

Disloyal to the Structure:

Extra Intra Reader #1

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Hopefully

curriculum

together –

listening

A talk,

death cycles

a text,

critical pedagogy

a mixtape

unknown

Dear reader, dear listener, I address you as both, as I'd like to invite you to join me in a reading and listening exercise. The following text has been written in concert, or rather correspondence, with a mixtape and a talk. All were prepared in response to an invitation from the Editorial Board to consider the timely questions, needs, and learnings shaping experimental approaches to art education today as part of the 'Disloyal to the Structure' symposium held on 30 November, 2021. The following text tunes in and out of the mixtape's tracks, relating their varied cadences, rhythms, and words to my talk, which reflected on how we might do critical pedagogical work hopefully, together – in a pandemicked time of distant relationships, loneliness, siloing, and a lot of heartbreak – through the grounding work of bell hooks.

A note here in silence before we cue the mixtape. In the last days, as I wrote these words, bell hooks left this dimension to join the ancestors.

The hopeful, loving, powerful, learningful, unapologetic, transgressive, and life-transforming legacy bell hooks offered and still offers has already started to be recapped, obituaried through social media posts, countless news articles, honorific reading rituals, and more. And an important so-

something to consider in all this, and as I look to the text ahead, is how a practice like that of bell hooks can often be reduced to the moments we ‘liked’ – those that made us feel the most comfortable and in tune. How might we celebrate and continue to unlearn alongside bell hooks’s challenging, not-for-everyone, sometimes dissonant curriculum vitae? Her imperfect, never claiming to be otherwise, and so hopeful curriculum?

You can press ‘play’ now, or in your own time.



As we tune in to the frequencies of this publication, the many voices in and shaping it, as well as our own experiences of the last pandemic years, let’s consider those perhaps shared (or not) understandings of the terms ‘curriculum’ and ‘hope’.

Track: Rethabile Khumalo feat. Master KG, “Ntyilo Ntyilo”

Rethabile Khumalo feat. Master KG’s “Ntyilo Ntyilo” is from the album Like Mother Like Daughter. Through the cry of a bird “ntyilo”, Rethabile Khumalo calls out to family for intervention. Don’t be fooled by the syncopated very danceable beat; this song speaks of heartbreak.



There’s a tension between these terms that speaks volumes of a time when so many ‘knowns’ are shifting under our feet, and so much of what is ‘unknown’ becomes ever more felt. When hope seems such a luxury.

To speak of the knowns, unknowns, and knowledge here is important as this is the underlying logic on which curricula are based – what and who is worth knowing and remembering? And who gets to decide? One doesn’t have to look too far for examples of where critical changes have been blocked or the value of the kinds of knowledge reproduced in educational structures (exhibitions and museums being very much a part of that!) are being actively contested. In the wake of George Floyd’s murder in 2020, and the ongoing reckoning within many cultural and memory institutions, we’ve seen petitions to actively omit progressive curricular content from schools,¹ and young people

¹ Tune in to the episode “Talking While Black”, *This American Life*, Jan 2022: <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/758/talking-while-black>.

finding it more effective to stay out of school to pressure governments to act on the climate crisis. For our psychic survival, we need a collective intervention – to learn now, in this time, in this world, and to do so ... hopefully together.

Track: Billie Eilish, "My Future"

Billie Eilish's "My Future" has been haunting me since the end of 2020 when I first shared it as part of the 'Hear! Here!' workshop entitled 'Holding Space Together (digitally)' (Dec

2020). I'm so grateful to the organisers and participants for sharing their future perspectives on digital pedagogical approaches that could practise ethics of care even remotely. Being in the future that we spoke about now, a lot of what was discussed then has shaped this text.



Those that know me, know that I often go on about the curriculum. I'll share a bit of context for that:

Growing up in Zimbabwe in the 1980s and 90s, it was a new political era of independence for the country and the national curriculum was literally being written in real time. What histories, methods, languages, and knowledge systems should be acknowledged in contrast to the British colonial script that came before? Where to begin? And what about all those non-narrative components of what we were being schooled into as future citizens, as a society, through dress code, behavioural norms, intergenerational relationships, gender roles, power dynamics, racial stereotypes?

From that point on I was interested in this thing called curriculum as something highly constructed and non-neutral. I found myself drawn to the pedagogical practices of educators I came into contact with who sought to make those knowledge and power structures visible, and who encouraged me and my fellow students to ground ourselves in the lineages of critical and justice-seeking pedagogical practices while developing the tools needed to navigate and organise around them.



Track: Khruangbin feat. Knxwledge, "Dearest Alfred (MyJoy)"

Khruangbin feat. Knxwledge's "Dearest Alfred (MyJoy)" speaks to practices of correspondence from a distance, both in the remixing of the initial piece but also within the title and visual essay that accompanies the track, in which letters are exchanged to dearest friends (Alfred) containing written fragments bearing intimate messages

of love, longing, forgiveness, loss, and "I hope you're well".

Some of those lineages go beyond the classroom, beyond the academy, into other collective or collaborative settings ('the world as classroom', as bell hooks would say). As with all lineages, it's important to think about who's included in them and how they come to us, as well as the contexts and conditions surrounding those lineages – particularly in this case of experimental and critical education. Ideas and practices emerge in particular places and times, and perhaps shouldn't be translated one-to-one within our present contexts. For bell hooks – whose work we'll talk about more specifically in just a page or so – there was a disturbing lack of awareness of gender and an outspoken sexism in the literature surrounding radical pedagogy in the 60s and 70s,² as well as very clear gaps and inequities in a largely white and middle class feminist legacy in the US.³ bell hooks named these gaps in her writing, and nonetheless continued to work with the contradictions she encountered towards possible solidarities, a communing of resources: 'Think of the work as water that contains some dirt. Because you are thirsty you are not too proud to extract the dirt and be nourished by the water.'⁴

So it's often a question of how we do that careful work of understanding the importance of ideas and practices, loving the inspiration and impact they bring, acknowledging what doesn't sit well with us, letting go of what isn't for us to extract or 'use', and respectfully (and awkwardly) 'feeling our way' around how some of the learnings they offer might shape our own methods, embodied approaches, and desires. It's a complex intergenerational and often intercontextual set of relationships being navigated – as in any 'situationship', as Snoh Alaegrah would call it.

Track: Snoh Alaegrah, "Situationship"

Snoh Alaegrah's song, co-written with Nathaniel Warner, Richard Isong Olowaranti Mbu Isong, and Ariowa Ogheneochuko Kennedy



2 See bell hooks's critique of and appreciation for Paulo Freire's work in *Teaching to Transgress* (1994).

3 See bell hooks's *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (1981).

4 hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 50.

5 I'm really grateful to Tracian Meikle for introducing this phrase 'feeling our way' in the context of the symposium. It so generously articulates this open-ended process.

6 Watch the series trailer here (*The Chair*, Season 1, 2021 was all our faves are problematic', as the saying goes.

created by Amanda Peet): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eOqtBtWGI1Q> 'Hope is the thing with feathers' – These words by Emily Dickinson

Irosogie, goes: "The moment I met you, I knew I would let you down / And so many times you and I made love in my mind / Don't wanna regret you, I can't seem to forget you now" – how apt when we consider those voices we've built relationships with over time through research and reading, and deep affinities despite and because of their humanness and complexities; only to reflect later on 'how

were quoted by Dr Ji-yoon Kim, played by Sandra Oh, in the final episode of last year's series *The Chair* (2021): a complicated commentary on the state of academic culture within the ecologies of personalities, politics, economics, and other 'situationships' that fuel them.⁶ And though this isn't the place to debate Emily Dickinson's positionality or intent, her words and their citation in the context of the series encapsulated for me those risky, hard-to-pin-down, fugitive, and seemingly non-strategic ways in which we might flock together around shared and not-shared hopeful inheritances.⁷

Track: Moses Sumney, "In Bloom"

The video of Moses Sumney's *In Bloom* scans the flowers left on gravestones as a luminous camcorder recording passes through a cemetery, alongside the lyrics: "In bloom with room to grow / I'm only watering the seeds you sowed / In my heart, in my chest / Six feet beneath the flesh / When you held my hand / But you sighed BFF /

I hope you're not another supplement / For absent relationships". There's a beautiful discussion of this song on *Invisibilia* podcast as part of their series on *Friendship*: <https://www.npr.org/2021/10/20/1047650260/friends-with-benefits>.



A Pedagogy of Hope is actually the subtitle of bell hooks's *Teaching Community*, which was published in 2003. It wasn't bell hooks's first or last impactful publication – her work spanned decades and continues to work on and in us. And speaking of responsiveness to conditions, almost twenty years later, it's hard not to read *A Pedagogy of Hope* outside of the fallout from 9/11 and the many political, social, economic, and cultural shifts that followed in so many places and lives.

But let's go back a bit. bell hooks's (bell hooks is a pen name) *Teaching to Transgress: Education As the Practice of Freedom*, which I've referenced already, was published ten years earlier in 1994. Here, through a series of essays, she opened up personal experiences of growing up as a student in the segregated and then 'desegregated' classroom in the South of the US, and coming to an awareness of Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire and his work around liberatory practice in and through education,⁸ as well, Thich Naht Hanh's holistic approaches in engaged Buddhism that moved hooks towards pedagogy as a healing, embodied, and spiritual praxis.⁹ For hooks, these experiences emphasised the importance of contending with the multi-faceted contradictions of the world around us in the classroom but also in our communities in intersectional and holistic ways that acknowledge the very different experiences of race, class, gender, histories, and herstories we bring with us to processes of learning.



Track: Lakota & Evelinn Trouble, "Easy"

This is a surprising track in the midst of the gravity of what's at stake here. Reminding us, or specifically me, and you too as you tune in, to be kind to yourself and those you love or admire for all those contradictions and shortcomings that make us humans working, hopefully, towards ethical futures.

And it's those very real structural, historical, and everyday struggles that bell hooks brings to *A Pedagogy of Hope* – a book that has been on my mind a lot in the last year.

Here, over a series of what she calls 'teaches', bell hooks gets us to think within the learning spaces we're part of from a place of hope in a time of loss – loss of community, of connection, of belief, of certainty, of relevance 'with the world beyond the academy'.¹⁰

But what does bell hooks mean by hope within critical pedagogical practice?

Track: Merry Clayton, "Gimme Shelter"

Merry Clayton did vocals for the Rolling Stones' Gimme Shelter in 1969, though her name unfortunately doesn't appear as prominently as it should in the credits. Her revisiting of the song – which was written in the context of the fear and outrage over the atrocities of the war in Vietnam – brings a very different tone when we consider the at-home-ness of violence,



8 See Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, published first in Portuguese in 1968:

<https://envs.ucsc.edu/internships/internship-readings/freire-pedagogy-of-the-oppressed.pdf>.

9 Thich Nhat Hanh also left this world during the writing of this text (January 25, 2022). The principles shaping his life's work continue to challenge and guide many: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2022/jan/23/thich-nhat-hanh-obituary>.

10 bell hooks, *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*, xv.

11 hooks quotes and discusses this in the Preface of *Teaching Community*, xiv–xv.

12 hooks, *Teaching Community*, xiii.

13 Listen to the episode "Remembering Desmond Tutu" with Krista Tippett in *On Being*: https://open.spotify.com/episode/47udOdjGV-M24gPg1NHij1i?si=ecMFpb1kTt-0Bkz67IFh0w&utm_source=whatsapp&nd=1. With thanks to Sekai Makoni for directing me to this interview.

In terms of hope itself, bell hooks quotes Mary Grey's *The Outrageous Pursuit of Hope: Prophetic Dreams for the Twenty-First Century* (2000), saying that 'Hope stretches the limits of what is possible. It is linked with that basic trust in life without which we could not get from one day to the next . . . To live by hope is to believe that it is worth taking the next step: that our actions, our families, and cultures and society have meaning, are worth living and dying for. Living in hope says to us, 'There is a way out,' even from the most dangerous and desperate situations.'¹¹

And a hopeful pedagogy for bell hooks is one that '[works] for justice, changing our educational system so that schooling is not the site where students are indoctrinated to support imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy or *any* ideology, but rather where they learn to open their minds, to engage in rigorous study and to think critically.'¹²

Hope is not the same as optimism. Desmond Tutu, whom the world lost as I was writing this text, explained in a not-so-long-ago interview that ‘hope says “at no point will injustice and oppression have the last word” . . . There’s no question about the reality of suffering, but at the centre of this existence is a heart beating with love...You and I and all of us are incredible, we are remarkable things ...’.¹³



Track: Nakhane feat ANOHNI, “New Brighton”

The anthemic strains of this tribute to place, to shifting ground, catches in my throat everytime I try to sing along. It reflects on memory, those who have gone before us, as well as freedom from fear. See more about Nakhane’s other work in this interview: <https://www.okayafrika.com/nakhane-dance-again-real-meaning/>.

This is not an easy or flighty kind of hopeful practice being described here. And bell hooks leans into that in Teach 14: “This is Our Life: Teaching Toward Death”, which calls for a pedagogy that embraces and encompasses grief and loss as part of a learning process. An awareness of the constant presence of death was important for hooks in attuning her to the present. Rather than always focusing on the futurity of the educational project where paying students ‘invest’ in a trajectory that will only be *lived* later, bell hooks invites educators and students (which is an interchangeable relationship!) to learn to practice ‘life-sustaining presentness’ when we gather together in the face of what is not an unlimited time together.¹⁴

For me, this Teach made me consider what it means to work pedagogically in the very real context of an ongoing global pandemic when so many have had to say goodbye to loved ones. And also, in a different way, in the presence of the grief and mourning that come with unlearning the modes and methods that have become so much a part of us – gathering in the same space, meeting face to face for a workshop, sitting together in a reading group, sharing food, hugs.

