

WHOSE LAND
HAVE I LIT
ON NOW ?
CONTEMPLA-
TIONS ON THE
NOTIONS OF
HOSPITALITY

**S A V V Y CONTEMPORARY
THE LABORATORY OF FORM-IDEAS
B O O K S**

WHOSE LAND HAVE I LIT ON NOW ? CONTEMPLA= TIONS ON THE NOTIONS OF HOSTPITALITY

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WHOSE LAND
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BONAVENTURE SOH BEJENG NDIKUNG

Man of misery, whose land have I lit on now?
What are they here—violent, savage, lawless?
or friendly to strangers, god-fearing men?
—*Odysseus upon his return to Ithaca* (13.227–29)

now that the soil has become co-conspirator
eating up our dreams and dusty tears
bearing the fruit of our horrors
in orange navels
rooting us yet stronger
firmer to our ancestors' bones
we ask
when did stones
become the comrades of sunken boys
who utilize rubber bullets and empty shells
as toys?
—Suheir Hammad, *Children of Stone*, 1996

A C T I

The dawn of the year 2017 saw people all over the world mobilize on the streets and other public spaces in protest of the US' unilateral declaration of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Not only did the masses on the streets in traditionally anti-US countries agitate, but also some of the US' staunchest allies like Britain, Germany, and France strongly rebuked the US for this decision regarding Jerusalem—generally considered as the “final issue of the peace deal” in the negotiations

between Israelis and Palestinians. Even the United Nations general assembly scolded the US—a huge majority, 128 member states, voted to reject the US decision.¹ Besides the fact that the US government's decision seriously jeopardizes the peace process in the Middle East, this decision seems to be the last

1 Peter Beaumont, “UN votes resoundingly to reject Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as capital,” *The Guardian*, December 21, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/21/united-nations-un-vote-donald-trump-jerusalem-israel>, accessed August 4, 2020.

straw that could break the camel's back, thus fortifying Israel as a settler colonial state. The premise of every settler colonial system, enterprise, or process is the occupation and elimination of the indigenous population and a replacement of the native population of the colonized territory with the colonizers, with the intention of acquiring land and resources. This is evident in Australia, the USA, apartheid South Africa, Ukraine, and certainly in Israel as viewed by Rabbi Brant Rosen.² Thus, at the core of the settler colonialist project, or any other colonialist enterprise for that matter, is the absolute distortion and wrenching of the host-guest relation, as well as the violence and brutality of making the host a guest in their own land. To paraphrase Suheir Hammad in the poem, *Children of Stone*, even the soil of the colonized land becomes a co-conspirator, eating up dreams and tears and bearing the fruit of horrors. This prompts one to reassess the notion of hospitality, a core practice and source of pride in the cultures of many colonized people around the world. Could it be then, following Suheir Hammad, that the hospitality of the natives became a co-conspirator, accelerating the colonization of their lands and lives? Whether or not we might consider this a possibility, it becomes even more urgent to review the concept of hospitality especially in a time when this violence of the guest over the host is reiterated and fortified—that is the hostility in hospitality.

A C T I I

But there are many things happening today that necessitate a deliberation on concepts and understandings of hospitality in Germany, in Europe, and in the World at large. In an age of flourishing resentments, of blossoming antipathy towards all that seems conceptually or physically “strange”/ a “stranger,” as embodied in structures like *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) in Germany, the Golden Dawn in Greece, Front National in France, Vlaams Blok in Belgium, Lega

² Rabbi Brant Rosen, “Yes, Zionism is Settler Colonialism,” *Shalom Rav* (blog), April 2, 2016, <https://rabbibrant.com/2016/04/02/yes-zionism-is-settler-colonialism>, accessed August 4, 2020.

Nord in Italy, PVV in Netherlands, UKIP in England, Trump's Republican party and the Alt-Right in the USA, or through the example of the xenophobic attacks by black South Africans upon Africans from other countries residing in South Africa, it seems appropriate to reflect on cultures of hospitality.

As thousands of children, women, and men, mostly from Syria, flooded through Europe as they fled their homes in the wake of a humanitarian crisis in the summer of 2015, German chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) made the statement *Wir schaffen das* (We can do it/ we can cope with it). As hundreds of Germans went to train stations to welcome these people seeking refuge in one of the wealthiest countries in the world, Germany seemed like a born-again nation, as for a few weeks, the country celebrated its new found *Willkommenskultur* and *Gastfreundschaft* (welcoming culture/ hospitality). Soon enough the summer of grace became the autumn of rage and the winter of nightmares not only for Merkel, who was attacked by the opposition and even members of her own coalition party CSU, but especially for the refugees, who, since then, have become the scapegoats of all of Germany's problems. As the new found hospitality translated into hostility, as the *Gastfreundschaft* transmuted into *Haßfreundschaft* (as in the mushrooming of hate groups all around the country and continent in protest of what they called a refugee-crisis!), Germany witnessed a sharp rise in arsons on asylum seekers homes in 2015 and 2016—and although there is a downward trend in 2017 in comparison to 2016, there is still on average one arson case on an asylum seekers home every day in Germany. In the first nine months

of 2017, 211 attacks on refugee shelters were registered by the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA), and it was noted that most of the arsons and attacks were committed by right-wing radicals. It is noteworthy that in the entire year of 2014 before the huge influx of refugees into Germany, there were only (!) 199 attacks.³

3 “Noch immer gibt es fast täglich einen Anschlag auf Asylheime,” *Welt*, November 6, 2017, <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article170354347/Noch-immer-gibt-es-fast-taeglich-einen-Anschlag-auf-Asylheime.html>, accessed August 4, 2020.

It thus didn't come as a surprise that the one topic that massively set the pace of the 2017 German elections was the question of migration/refugees, and this led to an approximately 13% win for the AfD and with this the entry of an extreme right wing party into the German parliament.

In May 2015, Dirk Schümer published an article in *Die Welt* titled *Europa ist eine Festung – und muss das auch bleiben* (Europe is and must stay a fortress),⁴ and judging from the thousands of commentaries that accompanied the article online, one is tempted to think that a culture of unhospitality already crept its way into the proverbial *Mitte der Gesellschaft*. Though not wanting to overrate Schümer's article in the face of the sheer importance of the topics at stake, it seems most important to query and reflect on the roots of these symptoms of hostility in hospitality that, in recent times, have ravaged through, for instance South Africa, Greece, USA and Germany. Currently in Cameroon, as the UNHCR reports, more than 40,000 Cameroonians have had to flee from their country to Nigeria as refugees⁵ as a result of an unprecedented exercise of violence by the regime on its Anglophone citizens, who have been made strangers in their own lands.

But how can we deliberate upon, speak of, and reconceptualize cultures of hospitality in such an era? Maybe an appropriate point of departure for such an exercise would be Jacques Derrida's notion of *hostipitality*⁶ wherein he purports that there is always a kind of hostility in all hosting and hospitality.

4 Dirk Schümer, "Europa ist eine Festung—und muss das auch bleiben," *Welt*, May 15, 2015, <http://www.welt.de/debatte/kommentare/article141026268/Europa-ist-eine-Festung-und-muss-das-auch-bleiben.html>, accessed August 4, 2020.

5 Babar Baloch, "Thousands of Cameroonians seek refuge in Nigeria," *UNHCR The United Nations Refugee Agency*, October 31, 2017, <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2017/10/59f83dfe4/thousands-cameroonians-seek-refuge-nigeria.html>, accessed August 4, 2020.

6 Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to respond, ed. Anne Dufourmantelle (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000). Originally published as *De l'hospitalité: Anne Dufourmantelle invite Jacques Derrida à répondre* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1997).

Not only in this micro-context is the paradigm of hospitality of importance, but as history reveals, from time immemorial, humans have moved freely or by force from A to B and have always relied on the hospitality of the host to find a resting place. In his philosophy of hospitality, Derrida differentiates between the “law of hospitality” and “laws of hospitality:”

The law of unlimited hospitality (to give the new arrival all of one’s home and oneself, to give him or her one’s own, our own, without asking a name, or compensation, or the fulfilment of even the smallest condition), and on the other hand, the laws (in the plural), those rights and duties that are always conditioned and conditional, as they are defined by the Greco-Roman tradition and even the Judeo-Christian one, by all of law and all philosophy of law up to Kant and Hegel in particular, across the family, civil society, and the State.⁷

Derrida, who considers hospitality as always conditional, sees the exercise of hospitality on two practical levels of inviting and welcoming the “stranger” at the personal level of the private home or at the public level of the nation-state. But Derrida sees in the concept of hospitality an ambiguity that stems far back from its proto-Indo-European etymological derivation, which encompasses the words “stranger,” “guest,” but also “power.”⁸

This power gradient inherent in the concept of hospitality is at the root of what Derrida called:

an essential ‘self limitation’ built right into the idea of hospitality, which preserves the distance between one’s

7 Ibid., 6.

8 Kavin D. O’Gorman
“Modern Hospitality:
Lessons from the Past,”
*Journal of Hospitality and
Tourism Management*
12, no. 2 (August, 2005):
141–151.

own and the ‘stranger,’ between owning one’s own property and inviting the ‘other’ into one’s home.⁹

So, by welcoming someone into your home, you, the host, thus have the possibility of exercising power. Here a few things could be taken into consideration; while you give your guest a “roof over their head” the pleasure derived doesn’t only come from the altruistic act, but also pleasure is gotten from keeping your guest at your mercy, especially if there is an existential, economic, or political dependence. Also, the power of making the guest the “other,” constructing the subordinate, or through a process of identification, the guest might be stamped or categorized. So concepts of hospitality see-saw in balancing acts of the host renouncing and at the same time proclaiming his mastery. Thus, the concept of hospitality encompasses these schizophrenic acts of invitation or attraction to “feel at home” but at the same time repulsion by reminding that the guest doesn’t share property and is expected to leave. So the guest is always a guest and always in a state of limbo, except in those cases, like in colonialism, where the guest comes with the power of suppression, denigration, disappropriation, dispossession, and dehumanisation. Otherwise, the guest is always in a state of coming and never arriving.

Looking at Derrida’s points from the perspective of the nation-state, e.g. in Germany, the Netherlands, or Belgium with the concepts of the *Gastarbeiter* (migrant guest workers), or in the Nordic countries *Invandringsarbetarskraft* (work-force-immigration), who imported workers from Turkey, Italy, Spain, and all over the Southern Hemisphere from the 1950s to 1970s, this would mean that these so called “guests” who were and are still expected to leave will forever be in a state of limbo. The scenario becomes even more complex when one thinks of other constellations, e.g. refugees that come into a country as mostly unwanted “guests,” especially because their coming in is not tied to any particular economic gain on the side of the host or contexts of colonial dependencies.

9 John D. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 110.

Here again the power gradient expresses itself in multifold dimensions, e.g. the colonizer as a “guest” using force to stay in the colony, the ex-colonizer using force to evict the ex-colonized from the territory of the metropolis, etc.

The relationship between the host and the guest is conditional, and it is a thin line between being a guest or a parasite, as both exist sometimes simultaneously, side by side. Despite this, Derrida puts into question the limitations of national hospitality toward legal and illegal immigrants.

A C T I V

At the crux, the questions range from the micro level of what it means for SAVVY Contemporary to be guests within a historical and social context like the neighborhood of Wedding in Berlin, to what exactly it means when approximately 13% of people of voting age vote for AfD. How can the concept of hospitality be understood in our contemporary times? What are the conditions that make the conditional hospitality still count as hospitality? Are there possibilities of creating moments of unconditionality before they are suffocated by conditional hospitality? How does the violence of the nation-state exercise hostility on its weakest citizens?

According to popular lore, some regions around the world, be it Minnesota, Pashtunistan (the Land of Hospitality), African countries, or the Orient are said to be most hospitable and hence such expressions like “Minnesota nice” or “Southern hospitality.” Come to think of it, hospitality holds a very important place in many cultures and their myths. In Greek mythology, Zeus was the god of hospitality and one of the ways of worshiping Zeus was to be hospitable to strangers; so every passerby is said to have been invited into the family house and the stranger’s feet were washed, food and wine were offered, and the stranger was made comfortable before asking the stranger’s name. From a biblical point of view, there are numerous accounts of hospitality. An early one is in *Genesis 19* (The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah), where

Abraham's nephew, Lot, not only pleadingly beckons two angels into his house, but bakes unleavened bread and makes them a feast and also protects them from rape by a wild mob, instead offering his two daughters to the mob in the name of hospitality:

Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.¹⁰

This offer later saved Lot from the subsequent destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

If one were to take a yawning leap into modern European philosophy, even a figure like Immanuel Kant formulated outstanding legal thoughts on the subjects of "hostility" and "hospitality" in his treatise on international law of 1795:

[...] hospitality means the right of a stranger not to be treated as an enemy when he arrives in the land of another. One may refuse to receive him when this can be done without causing his destruction, but so long as he peacefully occupies his place, one may not treat him with hostility. [...] it is only a right of temporary sojourn that all men have as a right to associate by virtue of their common possession of the surface of the earth, where, as a globe, they cannot infinitely disperse and hence must finally tolerate the presence of each other. Originally, no one had more right than another to a particular part of the earth.¹¹

In this astonishing passage, Kant makes clear that universal hospitality is a right

10 Gn 19:8 (KJV).

11 Immanuel Kant, "Zumewigen Frieden. Ein philosophischer Entwurf" in *Gesammelte Schriften. Erste Abtheilung: Werke*, Band VIII, *Abhandlungen nach 1781*, Herausgegeben von der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin/Leipzig: De Gruyter 1923), 341–386.

to humanity, less a matter of philanthropy than of right. Despite his way of stressing the importance of the temporality of the sojourn of the guest, Kant makes a point against hostility and micro-space nation-state mentality and endorses a global thinking of the earth as a common space. At any rate, we are all just passersby on this earth and thus every human existence is but temporal. Again in his *Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (1795), in “The law of world citizenship is to be united to conditions of universal hospitality,” Kant tries to distinguish between peacefully setting foot into a territory and asking to be accepted in that society from actually being accepted in the society. Though it is not very clear as to what line he chooses there, he makes the point that hospitality means the right of a visiting foreigner not to be treated as an enemy. Kant goes as far as to name hospitality a precondition for “perpetual peace” between nations and mankind. But the ultimate point Kant tries to make in his reflections on notions of hostility and hospitality, using the spatial metaphor, is that:

human beings enjoy a universal right to hospitality because they share a space, the ‘surface’ of the earth.¹²

Most right-wing organizations refer to their European cultural values—known to be remnants of Greek culture—and many of such organizations see their Judeo-Christian culture, tradition, and religion at stake. What about the values of unconditional hospitality that the aforementioned models so aptly embody? What about these concepts of hospitality propagated by Immanuel Kant and co. in the wake of nation-state building and foundation-making of modern European philosophy?

