinsically tied with sociopolitical egalite – there can be no equality without a universal surplus of pleasure (until the very oceans turn to lemonade), which is a way of thinking market dynamics formulated around abundance rather than the interchange of consumption and scarcity.

Fourier's claim was for a valorization of the corporeal passions: the body's living material desires (for sustenance, for reproduction, for warmth, etc), should not be underestimated as a political force. But it is also evident that human sensation as it stands reaches an impasse as it leans up against the domain where value is abstracted by digital markets. Just as the spectral gamut of the human retina is constrained by basic atomic structures, so the capacities of human desire are delimited by its biological composition. To produce a political subject in excess of their biology, the material conditions of sensation must be more deeply examined. As one modest proposition, the development of human infrared vision renders those limits mutable – the trans-nutritional richness of pike caviar offers the opportunity to reconfigure the boundary definition of the visual subject. Now able to see clearly currency's officiated indexes, markings designed for machine vision, the formation of the body's political subjectivity as shaped by networked currency falls within the visible spectrum. In this way the authority of the state is incorporated into the organs – no longer relegated to the exterior domain of abstraction, but held deeply within the body, ingested by its metabolisms and manifested as new vision.

Unknown passions emerge and with that, new human capacities.





Erik Wysocan
(Τὸ νόμισμα παραχαράττειν) *to give a new stamp*
2013

Nick C. Irvin

A Revenant Dispatch: On RAW's Institutional Spectres

APPARITION

Some background: I was one coordinator of a past RAW called Rupture, which is why I've been invited to write for this catalogue. But since I finished Reed and moved East this past year, this is the first RAW of which I'll be aware but not present. Of its formation I know little; of its result, still less. I know only blurry glimpses, premonitory texts, and yet I am to write of it. Here I am my own spectre. What can wraiths write?

An apparition provides glimpses of things unknown – or of things unspoken. Here I hope to put my particular pairing of experience and absence to use by speaking in a corresponding manner. What can be said from where I am is old, echoic, alien, blind. Here I can speak only augury, taking surfaces as symptoms for the structures which enveloped me then, and whose subsequents envelop you now. This will, hopefully, compel these forces' condensation, if only in passing. As such, my intent is to provide not prescription but proscenium for you, the Living RAW, and your staging of future acts.

FACE AND TAIL

As students we tend to think of RAW as an event, and rightly so. It bears all the marks: an annual release of creative charge, providing a brief brightening of a campus so often called dreary. For those unentrenched, it falls from the sky overnight. It is a Renn Fayre of a

minor key, and those who forgo their studies long enough to engage it breathe for five days a radically different air.

Count us lucky that we have and have had this thing. The farther I move from it, the more its premise proves an anomaly: entrust some undergraduates with a five-figure budget to “make art happen” on such a broad platform, un beholden to funders, markets, earmarks, overhead. Remarkably little red tape, compared even internally to the Renn Fayre / Paideia / Senatorial analogues. I believe in this thing, and in those who speak through it.

There are two parts to this thing called RAW: there is its breathing, speaking, acting face, and there is the tail of precedents that it drags behind it. For as much as each RAW is an event, RAW is also an institution (27 years old, now). It has its own histories, habits, vices, and position within Reed writ large. It is my presumption that we think of this side less. Unless, that is, you are among its organizers or its administrators, for whom precedents, structures and strictures come to loom large, though invisible, over all proceedings.

I’m coming from the position that it can be productive to bring these structures into broader discussion, so long as we don’t succumb to paranoid, hysterical lambasting. RAW’s organizers ascertain them on the fly, over time, as they grope toward their efforts’ realization. We in Rupture mapped them out with particular relish. But as with all RAWs, we were so busy proving that this is a Thing Worth Existing for those who mistrust it that articulating structures was not so pressing, if not directly counterproductive. And by the time we were done, we were tired, as has so often been the case with RAW. My remove leaves me recharged, and here I hope to sketch some considerations of the structures into which RAW’s organizers are thrown, and through which each RAW is formed.

GOLEM

If RAW is a body, it is its face that speaks and acts in the present,

and its tail – its history and precedents – that balances it. Each year it reformulates, an iterative composition of different people doing different things (though not without bureaucratic consistencies: there are hiring processes, vettings, form letters, dynasties, nepotisms). And with each thing done the tail grows longer. Often the face doesn’t mind the tail, though its helpfulness is felt. Certainly we shouldn’t be chasing it – but we should not be blind to it either. Precedents save us time, and energy, and provide each year with Do’s and Don’t’s on the annual crash course.

But moreover, and more perniciously, there are entities to whom the tail matters more than the face. Often those entities are adjacent to the body, not of it. They have an eye for liability, an investment in the long view. They’re tasked with worrying about what the tail might knock over or rub against. So their impulse is to grab it, moderate it, “mediate” it, and hold their long view over the forward-pointed face.

What I’m circling is institutional memory, and the economy of its distribution. For the perceived total newness of a given RAW is the perception of the student, whose time here is short. For the student it’s all new-ish – by the time you’ve perceived the structures your term is usually up. For the other entities at play, the staff, faculty, and trustees – the third being those most powerful and most invisible – the novelty smooths into patterns, often with creases of resentment. This is not exclusive to RAW, but endemic to all student acts. So when the new bodies approach their administrators, they’re held up by the tail and greeted with parameters. Never-agains. Never again will the theatre department be consumed by a lysergic gesamtkunstwerk (Rosalie Lowe & Jesse Van Buren’s *Horror or Her Mirror*, the former’s Theatre thesis, 2011). Never again will campus grass be damaged in the name of large-scale public sculpture (Ben Wolf’s *Assembly of Freight*, RAW 2011). Never again will giant wooden letters be blissfully anagrammed on the lawn, since in the past they’ve been lit on fire (Renn Fayre, ca. 2009 – 2012). Never again will a discussion on safely smoking “unregulated depressants” be institutionally endorsed (Paideia 2013).