The preciousness of coming together – in collaborations, conversations, hang outs – when we know it’s not a given or forever, invites us to intentionally consider the meaningfulness (the heart beating) of *what* and *how* we’re doing this togetherness thing. Rather than paper over the

frustrations and disappointments we experience along the way – not to mention the fucked-up-ness of what’s happening around us – this intentionality can also bring compassion for ourselves and each other.¹⁵ That process of teaching and learning towards death could create what bell hooks calls a ‘place of liberating mutuality’, where we understand our mutual vulnerabilities, interdependencies, intergenerational connectedness, and the limits of those.¹⁶ This mutuality becomes a transformative collective presence,¹⁷ and an understanding of our small part in the larger cycles of ideas, voices, processes, and relationships formed over time. For me, this brings perspective to the context-based changes around us that take time, care, desire, and collaboration to shift . . . Even the most seemingly simple ones like whose responsibility it is to prepare a workshop space or how the labour of cleaning up after a process is shared.¹⁸



Track: Feist, “The Limit to Your Love”

This song has become a bit of an institutional anthem for me. A friend Amy Halliday and I recently reflected on what it means to personally compensate for the lack of care in a careless system. Acknowledging personal limitations is a really important part of setting expectations so that we can honestly, and with accountability, support others.

What intentions, relationships, and lineages do you carry with you?

What are the terms of reference and relationship being set up in the experiences and models you’ve been a part of or would think are important to establish, reimagine, let go of in your hopeful curriculum?

Is hopeful justice part of that? Our own imperfections another?

How to continue taking next steps in hope, while still acknowledging the frustrations and the limits (of our own capacities and the resources around us)?

How to hold space for transformative collective presence in a time of grief and loss?

14 hooks, 173.

15 A meaningful and surprising comfort in this context has been the book *The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why It Matters* by Priya Parker (2018).

16 hooks, xv.

17 hooks, 174.

18 See Annette Krauss and Casco Art Institute’s *Unlearning Exercises: Art Organizations As Sites for Unlearning* (2018): <https://casco.art/resource/unlearningexercises/>.

19 See more details here: <https://www.ics.hawaii.edu/2019/03/indigenous-protocols-and-artificial-intelligence/>.

20 In Lewis, Jason Edward, ed. “Indigenous Protocol and Artificial Intelligence Position Paper,” (2020) Honolulu, Hawai’i: The Initiative for Indigenous Futures and the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIFAR): https://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/id/eprint/986506/7/Indigenous_Protocol_and_AI_2020.pdf

21 I’m so grateful to Yolande Zola Zoli van der Heide for our ongoing conversations and the ways in which that has prompted much deeper engagement with these questions!



Track: BLK JKS, “Maiga Mali Mansa Musa”

This track comes from the BLK JKS album *Abantu / Before Human* (a prequel to their *After Robots*). For the band, the album is an ‘Obsidian Rock Audio Anthology chronicling

the ancient spiritual technologies and exploits of prehistoric, post-revolutionary afro bionics and sacred texts...from Azania.’ Mansa Musa

was the ruler of the kingdom of Mali from 1312 C.E. to 1337 C.E.

A final thought on a hopeful togetherness in the presence of death to add to this mixtape of voices and reflections.

Suzanne Kite (aka KITE) is an Oglala Lakota artist, scholar, and composer whose work brings Indigenous Lakota epistemologies into computational media and research. She is also acting as Global Coordinator for the Indigenous Protocols and Artificial Intelligence workshops.¹⁹ I was so grateful to get to learn from her in a programme a few years ago, and from her text “How to Build Anything Ethically”,²⁰ where she shares the protocols of decision-making that create and sustain ethical (just) relationships within a design process – particularly in the context of AI – through phases of identifying needs, identifying stakeholders (which include the raw materials, environment around them, the communities affected by their extraction, and who creates the objects, etc.), to distribution, compensation, and ...

KITE shares that an essential part of the design process, what needs to be included from the very start, is a death cycle. Instead of developing something meant to last forever (as so many modernists have done before!), there is already a view to how the process will end – understanding that the materials, conditions, and stakeholders will be repaired, change, enter other cycles, and transform.²¹ In a world of wasteful legacy-building and dumpster fires of half-dead devices, how do we take responsibility for the leftovers of the processes and objects we create? From policy change, to critical curricula, from community relationships, to the packaging on materials. On what terms do we carefully and hopefully say goodbye?



Track: Kindness feat Ade, Kelela, "World Restart"

This track has been an important page-turner at so many points in this pandemic. In addition to its refreshing and also somehow cyclical samples, it's been the theme song for the podcast Still Processing with Jenna Wortham and Wesley Morris, who continue to offer their compassionate and incisive perspectives to so many ongoing processes. With thanks to dear friends for attuning me to this frequency!

Clare Butcher is a curator and educator from Zimbabwe who cooks and collaborates as part of her practice. Clare is wondering what the future of gathering and learning together might be, as well as how artist-led education can transform the curriculum.

Clare has worked with the Toronto Biennial of Art as Curator for Public Programming and Learning, and before that, with colleagues and students at the Rietveld/Sandberg, and was an education coordinator for documenta 14 in Kassel.

Embodied Learning:

sensing

A Conversation

movement

between

cognition

Yotam Shibolet,

capitalism

Micaela Terk,

gesture

Sheona Turnbull

Micaela What do you think embodied learning is?

Yotam In terms of a point of departure, I think education sees itself as being about training the mind. And that can be fine, as long as we can rethink, redefine, reposition – where is the mind?

Human beings are often addressed essentially as disembodied brains, but we are taking the radically different perspective that the human mind – our thinking system and our very being – intrinsically works also through the body (and therefore through interaction with the world we inhabit). The dominant view in Western education takes the opposite approach; any serious form of education other than physical education, which is cut off into a separate territory, is presumed to have nothing to do with embodiment and is intended for floating heads.

Micaela Right.

Yotam So an integrated approach should be about undoing both sides of this body-mind binary, both presumably isolated forms of knowledge: finding the many resonances of embodiment and movement within the territory of ‘the mind’, of concepts and abstracted knowledge, while also finding so-called ‘higher order’ forms of understanding and mea-

ning within the territory of physical embodiment and education, in which we learn by interacting with the world through our sensing bodies.

Micaela If we expand on the example of physical education, we also see how instruction on the body within education systems often relates to a very specific kind of physicality with very specific goals, many of which exclude a lot of bodies as well.

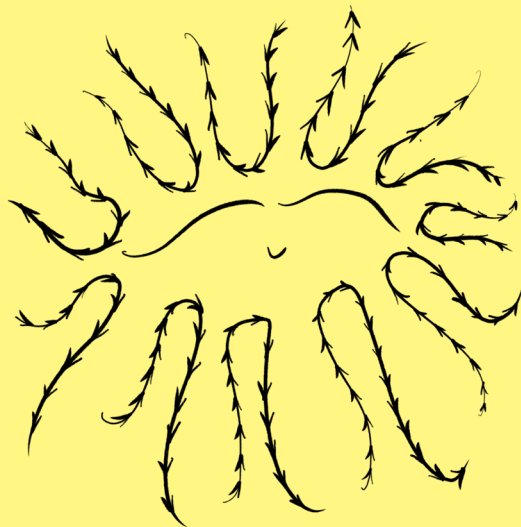
Yotam Yeah, it's just learning how to run and stuff. The body is treated as a machine that needs to undergo scheduled maintenance, so as not to let our physical existence get in the way of paying attention to something more important in the 'wholly different' territory of the mind.

Micaela Exactly. It's an approach to physicality that often fails to engage students in the connection between sensation and learning, and fails to accommodate the endless array of bodies and embodied identities that exist. In educational spaces, not only is one's body often related to as something to be maintained in support of the thinking mind, it is also being choreographed into certain habits and norms to the extent that an actual lack of trust towards the body is deepened.

Yotam You know, the more I think back on my experiences of formal education, from first grade, the more fucked up it feels to me that you enter this system that is basically appropriated from Fordism, modelled after factory lines in the early 20th century, in order to organise not only the class schedule of children but the entire educational process; how we broach children as subject, the ways by which we assume they are capable of learning, and how their educational production is measured. This kind of thinking could never acknowledge the significance of embodiment: it is not only inherently ambivalent to embodied experience, but also often implicitly motivated to alienate people from paying attention to this dimension, as sensitive embodied engagement would tend to be measured as ineffective or counter-productive in terms of maximising input and output.

Micaela Absolutely, and still in parallel, educational environments provide a lot of input on how the

body should appear. For example, that it does not convey inappropriate sexuality, or that you, as a student, are not giving in to your emotional needs beyond what is socially acceptable. This is something that we learn from a very young age, and it very much affects the ways that we relate to the workplace.



Sheona

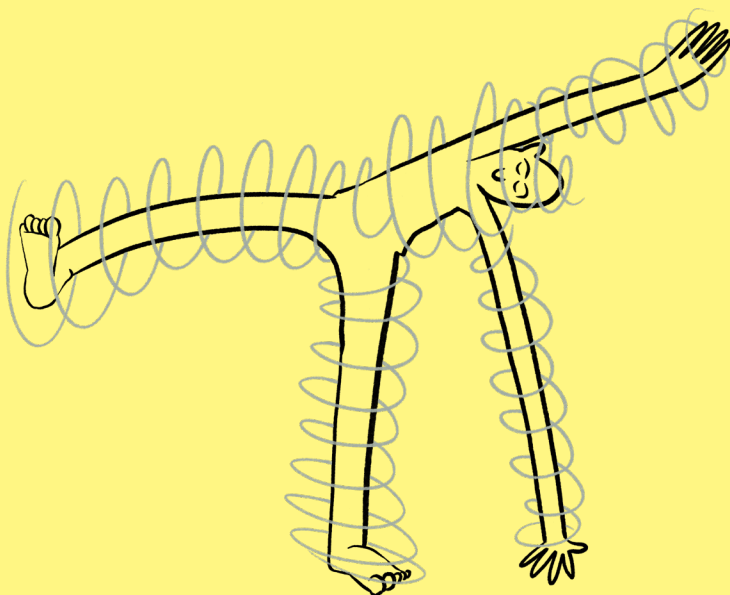
Micaela What I'm interested in is how educational systems can potentially be spaces for actually democratising access to forms of embodied knowledge, which are often perceived as confined to those with certain socio-economic status or professional experience. For example, the notion that dancers have access to certain forms of knowledge that is off-limits to non-dancers.

Yotam True, but let's also remember that some dancers are trained in a way that is very oppressive to their bodies. Like strict ballet training could surely teach you to become an expert mover, but in the process might actually detach you from embodied experience.

Micaela I would argue that the 'choreographing' of the social body actually begins with the assumption that dance is a realm that exists separately from life. Because this then assumes that there is a dancing body, which possesses the natural capacity to harness embodied intelligence through gesture, and a non-dancing

body, in which emotions exist as mere internal experiences. As I see it, to assume that embodied knowledge is accessible to a select few based on professional domain is to perpetuate hegemonic understandings of knowledge premised on this very misconception.

Yotam I really like this idea. Quite similarly, accessing embodied knowledge for me in a way simply means learning to reframe knowledge as being very intertwined with and inseparable from the world of embodied experience and movement, so that the dynamics of movement and of the environments we live in become inseparable from the dynamics of symbolism, conceptualisation, and abstraction. It makes this kind of tasty soup out of these categorical divisions. And maybe this essential thing we call movement, and the very rich and thick sense of meaning that moving ourselves or being attentive to movements we perceive can carry, is so flattened in dominant Western discourse that the only territory in which it is reflected on as having any 'real' meaning is dance. Only when a dancer is moving on stage does movement suddenly become worthy of our cultural attention in-and-of-itself.



Sheona

Micaela I think that's a very good point. Movement is inherent to each and every aspect of our daily lives; there is so much moving in doing – any form of labour is so fundamentally physical. And yet most forms of movement are not valued the same way as those of 'dancers' or 'athletes', or even perceived on similar

terms. This is reflected monetarily, and also touches on the importance sensation is — or rather isn't — granted in 'non-moving' jobs. One of the dangers of this separation in everyday labour or education is that movement loses its informational capacity. Felt sensation becomes a side effect of movement, rather than its source or incentive.

Yotam And in no other context than dance and sports are we typically willing or ready to discuss the experience of movement as thick with meaning rather than a means to an end. And educational systems perpetuate this so, so much, exactly through this social choreographing as you were explaining.

Micaela Right, and I am very concerned with the maintenance of these kinds of hegemonies, for example as they exist within school systems. Because as we are taught to negate our embodied experiences, what is at stake is our ability to actually discern sensation as vital information. And I would argue that this knowledge is not only essential for survival, but also for freedom.

Yotam In terms of changing educational institutions, it seems to me that this shift we are trying to speculate on, this re-integration of embodiment and movement as meaningful forms of action, perception, and sensemaking, would also have to entail paying more attention to people's sensitivity, personal experience, and wellbeing. It would force open the space of educational practice into something less detached.

Micaela It's interesting how we could compare this to our experiences at Sandberg or other art schools, which are often spaces of instruction where the sensing body is very much kept separate from practice and process. Consider, for example, critiques. The critique is a great example of an educational process that is deeply embodied, even if the body is not directly addressed throughout the day of feedback. Because when you create a work for critique, you are giving birth to something that you've

probably laboured over for some time, and then you reach a moment where you need to release it into the world. And in this moment it goes from being something very internal, which often involves a very emotional process, to something that is out in the open for people to give their feedback on, which can often be very harsh. Crit days are filled with tension, and they require bodily discipline and the performance of a very specific form of prolonged focus designed to prepare students for late-capitalist work cultures. Students are often adhering to particular presentational structures and formations that are fundamentally rooted in Cartesian dualism. So I think it's definitely interesting to see what happens when making and sharing are more seriously considered as physical or embodied processes. I'm curious to hear how you would see this in your own experience, as an academic.

Yotam Academia (and specifically my field of humanities studies) is a complicated question, since the attempt is to study things from a very zoomed-out theoretical lens. Academic research often tries to examine questions that are hopefully relevant to people's lived experiences by means of abstraction, theorisation, and critical reflection, so the question of how to bring embodiment into play more significantly while going about this process is a very interesting but also difficult one. It's maybe a helpful starting point to remember that the body is always there in the philosophical soup in one way or another, even when ignored. In this context, I enjoy thinking of Plato: one of history's most influential proponents of dualism and the hierarchical separation between mind and body, and simultaneously an icon of a more

embodied way of doing philosophy. Think of the description, in *The Symposium*, of Socrates and friends trying to define eros while basically getting wasted on wine together at a party, touching each other, tying flowers to each other's hair ... So I'm very motivated to interrogate how academic courses could do more with the body, could relate more to tangible experiences of different people and the concrete dynamics of social spaces ... I wonder how the presumably disembodied Western framework of philosophical discussion can be bent or transformed. I remember taking some classes on contemporary philosophy that have to do with totally mind-bendy stuff (like the work of Deleuze and Guattari), wishing to argue against the common-sense ways that we define basically everything in life and making many statements related to embodied experience in one somewhat-convoluted-way or another. But then, you know, it's still a class where we sit and listen to a guy talking for an hour and a half, and its design does not seem to care about paving paths for any of this discussion to reverberate into anything else that happens once we leave the classroom.