12 Panu Minkkinen,
Hostility and Hospitality
(Helsinki: University of
Helsinki Press, 2007), 53–60.

In the diverse and heterogeneous cosmos of African philosophies, it is recurrent that hospitality is perceived as “an unconditional readiness to share,”¹³ i.e. giving without the pressures of expectations, or to put it in Julius Gathogo’s elegant words, “this sharing has to be social and religious in scope. In view of this, it can be simply seen as the willingness to give, to help, to assist, to love and to carry one another’s burden without necessarily putting profit or rewards as the driving force.”¹⁴ As African philosophers like G.I. Olikenyi¹⁵ and co. have pointed out, the concept of hospitality stands as a backbone in many African cultures and is considered to be one of the few characteristics in African societies that have survived the 600 years of slavery, imperialism, colonialism, despotism, and all sorts of technology. The complexity of hospitality in many African cultures is the marriage of African philosophies, African religions, and the adopted religions of the colonizers, who, despite cruel acts in reality, preached peaceful words of God, of which hospitality was at the top of the list. And indeed hospitality could be considered a vital element in the conception of personhood and communality—that state of interdependence in relations, socio-political structures, consciousness, philosophies, or worldviews—in many African societies, as expressed for example in Akan and Igbo philosophies. These virtues of hospitality are not only revered for strengthening the bonds between human beings in their societies, but also between the people and their collective and personal traditional gods. It is in this line that in his aforementioned paper, Julius Gathogo expatiates on one of today’s most popular and even exploited philosophies of hospitality, i.e:

13 Austin Echema, *Corporate Personality in Igbo Society and the Sacrament of Reconciliation* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1995), 35.

14 Julius Gathogo, “African Philosophy as Expressed in the Concepts of Hospitality and Ubuntu,” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (KwaZulu-Natal, ZA: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008): 39, 130.

15 G. I. Olikenyi, *African Hospitality: A Model for the Communication of the Gospel in the African Cultural Context* (Nettetal, DE: Steyler Verlag, 2001), 102.

Unhu among the Shona of Zimbabwe; *Ubuntu* among the *Nguni* speakers of Southern Africa; *Utu* among the Swahili speakers of East Africa; and *Umundu* among the Kikuyu of Kenya, among others. Basically, it is both a philosophical and a religious concept that defines the individual in terms of his or her relationships with others. In the African context, it suggests that the person one is to become, by behaving with humanity, is an ancestor worthy of respect or veneration. In other words, those who uphold the principle of Ubuntu throughout their earthly lives will be rewarded or promoted in death by becoming ancestors.¹⁶

This by no way should imply any idealization of African societies, as the levels of hostility experienced by some of the most vulnerable intra African refugees is well known and documented, as earlier mentioned with the ongoing struggles in Cameroon.

ACT VI WHOSE LAND HAVE I LIT ON NOW? CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE NOTIONS OF HOSPITALITY

This project, though departing from the national, i.e. Germany; though taking Derrida as a point of commencement and citing Germany as a context of reference, is neither limited in geography, history, philosophy, nor culture to these physical and conceptual locations, but rather seeks to address concepts of hospitality in a global context. The project situates itself within a number of “contemplation spaces”—exhibitions, performances, lectures etc. By inviting curators, artists, and other thinkers to deliberate on concepts of hospitality and the triggers of hostility in hospitality—historically and in the contemporary, the project intends to create a space of exchange, mutual respect, and learning.

16 Julius Gathogo, “African Philosophy,” 12.

CARESSING
THE PHANTOM
L I M B :
“HEIMAT” =
PROGRESSION,
REGRESSION,
STAGNATION?

BONAVENTURE SOH BEJENG NDIKUNG

Heimat ist, was man nicht ertragen kann,
wenn man dort ist, und nicht loslassen kann,
wenn man weg ist.

—Herta Müller, lesung im LCB am 11.11.2009

It goes without saying that there is an uncacheable radical shift to the extreme right in most of Europe today. For the first time since over 60 years an extreme right wing party, the AfD found space in the German parliament after the elections in 2017, with some 13% of votes and some 94 new right-wing parliamentarians making themselves comfortable in the highest political house. With these results, the AfD is not only the third strongest political party in Germany, but also the first opposition party in parliament. This trend was followed by the Czechs voting in a new billionaire prime minister in 2017 who is against any kind of migration and despises anything that comes from the European Union, as well as the Austrians voting for the rightwing Freedom Party and a young politician whose only achievement has been to spit out anti-immigration slurs. In Russia, Netherlands, Denmark, Poland, Turkey and many more countries, the shift toward the extreme right is evident.

One of the stunning things about this radical shift to the extreme right is that it has not really provoked a significant wave of agitation within the so-called left. It hasn't substantially called for indignation within the masses and the so-called middle-classes. It has been met with mostly excuses and blaming and apologetic justifications. What is obvious is that instead of a mobilization from the left, most political parties from the left, centre or centre-right, have sought to adopt most nationalist, chauvinistic, xenophobic and identitarian rhetorics, in what one might call a "rightening" of the political spectrum. Though the debate about the Heimat in Germany is in no way a new one, today it must be considered through the prism of this swing to the extreme right, and the creation of a "Heimatsministerium" must be seen as either an effort to sooth the sentiments of the right-wing; an effort to cajole right-wing voters or appease the so-called "besorgte Bürger."

At any rate, the creation of the Heimatsministerium has led to controversial and polarized debates in Germany. In Daniel Schreiber's article *Deutschland soll werden, wie es nie war*¹ (Germany should become what it never was) in which he proposes that Heimat is not a politically innocent term, and it should be left to the right margin. He also states that, "a look at cultural history reveals that people talk about home whenever they believe they have lost something like home. Talking about homeland in this sense is above all a symptom—a symptom of collective feelings of uprootedness and of the alleged loss of cultural and regional identities."² From a historical point of view Schreiber argues that, "in fact, there was no political system in our country that could have done without it (Heimat). The German Empire invented the Homeland Security Movement. The Weimar Republic recognized in the different regional identities of the country the root of patriotism. Home was the central conceptual building block of the National Socialist blood and soil ideology. The young *Wirtschaftswunder-Bundesrepublik* tried to forget the dirty past with white washed home movies. In the 'Heimatkunde' classes of the GDR, the term was used for ideological indoctrination. 'Heimat' has always described a

1 <http://www.zeit.de/kultur/2018-02/heimatministerium-heimat-rechtspopulismus-begriff-kulturgeschichte>, accessed August 4, 2020.

2 "Ein Blick in die Kulturgeschichte verrät, dass Menschen immer dann über Heimat reden, wenn sie glauben, so etwas wie Heimat verloren zu haben. Das Sprechen über Heimat ist in diesem Sinne vor allem ein Symptom—ein Symptom für kollektive Entwurzelungsgefühle und für den vermeintlichen Verlust kultureller und regionaler Identitäten. Lange war das Wort nichts als eine Bezeichnung für den Ge-

burtsort oder den Landstrich, in dem man seinen bleibenden Aufenthalt hatte." <https://www.zeit.de/kultur/2018-02/heimatministerium-heimat-rechtspopulismus-begriff-kulturgeschichte>, accessed August 4, 2020.

3 "In der Tat gab es kein politisches System in unserem Land, das ohne ihn ausgekommen wäre. Das Deutsche Kaiserreich erfand die Heimatschutzbewegung. Die Weimarer Republik erkannte in den unterschiedlichen regionalen Identitäten des Landes die Wurzel der "Vaterlandsliebe." Heimat war der zentrale begriffliche Baustein der national-sozialistischen Blut-

und-Boden-Ideologie. Die junge Wirtschaftswunder-Bundesrepublik versuchte mit weißgewaschenen Heimatfilmen die schmutzige Vergangenheit zu vergessen. Im "Heimatkunde"—Untericht der DDR diente der Begriff zur ideologischen Indoktrination. Immer beschrieb Heimat eine mehr schlecht als recht an die Realität gebundene Wunschvorstellung—eine Wunschvorstellung, die existierte, um sie politisch nutzbar zu machen. "Heimat" hat noch nie existiert, ohne dass sie politisch instrumentalisiert worden wäre." <https://www.zeit.de/kultur/2018-02/heimatministerium-heimat-rechtspopulismus-begriff-kulturgeschichte>

wishful thinking that was more or less tied to reality—a wishful imagination that existed to make it politically useful. ‘Heimat’ has never existed without its political exploitation.”³ According to him, “it is no coincidence that we owe the renaissance of this term (Heimat) essentially to the right-wing edge of our society, which has become louder and wider in recent years. Because our today’s ‘Heimat’ obsession is nothing more than the German version of Trump’s motto *Make America Great Again*—the desire to return to an idealized past that never existed,”⁴ stressing that “the term ‘Heimat’ is today used by many Germans as a cipher for exclusion; it acts as the seemingly human face of everyday racism and as a pretext for nationalist supremacy fantasies.”⁵

On the other hand, in writer Susanne Scharnowski’s guest post *Die Verlustangst ist real* (The fear of loss is real), in an effort to contradict Schreiber, she looks for the origin of the usage of Heimat in the Christian canon, stating that “the German transfiguration of ‘Heimat’ has its origin more in the sphere of religion and refers first to the hereafter, not to the past: In the well-known 1666 song *I Am a Guest on Earth* The Protestant hymn writer Paul Gerhardt finds his home in heaven, and only at the end of the gloomy earthly existence we return to it.”⁶

matministerium-heimat-rechtspopulismus-begriff-kulturgeschichte, accessed August 4, 2020.

4 “Dass wir in Deutschland heute wieder über ‘Heimat’ sprechen, steht, ob wir das wollen oder nicht, in der Tradition dieser Geschichte. Und es ist auch kein Zufall, dass wir die Renaissance dieses Begriffs im Wesentlichen dem rechten Rand unserer Gesellschaft zu verdanken ist, der seit einigen Jahren immer lauter und breiter wird. Denn unsere heutige ‘Heimat’—Obsession ist nichts weiter als die deutsche Variante von Trumps Wahlspruch ‘Make America Great Again’—der Wunsch, in eine idealisier-

te Vergangenheit zurückzukehren, die es nie gegeben hat.” <https://www.zeit.de/kultur/2018-02/heimatministerium-heimat-rechtspopulismus-begriff-kulturgeschichte/seite-2>, accessed August 4, 2020.

5 “Der Begriff ‘Heimat’ wird heute von vielen Deutschen als eine Chiffre für Ausgrenzung gebraucht; er fungiert als das scheinbar menschliche Gesicht von Alltagsrassismus und als Vorwand für völkische Überlegenheitsfantasien.” <https://www.zeit.de/kultur/2018-02/heimatministerium-heimat-rechtspopulismus-begriff-kulturgeschichte/>

seite-2, accessed August 4, 2020.

6 “die deutsche Erklärung von Heimat hat ihren Ursprung eher in der Sphäre der Religion und bezieht sich zuerst auf das Jenseits, nicht auf die Vergangenheit: In dem 1666 entstandenen bekannten Lied Ich bin ein Gast auf Erden des protestantischen Kirchenlieddichters Paul Gerhardt findet sich die Heimat im Himmel, und erst am Ende des trüben Erdendaseins kehren wir in sie zurück.” <https://www.zeit.de/kultur/2018-02/heimatministerium-moderne-verlustangst>, accessed August 4, 2020.