These are some examples from my own time at Reed. But what precedes them? We scantily know, though it's implied in the knowing tone of our facilitators that what is best is to trust and feel shame. What follows them? As we as we watch our facilitators' hand witlessly graze a kill switch, we start to suspect that the answer is "less."

And trust we do. Suspect we do, too. We see enough to know that the strictures expand. Less evident is whether there's a place for those strictures to meaningfully contract. We could challenge some, certainly, and sometimes we do – but we are so busy proving that our actions are Things Worth Existing. We pick our battles carefully. Do they?

APOCRYPHA

In emulating the long view as best we can, we conduct pattern recognition. And when we do so, RAW shows as much repetition as it does difference. To repeat my own byline: the tail helps us because each year we are flying blind. Reliance on previous, proven successes is not just a mandate of laziness or hagiography (though let's not count them out) but of survival. But to know the patterns, we must also know of each iteration's specifics – the flesh enveloping the bones.

But we lack a material archive to provide us this content. There are binders from years back whose sparseness leaves us wanting, and recent years' correspondences have drifted toward Google Docs, whose lives in the cloud are not always passed on. We've relied on something of an intimate oral tradition, mainly comprised of coordinators and their staff advisor. The advisor serves the pivotal role of a historical through-line, providing background, recounting the tail to the face. Recently, this relation refreshed: RAW's advisor of six years left Reed in 2012, and a new one was found, making that figure as clean a slate as the students'. The obligation to memory, then, is all the more pressing at the moment of my writing. Here I give gifts of apocrypha.

One: it's rarely noted that RAW's founding had a repressive dimension. It served, in part, to divert the construction of large-scale student projects (structures, environments) away from Renn Fayre and its attendant intoxicants.

Another: one of its major initiators was a professor of classical music, an art form all but forgotten in recent RAWs. In fact, visual art's predominance in RAW has come to be a sore spot for a number of faculty, who would like to see more generously multidisciplinary (and perhaps, then, departmentally collaborative) programming.

Another sore spot lies in RAW's rights to school facilities. I was told by one staff member that his job and my job were irreconcilable, since his job was to keep walls in good condition, and my job was to put holes in them. The effect was not one of ribbing but of condescension, which discolored the rest of our working relationship. Speaking of RAW's contested rights in campus spaces, I would like to formally register the fact that this year's programming has been better supported by the Sports Center and their racquetball courts than the glimmering new Performing Arts Building.

I was also told by our advisor, in a moment of unflattering candor, that "it would be really great if RAW weren't pretentious for once." I find that word unhelpful, here and elsewhere. What really matters, and what I can only presume he was getting at, is the constructive interrogation of RAW's publics, the effects of the services it provides to said publics, and the hurdles that its inevitable specificities provide for inclusivity. That word 'pretension' is more often used hollowly, as a device of foreclosing negation. Around RAW (and at Reed in general), I saw more of the latter use. I would want to see more of the former – both within and without its present inner circles.

Another: In the recently published preliminary reports of the college's current Strategic Planning, RAW goes unmentioned entirely, most glaringly in "Report C: The Arts at Reed."

PUNCTUALIZATION

Do these few remarks pave a firm recommendation? Not necessarily, or not yet. My point is that we carry the tail, our history, with us, and that students should know it for more than its weight, since this is not the case for the forces of administration. I hope that my few apocrypha, like the augur's swarm of birds, prove hard to pin down, teeming with contestation and collision. For Rupture re-taught me that friction yields sparks.

RAW is a thing of beauty and of force, but its own premises should not go unthought either. We must be unafraid to ask whether, for all its merit, all its present effects on Reed's creative life are wholly positive. Recall that it was instituted partly to localize artistic activity. While on the one hand this concentration yields greater visibility, a more cynical eye would also see this as fencing art in. To put it in one place has an effect of keeping it from others. This leads to a question at the very heart of RAW: what does the rhetoric of the event, the discrete, annual explosion of Art, do to creativity in the calendar's other 360 days? What does Reed Arts Week mean for Reed's arts' year? And what types of creative activity does its present temporality fail to properly accommodate?

One last polemic. In the time I've spent writing this thing, I've moved from thinking about this spectre of administration as a form, localized in the bodies of our institution's staff, and more as a wider-reaching force. This is to say that it seems unhelpfully antiquated to think that the source of our stratification lies solely "over there" in some figureheads. I've thought about the risks that we in Rupture chose not to take, not out of mandate, but out of reverence to our precedents and a desire to conserve a certain shape of RAW. We should remember that we are administrators to ourselves, too: strictures don't only come from on high. RAW, then, may be an event calendrically, but it has seen less of the event as historic departure. Is our tail in need of reshaping, mutation? When should we take blind leaps, and what toward?

I question this thing, and I believe in this thing. I am grateful for it. I believe it is a Thing Worth Existing. But our appreciation of things as they are should not preclude our speculation on things as they could be, and will be, for worse as well as for better. To question it, unfurl it, and illuminate it are acts of love. To love it is to challenge the present distribution of memory, authority, and the right to the direction of our shared life's future. And crucially, this love is not for any of the institutions at hand, but for what those institutions provides when at their finest: sensation, invention, and the radiant relation of a singular community. Art belongs with you.