Micaela This reminds me of an article I read in *A Dance Magazine* titled, 'How Ketamine and Techno Helped Me Finally understand Derrida.' It's a beautiful reflection on the interdependence of nightlife and critical theory. Especially towards imagining future worlds as fleshy, communal bodies.

So we're recognising a problem that exists in multiple forms of educational institutions – from elementary school to art schools and academia – even if in slightly different ways. And I believe this addresses a question we've been asking ourselves over this year, which is: how do we use the framework of educational spaces to create a realm where stu-

dents can safely integrate sensation as part of their practice or research? And at the same time, how can we use this exact framework to facilitate access for those who might not have the means to afford the training that is often needed to translate sensation, or somatic experience, into information?

Yotam Those are definitely big questions. To me, the first thing about this notion of limited access is the crucial perspectival shift we've been discussing, because if we reposition our understanding of the mind as always being embodied, it should be clear that you don't need basically any super-special training in order to access this territory of embodied knowledge. I could even say that maybe a first step is to 'unlearn' (although I hate this word) the narrowing down of what constitutes knowledge and thinking and learning and meaning, of the aspects that constitute 'me'. You can then hone your ability to tap into this usually unexplored territory of embodied knowledge. But at least in my experience, the main process this is about is to kind of rewire my intention and attention, my response-ability maybe, to be more conscious of this. And I've seen this shift become so present for so many people in spaces such as Contact Improvisation festivals.

Micela I love your use of intention and attention, such a great takeaway from Tom Goldhand's workshop on shifting spaces! I wouldn't say that training is necessary, but it is very helpful and effective in accessing this knowledge. Especially when, socially, so much is being done to direct our attention away from certain sensations. As an example, my culture taught me to believe that pain is a bad thing. And so when a painful experience occurs – let's say I hurt my pinky toe – I might do everything to take my attention away from that experience in the moment. Instead of giving the pain space, and allowing myself to process it and to heal, I'm concentrating more on trying to make the feeling go away. If perpetually ignored over time, that pain might develop into trauma, which can manifest as actual physical pain. In training, one learns to rewire the brain to say, 'Oh, I'm experiencing pain. I'm going to give it space and listen to what it needs.' Pain is just one sensation, but I would say that the same could very much go for excitement or fear, for example. So for me, embodied learning is very much a process of unlearning, where one learns to disconnect from conceptual experiences and tune into what's already happening.

And that is absolutely a matter of practice, which often requires trauma-informed guidance.

Yotam I think we actually agree about the importance of some form of training and being part of a larger framework here. I previously underscored that all humans already possess embodied knowledge, but maybe access is a tricky term to use for this because it is certainly not the case that people should be assumed capable of meaningfully tapping into that knowledge completely individually, or independent of social and cultural context. To view the mind as embodied is also to reposition it as something that is never fully self-contained within individual brains, but is rather embedded in some larger ecology. So actually having access to, being part of, some larger space or system of practice (though not necessarily in the formalised sense) that cultivates embodied knowledge is crucial to facilitate this reframing. This is also another reason that continuing to search for ways of facilitating education that work completely outside the alienating, quantified Fordist method we began by outlining is so crucial, certainly in the context of artistic education.

Micaela Absolutely, I agree that cultivating embodied knowledge is a very personal experience that requires collective reflection and community. Of course, there are many issues or concerns that arise when discussing how exactly educational environments can engage embodied knowledge and somatics in ways that are transformative, safe, and inclusive. There is a growing community looking for ways to integrate this knowledge into educational frameworks, but also within organisational, activist, leadership, and social justice frameworks. In the Embodied Knowledge Bureau, I feel we are in an extremely early stage of asking these same questions, and in a process of taking small steps towards 'normalising' body discourse within an educational environment in the Netherlands. From my experience, agreeing to engage embodied knowledge is very much a constant and conscious decision, a practised awareness, and a kind of constant refusal or challenging of particular mental constructs. I see this kind of learning as something that can never be done in a 'complete' way, an impossi-

ble task that makes for a juicy inquiry. Looking at the meetings that we've held so far, it is very clear that while embodied learning is anything but a universal experience, the collective and intersectional learning that an educational environment like Sandberg/Rietveld enables has shaped this process very differently than I'm familiar with in individual or movement-oriented frameworks.

EKB Definitions

Gesture, working definition

Gesture is a living form, an emergence of a living process rather than a result. Your body is a medium for materialising gestures. Play with moving quickly while you lead slow gestures in space, however this might be accessible to you. Explore just how sensitive you can be.

Sensation, working definition

Anything you sense travels through the body, feeding it with information. Practice moving from different senses, by playing with the hierarchies between them. For example, choosing smell over sight as an impetus for movement. Perhaps play with being moved from several sensations at once, allowing yourself to be overwhelmed.

Somatics, working definition

Originally coined by Thomas Hanna, Somatics is an umbrella term referring to a slew of movement practices and techniques developed over the 20th century, such as Feldenkrais, Alexander, Body-Mind Centering, and Contact Improvisation. Somatic methods focus on the sensing body (soma) as experienced 'from within', and in different ways practise dedicated attention to perception, sensation, and the felt sense of movement. In the words of Staci Haines, Somatics is a form of 'psychobiology.'

Micaela Terk Sandberg Instituut, Design Department / Director / is a writer-publisher, designer, and artist. Her practice and community-weaving stems from her commitment to movement research and somatic literacy as transformative forms of knowledge and perception. Over the last 10 years, Micaela has worked with various movement, choreography, breath work and somatic methods.

Sheona Turnbull Sandberg Instituut, Design Department / Coordinator / is an illustrator, curator, and event organizer based in Amsterdam. Her practice emerges from a fascination with movement and improvisation within the act of drawing. Her hybrid research manifests in illustrations, event series, and independent publications.

Yotam Shibolet Utrecht University / Main Tutor / is a teacher and PhD researcher at Utrecht University, and a cum laude graduate of its Media, Art and Performance research master program. His interdisciplinary research on 'embodied narrativity' combines insights from philosophy, embodied cognition, critical theory, and new media studies to explore the central role of movement and interaction in our capacity to make sense of art and grasp meaning at large. Yotam is a long-time practitioner and facilitator of Contact Improvisation and other somatic methods

Being

unfleshy

part

gestating

dog

re-membering

Being part dog

Being part dog
means that some
unfleshy people find
the things I put in my mouth
disgusting

It's how I understand you

Salty, grainy, chewy, bitter, fragile, bouncing
back after bite marks

What kind of grains?

How many?

How many hearts, my chicken? (5% of your recommended diet)

You worry too much about being
too much

The stuffing of the toy calls out, to be out

Too much of not enough, we joke
We mean it

I mean it
Let's smell where you are in 360 degrees
And what you have eaten
How your colon
mulls it

Re members
Over and over

And if you are gestating
over guessing

they hesitate

they think
If I lick you
Like you

Lick

We'll know each other.

I took too long to find a witty, yet casual reply
To your thoughtful article about chinese confectionary and
Nostalgia

It was a great piece and made me
cry

tasting cortisol in tears
like graduating
full mouths

Jay Tan is an artist and educator teaching at the Masters of Artistic Research programme at KABK in Den Haag and the Fine Arts Dept at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam. They have hosted one of the Reading Groups with the GRA Studium Generale for the past 3 years. Hailing from South London, they completed their MFA at the Piet Zwart Institute in 2010 and were a 2014/15 resident at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. Currently based in Rotterdam, they make decorative sculptural and video installations heavy in domestic mechanics.

Can we

financial structures

critically

solidarity

develop

precarity

experimental
education

redistribution of power

during

self-organisation

neoliberal
restructuring?

Being involved in the Editorial Board for Intercurricular Programmes of the Gerrit Rietveld Academie is a privilege and a pleasure. The Editorial Board is currently a working group of ten people who study or work in different positions at the Rietveld Academie or Sandberg Instituut. It was appointed in 2019 by the Executive Board of the academy in order to support and stimulate intercurricular educational programmes over the period 2019–2024. In supporting intercurricular education, the Editorial Board is realising one of the eight goals outlined in the Quality Agreements. The Quality Agreements were drawn up by the academy in 2018–19, with input from students, teachers, and other staff members, and agreed upon by the Executive Board and the Participation Council. The preconditions for these agreements were broadly formulated by the national government, higher educational institutions, and student representative organisations. They decided that the agreements on the extra institutional efforts needed to relate to one of the following topics: small-scale education, talent development, professionalisation of teachers, educational facilities, student support, or study results.

Being involved in the Editorial Board means to be involved in shaping experimental educational models, practices, and discourses at the academy, and generating and stimulating

conversations on the future of education in art and design. But it also means being implicated in structures that are larger than the academy. Since it might not be widely known, I find it crucial to clarify that the Editorial Board exists as a consequence of the financial restructuring of higher education in the Netherlands, decided upon by the liberal, social-democratic government (VVD, PvdA) in 2015. Without this restructuring, there would have been no Editorial Board. The more I feel implicated in this financial restructuring by politicians, the more I feel the need to be critical towards it and, importantly, my own position within it.

Financial investment in improving the quality of education can generally be regarded as a good thing. However this time, it came at a cost. The budget that is used to finance the Editorial Board – and all other Quality Agreements in the Netherlands – comes from the so-called ‘study advance funds’.¹ This budget became available after the decision was made by the Dutch government to phase out the basic student grant and to introduce the social loan system for all students in higher education. The budget that was previously divided across the Dutch student population in the form of individual monthly study grants was transferred to the institutions for the creation of (temporary) institutional programmes. In other words, the budget that was cut from this socio-economic solidarity structure that aimed to make studying affordable for students from different socio-economic positions now contributes to the growth of public educational institutions by seeking to improve their quality.

1 The study advance funds for all higher educational institutions in the Netherlands

began at €192 million in 2019 and will increase to €573 million in 2024. <https://www.rijks-overheid.nl/onderwerpen/hoger-onderwijs/kwaliteitsafspraken-hoger-onderwijs>.

This financial restructuring, decided upon by the national government, has a huge impact on the academy, the educational programmes that are offered, other support programmes that are

developed, the people that work here, the kind of work that is done, and also the pedagogies that teachers and students engage with. At the same time, the phasing out of the basic grant means for many students an increase of their precarity. More students are forced to generate an income during their studies when there is no longer individual governmental support, even more so since housing, living, and study costs are increasing every year. This is why students, with or without a side-job, are more compelled to take up a loan under the new system. The Dutch minister of education stated in parliament in December 2020 that because of the new social loan system, the debt of current graduates is between €3,000 and €10,000 higher in comparison to graduates before 2015, leading to average student debts of between €18,000 and €25,000. Especially affected are the students that already needed to take out a loan when the basic grants were still available; this group saw a maximum increase of 166% in their debts. In short, the financial restructuring led to a strong increase in the debts that students start their professional career with, in particular for those who were already less financially advantaged.²

As the chair of the Editorial Board, I have been questioning how to deal, on both a personal and professional level, with this contradictory imposition onto our educational institution. What hurts me the most? It can be argued that the talent programmes for the privileged have been made possible at the expense of access to education for the less fortunate. On top of that, by taking up this task of supporting experimental initiatives in which students can develop their own education, I feel complicit in the spread of precarity amongst the student body because of the context of the funding used. This is enhanced by the fact that I am getting paid (2,9 hours a week) from a budget that, until 2015, was given to students to pay their tuition fees, room rents, and other study costs. Therefore I feel that putting this critical note on the table is both a moral and a structural obligation, and the only right thing to do. This awareness of my own position has been important in guiding my thinking about the development of the Editorial Board and its activities.

The redirecting of budget from individual support to institutional growth is not new, and higher education is not the only domain in which this has taken place. This kind of financial restructuring is a neoliberal tendency that has been implemented within many other sectors, including the field of visual arts. From the 1980s onwards, government financial support for visual artists was restructured and funnelled into art institutions. With comparable arguments – to improve quality, stimulate professionalisation, or encourage entrepreneurial spirit – minister and state secretaries

of culture Elco Brinkman (CDA), Aad Nuis (D66), Rick van der Ploeg (PvdA), and others, have hampered individual support schemes for artists while promoting schemes that support a selection of professional art institutions.

It is one thing to be critical of this neoliberal restructuring, but how can this criticality practically feed into developing and supporting the experimental educational programmes at the academy?

One way is to not instigate top-down educational programmes, but rather to support the intercurricular platforms as self-organised, small-scale initiatives by students and teachers. I believe that within the current political context that dismantles solidarity structures, it becomes more important to support and train self-organisation in order to develop different kinds of solidarity. Self-organisation will be – is already – a crucial tool and method for students to be able to develop their professional practices within current socio-political landscapes. Whether it will be to co-develop housing or studio spaces, or to obtain financial stability in case of illness, it is very likely that artists and designers will need to organise together. Many are already doing so. On top of that, it is important that students who do organise their own educational platforms are able to get paid. This should ensure that the organisation of educational platforms is accessible for students from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Moreover, the experimental educational platforms decide upon their own specific working methods and topics, although they are stimulated to think of key questions for art education that are relevant for the academy's entire community.

In short, by creating a support base that offers budget, advice, and practical – and sometimes moral – support to stimulate students with teachers to organise their own educational paths, the Editorial Board is fostering an educational model that tries to empower students and enrich the educational offer of the academy with a student-run, initiatives-focused approach that generates knowledge for the whole community. Perhaps in this way, the experimental educational platforms can be disloyal to the structure of the study advance funds. When

developed in solidarity, the educational platforms extend their knowledge beyond the small-scale. The quality that the platforms promote is not individual excellence, but rather relational growth and sharing.

I am grateful that several students, teachers, and others, both from within and outside of the academy, have taken the initiative to develop various interesting educational platforms. I would like to thank all those who have been developing Writing Classes, Garden Department, Recipes for a Technological Undoing, Embodied Knowledge Bureau, and aux), with so much dedication and care. In supporting these educational platforms, I hope that the Editorial Board has strengthened initiatives that were already present, about to begin, or bound to happen. And with these developments in educational platforms at the academy, I hope that all kinds of spaces are opened up in which education can be redeveloped, constantly questioned, and to some extent remain somewhat undefined. I hope that students and staff alike hold space together to discuss the pedagogies in the current times at the academy, as it is fundamental to keep critically assessing the underlying assumptions, beliefs, and, of course, the (financial) structures that define the conditions of our educational institution.