Paul Gerhardt's *I Am a Guest on Earth* of course calls to mind the famous negro spiritual *This world is not my home, I'm just passing through*. But interestingly, those clinging die-heartedly to Christianity as a fundamental value of the Heimat at the same time cling to this very worldly earth as their home-alone. The gist of her argument is that, "nobody will deny that 'Heimat' can also mean confinement and restriction, and that especially young people or outsiders often feel the need to escape. However, drawing from this often age-specific, very individual experience the consequence of banishing everything that has anything to do with homeland to the right margin is evidence of political blindness and contributes, if at all, to the further polarization of society. If home is increasingly the subject of public speech, this can be interpreted as an indication that many people feel a sense of loss."⁷

General debates on the matter have been diverted on the perceived sense of loss of the "ordinary citizen." This sense of loss is strongly attached to a sense of deterritorialization, based on the fact that though people are still in their home country or even home city, they have the impression that that space, its structure as well as their privileges, have been taken away from them. This feeling of loss, of course, has increased since the influx of refugees from the African continent and Syria in the last years so much that one is tempted to think that the loss is not quantitative, as in, it is not because the "ordinary citizen" gets less than before the influx of refugees, but the mere fact that the resources of the country and the privileges of the welfare state will be shared with others provokes a sense of loss and deterritorialization. All this must be regarded from the point of view that

7 "Niemand wird leugnen, dass Heimat auch Einingung und Beschränkung bedeuten kann und dass gerade junge Leute oder Außenseiter oft das Bedürfnis haben, ihr zu entkommen. Aus dieser oft altersspezifischen, sehr individuellen Erfahrung aber die Konsequenz zu ziehen, alles, was mit Heimat zu tun hat, an den rechten Rand zu verbannen, zeugt von politischer Blindheit und trägt, wenn überhaupt, zur weiteren Polarisierung der Gesellschaft bei. Wenn Heimat vermehrt Gegenstand öffentlicher Rede wird, lässt sich das vor allem als Hinweis darauf deuten, dass viele Menschen ein Gefühl der Verlustangst empfinden." <https://www.zeit.de/kultur/2018-02/heimat-heimatministerium-moderne-verlustangst/seite-2>, accessed August 4, 2020.

Germany's economy is booming like hardly ever before⁸ with low unemployment rates and a good health and social systems.

While the debate continues on the Feuilleton, the first interview given by the new Heimat minister, Horst Seehofer, made it quite clear that his concept of Heimat when he stated clearly that Islam does not belong to Germany—a slogan widely used by the AfD during the 2017 election campaign, because Germany is built on Christianity.⁹ In that same interview he makes faster repatriation of refugees also one of his priorities. The question is thus not whether using words like Heimat is good or not, but rather what the term Heimat has come to mean. Words are not empty vessels. They are vessels filled with meanings and connotations that change with time and space. Home has come to mean more than place of nativity, but also a religion and race. It has come to characterize privileges and the common denominators of those who are viewed by the majority as eligible to partake in the privileges. And most especially, home becomes a space filled with romanticized, nationalist, and xenophobic fantasies.

In Olu Oguibe's seminal essay "Imaginary Homes, Imagined Loyalties: A Brief Reflection on the Uncertainty of Geographies" (1998), he writes that "our bond with the site of our nativity is a one-way affair. It is an ambivalent bond borne

out of a one-sided loyalty and a proclivity to possess, a desperate striving to belong, to lay claim to something that lays no claim in return. Severed from the womb and the body that bore us and hauled into the void of life and existence, we crave to attach ourselves to something, a moment, a location, an event; we crave an anchor which we readily find in the contours of the house of our upbringing, in the streets of our childhood, in the city of our birth. But the city has a different desire and a different response, for we need the city more than the city needs us."¹⁰

8 https://www.bundesbank.de/Redaktion/EN/Topics/2018/2018_02_19_monatsbericht_konjunktur.html, accessed August 4, 2020.

9 <http://www.dw.com/en/ge-man-interior-minister-horst-seehofer-is-islam-doesnt-belong-to-germany/a-42999726>, accessed August 4, 2020.

10 Olu Oguibe, "Imaginary Homes, Imagined Loyalties: A Brief Reflection on the Uncertainty of Geographies," in *Interzones: A Work in Progress*, eds. O. Zaya and A. Michelsen, (Copenhagen: abapress, 1998).

Oguibe's observations resonate with novelist and poet Herta Müller's comment that "Heimat is what one can't stand when one is there and cannot let go of when one is away." The reverse to this seems to be true. Which is to say that if Germans are in their Heimat, but still feel a loss of that Heimat, then maybe that thing called Heimat is already long gone, never ever really existed or was long lost as early as birth or a gain of consciousness. The relationship between most peoples, not only in Germany, to their Heimat seems to be like the relationship between an amputee and her/his amputated limb. This very complicated relationship is one furnished with the sentimentality and denial of loss, or sheer longing for something inexistent. Just like with the phantom limb syndrome whereby individuals with an amputation experience pains, twitches, itches and other sensations in their missing limb, or other amputated body parts, the call for an increased identification with Heimat seems like caressing a phantom limb. It is known that upon increased stress and anxiety or radical changes in weather or living conditions, the sensations of pains or itches in the phantom limb increase. It seems as if the influx of refugees seeking for greener pastures and shelter, seeking for protection and refuge, as prescribed by the UNHCR, caused so much stress to one of the richest countries in the world such that it provoked this phantom limb syndrome.

Truth to be told... the longing for and the serial resurgence of debates on Heimat is truly a constant in Germany. In my 20 years in Germany, this debate has come up on a yearly basis, taking varying shapes and forms. Once upon a time, it took the debate on the "Leitkultur," another time on "Kinder statt Inder" or the concerns of the "besorgte Bürger" or now the "Heimatsministerium." In all the cases, the debates, as proposed by mostly politicians, and citizens alike have almost always been exclusive rather than inclusive, divisive rather than uniting, and often condescending towards those who are not assumed, supposed, intended to be part of this Heimat.

But what is Heimat when one thinks of it culturally, institutionally as well as legislatively? Who is part of this Heimat

and who is not? How are the factors that disqualify peoples, religions and cultural traits from being part of this Heimat related to coloniality, race, and capitalist and neoliberal economic forces? And how are the privileges of Heimat, which are not to be shared with others, tied to the dispossession and exploitation of others in other geographies? And what is Heimat in a postcolonial world, in which artifacts, arts, and ritual “objects” from the Kingdom of Benin, Mexico, India or Iraq are in German museums and labelled as part of the Prussian Cultural Heritage? If these are part of the Prussian Cultural Heritage, why are the people who are the rightful inheritors of these artefacts, arts, and ritual “objects”—mostly taken from the colonies through dubious means—not part of this heritage and Heimat? Words are not empty vessels. They have meaning only respective to the content of the container. Heimat could be the sum of our singular beings, cultures, religions and philosophies. Heimat could be more sophisticated than the banalities of blood and soil. Heimat could be inclusive and unifying, and sensitive to the historical, political and economical realities that have made people move forcefully or willing from A to B. Any Heimat that is antithetic to the aforementioned is chasing the wind of a myth of a city, nation or home that belongs to you and your “kind” exclusively. Any concept of Heimat that doesn’t comply with the aforementioned is rather regressive and a mere caressing of the phantom limb.

And to close with Olu Oguibe...

the conviction that we own the city, that in losing our place to others or to distance we lose that which belongs to us, that to which we have an exclusive right, derives in no small measure from the wish not to compete for the attention of something whose love we crave, but fear, even know, that it does not love us back. It is as much a craving to own, as it is an appeal to be owned. And, as for city so for country.

In time, the apprehension transforms into a romantic longing in the hold of which we are blinded to the specifics of our relationship. Everything takes on a different hue; the ugly turns unique, the trivial symbolic. We argue the illogical, defend the indefensible, stake out the frontiers and keep out others. We weep at the sound of the anthem and worship the flag. We descend to the habit of kissing the earth. There is no love more blind than the love of country.¹¹

No matter how much one caresses the phantom limb, it doesn't become more real than the imagination of it.

11 Ibid., 10.

H O S T I L E
C E N T E R S
A N D
H O S P I T A B L E
M A R G I N S

DENISE RYNER

Totoben and Maisie moving the islands, by boat and by plane they moving overseas to foreign, they moving in time and space once again, to be bettering themselves, following their money and their raw material that the banks and companies taking overseas and abroad. They following Barclays Bank, Shell, Lever Brothers and Fry's Cocoa to England; they following Texaco and Amoco to the United States and they following the Bank of Nova Scotia, the Royal Bank of Canada, and Alcan to Canada.

—M. NourbeSe Philip, *Caribana: African Roots and Continuities*, 1996

'Reconciliation' is being promoted by the federal government as a 'new' way for Canada to relate to Indigenous Peoples, and it isn't just government officials that are promoting the idea. I have heard heads of universities talk about reconciliation; I have read journalist's op-ed pieces; I have heard mayors talk about reconciliation as they open local Aboriginal events. But the idea of reconciliation is not new. Indigenous Peoples attempted to reconcile our differences in countless treaty negotiations, which categorically have not produced the kinds of relationships Indigenous Peoples intended. I wonder how we can reconcile when the majority of Canadians do not understand the historic or contemporary injustice of dispossession and occupation, particularly when the state has expressed its unwillingness to make any adjustments to the unjust relationship.

—Leanne Simpson,
Dancing on Our Turtle's Back, 2012

As M. NourbeSe Philip and Leanne Simpson highlight, the reality of borders and migration routes is that they are entangled with parallel movements of stolen resources, labor, and land from Indigenous populations, which in turn undoes the dichotomy of host and guest, a home and a foreigner.

In Canada, Or Gallery was founded in 1983 as a project space in a former deli located in an industrial area of east Vancouver that factory workers frequented and where Chinese merchant developers established businesses and rooming houses. The gallery's founder, LAIWAN, was an art student who was part of the Chinese diaspora that lived in pre-independence Zimbabwe before immigrating to Canada. She would, however, return temporarily to support Zimbabwe's decolonizing movement. Or Gallery's current location on East Pender Street is on the edge of Vancouver's rapidly gentrifying Chinatown neighborhood where, in 1907 following anti-immigrant riots across the border in Bellingham, Washington, a march of white-supremacists similarly attacked Vancouver's Asian residents and vandalized their businesses while demanding a "White Canada." It is recorded that the mob grew into the thousands as it marched from Vancouver's city hall to the site of the riot in Chinatown and nearby Japantown. Sadly, this riot presaged the imposition of quotas on Japanese immigration and regulations of immigration to Canada on Chinese and Indian populations.¹

Near the gallery, on the edge of Chinatown, early black immigrants who moved up from California began settling in the Strathcona neighborhood and what was colloquially known as Hogan's Alley. They were soon joined by black homesteaders fleeing racism and conflict in Alberta, where they had founded communities after emigrating from equally oppressive conditions in Oklahoma. The Great Northern Railway terminal station's nearby location meant that Hogan's Alley was an ideal place where black railway porters could reside and socialize. As black businesses and culture grew within this tight-knit community, officials in Vancouver targeted Hogan's Alley with rezoning plans and regulations

1 See: <https://www.library.ubc.ca/chineseinbc/riots.html>, accessed August 4, 2020.

that made mortgages or permits for building improvements impossible to attain until 1967, when the city wiped out the neighborhood altogether to build an interurban freeway.²

The original and ongoing custodians of the area Vancouver was founded on are the Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh, and Squamish First Nations. Their struggle to regain claims to their land and protect it from degradation due to oil pipelines and other threats continues. At the intersection of all of these arrivals and settlements, discouraged or otherwise, Or Gallery considers its current role as host to artists, writers, curators, and their ideas.

The artists and scholars who Or Gallery invited to exhibit, perform, and speak in its joint presentation of *Hostipitality. Whose Land Have I Lit on Now?* with SAVVY each address the gestures of hospitality and hostility that are part of the narratives of those who, through colonization and migration, have been dispossessed of their resources, land, bodies, and communities. Who then, establishing themselves on their ancestral territory or in networked diasporas, founded their survival on rebuilt home, community, and culture.

Artist Abbas Akhavan draws on everyday vernacular objects as metonymic stand-ins to complicate the domestic sphere's centrality to our early understanding of relationality. Hygiene and cleanliness are particular areas where prohibitions are entangled with acts of care. Akhavan exaggerates the dimensions of the broom, a seemingly universal image of homemaking, and emphasizes its connection to xenophobia and social division. The broom is transformed into a hostile symbol when "cleaning up" is repeated in the dog-whistle campaign slogans of numerous politicians who promise to rid their streets and neighborhoods of othered people, be they immigrants, the homeless, sex workers, or people visibly suffering from drug addiction.

The broom leans against the wall but is poised in service of an invited guest, the expulsion of an unwanted one, or the marginalization of those deemed "other." Furthermore, Akhavan's broom is associated with the maintenance work of office cleaners who are often an invisible,

2 See: <https://www.vancouverheritagefoundation.org/place-that-matters/hogans-alley/>, accessed August 4, 2020.

ghosted, and racialized labor force. With their brooms they prepare spaces for less-precarious citizens to work and live.

In the 1960s, cleaning/caring became racialized in France and other European countries as governments organized the migration of women of color from their former colonies (this type of work had long been racialized in the colonies themselves). As European women were entering paid jobs, societies were becoming wealthier, and domestic work looked more and more disconnected from the image of the modern woman promoted by these societies.

—Françoise Vergès, *Capitalocene, Waste, Race, and Gender*, E-flux Journal #100, May, 2019

The overlapping of political and physical centers and margins underline's Stephanie Comilang's work. Her series of multi-channel videos addresses the invisible/visible communities comprising the Filipino diaspora through a combination of social documentation and speculative fiction. Comilang's protagonists are post-colonial figures who identify with Indigenous Filipino histories and cultures, but lack bodies and are part of diasporic communities that are politically or economically exiled from their "home" nations. Her work, *Yesterday, In The Years 1886 and 2017* is a two-channel video projection that links the arrivals of José Rizal and Lourdes Lareza Müller in Europe and who each fulfill the roles of hostile and hospitable hosts respectively. Rizal (1861–1896) was a Filipino nationalist, considered a national hero, and is often described as the "First Filipino" for his influence on Filipino intellectual and revolutionary history. This is in connection with his book, *Noli Me Tángere* (*Touch Me Not*), which he wrote and published in 1887 while living in Heidelberg, Germany. *Noli Me Tángere* is credited for its critiques of Spanish immigration to and occupation of the Philippine islands. Furthermore, Rizal's writing formulated an early sense of a possible nationhood and "imagined community"

through his fictionalized everyday dialogues between characters identified with the Philippines and the Filipino diaspora.

Go from town to town, from house to house, listen to the secret sighings in the bosoms of the families, and you will be convinced that the evils which the Civil Guard corrects are the same as, if not less than, those it causes all the time. Should we decide from this that all the people are criminals? If so, then why defend some from the others, why not destroy them all?

Some error exists here which I do not see just now some fallacy in the theory to invalidate the practise, for in Spain, the mother country, this corps is displaying, and has ever displayed, great usefulness.

I don't doubt it. Perhaps there, it is better organized, the men of better grade, perhaps also Spain needs it while the Philippines does not. Our customs, our mode of life, which are always invoked when there is a desire to deny us some right, are entirely overlooked when the desire is to impose something upon us. And tell me, sir, why have not the other nations, which from their nearness to Spain must be more like her than the Philippines is, adopted this institution? Is it because of this that they still have fewer robberies on their railway trains, fewer riots, fewer murders, and fewer assassinations in their great capitals?
—José Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere*³

3 This translation is from José Rizal, *The Social Cancer: A Complete English Version of Noli Me Tangere*, trans. Charles Derbyshire (New Delhi: Prabhat Books, 2008).

After a brief time in the Philippines, Rizal returned to Europe where he wrote a follow up book, *El Filibusterismo* (the sub-verse), which was published in 1891.

Lourdes Lareza Müller migrated to Germany in 1968, where she was soon established as an archivist at Berlin's Staatsbibliothek. During that time she became a host to early immigrants that would follow in her wake and grow into Berlin's Filipino community. The crossings that mark this German-Philippine route over time create the presence of a disembodied feminine narrator. This ghost, who is unidentified, positioned as a third protagonist, and distinctly non-human, speaks from a distant future.

This complication of leaving and arriving as never quite leaving and never quite arriving is echoed in so many stories of migration and settlement. As a member of the second generation of an extended family who immigrated from the Caribbean to Canada throughout the 1960s and 70s, I have known of such frustrations of prescribed identities linked to a distant "home" country and withheld acceptance as a full member of my country of birth and residence. I grew up in the height of Canada's promotion of its cultural mosaic when those racially othered and Indigenous Canadians were expected to perform their culture in festivals and tokenized in museums and the media for a white gaze, and then assume their place in a Eurocentric Canadian hegemony the rest of the time.⁴ We weren't encouraged to question ours and our nation's relationship to the First Nations.

Artist Deanna Bowen's work opens up conversations and archives that challenge settler colonial narratives and founding myths of Canadian and American nationhood. In order to escape interracial violence across the United States, Bowen's ancestors, originally from Alabama and Kentucky, moved towards the Canadian Prairies, also known as Treaty Territory 8, and built settlements like Amber Valley and Campsie alongside other black homesteaders.

Her work, *Anti-Creek Negro Petition 1911* confronts the viewer with documentation of white farmers' protests against the immigration of black prairie farmers across the US/Canadian border. Prohibitions and head taxes were installed by the Canadian government to attempt to

4 This includes the violent history of removals of Indigenous children, who were then sent to residential schools where they were degraded, separated from their communities, and often brutalized into unlearning their culture and taking on a Eurocentric one.

stem immigration of Indigenous and non-white farmers into Canada. Once in the prairies, a hostility born of both difficult terrain and further racialized conflict awaited homesteaders of color. An example of this is a 233-page petition that was circulated and signed by white Canadians to protest the influx of African-American farmers. This is spatialized as a wall of xenophobia, formatted as genteel and bureaucratic letters of concern. The reproduced pages in Bowen's work show signatories of families that Bowen, in subsequent projects, has traced to powerful networks that influenced both cultural and political policy across Canada. Bowen's family eventually relocated to urban centers across Canada, including Vancouver's Hogan's Alley. As part of her art practice, Bowen herself continues to recontextualize, rework, and circulate archival material tracing the development of black lived experience in Canada while challenging the erasure and invisibility of black communities in nationalized narratives.

Peter Morin's work takes him to the centers of colonial power where he performs with both sound and song to rupture their foundational connection to Canada. Morin is a member of the Tahltan First Nation whose territory is located around Telegraph Creek and across northwestern British Columbia. He often wears black and red Tahltan button blankets as a witness to his sonic unsettling. Such button blankets are danced with at potlatch ceremonies and are embedded with clan histories, duties, rights, and privileges. One, mapping out Tahltan Territory, was hung in Berlin overlapping the spatial claims that delimit North America's Pacific Northwest Coast/Turtle Island and Europe. His collaborative performance with Aaron Wilson, a white American musician, entitled *Affect(ing) music: To build a ghost house on your territory*, further joins these geographies and histories in a two-part performance between historical host and uninvited guest. Wilson and Morin dismantle and wrap their instruments, first silencing, then merging the divergent legacies and sound of the European trombone and Tahltan hand drum. This collective endeavor was a personal and direct act of reconciliation established through collegial conversations between human and non-human beings, in connection

with Canada's Truth and Reconciliation process addressing the genocidal abuses of the Indian Residential School System.

Morin and Wilson's performance spanned two of the three-day symposium that filtered through some of the works and ideas in the exhibition. The first was a subtle affair that took place under the afternoon sun, in the courtyard of Silent Green, the cultural complex where SAVVY Contemporary is located. While most of the SAVVY staff and artists were preparing for the day's events in the gallery below, Morin and Wilson, with hand drum and trombone, entered the courtyard while slowly sounding out across time and space; connecting the disparate histories of the trombone's early role in Europe as the voice of God and the hand drum's role as the heartbeat of a nation. Slowly, red fabric was laid out and the trombone was dismantled and wrapped together with the drum in a bundle of red cloth. Both were then carried into the gallery and set down before Morin's Tahltan button blanket where the trombone and hand drum could sit together. Of this moment, Morin declared, "I think the drum talked to the trombone." The next day in Silent Green's Kuppelhalle, the red textile was brought in and Morin and Wilson thanked the ancestors and introduced their performance as the outcome of a year long process of conversations on legacies of colonialism, asking the question: "How do we overcome colonial systems in order to actually make beautiful sounds?" The trumpet and hand drum were unwrapped as Wilson read their intentions for creating a new sonic landscape and building a ghosthouse in Berlin as a way to relate and challenge the silencing effect of the colonial imaginary.

This is how Or Gallery and SAVVY, two galleries with mirrored locations and founding narratives of immigration, art, and activism in Vancouver, Canada and Berlin, Germany respectively, encompassed the gesture of hospitality, of holding space, and of displacing oneself to address the urgency of acknowledging the fluidity and simultaneity of the position of guest and host. I thank SAVVY for allowing Or Gallery and the artists we travelled with to make a home abroad and abroad a home for a few days in May and June 2018.

A MATTER OF
ASYMMETRY...
ON THE
VIOLENCE
OF THE
CURATORIAL
AND THE
GEOMETRIES
OF HOSPITALITY

ELENA AGUDIO

This is not about us, the curators. (...) This is not about what we are or what we do. (...) Instead, this is about what happens between us (...) What I am interested in is the performative aspect of the word “curatorial” and what its utterance does to the existing identificatory machine that endlessly consumes us.

—Je Yun Moon¹

Unpredictable encounters transform us; we are not in control, even of ourselves. Unable to rely on a stable structure of community, we are thrown into shifting assemblages, which remake us as well as our others.

—Anna Tsing²

Museums have something in common with cemeteries. Paintings, objects, and artefacts lie behind thresholds separating the living from the dead. Amassed and accumulated, they rest in galleries and storage units, deracinated from their places of origin, alienated from their original contexts and use. Some of these artifacts are neutralized from their “original” potency, while others acquire the status of objects of worship for a bourgeois cult.³ Collected or often times looted, many objects in museums are neutralized of their ritual power in one place, while giving birth and justifying the glory and pomp of nations in another.

Dust, molecules, and histories

1 Je Yun Moon, “This Is Not About Us” in *The Curatorial. A Philosophy of Curating*, ed. Jean-Paul Martinon (Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

2 Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

3 Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

interweave in the soil of cemeteries and in the galleries of museums. As architectures of loss and nostalgia, cemeteries build on the material presence of an absence. As architectures of gain and (national) affirmation, museums mortify objects, displacing them and making their

presence as fixed.⁴ They host and cleanse, separate and re-territorialize, put thresholds between those who come to visit, and those who have to stay.

Like keepers and guardians, the columns and vitrines of museums bury and entomb, while curatorial practices and contemporary exhibition-making may translate into acts of hospitalization. The cold secularism of the white cube and the *froid* intellectualism of contemporary art medicalize, cleanse, and sanitize objects and epistemologies, taking spectators “out of the grime and stress of everyday life.”⁵

Curatorial practice, and its translation into such spaces, can neutralize and homogenize the particularities and idiosyncrasies, the dirt and contagion of art. They host, but they also decide about what to include and exclude, being selective environments. Curatorial “editing” thus etches a line between hospitality and hospitalization that runs thinly. Oscillating between obsessions of keeping alive and letting die, museums, cemeteries, hospitals, and mental asylums belong to a shifting taxonomy of places of hostipitality.⁶

Within the working structures and laboring conditions we inhabit as curators, some also dare to act as infrastructural activists, grappling with accessibility and inclusivity to challenge and open up institutions, and practicing not only a discourse *from within* but also *across*, inside and outside. As infrastructural agitators, curators might not only act as gravediggers and undertakers, but also as caretakers and choreographers.

4 Claiming that colonialism is responsible for the “disenchantment and demystification” of African culture, in *Statues Die Also* Alain Resnais and Chris Marker narrate the dead life of Sub-Saharan statues which have lost their original significance and have been musealized—reduced to a museum object.

As Nora M. Alter points out, the film evokes “the process whereby a religious fetish is transformed into a commodity fetish by Western civilization.” Nora M. Alter, *Chris Marker* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 57–60.

5 Arjun Appadurai, “Museums and the Savage Sublime” in *Across Anthropology. Troubling Colonial Legacies, Museums, and the Curatorial*, eds. Margareta von Oswald and Jonas Leonhard Tinius (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2020).

6 As artist Javier Téllez, son of two psychiatrists, who spent his childhood and youth between mental hospitals and museums, contended, museums and hospitals are “symbolic representations of authority, founded on taxonomies based on the normal and the pathological, inclusion and exclusion.” Cited in: Cristibal Lehyt and Michele Fauget, “Madness Is the Language of the Excluded,” *C: International Contemporary Art* 92 (Winter 2006): 26–30.

Dissecting the tensions, *aporias*, and paralyses in hospitality, curatorial practice can be, more than outward-oriented analysis of contexts, objects, theories, a form of *self*-confrontation. Curating as a critical form of care troubles rather than settles, thinking of access and inclusion not as an afterthought, but as a first principle.⁷

A curatorial situation is always one of hospitality.⁸ Together with curators Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung and Denise Ryner, with the exhibition and discursive program *Whose Land Have I Lit On Now? Contemplations on the Notion of Hospitality*, we addressed this *aporia* of “hospitality.” Hospitality carries in its etymology a fundamental ambiguity, as *hospes* derives from *hostis* and thus blurs the line—however thin—between guest and enemy. The stranger comes both as a gift and a threat.

In the last decades, international conflicts, natural disasters, devastation, toxicity, poverty, and global debt provoked new massive migration waves, bringing the riddle of hospitality and the complexity of its related anxieties to the forefront of European politics.

Confronting ourselves with the conundrum and the (im)possibility of unconditional hospitality, we pondered the limits of a welcome culture that is always restricted by norms, codes, and presumptions. So as to open a space of discussion that could trouble stable concepts of national sovereignty and identity, we invited artists, activists, writers, musicians, and thinkers to share different experiences of migration and hostility to speculate on a possible grammar of hospitality that could counteract the racism, anti-immigration, islamophobic, and nationalist sentiments that have been mobilized by right-wing political forces in Western countries.

To understand and deliberate together on a current political situation in which we are finding ourselves embedded and trapped, we engaged in an exercise of self-critique, fundamentally questioning and challenging the role of art institutions in addressing the problematic *inhospitality* of much of the so-called art world.

7 Amanda Cachia, “Disabling’ the Museum: Curator as Infrastructural Activist” *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, Vol.12, No. 3 (2013): 257–289.

8 Beatrice von Bismarck, Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer, *Hospitality: Hosting Relations in Exhibitions—Cultures of the Curatorial 3* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016).

We dissected and complicated curatorial narratives that reproduce the violence of cultural erasure. “Speaking *nearby* our” invited guests and vulnerable communities with whom we worked, we contoured and measured geometries of hospitality, trying to comprehend the asymmetries, the sets of exclusions and dependencies, the strategies of exploitations that an act of hospitality presupposes.