Joram Kraaijeveld is a curator, teacher, and writer and as such is committed to promoting the position of artists and the value of the arts for society. He works on active forms of solidarity within and outside the arts. He was involved in the development of the Labour Market Agenda for the Cultural and Creative Sector 2021–2024, the guideline on artists' fees, and the Fair Practice Code. On behalf of Platform BK he wrote the research report 'Geen Stad Zonder Kunst' (2020) on different forms of managing studio buildings in the Netherlands. Joram teaches art theory at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, is a member of the institution's Participation Council, and the chair of its Editorial

Board of Intercurricular Programmes. He has worked as (guest) curator for Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam, Van Abbemuseum, De Brakke Grond, Museum Dr. Guislain, Stroom Den Haag, Schloss Ringenberg, Metropolis M & Stedelijk Museum, and Casco Art Institute: Working for the Commons. His articles have been published in Metropolis M, Boekman, and Kunstlicht, among others. He is chairman of association Platform BK, member of the Advisory Committee Cultuurnota 2021–2024 of the City of Utrecht, member of the CAWA (Commissie voor Ateliers en (Woon) Werkpanden Amsterdam), and member of Bajesdorp, a self-constructed residential tower block with studios for artists and activists.

Writing

shortcut

Class

surprise

X

stumbling

Disloyal

language

to the

encounter

Structure



__NOPUBLISH__

Welcome to Constant Etherpad!

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(□□□□) WRITING CLASS (□□□□) X DISLOYAL TO THE STRUCTURE

what do i write? :D

The Editorial Bored org *agresing the wheels of this symposium to collectively reflck me quick on the developments of the three original experimental educational platforms and discuss the importance of experimenthol mental mentholate me babyyyyy!* education momomore generally, and its place within the academy. is there an up and down in the non-hierarchy? is there a side to side? does it move in waves, does it flicker in the wind? what shape does it take? does it fluctuate??? **when we decide together, CAN ANYTHING ACTUALLY GET DONE???** **IF WE ALL HAVE TO AGREE? ISN'T IT JUST GONNA TAKE FOREVER AND EVER?? DON'T WE JUST WASTE TIME DRINKING COFFEE AND RUBBING EACH OTHER'S BELLIES, OH YEAH, DO IT CLOCKWISE, IT'S BETTER FOR DIGESTION! CLOCKWISE, PLEASE, CLOCKWISE! NO NO ANTI-CLOCKWISE IS BAD FOR DIGESTION, I WANT GOOD DIGESTION!** **i want it to be good. please, make it good, let it be good!** It will also address other questions, such as:how do the platforms experimental sex education more gently and its place onal paradigms and offer us ways to rethink what education is love having hard enough time to think about what education is, rethinking is above my paygrade/schaal? how can we include more dancing in the structure ? __NOPUBLISH__ have you tried by dancing in the structure of an other structure, if a structure is in place?how can we shut up? how can we speak up? and what might be the different between the former and the latter??? can you tell me that, huh, can you, can you, can you how are they intertwined with resources of critical horse riding? i was also thinking about the bird facing side to side — the bird is always a bird is a bird is a bird is a bird is a bird is a bird is a bird !

The evening will begin with a welcome love from the Editorial Board and a keynote lecture by My Cat, a curator and educator who used to be the coordinator of Tling and has worked at various other educational institutions in the Net-herworld. It will continue , continue continue continue with

presentations from each platform, and a roundtable is it still
a rountable if there is no table_**no its a grid now** with all three
platforms and

*Typing Glass, Writing Class, Firing Mass, Glazing
Gras. Biting Class*

There is one a two a three a five a more a pudding and pie and guest
speaker who is yet to be confirmed who?, and the evening will be hou-
sed beside, snicker doodles Tling (an ongoing Spa in a referbished ice
cream progressing into hairlooms that remind me i have ice cream in my
fridge hang on am gonna get it car) in in in and has worked at various
other space clubs

hair rooms in the Madagascar.he's
dangling by his toe nails! don't jump
off that eductational platform joe ! you
won;t survive the fall and what is THIS
HEIRACHY HIGH? get of your low
horse high sausage dog officer sir doctor
educator my lord!2

*how do we feel about spellcheck? is it helpful? or hindering...the squigggley
line freaks me out sometimes.*

(□□□□)□ □ emojis □(□□□□)□
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NOPUBLISH □ □ □ □ □ □
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□□□□□□□□)

happy emojis

cute emojis

everywhere 🌻 🌻 🌻 🌻 🌻 🌻 🌻
🌻 🌻 🌻 🌻 🌻 🌻 🌻

emojis how to read emojis

I also wrote my first rapsnice good for you:Pwe
cracked the code folks!

a few traps

i could rap it for you, my sising with me, and his toe nails!

hotdog and coffie

flick off !

flick off !

i write, i write

i fly, and fly

sometimes

i cry

my two lovers

by the moon and the sunshine

always there by my side, my sising with me, join me

you wont regret it *i regret it*

**do you ever feel like too tired and
just want to nap?**

**also why is highlight this weird color, its not
rown or red or pink its somewhere in bet-
ween, like a bleached brown when left under
sunshine. i also shouuuld e writing formy
thesis but somehow this feels productive.**

sing with me, join me

you wont regret it little undergrad
hotdog and coffie

kissing me this is a reminder

by midnightkls

like dancing interwtined bodies

the underground was not pop!

i'm a bit tired

maybe have

I don't stop. And I'm still the same, with the same mentali-
ty. Not that I'm relaxing now. pum pum, pum pum.

I never had any money, so I worked hard. I worked to pay
for my studies. I did all sorts of things: baker, telemarketer,
production line worker... In Madrid I also wrote my first
raps. But ok the underground was not pop. pum pum, pum
pum.

always there by my side, my sising with me, join me

you wont regret it a cofffee

or a tea. with cake.

or something with less cafeine

lemonade

naaah

too wintery

better just stick to water

the end lol

Between January 2020 and December 2021, word fans, self declared poets, literary dreamers, and language schemers gathered weekly, in strength, to read, ride, and write in the shelter and helter-skelter of the Gerrit Rietveld Academie.

anna

The Writing Classes turned out to be a space for communal stuttering and stumbling. A confrontational awkwardness of materialising inner monologues, dialogues, and narratives amongst each other, none of us actual writers. Some have a better insight into methodology than others but all in all we're giving each other instructions without really knowing the city, leading each other into curious alleyways, chance encounters, and parts of the map one didn't know even existed. For me, the potential of such peer to peer education lies in the surprises that this kind of collective stumbling encourages.

isabel

when we started organising these lessons, my main goal was to write more and write better. but as the role of organiser and facilitator grew, the role of a writer shrunk. the Writing Classes themselves took precedence, at once a force of nature and a tiny seed to be nurtured. and here at the finish line, saddled with the strange task of wrapping up the things we've unfurled, it seems that Writing Class became mostly about talking and connecting with others and less about the writing itself. although, arguably, that is what writing does – text seems to be an intimate shortcut into the minds of others, bypassing the flesh, its niceties and social conventions. I've always been partial to writing because of that strange paradoxical feeling of being alone and yet submerged in the private (albeit published) thoughts of another human being. in Writing Class we submerge together, steeped in each other, reading the tender poetry, the hard-hitting prose of your friend or your favourite author, exploring a weird web of experiences near and far.

jimena

Something that appears when I think of the classes are the moments before a student gathering and workshops. Where we talked, shared ideas, and coordinated our thoughts to create a space of writing that we imagined and yet that was unknown to us. At the same time, we were getting to know each other; our interests and backgrounds. Motivating one another to make the atmosphere of the WC grow. At moments, detaching ourselves from the text and forgetting why we came to the classes, integrating external voices.

shifra

Do we talk to write or write to talk? We tried to reach into the articulation process and get a hold on the medium of feedback: using language to talk about language. We came to ongoing discussions – niche ones, wild ones, focused ones, wandering ones – in which the participants were characterised by their texts, and the texts themselves were participants. Atmospheres during the gatherings were wide-ranging. We could be writing revenge fantasies on the light bright sixth floor about a left foot to a right foot, or mother earth to a starbucks barista, the mood cathartically jolly, wide, show-offy. We could be blushing over dug-up teenage love letters, or lying flat on our backs listening to grunts emerging from a speaker, absorbent and lethargic.

loïc

When we started the Writing Classes, I was amazed by the level of attention: listening to others and their words, the gradual unfolding of worlds within worlds, the different faces already passing into one another. Even if the attention sometimes crumbled into the occasional boredom or erratic-ness, at the end, was there anything more light than us when we were reading, writing, and talking? What is this force that binds all our words together? That was the sort of question mocking me when we started this project. Is it the same force that binds all the letters together? When we came together in the Writing Classes, I thought so.

I

paranoid reading

never

plot twist

remember

lingering

endings

pleasure

I never remember the endings of novels I've read. These ends often bring resolution, revelation, or a sense of clarity regarding the story that came before them. But I don't remember the deaths, the lovers reconciled, the family reunions, the reflections. In fact, it feels foolish even writing this list because, as I can't remember them, how do I know what it is that I've missed? I am not disinterested in how things end, but am instead preoccupied with their filling – the complex machinations, the back-and-forths, the wrangling that endings depend on and are produced by.

Following this, determining the function of education before it happens – that is, what its outcome should be – gives little autonomy to the process itself, even if the outcome desired is a broadening one. Autonomy is instead given to those who initially determine this function, but not to those who are navigating it, living within it. Is it useful to construct educational models in relation to what the institution deems necessary for the future, or is this future-orientedness detrimental to learning; counterintuitive in that it keeps us from the needs of the moment?

Experimental education is a grind – the thinking, the rethinking, the planning, the hoping. Whatever forms they take, I'm interested in how experimental educational practices are shaped around urgencies that are felt in the present moment. How they ask what can be done to understand, unravel, and complicate these urgencies. How to serve needs now.

Recently, I watched a group performance where the audience was invited to type in a shared etherpad. One (anonymous) participant typed: 'having hard [sic] enough time to think what education is, rethinking is above my paygrade'. This sentence was part of a shouting, a repetition, a song of sorts. I laughed out loud when I read it, then returned to taking notes. This statement rang like a bell amongst those of us who were watching, who were scrabbling around trying to rethink how learning happens, in the hope that the process might become more fruitful, more capacious, more enlivening.

Rethinking is akin to a plot twist. What happens if the story doesn't go as planned, or if how it is planned does not serve its characters? The plot twist functions as an arbiter of change, signalling that the unknown and unexpected is bubbling under the surface of the narrative, that there are other possibilities. The unknown remains both the fundamental (and perhaps performative) lure of institutional education, and something it tries its best to avoid.

Institutional time is commanding and manipulative, it works on you like a heteronormative relationship – both are in the thrall of chrononormativity, a process queer theorist Elizabeth Freeman describes as 'the use of time to organise individual human bodies towards maximum productivity'.² Both are structured by predetermined milestones: a degree, a marriage, a masters, a baby, a job. But instead of following the onward movement of progress, time folds

1 Writing Classes etherpad p. 47

2 Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 3.

back on itself – things end, return, repeat. Knowledge can be lost

and is only occasionally found again. Certainty crumbles, relationships disintegrate or shift their form, things you thought you knew collapse beneath you. And yet, there are continuations.

In thinking about the plot as a structure, what might it look like to avoid narrative closure? If the notion of the plot twist is embraced, the pull to defer, detour, or redirect may be prioritised instead – a lingering in the middle.

However the telos of institutional education is not knowledge and community for its own sake, but rather that of success and, ultimately, wealth creation. In refusing its progress-orientedness, time becomes tricky.

Still, the disruption of institutional time happens continually, both intentionally and unintentionally, despite the institution's desire to keep its subjects in line. Disruption returns, again and again, and in its wake space is carved out for alternative methods of knowledge-making.

The frame of paranoid reading, outlined by queer theorist Eve Sedgwick, describes a critical practice that attempts to avoid surprise and anticipate pain and disappointment by assuming their arrival. It hopes to soften the blow, or at least weaken its force, by ensuring that 'bad news be always already known'.³ It runs parallel to the future-orientedness of the institution, demanding that outcomes be predetermined, whilst taking up a rhythm that jumps back and forth.

Within the institution, the 'bad news' is that the structures and models that are on offer do not provide for and sustain students or educators in the long term. This plays out in a myriad of ways – the knowledge privileged is shaped by historical and ongoing structures of oppression, educators have only temporary and precarious work, students leave feeling unequipped to find a job, in debt, without support, etc. This news is known, is not new, and its effects and affects are rarely avoidable or mitigated by the institution.

But Sedgwick asks what the knowledge of this bad news, the paranoia that is oftentimes a ‘sensical, defensive response’⁴ does. ‘As though to make something visible as a problem were, if not a mere hop, skip and jump away from getting it solved, at least self-evidently a step in the right direction’.⁵

The traditional novel’s wont for a happy ending comes hand-in-hand with the expectation of resolution. This, to me, can be the bad news that paranoia speaks to. It courts false promises, abandons nuance, and leaves little room for subjectivity (although happy endings do, of course, have their place).

The desire to maintain a sense of equilibrium as a reader – to feel safely held by the story – means there may be a feeling of disorientation when no such resolution presents itself. I hold this disorientation dear, as it asks me to consider how narrative events could have been otherwise and why I presumed they would be.

I heard the cultural worker Clara Balaguer make an analogy between the iterative process of publishing, and the way that cows digest their food. She said: cows chew the cud then rework and re-swallow it with their four stomachs in order to extract its most nutritional elements.

When I consider this grind (work) and the perpetual grinding of teeth (more work), there emerges a belief (or, if I return to publishing, a hope) in this work’s eventual fruitfulness.

To rework, to rethink, to re-swallow. A student I know observed that, when sharing writing with a group, you use language to talk about language. This calls up the cud, the way that words are chewed upon and spat out, warmed by our mouths in order to keep them pliant, true to our desire for expression.

Rethinking educational structures can be a form of drafting. Drafting

3 Eve Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 130.

4 Maggie Nelson, *On Freedom: Four Songs of Care and Constraint* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2021), 28.

5 Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 139.

is an action defined by its malleability, an iterative form that does not necessarily demand a conclusion. Instead, it responds to the hands of the maker that is always in-action. Drafting is a way to stay inside the plot, to try out alternatives.

The reparative frame – posited as an alternative to the paranoid by Sedgwick – knows that whilst there are bad surprises, there will be good ones too. This allows room for hope (which may be fraught and painful nonetheless) that the future will indeed be different from the present.

What if pleasure-seeking is prioritised over forestalling pain, the pain of being cast out of the institution without the tools that are needed? A resolution without tools for continuation is like a novel ending without offering what the reader needs to keep the characters alive.

Perhaps this is where a certain disloyalty to the institution lies, in the refusal to complete, to finish, to call an end to proceedings in the ways that are both implicitly and explicit-

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Ecologies

disloyal

of Transformation:

trickster

Camille Barton

nervous system regulation

and

reckoning

Tracian Meikle

generative

in conversation

extractive

Tracian When I was asked to respond to the topic 'being disloyal to the structure' and alternative ways of doing and thinking about art education, I immediately thought about Ecologies of Transformation. The masters programme really points to these ideas, both in what you're dealing with, and in its different ways of thinking what art can be and what art can do. What kind of ideas or inspiration did you have in conceptualising Ecologies of Transformation?

Camille I think it really germinated when I was studying International Relations years ago. I loved it in many ways; it gave me a map to understand global power dynamics, colonisation, and why the world is operating as it does now, but what was really disheartening is how we weren't really presented with any solutions, we were just shown how corrupt all these international governing organisations were. By the end of it, I felt no trust in this system. I'm interested in creating things that can be transformative, that can allow culture to shift, and that allow us to relate in different ways, but this programme didn't give me that. So that was the initial spark; having a desire to understand how to create cultural transformation.

I then moved to California, where I learned a lot of different embodiment practices and got into somatics. I was working as a youth worker in a restorative justice school, I became a peer counsellor, and was also a clown and performance artist. Living there with this whole range of things happening showed me the possibilities of transforming culture in a way that was absent from my course in the UK and from a lot of activist spaces. So the programme is an interdisciplinary exploration of different techniques and practices that can allow us to transform the way we organise our lives, and also hopefully society, so that we can live in a more beautiful world and pass that on to the next generation.

Tracian I really love that last sentence, thinking about the transformative aspects of art. There is a school of thought that suggests that art is for art's sake, and that the work that art does can be incidental, but shouldn't necessarily be sort of intrinsic to the art that is created. I'm curious about how you see that in relationship to Ecologies of Transformation, and creating art that is about transformation.

Camille I definitely don't subscribe to the art-for-art's-sake worldview. I'm trying to expand my capacity to appreciate it, but often it makes me angry, not with individuals who have that worldview, or who make art in that capacity, but because I see it as a legacy of colonisation. Art has been commodified into this luxurious, playful thing that has no inherent meaning in the western context, and artists are trained to be in competition with each other. They're not trained to think about the power of the arts to transform, to create a sense of belonging, shared ways of knowing; this is much more linked to traditional and indigenous cultures, where art making is a way of world building, of sharing cosmology and ways of being in relation to each other. I'm not suggesting that it's binary and that it has to be either/or, but I'm definitely advocating within the programme for moving towards a way of using the power of art to connect, create belonging, to think about intention and potential outcomes with regard to how you might want people to feel or perspectives you might want to illuminate, so that there's more attention to the power that art has in giving us new stories and narratives that might allow us to see other possibilities and actually live them out. I think the art-for-art's-sake dynamic is sometimes a bit of a wasted opportunity, because it assumes there is such a thing as 'neutral', but actually everything is very political. I feel more comfortable when people acknowledge that as well as their positionality.

Tracian One of the things I find really great about the programme is who you have brought in. It's really fantastic to see students who I know from activist spaces in Amsterdam within the formal – if we want to use that word – art space of the school, because of course these are people who have been creators in other ways in Amsterdam all along. How did you create the cohort for the programme?

Camille I'm really grateful to be working with such a beautiful group of humans; they're really incredible and have such rich practices, ideas, and lineages. Many of the cohort have ancestral histories of migration or displacement, or ancestors who have recently experienced colonisation. Many have been rooted in the Netherlands for some time but don't identify as white or Dutch, and as a result there are a lot of different histories, understandings of social change, and cultural perspectives present, so there isn't necessarily an assumed

neutral to work from; we're really having to understand the variety of different perspectives in the space, and I think there's a real appreciation for that within the group. I did have a desire to have a majority BIPOC group, or at least a group of students who had a rich understanding of intersectionality and systemic oppression, so we could get into the work and not have to spend lots of time on introductory concepts to social change and oppression. There's a massive underrepresentation of BIPOC students in universities in the Netherlands generally, and also in art academies. This is a real shame and there's a lot to say about structural racism in the art world, for example the way African art is viewed as not really being art because much of it has a function. There are various barriers as a result that many BIPOC students have to navigate, and I wanted to create a container where we could really be together to honour our ancestral histories and explore art making with our different lived experiences. In order to do that, I generated very specific interview and application questions; I really wanted to know about peoples' connections to their ancestors and how, if at all, that impacted their work. I wanted to know about their interests and approaches to conflict resolution. I wanted to know about their visions for social change and why they were interested in it. I think having these specific questions really helped to get a sense of the people that had the motivation and the desire to do this work. I really wanted to bring a group of people together who had been sitting with these questions for a long time, who had noticed in the art space or the activist space that something didn't feel aligned, and who wanted to explore a new approach, to develop something else, and had the curiosity to do so. I'm really pleased that it seems to have worked, in the sense that we have a group of people who really are very ready to explore together and create new approaches.

Tracian It shows that you have to be quite deliberate about how you create the space to bring these people in, right? You can't have the desire without also creating and following a process capable of meeting that desire. That's certainly something to learn; when we are thinking about doing art education differently, it's not just about what is done and how, but also who is doing it, right? It's amazing that you identified what was desirable for this course, and that you were then able to do what was needed to make that happen, to create the right group. It's important to realise that it's about process and not just desire.

I'm curious about what you've seen in terms of these new approaches. What has come from students so far in discussions about new approaches to what art can look like, feel like, and do?

Camille The first part of the year focused a lot on nervous system regulation work, tuning into the body, getting a sense of different stress-states and how that relates to our daily lives, and maybe the activist or art spaces we have been in. The students are experiencing a lot of self-reflection and validation, for example noticing 'oh yeah, this space was not really giving room for emotions', or 'this space wasn't allowing for certain types of dialogue'. It's a bit of a reckoning, or a re-humaning experience. We haven't pushed to really create a lot in this first term; the focus has been on getting to be with the nervous system and understanding embodiment work. The upcoming assessment is a little bit of a shift in a way: we're now going to start to make. I'm really excited to witness what they come up with. I see a lot shifting in how folks want to show up in activist spaces, how they want to engage in social change, and there's a lot of desire for collaboration, but something that has come up when we think about the radical imagination is just how much colonisation and white supremacy culture can stifle the imagination, and the need to really practise – to deliberately be practising – imagining different things, being in different relational ways with each other, and tending to grief as well. In the new year, we're going to start moving towards sowing the seeds of imagination and new possibilities, bringing in clowning, pleasure activism, and starting to think about what these body-based, joyful approaches could look like. The cohort will also start thinking about their own areas of inquiry and research. Things are coming up for themselves, but it's about really working out 'how am I seeing this in the collective? And how does this shape the wider world? What would an intervention look like to shift those dynamics?' We're working with the spiral model

quite a lot, which is an approach to social change that thinks about the need to really embody change on the level of the self, but also to consider how that will impact community and the wider world; it's holistic.

Tracian Wow, tears came to my eyes when you spoke about how capitalism and white supremacy forces this immediate need for creation and moves from the imagination to production. I think that in the question I just asked you I was asking you in some sense about production, and I love that you're saying 'no, this semester we are really sitting with our bodies, with thinking, with feeling, and not worrying so much about producing something.' How much does art education actually allow for one to just be, and not always be creating? Allowing for the pause?

Camille I'm a big believer in the pause. We're trying to create a new ecosystem in this model but we're also still inside an institution, and we have to do things like assessments, but it felt important for me to give us as long a pause as possible, so the cohort could really be with each other without having to be busy with dynamics of competition, which I hope don't come into play in the group. Competition, constant judgment, and pressure are very much a part of arts education in the Netherlands, and maybe many other parts of the West too. It's been beautiful to see the group connect together, to start to see each others' interests and build trust, reaching a point where it's okay to reveal themselves, to think 'who could I collaborate with? How can we lovingly give each other feedback?' We're using a process for assessments that was suggested by two students in the cohort that takes a consensual approach to how feedback is shared. Many in the group expressed how, in their earlier art school experiences, critique was often very painful, harsh, and had an impact on their mental health. I am curious about the role of critique in the art space and the academic space: what is it for? How do we shape it in a way that is generative, that allows people to still grow? Maybe we aren't taught loving approaches or different pathways to critique in a way that still builds trust. I'm really grateful that we're working with this model, so that there can continue to

be this trust and consent around sharing with each other and supporting each other to grow.

Tracian Again the thinking is about the process of the education itself, and not just the content. I look forward to seeing what comes up, in the sense of what art can bring to social change movements, to transformative movements; the role of art there. I'm curious about that, about an activist who wants to use art as a way to impact. Could you talk a bit more to this?

Camille Something I noticed when I was really engaged with activist spaces was a demonisation of pleasure and joy. There was this sense of it not being possible to feel good until the revolution comes, and there was this kind of posturing around it: everything had to be very serious. Many of us in those spaces had chaotic relationships with substances and were using to disconnect from the pain and grief that comes with focusing on these issues so much, and from experiencing police violence at protests. The way I navigated a lot of that time was by going to raves: I love dancing. That was my happy place, but I didn't feel a lot of permission to bring that in, to be a raver and an activist. Now I'm much more into the approach of the famous Emma Goldman quote, 'If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution.' That's how I feel: I'm not going to wait until the revolution comes to enjoy my life, I'm going to try to enjoy it as much as possible, whilst also trying to create change. adrienne maree brown's work on Pleasure Activism and other books like Joyful Militancy are really making a case that if we're having fun, if we're treating each other well, if we're doing things that are joyful, we're probably going to be more effective in the social change work that we do, and we'll bring more people along with us. I think there is a role for artists, as Toni Cade Bambara would say, to make the revolution irresistible, to make it playful, to bring in delightful elements. Even if you're having a long meeting, just the gesture of providing herbal tea and snacks can make that so much more pleasurable; infusing a little bit of care can actually make that a cosy experience. We shouldn't underestimate how these small acts can be transformative. I do believe in policy change, I think it's very important, but we also need cultural change. I'm currently more interested in working to shift hearts and minds, which to me is art, to support the reform that we want. I also choose to make it as sustainable for myself as possible, because I've definitely experienced burnout from engaging in forms of activism

that I've felt I should do, because this is the way. I feel a lot more comfortable now understanding there are many different paths and we need people in a whole range of different spaces working on transformation. I would advocate to really trust that if something is pleasurable to you, it's not necessarily bad. Chances are you have skills that will really be helpful in that area, and we should trust that more.

Tracian This made me think about art education, which sometimes feels like it's either complete pleasure, or like it has to be totally serious. It's nice to have a reminder of the role of pleasure in activism but also in art. Art really is one of the ways in which we access pleasure, and I think we should remember that. I really like the idea of being 'Disloyal to the Structure', because you can think about it in different ways. What the structure is is one question, but also what does it mean to be disloyal? Do you consider yourself disloyal to the structure? And what does it mean then to be disloyal within the art-educational space?

Camille I do consider myself disloyal to the structure . . . I often feel like a trickster or trojan horse that has entered into this space, and I'm trying to enjoy that. I'm actively turning away from what I've been told is the way to do things, from the structure that's in service to capital, from the steps that are necessary for positioning yourself as an easily commodifiable entity. We need other options if we're going to sustain life on this planet, and I want to explore what that looks like. So I do consider myself disloyal, and I hope more people will consider how to infiltrate spaces and pivot as much as possible to create more space for something else.

Tracian I'm curious about what it means to bring a programme like this into a majority white art institution, also for you yourself as a Black person coming into this space as the head. You spoke about trojan-horsing and I love this as I think it's THE way to gain entry into spaces and to use the resources of those spaces for certain kinds of work. But of course the spaces benefit even more from this than you do. What does it mean to be doing this programme at the Sandberg Instituut? What's the radicality in that?

Camille It's a very complex experience already. On one hand, there's the trojan horse element. I'm aware that being so interdisciplinary and experimental in an institutional setting is unusual; I acknowledge that and that feels powerful to me. I don't think it would be easy for me to bring this to a traditional academic institution, so I see the radical nature

of that. At the same time, I'm very aware that we're in a moment where institutions want to showcase being diverse, and Sandberg is benefitting a lot from currently having two temporary programmes led by Black femmes. It creates a certain kind of positioning, despite the reality – the organism does not embrace and practise decolonial thought. I'm aware that as much as there's a trickster element, this is being utilised for the benefit of the institution. Oscillating between these elements can create tension. There's a fugitivity that I'm aiming for, maybe not always successfully, but it's definitely a dance. I was reminded by a friend that doing *Ecologies of Transformation* is creating possibility in the imagination of other people, showing what is possible. This may bring other people, other institutions, other programmes, to understand that we don't have to do what has been done before; we can create – we actually have to create – new things. It's our duty to experiment. Those of us who have imposter syndrome because of ongoing marginalisation and ancestral legacies of oppression, we really need to come through, trust our power, trust the wisdom of our ancestors, and trust in what we need to deliver in this time. So I appreciate knowing that hopefully, even if I can't always see it, this is creating possibility for other people, and will continue a wave of voices that are so desperately needed in this time to move us beyond the normative, extractive, dominant culture that is not working for us.

Tracian I'm really hoping for that too. We're setting the groundwork for a future that we may or may not partake in, but we know that we've put some of the building blocks down while having fun. Maybe that's the whole point of the pleasure we spoke about, otherwise everything we do is just investment in the future without investment in the present. Thank you so much, this has been so lovely. I'm always glad when I get the chance to have these conversations that are often never fully had because there's no moment to just sit down and have them. I'm grateful for this opportunity to talk with you about this.