The very notion of hospitality, Mireille Rosello contends in her book *Postcolonial Hospitality. The Immigrant as a Guest* (2001), is still undergoing a crisis and a process of redefinition. Western societies and governments are keen to use immigration as a cipher for hospitality, but their rhetorical understanding of this notion doesn’t correspond to the social and legal performativity of its enactment. The philosophical concept of hospitality as elaborated in Western intellectual traditions entails not only an act of generosity on the part of the host, but also a fundamental moment of risk on both the side of the giver and the receiver. If we accept that this is the case, then the metaphor of hospitality cannot be applied to contemporary immigration. In other words, “if a nation invites immigrants because they are valuable assets, because it needs them for economic or demographic purposes, that country is not being hospitable.”⁹ In fact the risks undertaken are those of the migrants, and not by the host nations.

This publication is the result of a series of conversations and exchanges that led to the production of an exhibition and *Invocations*, with artists, activists, thinkers, musicians, poets, friends, and those with whom we might disagree. Together, we engaged in a debate around questions of hospitality and conviviality, making space and time for moments of collective reflections, critical thinking, acts of refusal, and care. It was our intention to move outside our comfort zones, and instead generate a “contact zone” between people, thoughts, ideas, art, words, and things; an affective space where we could practice care, heal, nourish, and shelter. But also to argue, dissent, or disagree; to challenge the boundaries between practices,

9 Mireille Rosello, *Postcolonial Hospitality. The Immigrant as Guest* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

disciplines, epistemologies, and identities; and to create new coalitions and alliances in a geography of counterinsurgency.

Hospitality is a matter of encountering and generating a dialogue that is mostly unpredictable, and can only be transformative. For three days, we have been navigating and living in these contact zones, this extraterritorial space, where extra-disciplinarity and togetherness became a possibility of breaking with prevailing laws and cultural behaviors; a moment and space of emancipatory rupture; a momentum of co-authoriality, plurivocality, and relationality.

Along the lines of feminist thinkers,¹⁰ we sought to renegotiate and redefine what “home” could be, transforming the “Home Order” and speculating on the possibility of subverting its codes and norms.¹¹ Reflecting on hospitality in a wider social and political sense, dealing with nomad subjects, and those who find themselves excluded from protective territoriality (in exile), we exercised the possibility of defining a home in which to live and think, and to utter an alternative theory of hospitality by reflecting on issues of identity, inclusivity, reciprocity, forgiveness, and embodiment.

If Derrida claimed that “hospitality is being prepared to be unprepared,” we wanted to push ourselves further, taking that challenge and being open to even becoming *dis*-oriented, embracing what Anne Dufourmantelle elaborated as a philosophy of risk and *gentleness*.¹²

In proximity to feminist strategies of weak resistance formulated by Ewa Majewska, by which she refers to the non-heroic disobedience performed in the everyday, Dufourmantelle’s *Power of Gentleness: Meditations on the Risk*

of Living ponders the disruptive power of gentleness, and the potential of fragility to subvert and create personal and political change. For her, gentleness is not a “diluted form of mawkishness.” Rather,

10 See: Seyla Benhabib, Margaret Urban Walker, Iris Marion Young.

11 Judith Butler, *Precarious Life* (London; New York: Verso, 2004).

12 Psychoanalyst and philosopher Anne Dufourmantelle died in 2017 rescuing the lives of two children drowning in the waters of the Mediterranean sea.

in the name of our highest values—happiness, truth, security—we enforce “gentle” safeguards against hurt and are persuaded to participate in our era’s three divinities: efficiency, speed, and profitability. But in doing so we seal ourselves off from the life-affirming gamble that a true gentleness affords.¹³

Gentleness, Dufourmantelle suggests, must be considered as an active passivity, a contingent extraordinary force of resistance, and a radical possibility of fully embracing the risk of living. Creating and strengthening relationships then implies taking the risk that comes from the vulnerability of human sharing, key to all hospitable encounters. Articulating and unfolding a practice of curatorial hospitality entails embracing and rendering meaningful these ambivalences and paradoxes.

In contrast to the hospitalizing imagination of the thresholds of museums and cemeteries that separate and immobilize, our exercise on hostipitality—performed from our gallery space that is itself situated in a former crematorium and alongside a cemetery—sought to pry open the faux panelling and artificial boundaries of curating, and ponder its asymmetric geometries.

13 Anne Dufourmantelle, *Power of Gentleness: Meditations on the Risk of Living*, trans. Katherine Payne and Vincent Salle (Fordham: Fordham University Press, 2018).

FORGING
BRIDGE:
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TO “DAS
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IST
VOLL

THE FACTORY OF SURNUMER- ARIES

SELOUA LUSTE BOULBINA

Aucune utilité ne peut légitimer le risque immense de partir sur les flots. Pour affronter la navigation, il faut des intérêts puissants. Or les véritables intérêts puissants sont les intérêts chimériques. Ce sont les intérêts qu'on rêve, ce ne sont pas ceux qu'on calcule. Ce sont les intérêts fabuleux. Le héros de la mer est un héros de la mort. Le premier matelot est le premier homme vivant qui fut aussi courageux qu'un mort.
—Gastone Bachelard¹

Au petit matin du 23 octobre 2015, la police est arrivée très tôt, nous a priés de monter dans des bus sans nous dire où on allait. C'était angoissant. Quatre heures plus tard, on descendait à Varennes-sur-Allier, sans savoir où on était.
—Ahmed Hassan²

“Das Boot ist voll:” this quintessential sentence expresses a political process called the factory of “surnumeraries” which defines a society as a political organization which continuously creates abnormal people (poor people, foreigners, homeless, refugees, etc.). In European discourse as well as in European national policies, the Migrants now embody the Surnumeraries, the “part of no part,” those who, while formally included within

the social edifice, have no determinate place within it. There is no social anomaly here, but a way to produce the Society as a whole. This Totality is supposedly defined by its common identity and its ability to provide rights and goods to almost everyone. The greatest good for the greatest number? Or, do we have the right, in order to enjoy many Romans, to throw only one Christian to the lions? Extra-European recent migration seems to represent a bridge between elsewhere and nowhere.

1 Gaston Bachelard, *L'Eau et les rêves* (Paris: José Corti Bookstore, 1942), 92.

2 Maryline Baumard, “Du Soudan à Vichy, la quête d'intégration semée d'embûches d'Ahmed, Hassan, Ali, Anwar et Alsadig,” *Le Monde*, May 20, 2018, https://www.lemonde.fr/les-nouveaux-ar-rivants/article/2018/05/20/du-soudan-a-vichy-la-quete-d-integration-semee-d-embuches-d-ahmed-hassan-ali-anwar-et-alsadig_5301898_5084811.html, accessed August 4, 2020.

The most common racial feelings are legitimized by the impossibility of integrating Migrants into Society. Deconstructing the pitfalls of National Consciousness is a way to forge a bridge and to work to end this violence.

Our societies are built like fortified castles even though everyone feels that they live in an open society. The objective reality contradicts these subjective feelings. Everyone knows that politicians' decisions and policies are founded on these feelings of fear and the desire to be protected from "external" agents. If this is not the case, how can one explain that 67 million French people are worried about 24,000 migrants? Former french Minister of Justice, Christiane Taubira, has pointed out this gap. It is the very reason why building a bridge is so important. Fortified castles are the main paradigm of our societies, when in fact they should be building bridges. The Great Wall of China seems now ridiculous: it is deceptive, deluded. Israel has built a wall "against" the Palestinian people; the United States has built fortified boundaries "against" Mexican people. Now, Donald Trump wants to separate parents and children: he wants to create a wall within families. The Spanish government hangs barbed wire around the small city of Melilla in north Africa. Today, all North African countries too have adopted the same immigration policies of Western European countries, cementing the political exportation and enforcement of European policies abroad. As Fanon once said,

If the building of a bridge does not enrich the awareness of those who work on it, then that bridge ought not to be built and the citizens can go on swimming across the river or going by boat. The bridge should not be "parachuted down" from above; it should not be imposed by a *deus-ex-machina* upon the social scene; on the contrary it should come from the muscles and the brains of the citizens. Certainly, there may well be need of engineers, and architects, sometimes completely foreign engineers, and architects; but the

local party leaders should be always present, so that the new techniques can make their way into the cerebral desert of the citizen, so that the bridge in whole and in part can be taken up and conceived, and the responsibility for it assumed by the citizen. In this way, and in this way only, everything is possible.³

Fanon is not the only one to reflect on the idea of the bridge. The German philosopher Georg Simmel too was interested in this notion. For him, boundaries were one of the most important political—in other words philosophical and sociological—issues of his time.⁴ Boundaries and walls appear, move, change, disappear, and are redrawn endlessly. This *fait social total*, this absolute social fact, is not the effect of treatise, of colonization, of war, cold war included, but the consequence

of the process of socialization. In this perspective, avoiding exchanges with people must be regarded as a kind of relation. It is a paradox of the “hostipitality.” A society is constituted by *Wechselwirkung*, reciprocal action. But what kind of reciprocal actions gives the form to a society? Exclusion and ostracism are other words to figure out internal wounds and boundaries. Because boundaries and divisions pervade the entirety of society: for instance, the separation of women and men, Black and white people, the poor and the rich, foreigners and citizens, and so on. According to Simmel, everything interacts in some way with everything else. Boundaries define and delineate social spaces of life. How does law serve to repress and mask the pain of disenfranchised subjects? By nationalist alchemy! So, it is more relevant here to

3 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove City Press, 1963), 199–200. Originally published as *Les Damnés de la Terre* (Paris: Maspero Editions, 1961).

4 The stranger “is, so to speak, the *potential* wanderer: although he has not moved on, he has not quite overcome the freedom of coming and going. He is fixed within a particular spatial group, or within a group whose boundaries are similar to spatial boundaries. But his position in this group is determined, essentially, by the fact that he has not belonged to it from the beginning, that he imports qualities into it, which do not and cannot stem from the group itself.” Georg Simmel, “The Stranger” in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (New York: Free Press, 1950), 402–408.

reflect on the process of socialization than to conceive of social life in terms of what conventionally constitutes a society.

Social borders shift and change. Fear and anxieties, as subjective social feelings, are a fundamental “social form.” The creation of inner enemies is the same process as the creation of surnumeraries. Basically, this gaze transforms every choice into social power. It is an invisible bio-politic which gives anyone the possibility to accept or refuse anyone else, that is to socially “elect” their own narcissistic “others.” Consequently there are “good” or “bad” social objects and subjects; there are social advantages, and good positions which are easily given to the “good ones,” whereas all of the above is denied to the “bad ones.” We are constantly inventing abnormalities in people. This invention of abnormality is a social and political secrecy. Secrecy is a condition in which one person is intentionally hiding something while another person is seeking to reveal what is being hidden. It should be useful to examine the many various forms of social relationships from the point of view of reciprocal knowledge and secrecy. Migrants, as part of *the abnormals*, can’t be officially called abnormal or enemies but they are more or less secretly and violently treated as such. The social structure of modern society permits and requires a high degree of secrecy. Then, people who have shown solidarity with *the abnormals* create, by their action, by their resistance, an intermediate state between knowledge and ignorance about a person: confidence. But, consequently due to their action, they too are treated as abnormals, enemies, or surnumeraries.

A strong “we-feeling,” a strong “between itself,” is the historical legacy of the European history. Because the nation-state is an European invention. Now, national consciousness is the common characteristic of European countries. What today constitutes a novelty is that migration is not only an internal European phenomenon but an external one as well. In 1979, Michel Foucault said about people migrating by boat from Vietnam and Cambodia, that “the problem of the refugees is a presage of the great migration of the XXI Century.” At that time, 40,000 Cambodians had just been expelled from Thailand.

40,000 Vietnamese were drifting on fragile boats. For Foucault, there were three determinant factors. Firstly, ethnic genocide and persecution would happen again in the future. Secondly, the shifting of the population would arise from the postcolonial situation. Thirdly, the so called “developed countries” would expel their immigrants. Michel Foucault continues by saying: “All these problems bring about migration problem, involving hundreds of thousands, or millions of people. These migrations are invariably painful and tragic and can only be accompanied by death and murder. I am afraid that what is happening in Vietnam is not only the aftermath of the past, but a presage of the future.”⁵ Unfortunately, this prophetic vision did happen, and the phenomenon was even more apparent by the welcome that “developed countries” reserved to migrants coming from the most underprivileged countries on the planet.

In the 70s, exiles and migrants were regarded as victims. Now they are perceived as profiteers. The ancient idea of *metoikos* seems here relevant: the “spiks” or the “wogs” have been charged with selfishness, greed, personal interest in European goods and rights. They are seen as absolute surnu-

meraries without any social and political usefulness. Sometimes they have been accused of being political “consumers.” The current French minister of Interior, Gerard Collomb, has recently said that exiled people and migrants practice a form of political benchmarking in Europe to find the best social legislation. Migrants are judged too harshly. What can they bring? Their courage? Their intelligence? Their talents? Their skills? Nothing at all. They have no value in themselves. Exiles and migrants can only bring problems. So, obviously, if they generate costs, but no benefits at all, they cannot be accepted and included into French society.

5 Michel Foucault, “Le problème des réfugiés est un présage de la grande migration du XX^e siècle,” in *Dits et Écrits II*, 1976–1988 (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 798–800. Le statut de réfugié a été juridiquement défini le 29 juillet 1951 par la convention de Genève: “le terme de réfugié s’applique à toute personne... qui... craignant avec raison d’être persécutée du fait de sa race, de sa religion, de sa nationalité, de son appartenance à un certain groupe social ou de ses opinions politiques, se trouve hors du pays dont elle a la nationalité et qui ne peut ou, du fait de cette crainte, ne veut se réclamer de la protection de ce pays”.