Camille Thank you, I've really enjoyed this very much as well. I'm excited to archive this, look back in five years, and think 'great, that was what was going on for me then!' I'm trying to get better at that.

Camille Barton is an artist, educator, and renegade researcher, working on the intersections of embodiment, drug policy, and healing justice. Their work is inspired by afrofuturism and embodiment as a means to imagine systems change and re-pattern the mind-body dualism that is dominant in the West. In 2020, the Amsterdam-based artist directed *The Grief Portal*, a sci-fi inspired short film, commissioned by Performing Borders Live and Counterpoints Arts, exploring how grieving can be generative. Their work was also featured in the VPRO documentary, *The Post Racist Planet*. Camille is the head of *Ecologies of Transformation* (2021 – 2023), a temporary masters programme at the Sandberg Institute, exploring how art making and embodiment can facilitate social change. They are the author of the *Grief Toolkit*, a small book of embodied grief practices, undertaken in collaboration with the Global Environments Network.

Tracian Meikle is a Jamaican creative, educator, and researcher based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, who focuses on blackness, space-making, and community building. She has conducted research on street art in Jamaica, and her curatorial work includes 'I came here to be Free' with Kenyan artist Neo Musangi. As an educator and programmer, Meikle coordinates the *Unsettling* programme, a programme for radical inclusivity at the Rietveld Academie and Sandberg Institute, where she also instructs in the Fine Arts Masters programme. She has led conversations with numerous thinkers and artists and is a part of the creative duo, the *WILD*, which serves as a laboratory on black fugitivity rooted in art and literature. In 2015, Tracian co-founded *Amsterdam Black Women* – a collective committed to creating a nurturing and safe space for black women seeking community, and continues to serve as co-organiser. Website – www.balmyard.nl

To move

traditional ecological knowledge

around

greenwich mean time

in a circle

chronometer

is not to know
the same

circles

place

twice

I recently found myself dwelling upon the notion of dwelling and wondered if it could give me something. The place of a dwelling, a home, an abode, seems to have a rather neutral quality – simply the place that someone lives, though perhaps in common speech a bit archaic or eccentric. Nevertheless, dwelling as a noun conjures a home, a place where someone lives or has lived. It exists and somehow in its concreteness has value, dignity. The doing of dwelling can be about living someplace, though I can't recall a time where anyone told me that they dwelled in an apartment. More commonly, dwelling ties itself to an object of attention, acting on or upon it, and here its quality changes completely, connoting fixating, staying with something for too long, a lingering, possibly even a wistfulness. To my ear, it points at a looking backwards, or at least a defiant staying put. This fixity is somehow imbued with the feeling of being unhealthy, untoward; dwelling is not what one should do. Such behaviours can be worrying and bothersome to those around you. This lack of movement and stuck-ness should be let go, to move onto something somewhere else. One must leave this place, relinquish this object of attention, abstract or otherwise, and find another (healthier) way to occupy her time. We should not dwell upon the past, someone once said, for it can't be changed. Or, as the disembodied

voice of the Oxford Dictionary entry scolds me from my computer screen: 'I've got better things to do than dwell on the past'. I learn from a text by Rasheedah Phillips the term 'space-time mapping,' an apt description for the ways in which we entangle time and space, in thought and speech. Time is space and space is time too, though I suppose a better student of basic physics would know that already. Phillips explains: 'We speak of temporal domains of the past and future as being near or far, as being in front of us or behind us, and often as destinations, i.e. "returning to the past"'.¹ Time is mapped in linear logic, in relation to and from the human, and not other bodies. So while the individual 'I' can be the sun of my time's story, time's movement seems restricted to only the onward march of forward, though I may wistfully turn and look backwards, remembering.

...

Some days have come and gone, and I am still dwelling on the word dwell. I am wondering how it arrived in the here and now. The tracing back of words seems a fairly speculative affair, but while searching online, I find the blog of the Oxford University Press, eponymous home of the dictionary, which seems a fairly trustworthy, or at least properly credentialed, source of speculation. It's from here that I learn that dwell originates from a causative form of 'dwelan' in German, meaning 'to err', so in a causative state would have indicated 'to make one err', though during its travels it appears to have found a much more expansive and wandering meaning for itself.² In Old English, its cognates were 'tarry, linger, delay' (from old Scandinavian), but also to 'lead astray' and 'be stupefied' (from West Germanic). An 1871 article by Au-

1 Rasheedah Phillips, "Placing Time, Timing Space: Dismantling the Master's Map and Clock", *The Funambulist* 18 (Cartography & Power): 2018, <https://thefunambulist.net/magazine/cartography-power/placing-time-timing-space-dismantling-masters-map-clock-rasheedah-phillips>.

2 This text is heavily indebted to Antoly Liberman's research and speculation on dwelling in his column on word origins on the Oxford University Press blog, <https://blog.oup.com/2015/01/dwelling-word-origin-etymology>.

gust Lübben connects a cluster of words related to the German 'twellen' ('t' in German becomes 'd' in English) and finds that they once meant to 'move in a circle', so it seems that perhaps this could hold the answer to the ways in which dwelling can be about both lingering and being led astray. Antoly Liberman, writing in the OUP blog, suggests: 'To be sure, a person moving in a circle gets nowhere (is delayed) and labours under the illusion of making progress (is led astray)', and I immediately want to ask: how are you so sure, Antoly? But regardless of

my doubts, from here he sees a compelling connection to dwelling (on) as we use it now. If this speculation is right, it makes me wonder about the frame of thinking that leads to the notion that moving around and arriving at (or staying in) the same place is inherently an error, a faulty premise, a lack of progress.

What if one started as hindered but then decides to linger? What if something about the return to a particular ground draws me, makes my legs arrive there, over and over? Why would moving in circles necessarily be redundant or superfluous? Could it be that this notion of going round in a circle when seen as an error is one of the places where things (here) went wrong? While the minute hand goes round and round in its cycle, it seems the march of time must still go forward. But what if we reject this lineage inherited from dominant European metaphysical traditions? What if in fact this march of linearity, arriving from this lineage, is what causes the illusion, leads us astray from actually sensing time and our precarity in it? I start thinking of Anna Tsing and her book that tells the story of matsutake mushrooms: 'Indeterminacy, the unplanned nature of time, is frightening, but thinking through precarity makes it evident that indeterminacy also makes life possible'.³ What happens when we think time as indeterminate and multidirectional, untethered from the horizon of progress?

Tools for telling time, for feeling and sensing time, are presumably as old and as varied as humans. Devices working with the sun, water, cogs, pendulums, and springs appear from 3rd century Greece to Song Dynasty China to 13th century Mesopotamia and 15th century Nuremburg, but it is the precision of a specific time-telling device, the chronometer, that plays a particular and peculiar role in a story of world-making and unmaking. From the 16th century, the rising hunger for 'discovery' and colonisation emanating across Europe creates a problem. While latitude becomes fairly easy to determine by 1700, 'the longitude problem' remains unsolved. The offerings of vast sums of money

from royal and state coffers induces a sort of arms race amongst European powers, leading a flurry of men who fancy themselves inventors to fiddle with escapements, balance wheels, roller bearings, and spiral springs, such that by the century's end, a proliferation of clocks with sufficient precision took to the seas.⁴ Carrying on their decks these tools of exactitude in geolocation made possible a level of colonisation that might have been unimaginable years previous, allowing ships to travel greater distances more reliably and accurately, fixing their watery loops and traces across the Atlantic into consistent 'trade' routes.⁵ Here time, the common-sense notion of it as produced in Europe, intertwines with conquest and coloniality, and begins its process of standardising into exactitude via the mean of Greenwich.⁶

...

I've been dwelling on other matters these last weeks and haven't re-visited this text as I should. I found myself a bit stuck and couldn't quite

3 Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*, (Oxford: Princeton UP, 2015), 22.

4 England's Longitude Act of 1714 offered £20,000 as first prize to such an inventor, estimated at roughly £3 million in contemporary terms.

5 It does not seem a coincidence that the first measurement of longitude using marine chronometers takes place aboard the French ship *Aurore* in 1767, and the peak of the transatlantic slave trade is reached in the 1780s, with an average of ca. 80,000 enslaved people brought to the Americas each year of this decade, primarily via British, French, and Portuguese ships. We could think of the chronometer as a device that facilitates exactitude in geolocation, while also making possible efficient mass displacement and genocide.

6 The chronometer was used to determine longitude by comparing Greenwich Mean Time and the time at the current location found from observations of celestial bodies.

7 Raymond Pierotti, *Indigenous Knowledge, Ecology, and Evolutionary Biology*, (London: Routledge, 2011), 9.

figure out where this line, ahem, circle, of thought could go. I'm looking at a book I read some years ago, a book that first taught me the term 'Traditional Ecological Knowledge'. TEK is challenging to define; it is a situated practice and a body of knowledge, gathered over many generations, relating to the environment in a given traditional homeland of Indigenous groups – knowledge that 'encompasses practical, empirical and ideological aspects of understanding and is both the information itself and a way of knowledge'.⁷ It is both a practice and an adaptive body of knowing that is relational, complex, and holistic. As described in a recent article, it can include, but is not limited to: 'botany knowledge, medicinal application (collection and/or administration), hunting, fishing, gathering, processing of material(s), caretaking such as burning, coppicing, thinning, astronomy, phenology, time, ecological markers, species markers, weather and climate knowledge'.⁸ Meanwhile, traditional sciences used for understanding climate – as developed within the dominant European metaphysical tradition – focus on isolating data, extricating it from its environment, not emplacing it, and, no surprise, presume a

progression of certain events, a linear flow at a constant rate and 'neat chronologies' linking past, present, and future; convictions that are both 'profoundly ethnocentric' and 'brazenly cultural in character'.⁹

Within most Indigenous American traditions, animal-persons and plant-persons existed before human-persons.¹⁰ Vine Deloria explains, 'The primary focus of creation stories of many tribes placed humans as among the last creatures who were created and the youngest of the living families'.¹¹ Because of this, humans need to learn from other beings, patterning our behaviour from observing our plant and animal elders. One way of thinking with cosmological differences is to understand cultures, and the epistemologies built within them, as temporally or spatially oriented. Deloria argues that temporally based thinking believes time proceeds in a linear fashion, and because of that, one must study mistakes of the past in order to 'learn how to be better' – that human history is 'progressive'.¹² Spatially oriented thinking does not mean that time is absent but less emphasised. Events occurred of course, but what is important is 'understanding the meaning of these events to your cultural tradition, and that this tradition can best be exemplified by experiencing the physical location and ecological surroundings where the actual event occurred'.¹³ Knowledge is emplaced, relational, and particular; it might be true in this setting, at this moment, with these conditions, but not in that situation over there. Meanwhile, if we return to time-space mapping in language, for Aymara speakers of South Ame-

rica, the present / past is understood as visible and perceivable; it can be known. The future, however, is behind a person and is, therefore, unseeable and unknowable. While within Māori paradigms 'it is impossible to conceive of the present and the future as separate and distinct from the past, for the past is constitutive of the present and, as such, is inherently reconstituted within the future'.¹⁴

I am a remedial student of these ideas and the teachings that come from Traditional Ecological Knowledge. I live far away from my family's homeland and my knowledge of the place I live now spans less than a decade. I read books and articles on these topics, but know too that the written word is deeply embedded within European cultural practices. Different tools are needed for experimenting with other temporalities, to think spatially and to practise attunement with other rhythms. And yet I am here writing this text, while wishing I could be in the garden, tending the Lacinato and Red Russian kale that has overwintered in the warm microclimate of our little courtyard of dirt, sequestered between the modernist and contemporary edifices of the art academy. Golden beets the size of thimbles are there too, and by leaving them be, they can decide when the environmental conditions are right for them to begin growing again. They can tell time better than I can.

Histories and futures already exist in the present. Through these visitations, we can practise unlearning in the present, articulating creative forms that allow us to sense pluralities of time, and perhaps, through doing so, we can attune ourselves to variant rhythms and knowledges as always tied to the soil underneath them.

8 Chisholm Hatfield et al. "Indian time: time, seasonality, and culture in Traditional Ecological Knowledge of climate change", in *Ecological Processes* 7 (25): 2018, 3.

9 *ibid.*

10 *ibid.*, 105.

11 *ibid.*, 31.

12 *ibid.*, 179.

13 *ibid.*

14 Chisholm Hatfield et al. "Indian time: time, seasonality, and culture in Traditional Ecological Knowledge of climate change", *Ecological Processes* 7 (25): 2018, 3.

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Excerpt

debt

from an

credit

Interview

presentness

with

study

Stefano Harney

Interviewer You and Fred Moten have used the term ‘study’ to denote a kind of politics in the university, or sometimes in what you both call ‘the undercommons’ of the university. Can you say more about this concept of ‘study’?

Stefano Harney Study is a concept, and it’s also a kind of practice, I think, that we can undertake and that we do undertake in the university. And yet at the same time, if you were to ask: ‘what’s the one thing that you’re not able to do in the university?’ The answer might well be: ‘you’re not able to study.’

Because when you think about what study is – in the way that we understand it as a practice – we’re talking about getting together with others and determining what needs to be learned together, and spending time with that material, spending time with each other, without any objective, without any end point, without any sense that we will ever escape our feeling that we are permanently immature, premature, without credit. And in a kind of mutual bad debt to each other, which we don’t intend to re-

pay. A kind of circumstance in which we come together out of a feeling that we want to learn together. That kind of study – a kind of study which is disconnected from credit, which is disconnected from individual accreditation, which is disconnected from the notion of instrumentalism, from completion, from leading to something directly, that kind of notion of study – for us seems almost impossible in the university, given all of its demands.

And yet, we know that study goes on, because there is a thing in the university called ‘the student’. And somehow within the student there resides – despite all of these imperatives to graduate, to get credit, to get a job, to do well, to compete, despite all of that – somehow there is a collective desire represented in the students to study. Where study is not connected to any of those things, but rather to collective self-development. Rather to an idea that the reason that we’ve come together is to try to share and develop our sense of ideas and history, philosophy, etcetera.

It’s almost impossible to do, and yet it’s necessary to do, and it happens all the time, but it almost always happens against the university. It almost always happens in the university, but under the university; in its undercommons, in those places that are not recognised, not legitimate; among those people who are doing something they are not supposed to do, or who are doing something that we neglect, or that we vaguely understand as not really fitting, as not really contributing. That’s where study occurs most often, and where it has to occur. And also where it’s welcome, and where those who want to do it are welcome. It’s in the undercommons that one is always welcome to come and join and be part of that kind of study.