On the contrary, French people are—more or less—useful. But, when Macron’s government recently decided to restrict the obligation to create disabled access to ten percent (instead of one hundred percent) of new housing buildings, this only shows that we are talking about the factory of surnumeraries. More broadly, it is less important to look at the contents than to distinguish a special type of social interaction which continuously creates surnumeraries. The stranger is a social role that combines contradictory qualities, for instance, nearness and remoteness. If they belong to some country, it is not the country where they live or, more likely, try to survive in. But it is another—unknown—country. Finally, subordination is expected from the migrants, particularly in front of national and local administrations. This is absolutely arbitrary, not to say grotesque.

For Michel Foucault, grotesque is “the fact that, by virtue of their status, a discourse or an individual can have effects of power that their intrinsic qualities should disqualify them from having.”⁶ The grotesque is one of the processes of arbitrary sovereignty. Foucault continues, “But you know also that the grotesque is a process inherent to assiduous bureaucracy. Since the 19th century, an essential feature of big Western bureaucracies has been that the administrative machine, with its unavoidable effects of power, works by using the mediocre, useless, imbecilic, superficial, ridiculous, worn-out, poor, and powerless functionary. (...)”

6 In the opening seminar of the 1974–1975 *Abnormal* lectures, Foucault points to the *grotesque* or *Ubu-esque* as a category of historico-political analysis. It is one that could be applied to the understanding of “the person who possessed *maiestas*,” be it a Roman emperor as ridiculous as Nero or a figure as grotesque as Mussolini. It is also to be detected in the mediocre functionary of the bureaucratic and administrative machine who we come across in authors like Kafka. But mostly it is to be found in the “doublings” (characteristic of the grotesque), the splitting of “the element on the same scene” that constitutes the discourses of the psychiatric-penal Ubu.

7 Michel Foucault, *Abnormal* (London and New York: Verso, 2003), 13. (8 janvier 1975) “Le grotesque, c’est l’un des procédés essentiels à la souveraineté arbitraire. Mais vous savez aussi que le grotesque, c’est un procédé inhérent à la bureaucratie appliquée. Que la machine administrative, avec ses effets de pouvoir incontournables, passe par le fonctionnaire médiocre, nul, imbécile, pelliculaire, ridicule, râpé, pauvre, impuissant, tout ça a été l’un des traits essentiels des grandes bureaucraties occidentales, depuis le XIXe siècle. (...) Il me semble qu’il y a là, depuis la souveraineté infâme jusqu’à l’autorité ridicule, tous les degrés de ce que l’on pourrait appeler l’indignité du pouvoir.”

It seems to me that there is in this every degree of what could be called the unworthiness of power, from despicable sovereignty to ridiculous authority.”⁷⁷ The indignity of power, the infamy of sovereignty, the absurdity of a foolish administration is what exiles and migrants are suffering the most. This makes impossible for them to enjoy anything. One of them confessed that he stays in France without staying there: “J’étais demandeur d’asile à l’époque. Je n’avais pas l’esprit assez libre pour visiter ces lieux dont j’avais rêvé dans ma vie d’avant. J’étais là sans y être, car j’ignorais encore si la France voudrait de moi.”⁷⁸

Migrants live on an ejection seat. It is not only uncomfortable but unacceptable. They are “les sans droits” (like “les sans culottes”) in supposedly democratic societies based on rights, especially human rights. They are individuals who need to be corrected because they are absolutely wrong (to leave their country, to travel, to choose a European society as a place where to live...). They are, especially men, also accused of having sexual deviance and raping white women. The violence is rationally and technically organized and calculated without any passion. The subjection of the migrant’s body is absolute. Then, the model of exclusion is the consequence of the factory of surnumeraries. There are two political operations in one policy. First to build some people as people who don’t have a right to live (normally). Then to exclude them from the society. There are two kinds of exclusion. On one hand, an internal one: it is easy to create refugees’ camps, detention centres, and to enclose foreigners for a while. On the other hand, an external one: it is more difficult to expel people and send them back to Syria or elsewhere without breaking the laws of hospitality. Migrants are living currencies. They take part in the current political transgression and political transactions of European governments. Simulacra and phantasms dominate not only our daily existence but also our current social and political life. The rationalization, and legitimation of exclusion is also related to the power of emotions. According to Pierre Klossowski, “stereotypes are nothing more than the remains of phantasmatic

8 Maryline Baumard,
“Du Soudan à Vichy.”

simulacra which have fallen into current usage, left to a common interpretation: but as degraded simulacra, they reflect an individual or collective reaction to a phantasm emptied of its content.”⁹ This voluptuous emotion is key to understand the factory of surnumeraries and the policy of migrants’ internment and externment. It is what Lyotard calls Libidinal Economy.

Pierre Klossowski¹⁰ explains the economy of voluptuous emotion as follows,

In the world of industrial manufacturing, what’s attractive is no longer what appears naturally to be for free, but the price put on what is naturally for free; a voluptuous emotion (non-communicated or incommunicable) is first of all indifferent, and *has no value*, in the sense that *each person* can experience it freely. Now, as soon as someone, while still able to experience it, cannot procure the means of immediately doing so, it becomes *less indifferent* and begins to gain value. If it is unique in its way—and if only a limited number of individuals will be able to experience it in its uniqueness—then either it is not appraisable at all, or the desire to experience it will ensure it the highest possible price. Such is the commodification of voluptuous emotion.¹¹

There is no subject with stable value. Anyone can potentially be used as living currency, but paradoxically on the condition that the person would be considered as a supernumerary without value. In other words “L’argent, c’est de la merde.”

The voluptuous emotion that many European citizens feel concerning the migrants, because they depend

9 Pierre Klossowski, *Living Currency* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1970), 129. Originally titled *La Monnaie vivante*.

10 Foucault describes *Living Currency* as “the greatest book of our times,” explaining “it’s so great a book that everything else falls back and only counts half as much anymore. That was precisely what we should have been thinking about: desire, value, and simulacrum—the triangle that dominates us, and, starting so many centuries ago, has constituted us throughout our history.”

11 Pierre Klossowski, *Living Currency*, 23.

on their good will, is key in human social and political exchanges. In this perspective, the process of socialization contains the “numeraire,” the basic standard of value, and the surnumery, the basic standard on non-value. Published in *Esprit* with the title “Who Is My Neighbour?”,¹² in this text Klossowski claims that popular sovereignty is “a simulacrum of the death of God.” In 1944, he became active in la Cimade, a protestant movement of assistance, and became chaplain in a camp near Clermont-Ferrand. At that time, Spanish (republican) refugees and displaced persons lived there.

In his essay “The Stranger,” Simmel writes, “the stranger, like the poor and like sundry ‘inner enemies,’ is an element of the group itself.”¹³ But he is perceived as a debtor. The philosophy of money allows one to figure out that migrants’ issues are not only about space but also about time. In other words, their life, their own time, is completely suspended to grotesque administrative decisions. Counterfeiture and bankruptcy are not only financial issues but social and political ones.¹⁴ Too often, no credit is given to migrant’s words. Furthermore, because of the speculation which is one of the pillars of social behaviours, European people also refuse to give credit to migrants as if they were unable to reimburse what they could receive from them. They refuse to give them any time. To preserve the idea, or rather the illusion, of a

social order and stability, going as far as to talk about predestination—as if society has been made especially for them. Europeans come to social relationships with a wide range of skills, representations, and phantasms, and, consequently, expectations. They speculate about others’ capacity for repayment as if they were bankers giving their hospitality as a credit which must be reimbursed with interest on amounts to be remitted. It is usurious. “Remember me ! As a stranger give it welcome.”

—Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 1, Scene 5.

12 Pierre Klossowski, “Les Forces De Haine Qui Est Mon Prochain?,” *Esprit*, December 1938, <https://esprit.presse.fr/article/klossowski-pierre/les-forces-de-haine-qui-est-mon-prochain-33889>, accessed August 4, 2020.

13 Georg Simmel and Kurt Wolff trans., “The Stranger” in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (New York: Free Press, 1950), 402–408.

14 Influenced by Jean-Joseph Goux, the author of *The Coiners of Language* (1984), Jacques Derrida wrote *Given Time, Counterfeit Money* (1991).

This form is the basis of such a special case, for instance, as the tax levied in Frankfurt and elsewhere upon medieval Jews. Whereas the *Beede* [tax] paid by the Christian citizen changed with the changes of his fortune, it was fixed once and for all for every single Jew. This fixity rested on the fact that the Jew had his social position as a Jew, not as the individual bearer of certain objective contents. Every other citizen was the owner of a particular amount of property, and his tax followed its fluctuations. But the Jew as a taxpayer was, in the first place, a Jew, and thus his tax situation had an invariable element. This same position appears most strongly, of course, once even these individual characterizations (limited though they were by rigid invariance) are omitted, and all strangers pay an altogether equal head-tax.¹⁵

The European policy about “migrants” is a long story...

15 Georg Simmel and Kurt Wolf, “The Stranger,” 1950.

OF INHOSPITALTY

DENISE FERREIRA DA SILVA

Since human beings do not, in the pursuit of their endeavors, follow merely their instincts as do animals, and yet also do not, as would rational citizens of the world, proceed in accordance with a previously arranged plan, it does not seem possible to present a systematic history of them. (...) When confronted with this, one does not know, in the end, how one ought to conceive of our species, one so thoroughly conceited about its own superiority. The only option for the philosopher here, since he cannot presuppose that human beings pursue any rational end of their own in their endeavors, is that he attempts to discover an end of nature behind this absurd course of human activity, an end on the basis of which a history could be given of beings that proceed without a plan of their own, but nevertheless according to a definite plan of nature.

—Immanuel Kant¹

For hundreds of years, those arriving in Europe from Asia, the Middle East, and the African continent have been anything but strangers to Europeans. Focus on the last five hundred years and their being long time acquaintances is even more evident in coloniality, that is, the juridical architecture capital put in place to facilitate and protect access to the commodities, lands, and labor needed for subsistence and growth found outside of Europe. For almost two hundred years, the colonial juridic architecture has been joined by an ethical framework, the political-symbolic tools of raciality; that is, the arsenal of knowledge that has named and explained the mental (moral and intellectual) by linking them to physical characteristics,

thereby providing justification for conquest, enslavement, and imprisonment. For this reason, it is interesting that when writing about an earlier iteration of what has been called the “refugee crisis,” Jacques Derrida chose to take duty as

1 Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology, History, and Education (The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant)*, eds. R. Louden and G. Zoller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 108–109.

the ethical descriptor for hospitality (absolute hospitality) and to present that figure of an absolute (nameless, homeless) “other”—Levinas’ *Autrui*, which remains without representation—as the one to whom it applies.² It is as if even the demand for the legal or moral obligation (deontological) to hospitality to the racial other is something unthinkable and unwritable as a philosophical exercise, even though when writing about hospitality, Derrida was referring to the others of Europe for whom, he charged, cities of refuge ought to be built. Even as he was doing so, Kantian moral philosophy helped as its non-commitment to external causes and consequences did not clash with the choice to not foreground coloniality and raciality.

What is it about coloniality and raciality that renders both philosophically inarticulable, even when called for in writing hospitality towards refugees from outside of the European continent and its settler colonial satellites, as an ethical demand? What I have here is not an answer but a guide for understanding the question. For a while I have been convinced that only a radical shift in thinking is necessary if we are to assemble the critical tools able to expose how capital is properly global, that is, racial, which also means that its accumulation is dependent on colonial modality of governance. Now, this task requires more than an attention to current global events or an engagement with modern philosophy. Beyond critique, but in addition to (not in lieu of) it, these notes enact the refusal of the image of the world comprehended by the tools of understanding; and, yet, at the same time—and for the reason it engages Derrida—they also register a sense of urgency and the need to move beyond the cycle of “universalist” (such as the human rights regime that has prevailed in the past 30 years or so) and “particularist” (such as the conservative identity-based one that announced itself with the Brexit vote and Trump’s election in 2016) trends that have characterized the past two hundred years.

What follows is meant as a contribution to the task of releasing our imagination, and with it, our image of

2 Emmanuel Levinas, *Basic Philosophical Writings* (Bloomington, IN and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996), 62.

global existence, from this limited mode of thinking—a task that includes but is not reduced to exposing and dissolving the tools of empirical knowledge that produce this world (its existents and events) as the play of necessity. As a small contribution to this collective and necessarily collaborative task, in this piece I stage a posthumous conversation with Derrida, through which I attempt to advance a case that any relevant ethical program for this world—that is, one leading to its end—requires an attention to coloniality and raciality. Now such a move must (via intention) lead to the dislodging of the “deep structures” of modern thinking, for in those structures resides the reason why colonial and racial violence—from which so many today risk their lives crossing dangerous waters and lands—remain impervious to the sharpest weapons in our critical apparatus and the strongest terms in our ethical indictments.

THE ETHICAL SCENE OF LAW

Hospitality, in this situation, is not offered to an anonymous new arrival, to someone who has neither name, nor patronym, nor family, nor social status, and who is therefore treated not as a foreigner but as another barbarian. We have alluded to this: one of the subtle and sometimes ungraspable differences between the foreigner and the absolute other is that the latter cannot have a name or a family name; the absolute or unconditional hospitality I would like to offer him* or her* presupposes a break with hospitality in the ordinary sense, with conditional hospitality, with the right to or pact of hospitality. In saying this, we are taking account of an irreducible perversity. The law of hospitality, the expressed law that governs the general concept of hospitality, appears as a paradoxical law, perversity or perverting. It seems to dictate that absolute hospitality should break with the law of hospitality as right or duty, with the “pact” of hospitality.

To put it in different terms, absolute hospitality requires that I open my home and that I give not only to the foreigner (provided with a family name, with the social status of being a foreigner, etc.), but to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other; and that I give place to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive and take space in the place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names. The law of absolute hospitality commands a break with hospitality by right, with law or justice as rights.³

Anyone who has read Kant's essay *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose* (1784) has a sense of the implications of his statement that, even though the human is both a natural and a "rational being," "the moral law" (the law of freedom), not the "empirical laws" (the natural laws of necessity), matters to the knowledge of the human.⁴ As late as 1784, the thesis of a fundamental difference between the human and other existing things was not yet settled; hence, rationality, that which is said to distinguish the human, had yet to be given its own stage of realization, namely history. To be sure, this framing of universal history, as a perfecting process—the workings of sequentiality as expressed under the terms development or progress—which would end up with the realization of human predispositions, does not challenge that basic statement about the fundamental difference between the human and other existing things. For this reason, in the last quarter of the 18th century, Kant could only hope to postulate that the human's unique natural trait will lead to the submission of their instincts—their "unsociable sociality" as he calls it—even as these are presented in the political organization, the state, and would lead to the constitution of an interstate cosmopolitan order.

3 Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to respond, ed. Anne Dufourmantelle (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000). Originally published as *De l'hospitalité: Anne Dufourmantelle invite Jacques Derrida à répondre* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1997), 25.

4 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1788).

In the presentation of this hypothesis in his famous book *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*—in particular the “third definitive article of perpetual peace,” I find a statement that seems to inspire Derrida’s writings on hospitality: “The right of a stranger not to be treated with hostility when he arrives on someone else’s territory (...) so long as he conducts himself peaceably,” Kant states, “is not a right to be treated as a guest (...) but a right of resort.”⁵ For Kant, this is a law of nature, “for all men are entitled to present themselves in the society of others by virtue of their right to communal possession of the earth’s surface. Since the earth is a globe, they cannot disperse over an infinite area but must necessarily tolerate one another’s company.” Precisely this right, which may lead those who live far away to come in contact with one another, “may eventually be regulated by public laws, thus bringing the human race nearer and nearer to a cosmopolitan constitution.”⁶ Near, but not quite there because this remains an ultimate end which Kant sees near the end of the 18th century still very distant when observing European “commercial states:” “If we compare with this ultimate end the *inhospitable* conduct of the civilised states of our continent, especially the commercial states, the injustice which they display in *visiting* foreign countries and peoples (which in their case is the same as *conquering* them) seems appallingly great. America, the negro countries, the Spice Islands, the Cape, were looked up at the time of their discovering as ownerless territories; for the native inhabitants were counted as nothing.”⁷ Without a “natural” (in the empirical sense) basis for explaining “the litany of evils” European commercial states brought upon the members of the “human race” they conquered, Kant’s commentary here leaves open the in-

terpretation that he thought that the cosmopolitan order to come would include the “native inhabitants” of these lands.

From the circumstance of existing within the limits of a globe, Kant derived a natural right which, because of how “mankind’s” predispositions develop

5 Immanuel Kant, *Kant: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 105–106.

6 Ibid., 106.

7 Ibid., italics in the original.

over time, would or could eventually come under positive law, in a cosmopolitan order. This construction responds to Derrida's description of hospitality in the juridical scene, as "conditional hospitality" in reference to the foreigner when defined as against the citizen. However, I am not sure how it supports his writing of hospitality in the ethical scene. I am skeptical for two reasons: one, which I cannot elaborate now and has to do with how this right to visitation is connected to the right to possession, that I think is a competing right to be decided by positive law; the other, which has to do with Kant's moral law itself and how it is not contingent on anything other than the human being as a transcendent "rational" thing; in other words, it has to do with how, unlike a natural right to visitation, his moral law is not contingent upon the fact that humans physically (as immanent things) exist on a finite sphere. What I find here is a distinction between the "natural" and the "moral," which is predicated on a third element, the empirical, that is not elaborated in the text. Interestingly, there are two referents of the empirical here: one, which is not mentioned, that which in the human is not rational and the other, which is mentioned, the globe in which humans live. Both referents are encapsulated in the notions of racial and cultural difference that have been deployed in descriptions of today's and past "refugee crisis." For, what raciality has accomplished was precisely to find a natural (in the empirical or scientific sense) basis for (ethically) justifying the violence European commercial states visited upon the "native inhabitants" from the lands conquered by European commercial states; precisely those who now arrive on European shores fleeing the wars of global capital.

Fortunately, I do not need to review Kant's moral philosophy and the intricacies of his notion of moral law to present this point here. The ethical significance that the empirical would acquire becomes obvious when we recall how careful Kant is when he distinguishes between his use of the notion of law in natural philosophy and moral philosophy. For, the former is the domain of empirical knowledge, where determination is an effect necessity and the latter is the domain

of practical (action) knowledge, where determination is an effect of freedom. Lacking an articulation of the empirical, Kant's account of the natural right to visitation turning into a positive law of hospitality does not challenge this distinction that protects the human from the force of the laws of necessity that interest science. For the passage from natural law to positive law, insofar as it is contingent on the human's rational part, remains transcendent—irrespective of any physical (empirical) aspect—even if it results from the spatial limits of a sphere.

THE ETHICAL SCENE OF LIFE

This pact, this contract of hospitality that links to the foreigner and which reciprocally links to the foreigner and which *reciprocally* links the foreigner, it's a question of knowing whether it counts beyond the individual and if it also extends to the family, to the generation, to the genealogy. It is not, here, although the things are connected, a question of the classical problem of the right to nationality or citizenship as a *birthright*—in some places linked to the land and in others to blood. It is not only a question of the link between birth and nationality; it is not only a question of the citizenship offered to someone who had none previously, but of the right granted to the foreigner as such, to the foreigner remaining a foreigner, and to his or her relatives, to the family, to the descendants.⁸

Whether Kant had the whole planet in mind when postulating that the geographical limits of human existence would bring about a cosmopolitan order, it had already become an irrelevant issue about one century after the publication of his *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*. By then sequentially—and with it linear temporality, which is said to be the distinguishing

8 Jacques Derrida,
Of Hospitality, 21–23.

onto-epistemological attribute of the rational thing⁹—had been deployed in descriptions of the world and everything existing in it as an empirical domain, or the play of necessity as it operates in the laws of positive science. In both Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) and Cuvier’s *The Animal Kingdom* (1817), the human (respectively mind and body) guides descriptions of the world (as History and Nature, that is, in Time and Space) as empirical evidence of an End or Final Cause. Both Hegel’s and Cuvier’s renderings of life, in the register of the final causes, are constitutive of the ethical scene of life and fundamentally distinct from the Kantian ethical scene of moral law (or duty), in which morality unfolds in the register of efficient causes. Exploring that which in Kant appeared as hope, Hegel and Cuvier provide elaborations on the notion of the human as a subject presented as a collective entity, which unfolds in time, in the historical transcendent (teleological) time of the Spirit of a nation and in the scientific immanent (finite) of the body of the human species. Existing in time, these two figurings of the human differ from the Kantian formal presentation of the human being and of humanity.

What these accounts of life provide is how Historical and Scientific reason determine the human as an immanent unity of a multiplicity (something Kant would not do, as his humanity, in so far as it is an attribute of existing individuals, refers to their being rational things, and, as such to their pertaining in the realm of ends, the homeplace of reason and freedom). On the one hand, Hegel’s

nation’s Spirit is a collective but particular moment of development of Spirit, in its trajectory which is human history. On the other hand, each member of the human species, the one whose organs and functions are mapped out by comparative anatomy and evolution, are placed at the apex and is the coda for knowing everything else that has ever made part of Nature.¹⁰ As I have demonstrated elsewhere, the arsenal of raciality becomes both necessary

9 For a discussion of sequentiality as well as of the other two (separability and determinacy) onto-epistemological pillars of modern, thought see Denise Ferreira da Silva, “On Difference Without Separability” in *32nd Bienal de São Paulo—Incerteza Viva. Catalogue*, eds. Jochen Volz and Júlia Rebouças (São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo), 57–65.

10 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

and possible after these two writings of the human did two things: the Hegelian opened the possibility that the difference between Europe and the rest of the world would eventually dissipate as Spirit followed its self-actualizing trajectory and the science of life finally articulated a concept that allowed for the deployment of scientific reason in the production of knowledge of human conditions.¹¹ Something that Kant did not find necessary or desirable. In sum, both versions of life would inform post-Enlightenment thinking—in particular the scientific projects assembled in the 19th century, such as the sciences of man and society, that articulated raciality as a descriptor of the human.

Both mark the onto-epistemological shift that enabled the confection of raciality, the arsenal of empirical tools of knowledge that comprehend those Derrida proposes should be treated as the “absolute other.” For the very simple reason that they do not fulfill the main criteria for absolute otherness, namely, they are not “anonymous” new arrivals and someone who has neither name, nor patronym, nor family, nor social status. For this reason, the empirical must not be ignored in considerations of a global ethical program. Nevertheless, unlike Kant, contemporary philosophers like Derrida, with his actualization of the ideal of a cosmopolitan order, seem incapable of thinking by taking into account colonial and racial violence. That is, they seem unable to conceive of an ethical program that begins with the acknowledgment that (a) the “facts” of colonial violence have sustained capital in all of its prevailing forms (merchant, industrial, and financial) over time and (b) the “signs” of racial signification, since the late 19th century, have supported what in Kant’s text appears as a contradiction, namely, that European “civilized states” visited total violence upon those described as racially and culturally different human beings. For this reason, an attention to coloniality and raciality exposes the precarity of Derrida’s distinctions between conditional and unconditional hospitality, between the pact of hospitality and the law of hospitality, that is, the distinction that allows him to present the call for a “law of absolute

11 Denise Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

hospitality” as a radical one. For, what coloniality and raciality tell us is that what is needed is not to accept or tolerate “the other” without knowing or asking “their” name; the radical ethical gesture is to attend to (a) how that which “the other” seeks when they come here is only available because of the violence visited in the places from which they flee and (b) how the very naming of “the other” as such, that is, not “I” or “us,” constitutes a visiting of the same violence upon “the other” among “us.”

My point here is that any ethical program that takes upon global capital must engage the ethical scene of life, in particular in this moment when its “particularist” political-symbolic tools are being activated so as to facilitate yet another shift in the workings of the state. Each articulation of life produces a mode of delimiting the zone of deployment of the modern ethical program. On the one hand, the historic rendering of life, as articulated in the notion of the nation (both the Hegelian and the pre-Enlightenment one), yields proper names and refers to other places, languages, and modes of life, which would correspond to the ones Derrida finds in the juridico-political notion of hospitality. On the other hand, the scientific rendering of life, articulated in the tools of raciality (through the post-Enlightenment concepts of race and culture) also yields names in the form of categories (Black/Africa, Europe/White, Indian/American, Asian) which do not correspond to the ones Derrida finds in the juridico-political notion of hospitality. More importantly, because these terms name non-white/non-European human collectives and the cultural (moral) traits said to be signified in their bodies, which renders them neither the absolute other nor the neighbor nor a relative (European descendants in the Americas, the Pacific, and elsewhere). For this reason, neither of the figurings of hospitality Derrida proposed adequately describes the ethical demand from the racial other of Europe. Named by the authority of the tools of European scientific knowledge, that is, *necessity*, these foreigners blamed by this latest European crisis demand another question and a different formulation of the ethical problem. I hope this short commentary helps in the composing of both.

MONUMENT
TO RECENT
ENEMIES¹

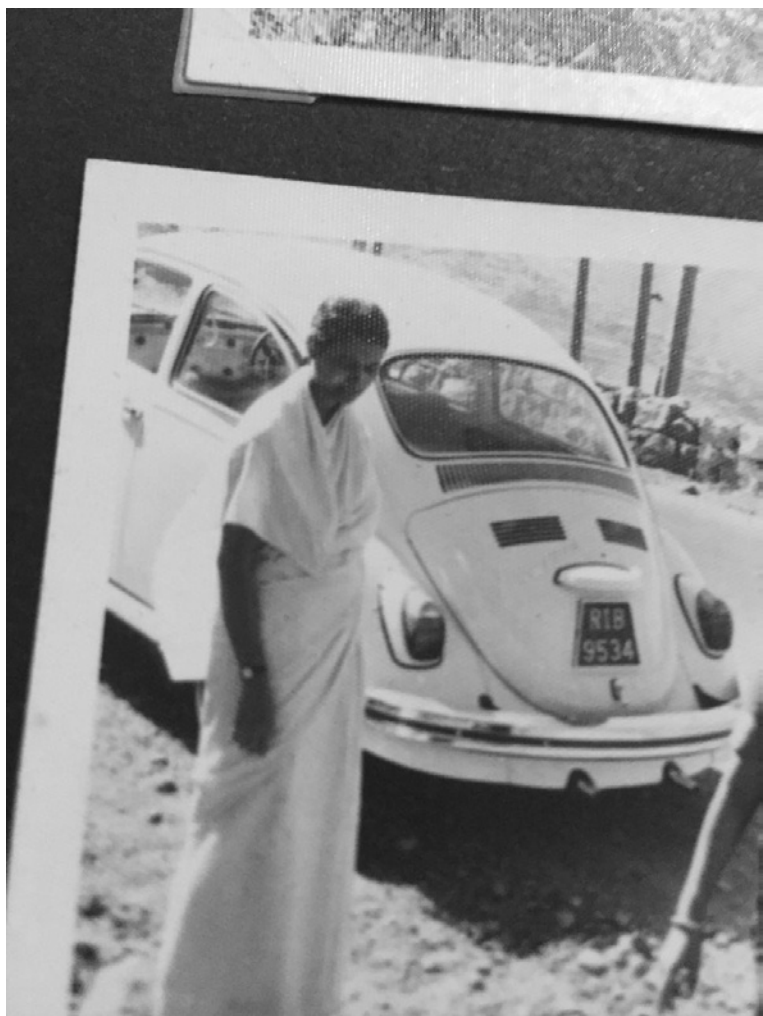
NAEEM MOHAJEMEN



An architect awaiting death stumbles onto a Manhattan teeming with camp survivors. At least in the 1970s, there were survivors. Still alive, still remembering. In Michael Chabon's slim book, a parrot recites the numbers of death trains. In William Goldman's novel, a merchant's arm reveals camp numbers.