Study is also a kind of bad debt to each other; a kind of bad debt that you don’t intend to repay. So it stands opposite to something like student debt, around which there is always this notion that there has to be

recovery, a job, credit, and payback. The notion of the credit as the completion of a certain step on the way to being able to get that job and pay back that money has to be discarded when we begin to talk about study.

So, for us, study is that movement, that practice that goes on all the time in the university, for the university, but against the university. And when we use study in that way, we mean not to say that it can only occur in a university; we mean to say that it's a kind of gathering of intensities, because the university is such a gathering of resources. But one of the things about studying is that once you begin to do it with others, you can begin to recognise where it's going on elsewhere, beyond the borders of the university. And that's crucial because it's necessary to know that people are trying to study all the time. They're trying to get together, trying to become in bad debt to each other, trying to enter into a world in which they don't have to produce a result, they don't have to get credit, where they can de-link credit and debt, and where they can remain in this space.

And again it's not surprising that certain populations and communities have traditions of this kind of study, populations which traditionally have been marked by never really being able to get out of bad debt. And again one could return to the history of slavery; one thing that marks Blackness is that no matter how hard you work, you're never out of the debt, because that debt is part of you, and part of your collectivity. Well that returns to us in study, to some extent; study aligns us with all kinds of communities where something remains of a bad debt, a debt that should never be paid, that can never be paid, that ought never be paid, that remains with us and circulates with us and deepens as part of our study. That's also what we mean when we talk about study as a practice.

Stefano Harney is author with Fred Moten of *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (2013) and *All Incomplete* (2020), both published by Minor Compositions/Autonomedia. He is currently a Hayden Fellow at Yale School of Art, New Haven, and Honorary Professor of Social Justice at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. He has taught widely in Southeast Asia, North America, and Europe. He works in a number of collectives including freethought, Le Mardi Gras Listening Collective, School for Study, Ground Provisions, and Anti-Colonial Machine. Harney lives and works in Brasilia.

Bringing

Revolution

Imagined Padagogies

policy

into

imagination

Practice

language

seven lessons learned

bureaucracy

over the last

dishes

two years

Over the last two years, I've often thought of the quote: 'Everybody wants to start a revolution, but no-one wants to do the dishes.' I first heard it in Nicoline van Harskamp's video *Yours in Solidarity*, but it can be traced much further back to the Catholic Worker Movement of the 1930s in the United States. My advisory role at the academy positions me right in the mix between ideas and execution, between the revolution and the dishes.

The multi-year Quality Agreements budget offers the Gerit Rietveld Academy the great opportunity to increase student involvement in the development of education, for example via student project funding from the student council, and the experimental educational platforms funded by the Editorial Board for Intercurricular Programs. But what does it actually mean to organise radically new formats for experimental education? What does it mean to radicalise an institution that sees itself as already progressive and open to experimental formats? And what happens in practice when you are disloyal to the structure, when the structure is an educational institution of over 850 students and more than 200 teachers?

1. Radical formats cannot be fully imagined beforehand

In the policy document Dossier Quality Agreements, the new Intercurricular Programs are imagined to form a structure that resembles the honours program, defining the roles of teacher, coordinator, and student. The editorial board has been discussing other forms of education in its meetings; forms that would challenge this traditional and hierarchical structure. Therefore, the possibility to make new connections across the school was emphasised in the open call for platform proposals. A variety of platforms were imagined; student-led, teacher-led, workshop specialist-led, or a combination thereof. It was imagined that students would initiate educational programmes that bring new topics, (guest) lecturers, and methods to the school, in addition to the activity of the regular programmes and departments. However, drawing-board perspectives look a bit different when put into practice. Despite wishes for radical change, it turns out to be difficult to imagine new formats when we are so used to the old ones. It turns out, too, to be difficult to welcome experimental suggestions when they bring unforeseen practical, and sometimes problematic, consequences. New formats require the anticipation of these practical implications just as much as they require radical imagination.

2. Language matters, and misunderstanding occurs easily

Throughout the last three years, I've often found myself lost in translation. I don't mean the obvious and continuous translation between Dutch and English in our international community; I mean the varying language used across different levels throughout the school, from policy to teaching to studying. I am familiar with the language of formal policy documents from the ministry, and with creating policy documents and plans for the school that meet both the criteria of the ministry and the characteristics of the academy. This is not necessarily the language that students or teachers prefer or use when they express their ideas in a proposal. Are we talking past each other when we talk about programmes, research platforms, or educational platforms? Or do we possibly mean the same thing when I say 'Editorial Board' and you say 'Extra Intra'? I realise that precise formulation and addressing of

expectations is necessary, unless your goal is to create chaos.

3. New formats might need new terminology

One could wonder if the labels 'student', 'teacher', and 'coordinator' are still sufficient when the tasks and responsibilities that we traditionally associate with each title are being re-organised and re-assigned. Should we rather speak of a group of coordinator-learners, or organising-educators, instead of students and teachers, when they are both taking on the responsibility of the platform's core group? While some suggestions for future education favour updating and renewing terminology to reflect the presence of more fluid or overlapping roles, others deliberately refer back to hierarchical terminology in order to stress an emancipatory shift. Other formats simply copy the structure and roles of the traditional department, instead of creating a new alternative. In any case, what the platforms do show us is that teachers are also always students, and students are just as much teachers.

4. Swapping roles is not without consequences

Most of the research platforms realised over the years challenge traditional hierarchy, which means that roles and responsibilities are shifting. Within their platforms, the students involved in the core group take on the responsibility to organise education. Some work in close collaboration with teachers or external lecturers to explore a topic, while other platforms are completely student-led. The platforms do not solely attract students as participants; teachers, workshop specialists, and in some cases staff members are happy and excited to join, which reflects the desire for new collaborations in the school. Yet this shift in the division of tasks and responsibilities is not without consequences. Offering space for experimenting with roles means that regular policies need to be adjusted. The organisation of the new platforms, for example, consequently led to discussions about payment; who is paying whom for their education? If students and teachers collaborate, working within a non-hierarchical structure, should they be reimbursed equally? While students are never reimbursed for their edu-

cation, it was decided after some deliberation that students who join a platform's core group, and who are therefore in charge of a large part of the organisation, will be reimbursed as 'working students'. While in some cases there might be a thin line between education and organisation, it is generally accepted that crafting and leading their own educational platform is of great educational value to students.

5. Expect resistance, and then expect some more

While finding ways to make space for experiment, expect resistance from all directions imaginable. To some departments, new initiatives – located in the gaps and holes of the regular curriculum – might be considered as competition, trying to grab the students' attention. Even staff are not necessarily always welcoming to new proposals, or excited to facilitate these when it means searching for loopholes and possibilities within the administration. From tasks such as creating new institutional email addresses, finding spaces that can host physical workshops under pandemic restrictions, or looking for affordable parking space for guest teachers, new formats require a lot of practical work. In the end, the organisation comes down to forms, payments, and contracts. Experimental formats might need to find unorthodox solutions, and they certainly require effort from everyone involved.

6. Quality lies within the process of connecting

All platforms receive a budget to create a two-semester programme. During their work towards a result as outlined in their project proposal, the process can naturally take surprising routes and lead to unexpected outcomes. This raises discussions of quality. But the platforms are not equivalent to departments; they have different goals and different budgets. Platforms are requested to collaborate in new ways, and are encouraged to manifest new connections in the school across departments, disciplines, and positions. It would, therefore, be very restrictive to only take the so-called material end results or outcome – such as a publication – into account as an illustration of their quality. The quality of the platforms lies within the whole process of initiating and realising, and

especially in the process of collaborating and connecting. It lies in the process of creating space for forms of art and education that are not yet represented, in addressing new urgencies, in inviting new guests, and in challenging the use and role of the campus (by, for example, caring for the garden). It lies in the crafting and nurturing of a subject-oriented community.

7. Maintenance work is no-one's favourite

Nobody wants to do the dishes. Or at least: most people want to do as few dishes as possible. That is why the editorial board appoints an overall coordinator, who can facilitate the organisational aspects of the Intercurricular Programs as much as possible. That is also why in each platform students are compensated for their coordinating work. When we talk of non-hierarchical freedom and experimental education, maintenance and organisation are crucial. Facilitating experiment is 20% sharing creative ideas, and 80% hard work, discussion, and looking for creative, concrete solutions. And it is thanks to the effort and many small acts of disloyalty by students, coordinators, and all involved, that these experiments are even made possible. Experimental education may begin in the revolutionary imagination, but it always requires manual, tangible, and bureaucratic work in order to be realised. I think it's worth the effort.

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ACT I: Prologue, The Disclaimer

VOICE OVER (VO):

This talk was written in a manner true to its subject and true to the manner in which I often find myself working, on planes and trains and in hotel rooms, while circulating, in transit and in collaboration. With thanks to Ming Lin, Sami Hammana, Sugata Ray, Florian Cramer, Renan Laru-an, and Simon Kentgens for listening, contributing, agreeing, disagreeing, and providing further readings.

A few disclaimers, as I have registered offense at my use of words like West and East and center and periphery. These are contested non-sites. Sometimes, those who dwell in (or have assimilated to?) centers of capital believe (or perhaps misunderstand?) that these concepts are invoked as static places rather than ideological spaces/concepts, and assert that West, East, center, and periphery do not exist. Similar to those who assert that race does not exist, and they are only half-right: These are not static places empirically identifiable with a GPS coordinate on a map but they do exist in a hyperreal state. By West, I mean the Hyperreal West—a term I heard from Indian art historian Sugata Ray at a conference panel in Hong Kong—a concept that was shoved down my post-colonial throat for most of my formative years in the Philippines. The Hyperreal West is a mythical dreamland, the only place where civilization can allegedly be found and that I, as its colonial post-property, should bow down to in awe-full respect.

Anyone who has grown up in a post-colony might recognize the shiny oppression of this place and understand the weight of it. The Hyperreal West may not exist as the land promised, but it most certainly manifests noxious side-effects. By periphery, I mean a mode of functioning. Not a fixed site, but rather a condition determined by one's access to (cultural) capital and delineated by precarity. In his essay, *An Impossible Profession*, Filipino researcher and curator Renan Laru-an, thus describes the peripheral condition in the shadow of ever more prevalent politics of emergency/precariety/disaster/rescue/aid:

“The assignment of the peripheral to a site is an unfulfilled death-wish... It takes place with expediency from the staging of threat towards the dramaturgical lines of safety... No one should be left behind *here*, and everyone must leave for *elsewhere*. In this [lies] a clear picture of the periphery as a space of constant alertness. Its only knowable time is emergency.” By center, I mean one of many nodes of dominance that amass, even monopolize, resources as well as the legitimacy that the volume of those resources provide. By center, I also refer to the subjects that benefit from being in closest proximity to that capital. These subjects tend to be heard the loudest, and make no mistake: now living in Europe, half-Spanish, and having grown up as a member of the Philippine upper class, I count myself amongst them. The hyperreal places and states and phenomena exist, just like privilege, on a moving scale. Their meaning and borders change depending on where and by whom the measuring is done.

If my use of these words offends you, I apologize. Also, if you're thinking it, please don't tell me to stop apologizing. (Yes, this is a thing, I am asked in Europe and the United States to stop apologizing often enough that it starts to require a disclaimer on my end.) It's how I was raised, a mark of provenance. Where I'm from, we apologize in small talk and in public settings as a form of politeness and deference. “I'm sorry” does not mean I think myself less than you. It means I honor your point of view, though we may disagree. It means I accept that I may be proven wrong. It is an allowance that both speaker and listener may occupy for saving face.

Act VI: Epilogue, The Undelivered Lecture

Tropical Megacity Circulatory Tactics

I was going to read, as I normally do, an excerpt from text written about two years ago that describes the material context in which we—as Hardworking Goodlooking, vehiculating the research of the Office of Culture and Design (RIP)—published books in Metro Manila. But now that I've lived in the Netherlands for over a year, it seems somewhat haunting to read about how we used to print in the city where I was born. I miss the city, because it is home and I feel that I don't quite fit in the city where I am now, a chilly hotbed of architectural cuteness and modernist order and laser cutting and design thinking. And I hate Manila in the same breath, as it has become an epicenter for neocolonial fascism, toxic and institutionalized violence and misogyny, human rights violations, and perverse authoritarianism under the rule of Rodrigo Duterte. So to read what I wrote about the city two years ago—before my unexpected and politically induced resentment set in, before I longed for the city so deeply, as migrants do—is a haunting.

Also, the cottage industry street scenes I describe in my previous text have disappeared from the area around Recto Avenue in Old Manila, thanks to the newly elected Mayor Isko Moreno. This young and dangerously idealistic neoliberal wet dream of a candidate decided, soon after he was sworn into office, to sweep the streets, quite literally, of the vibrant commerce that has always characterized the city. He did it in under three days, if memory serves me, which it often doesn't. There are pictures of him pointing a firehose at the stalls of an underground pedestrian walkway where tiny printers and tailors usually set up shop. He looks rather heroic, unfortunately. Photos of the disemboweled downtown area after the cleanup shocked me. The streets, once engorged with informal markets and cottage industries and informal dwellers (usually migrants from the rural areas), were empty. I could not recognize my home, playground, source of vitality and good humour,

print center, field of inquiry. Hawkers and street vendors of all kinds have, over centuries, built and sustained an informal economy in Manila. It is a secondary market that caters mostly to those who can't afford store-bought bottles of soy sauce so they have to buy soy sauce from big bottles repackaged into little sachets by a woman with a sidewalk store. We call this the sachet economy, and it has profoundly influenced the way large corporations distribute consumer goods in countries like the Philippines. The soy sauce vendor's sidewalk neighbor—a shoe shiner or stamp maker or peanut stall or restaurant-in-a-basket or goldsmith—can't afford storefront space for their microbusiness. So they build and unbuild their cardboard and plywood empire, cheek to cheek, maybe on wheels, every morning and evening. They might even sleep in it. These sidewalkers might serve clients such as a nursing student or call center worker or motorcycle messenger or department store clerk or security guard on their way home from work but stuck in so much traffic that street-side services are most convenient.

All of that industry sustaining all of those people, gone in a few days. No relocation plan, no warning, no alternative, no choice, no fucks given. Boom. Just like that. And the rest of the megacity reacted with glee. They also cheered when over 12,000 people were killed with no due process in a much-hyped drug war. Rodrigo Duterte's pretext for sowing fear against a scapegoat culprit (drug users) for all the country's ills. His consolidation of strongman power involved authorizing the shooting of dubiously identified "suspects" on sight. For long weeks, at the beginning of his presidency, many of these neutralized suspects appeared as corpses, dumped on trafficked streets at mysterious hours, their heads wrapped in packaging tape. Those affected by the drug war? The very same strata of citizens who participate in the sidewalk economy. Duterte's cheerleaders pretend his constituency is exclusively composed of the salt of the earth, of sidewalkers. They sell Duterte as the poor man's president. This is a manipulation. Many of those who enable Duterte's violent and rape-joke-laden policy also applaud the likes of Mayor Isko Moreno and his neoliberal street cleanup project that aims to "Singaporize" the city.

I have heard that in other countries around Southeast Asia, local governments had tried to do the same, sweep the cities clean of hawkers. But the public cried out in protest, because they understood that this street culture was integral to their identity and survival. And the initiatives were halted, or so I was told. Not so in Manila. We are thrilled to have our cities spayed. We have bought into the modern narrative of cleanliness, order, progress, and design thinking at the expense of autonomy and individual rights and, of course, the poor.

Manila is, by the way, a city of around 13 million people. She is a marvel of circulation that happens against all odds. Overpopulation is only one cause of the city's congestion. Rural to urban migration also plays a large part, and not just the kind of migration wherein people reside permanently in the city. Manila's daytime population is roughly 3 million more than her nighttime population. She counts on the influx of peri-urban workers who cannot find work in their cities or suppliers who deliver truck after van after truck after van of any number of imaginable and unimaginable goods that a megacity needs to survive.

For decades, there were only two main roads to get in and out of the city, Northern Luzon Expressway and Southern Luzon Expressway. Now there are 5 or 6 access roads, perhaps more now that Duterte has yoked us with abandon to China's One Belt, One Road neo-Silk Road infrastructural masterplan. But even these arteries are not nearly enough to decrease the city's

congestion. Evening rush hour lasts 6 hours, from 3 PM to 9 PM. More when it rains, which is often. A typical commute from home to work or school may last 3 hours, one way. Which means it is plausible for a citizen to spend 6 hours a day in an moving vehicle, 5 or 6 days a week. There are only two light rail transit or overhead tram lines plying a route down two major streets. The rest of the city is left to mobilize for itself, with misnomered public transport. It isn't exactly public. All of the buses and jeepneys and tricycles and pedicabs are privately owned. The city is privately and publicly congested, but somehow a massive amount of citizens circulate. If the arteries are clogged, alternative capillaries are opened. The citizens, the lifeblood, find a way around faltering infrastructure that bleeds from multiple forms of corruption, exhaustion, and ineptitude. Somehow the city does not collapse. Her citizens are too weak to complain but strong enough to survive.

To live in Manila, if one dares to live at street level outside of air-conditioned bubbles, is to learn how to circulate through the cracks, even when they tell you it's impossible, even under punitive threat. It is to learn a certain kind of self-belief that lives in the muscles, allowing you to perform feats of the body beyond all rational frameworks of what the body is capable. It is to manifest mobility as an act of faith. It is to have the courage to cross 12-lane major highways as a pedestrian, bullfighting SUVs and 16 wheelers. It is to develop the cold blood to cross (or simply lounge in) neck deep, E.coli-laden floodwater. In many ways, growing up in Manila prepares one quite well to make independently published books. You circulate madly but feel like you're going nowhere. You have faith but are constantly on the verge of giving up. You are full of life force but also utterly exhausted and afraid all the time.

Dutch Institutional Circulatory Ebbul

Content and research as a humour by which to measure a culture's critical vitality, the blood within the body public, the publishing hauz. A humour that has become thick with access to cultural capital, heavy and sluggish with the re-cyclical management of knowledge and, in rare cases, with the production of it.

Indian activist and Philosopher Sunil Sahasrabudhey writes that knowledge is only produced outside of academic or institutional environments. It is generated, in the form of craft and informal technology, vernacular wisdom, socio-political effects and behavior, datasets, affective currency, history unfolding, material culture, market flows, etceteras at a street or popular level. Those in the "high" cognitive class merely manage knowledge, shuffling it around, stacking, reconfiguring, finding connections and leveraging the resulting conclusions, playing mahjong like my grandmother used to play with my great aunts on Sundays. But this cognitive class does not actually produce knowledge. The key, thus to empowering those marginalized—those made to believe that they do not have any value, much less intellectual value, outside of being the menial labor force—is to position them as makers of knowledge. They could thus recognize themselves as sources who control and contribute, not just as fetishized victims to be mined of what they know and how they do. Some thinkers and grant-giving bodies would certainly take offense at this assertion that knowledge cannot be produced in institutions. Especially those steeped in and/or otherwise seduced by Western and almost invariably phallic concepts of the intellectual genius, in his ivy-laden tower, somewhere in the seat of modernism, surrounded by chocolate bunnies. Their discomfort at being stripped of the label of knowledge producers speaks volumes of cognitive institutionalization and its

reproductive violence. Reproductive in the sense that the Western institution aims to produce endogamic copies of itself, equipped with an ISBN as birth certificate that establishes someone's divine parentage as Author or Editor.

Since I moved to Europe and now, for the first time in my life, have academic institutional access, I was shocked to discover a dirty secret of Western schools. They publish expensive books that do not circulate. These books sit in boxes in the rooms of deans, directors, lectors, professors, and assorted fleshy creatures of the research community. These books—which, to me, seem quite expensive to produce—are entirely subsidized. Glossy as a fresh manicure yet astonishingly cheap to purchase. They are so cheap, you can even pick them up for free. People shove them into your hands and beg you to take them away. "I have three more boxes at home or in the research center or under my desk." These books are filthy secrets, public failures, knots in the stomach. They do not circulate, and because they do not move it is assumed that nobody wants them.

Some of these books are vanities, uselessly large calling cards, travesties that might be called by euphemisms such as coffee table books or catalogues or monographs or retrospectives or collections of essays or readers. They may look more or less cosmetic, but what they share is a lack of vigor, which concurrently manifests in the difficulty or impossibility of their circulation. They are often peppered with logos of credible cultural currency, to no avail. They are unurgent, well-fed, and gone to flesh. They have not known the disquiet of hunger.

Some of these publications are actually quite interesting. You see some in smaller runs, published in-house on employee print cards or at the print workshops on campus, on gloss-less paper, on the company printer. Sometimes they're fancier publications with some pretty decent content, produced under reputable co-publishing schemes and 5-year research trajectories. They *could* circulate well, the content is strong, but they *don't*. They stack up in the same kind of boxes that end up hidden in backrooms. A source of embarrassment. A mark of excess. Those backrooms become engorged with static wealths, useless accumulations, overly expensive research trinkets.

The humors and bloodways of the Western institution are thick with I'm not quite sure what, at this point. As a once-outsider looking in and now insider looking around, it's easy to say the blood has gravied with the fat of luxury that breeds complacency that provokes a sedentary turn that corrupts into anxiety. To be fair, I have seen this same thing happen in colleges and universities and local government unit offices in the Philippines as well. Except less, because there isn't always much money for publishing. But when they do print, they tend to go big, copies in the thousands, and the boxes, they stack just the same. To be even fairer, the first book I ever published suffered this fate. I sympathize with the pain of poor circulation. I remember it sharply as a complaint that manifests in my body as a stomachache or a pain in my heart.

To locate these pains of publishing within the stomach and the heart, the physical body. To write constantly rooted in the voice and experience of the I, the cognitive body, the I that *I* am, is not something academia quite likes, especially when its preferred gray matter, the thesis, preens for public debut. At this moment especially, it races to erase the personal—which is deemed vulgar—in favor of the abstraction, which I'm guessing has higher value within a framework that sees emotion, honesty, sweat, blood, tears, cursing, belly laughter... all these humours... as something to be hidden, too undignified to circulate. We talk about embodied knowledge, but rarely show the toll

knowledge production (or is it management?) takes on our bodies, the grotesque or unself-conscious shapes it twists us into. We talk about emotional labor as valuable. Emotional labor: A favorite battle cry for a certain kind of dusty wave feminist who excludes those who contradict her from the sacrosanct realm of wleydi (or wesleydi) feminine liberation. This exclusion may be targeted at transwomen or mothers or hijabi or, more insiduously, diasporic allies who disagree with their site-specific resentments that do not quite translate to other cultural contexts. Anyway, I was saying. Emotional labor. Despite it being waved around all the time as a (fund-friendly) flag of all trades, it still remains largely invisible in formal settings of study. When any signs of actual, effortful emotions arise, they are not given the dignified label of emotional labor, rather one is reprimanded for hysteria. That was inappropriate. That was too familiar. That was a show of weakness. That was uncalled for. Our humors are spit into polite handkerchiefs and shoved hastily back into pockets of files never shown, drastically edited, trashed altogether. It is a humour, like blood, that makes a mess and won't wash out. The stain of bodily humors recalls shame, especially if they have been left in the aftermath of defective wanting or reproductive desire.

As if emotional labor were only a matter of humiliation and suppression rather than a highly intellectual set of skills applied to professional settings. In its first sociological definition, emotional labor was defined as the work to suppress emotions carried out in relation to one's professional position in order to achieve a desired effect. Emotional labor was conceived as the smile of the flight attendant or fast food cashier who absorbs human rudeness because the customer is king. Surprisingly, we abide by this definition (because we like to agree with reputedly fashionable sources in print) and yet lament the fact that emotional labor is relegated to some sort of low-skill, non-intellectual, usually feminized, subservient position. Perhaps it is time to revise our definition of emotional labor in the frictionary.

Other Humorous Observations

Regarding published content as an ill humour, manifesting in the body as sickness, sometimes of the blood itself. Today I boarded a plane for the third time in three months, and I was tired, bone tired. I have been living this way, in sickly transit, for 6 years, ever since I started generating content as a member of the body public. Books (for lack of a better word... here I understand the book in its expanded form, beyond the traditional codex) require one to circulate, literally, physically, with the body. Books do not carry themselves, unless one belongs to a previously established empire of distributor infrastructure, with its Romanic network of bookways and its colony of peaceful merchant retailers. Books must go on one's back, climb on one's limbs, as leeches, as hand-carried items, stuffed into one's suitcases in lieu of warm clothing. (Hopefully the warm weather holds at my destination, my tropical heart shudders at the thought of book fair autumns, which count as winters as far as I'm concerned.) Books, at this juncture of the body public, require one to perform their content. More and more, one does not simply write and print them. One sells their mode of production in lectures, conferences, interviews, hallways, studio visits, assorted networkeries. One performs the practice that begat them in classrooms, workshops, summer schools, universities, art schools, festivals, biennials, assemblies. One turns them into films, TV series, full-length albums, plays, musical revues. The performative (or perhaps better said, performantic) turn of publishing requires one to become a minstrel and go on tour, to circulate and circumnavigate.

Excessive circulation causes all manner of illness, tumescence in the limbs. The long-haul threat of deep vein thrombosis from actual swelling of the legs that takes up to two days to subside after a cross-ocean flight. One herniated disc and another one on the way. (But you'd never tell from the way I swing my coffin-weight suitcases on and off trains and buses.) And my faithful book fair season friend, anemia. The circulatory and other diseases that have peppered my publishing affliction are not the only illnesses I suffer. The largest fever of all is that of making the publications at all. Why engage in this quixotic folly from a country like the Philippines? Though reading literacy is quite high, critical literacy is maimed by a post-colonial and even pre-colonial value system that punishes independent thought as an attack on the social fabric itself. Why make text-heavy research publications in a country that has no interest in them? These books are, confoundingly, consumed most eagerly in the ex-colonial seats of power that they critique. To go against indoctrination, to be the single defective heliotrope in the field that looks away from the sun (Side note: I recently learned that sunflowers that do this are elderly), to diverge or divert one's gaze from that which our anointed intellectuals and/or group think tell us is important... this is treated as madness. Book makers as convalescing patients, stricken with psychosis.

Financially also, we bleed out. Book making is for fools who've willfully unsewn the bottoms of their pockets.

What is also madness is the thickening of the waist, the engorgement of those who reside in centers of power. This madness is transferrable to those who frequent centers of power, though they may reside in the periphery and may not be so healthy-looking after a journey to the developed dreamlands. This is evident in the way their suitcases—swollen with their own publications on the journey Westward or Northish—almost burst with cultural capital in the form of publications on the way back home. Heavy gifts or compulsive purchases, it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter that you lived as a mouse during your government subsidized master's degree in Norway, losing half your weight because the subsidy didn't come on time most months, rationing your meals at 3 cookies and not much else per day. Doesn't matter that your home university in Manila now owns you for the next 5 years and that you cannot travel overseas without their express permission until that period is over. By access to the center of knowledge, your privilege increases. Your waist is a full 4 sizes smaller. But you are now engorged. Now you are (legally) bound to recirculate the capital you have gained.

Publishing as bloodletting. Bloodletting as a form of redistribution of access to cultural capital. But also uncirculated or thickened blood as the sign of a sickness, a convalescence. Too much prosperity, too much fat, leading to problems of the heart, prone to attacks, bodies of too much flesh, the need to eat leaner, leaving food on the table for those on the periphery, hungry for access, hungry, period.

Clara Balaguer Makati City, Philippines Metal Monkey is a cultural worker and grey literature circulator. From 2010 to 2018, she articulated cultural programming with rural, peri-urban, and diasporic communities from the Philippines through the OCD, a residency space and social practice platform. In 2013, she co-founded Hardworking Goodlooking, a cottage industry publishing house interested in the material vernacular, collectivizing authorship, and the value of the error. Currently, she builds and publishes curriculums at BAK basis voor aktuele kunst as curator of Civic Practice; at Willem de Kooning Academy as research lecturer in Social Practices; at Piet Zwart Institute as a midwife for Experimental Publishing; and at Sandberg Institute as teacher at the Dirty Art Department. Frequently, she operates under collective or individual aliases that disclose her stewardship in any given project, the latest of which is To Be Determined: a transitional, migratory, neighborly structure of sleeper cells (Trojan horse networks) that activate–deactivate for leaking access to cultural capital.

Colophon

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