What was Lotte thinking that morning, while rehearsing her lines? What was Hanif Kureishi doing when he had Shashi Kapoor meet the Bengali couple? An archetypal Bollywood actor, playing an exiled Pakistani dictator. Murtaza Vali wrote in 2011 of Dustin Hoffman's Babe, "a hapless history student studying for a Ph.D., an erstwhile stand-in..."

1 From a talk given at SAVVY in June 2018.



This is the Volkswagen in which my father drove from a camp in Pakistan to the airfield in 1973. A Fokker Friendship plane chartered by the German or Swiss or British aid agencies was going to take us to a new country. The car would be left behind.



My mother vomited repeatedly from the window of the car as we drove, but my father would not stop or slow down. It was some kind of homecoming, as the idea of Pakistan was leaving her body. The car was given away, or sold, for a very small price. When you leave a country in a rush, you have little bargaining power.

There is another New York, the one in *Marathon Man* where an old Jewish New Yorker explodes himself and Szell's brother, because the latter made the mistake of speaking German—*langsamer, langsamer*. Where an insistent Volkswagen reminds us that this will always be a German car. The *Volk* of the brand means “people” in German, but it also stretches to *völkisch*, or “ethnic.” A ghost insists, the Volk of Volkswagen is always *völkisch*. KdF will always extend to *Kraft durch Freude*.

Strength Through Joy



Diamonds are a drag on the market: everyone sells diamonds; there are diamonds everywhere. The script of *Casablanca* claims that “The Moor” says these words. The desperate seller is simply described as “The Woman.”

The word “Moor” was not yet *verboden* in polite conversation.

The reason so many have difficulty with the phrase “white people” is that they are used to “white” being the default definition of “people.” It should not require the clarification, they say.



In old age, Lotte divorced her husband when he wanted to return to die in Germany. Better to be alone than to return. She died the same year.

The survivor and witness: messy in real life, also unresolved in fiction.



That year, around September, people started leaving. First in small numbers, then in droves, and finally, by the end, in panic.

The psychiatrist's family was one of the lucky ones. They had understood early on that he would be made unwelcome. His theory of maternal affection and paternal infidelity had made the city famous. He had named his method after the city, inspired by long walks he took in the forest—to think, to clear his head.

All that thinking, but the storm of war eluded his sight.

Now there were rumblings that his books had made the city notorious, a magnet for those falling off the edge of the world. His family sold the good furniture and the jewels to cover the Atlantic passage. His small wooden container of cocaine and needles remained unsold.



My grandfather was always pained to say, *this house we bought it in 1950*. So it was not a “distress sale.” He wanted even his grandchildren to know, *I didn’t do it. I did not force a Hindu family out of the city. I did not profit from the exodus. I did not participate in making home suddenly unwelcoming.*

For those who had distress practiced on their bodies and homes, what are their possibilities?

The university professor picked up a rock and threw it at the dreaded wall. The university, being an institution where money talks too much, took disciplinary action against him, based on a photo of one moment.

It was messaged, *those forced into exile do not have the right to take up stones.*

What remains is, forgiveness?



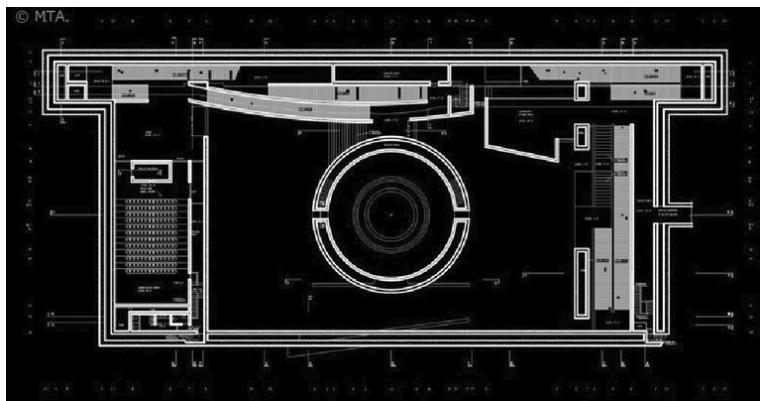
Tan Zi Hao said: *The dogma at present, judging from the many scenes of forgiveness, is to hasten an answer. As if forgiveness must be called for to “move on,” to bypass the odd crumbs of history. But the politics of forgiveness is irreducible to a catechism of pardon or punish; it is not a zero-sum game, it seldom yields a genuine answer, and always it arrives as a response without an answer.*

Today, axiomatic verdicts abound: forgiveness is necessary for the greater good; it is time to move on; so on and so forth. These sentiments refuse to engage with politics, politically, right when the stakes are high. But it is precisely in such an unprecedented moment of regime change that one must not be content with answerable questions.

Derrida claims, *Each time forgiveness is at the service of a finality [...], each time that it aims to re-establish a normality, then the ‘forgiveness’ is not pure - nor is its concept.*²

2 Tan Zi Hao, “On the Politics of Forgiving Mahathir,” *MalaysiaKini*, May 31, 2018, <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/427688>, accessed August 4, 2020.

One day, an invitation arrived for an exhibition. A rethinking of an exhibition from six decades ago. The original show, held in a museum ten years after the end of the Great War, had as its premise a thinking of tomorrow. This is the tomorrow of the distant future, not the near decades. In the first decade of the Cold War, the optimism of the future was formed around forms of architecture and engineering. This was techno-utopia, the hope against experience that we would build our way to an enlightened future. Walls of a curvature that did not exist yet in geometry; cars with levitation powers unknown to aeronautics; the liberated relations between genders and beyond binaries.



For the re-enactment, the architect I spoke to had experience in national monuments. She and her partner had designed the national monument to the war dead. The monument took an extraordinarily long time to open. The bureaucracy choked the project's pace in the way of long and faceless processes. Anonymity meant there was a towel on the civil servant's chairback, but nobody could be held responsible. Eventually there was a change in government, and the monument was stopped. It took five years, another election, until the monument was approved.

Talking about this future project, I asked her, what if we designed a monument to our enemies? Those people, we said, spoke a strange language. *Funny, that is the same thing they said about our way of speaking.* They were tall and fierce, they said; we were small and gentle, we said.

What could a monument to our recent enemies look like: what would forgiveness feel like? Could we imagine that as a future we want to live in? Not flying cars, reanimated humans, or curved buildings. Forgiving as a human condition of the future.

In Mahmood Rahman's *Killing The Water*, he writes of that time we surrounded the enemy village and burnt everyone alive. In Manosh Chowdhury's *Ali Bihari'r Kombol*, the warm winter shawl is the dead man's discarded clothes. The spoils of war can be that mundane.

The monument plans are on hold. We may not build it for the exhibition. A film script asked: *is it safe*. It is not safe yet, not yet time for forgiving enemies. We will live to see the science of the future long before the human of the future.

Levitation is always part of the future.

Luce deLire³ reminded me that in Paul B. Preciado's letter to the ancien régime, he describes himself thus, *I am as far removed ('loin de') from your aesthetics of heterosexuality as a Buddhist monk levitating in Lhasa is from a Carrefour supermarket. This is not an accident.*⁴

3 Luce DeLire, "L'Ancien Régime Strikes Back: Letter to Paul B. Preciado," *e-flux*, January 8, 2018, <https://conversations.e-flux.com/t/l-ancien-regime-strikes-back-letter-to-paul-b-preciado/7566>, accessed August 4, 2020.

4 Paul B. Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*, trans. Bruce Benderson (New York: The Feminist Press, 2013).

A paradigmatic image of the Vietnam protests—flowers inside rifles—was taken during a performance by the yippies in 1967. The performance was called: “levitate the pentagon.” Luce suggests *“levitation” to be (partially) bound up in (post) colonial fantasies; drawing a line from imperialism enabled infusion of hippie culture with Buddhism and ancient rites to Preciado’s idea of “removal from the aesthetics of heterosexuality” as equivalent to “spiritual enlightenment / levitation.”*

Back to: *Levitation is always part of the future.* I am still thinking of what it means to forgive our enemies, and to do so when we are in a position of “power.” This power itself is a position some want to reject. A triumphalism of the global south, of the *rest of the world*, would not necessarily bring liberation with it. As we have seen in the near past, the anti-west also carries within it the toxins it fights against. A smooth brown fist in a velvet glove can still crush our communities, and can do so while employing rhetoric that sounds like ours.

I am wondering now about my architect friend. Whether we would be able to build that monument.

The record (of remembering) is not over yet.

The *foundationClass' non-Cafeteria of the Academy of Misery (first table)

Miriam Schickler & Ulf Aminde

■ situation with ^{three} ~~four~~ voices

+ many resonances!

the host:

If this would be my institution, if I would be the host

If I would welcome everyone here. if I Would open up the next few days.
I wouldn't sing the tune, the melody but I'd give the opening act.

I would say maybe:

Dear all the others, dear ladies, dear gentlemen,

First of all, to welcome the bodies, the actual subject of the whole trial, it seems to me. For all the world pretends that there is simply no room for these very bodies. Like this one: "Sorry, we don't have enough chairs, not enough plates, not enough bread - an ancient German fairy tale.

So first of all: Hello EVERYBODY!

Welcome to all the bodies!

Bodies in motion now seem to permanently evoke affects. For some, enthusiasm, interest, love, for many many others, panic, anger, envy.

So I would like to welcome the bodies first.

Open the door: Come in!

And then the info: I'm only a guest here myself. Luckily.

But what would I say as a host?

Hosting has meant so far: to establish, with a broad or false smile, the rules to be followed by the guest, the reglement decides where a name is determined: guest and thus its value is determined. How the guest should appear and how guests should speak. How the guest is not allowed to speak, how the body is allowed to move and above all: where. ?

So, what can I say if I am invited to be both a guest and a host?

Maybe like this:

Welcome to Wedding, Berlin. Welcome to the wedding. Workers district.
Welcome to work.

Germany was never famous for its hospitality. Nor for ^{its} his weddings. A place more to do with death than with friendship. Instead of weddings, more like the death and the girl.

the host:

Because the German host likes to make decisions, sets the rules, but is above all: afraid. A creature with no resources. Little space, little sun. Far from living a Derrida'sche form of hosting. So to look nothing in the eye and not even wanting to know the name of the guest. Not to impose any conditions and not to read out any claims and rules as to what has to be.

Instead, always and everywhere the same questions: what does this evening cost ~~me~~ me? Are there any suitable business cards? Any leftover food I can use tomorrow? Above all: when are you leaving again, guest? So he was a torn landlord, that German.

THE question

So what would I say if I didn't want to reproduce that? If I wasn't willing to collect debts? Because no one would have been guilty? Because the question of what you are giving me and what would I be willing to give you? A coming together that does not just consist of causal relationships. An institution beyond causality would be necessary. No new banking house. We have to build many institutions and invent new ones. We need inns, not homes. Rooms, not fences. But walls against hostilities, against violence, against terror, against normalisation of hatred. I would say so. I'd try to put it that way. That's not so easy. Just because I'm the hostess, I couldn't just say it. This is a contradiction in being against the violence inherent in the institutions, in taking action against them and at the same time in setting up institutions. to have to represent them, too. But I will start from this contradiction. Don't cover up the contradiction. So if I were to speak, I would assume this contradiction. The inn is the real capital. We are the utility value.

*Let's make
this contradiction
productive!*

So I would say: one inn against all the confusion. Starting from the contradiction but addressing it against the present: I'd try that. So I would say to my guests: we urgently need to consider - together - where the door should go, where the windows, the tables and chairs, in short: how it should go on. And: We would have to take care of our cellars, the basement above all. Make sure that there are places where not every lamp shines, we need non-transparent places.

Luckily you're all here now, I'd say thank you for coming. Into darkness. (For you bring much light into the darkness) And I know what effort was involved and I try to respect it as best I can. Unfortunately, we have little time to rest. We need a relatively large number of new strategies relatively quickly. We want to communicate how we use institutions or invent new ones! that I would say - this institution here, for example, is a future form. An inn "to the end of the world". A much-needed self-invention that sustains and communicates itself.

But I'm worried, I would say to you, that we won't make any progress in art and through the arts with colorfully painted fabrics and everything a little nicer. I am concerned that it is no longer enough to dance against madness, even if this is a lot and was already more conceivable than before. But I have the impression that we must develop a new form of struggle.

the host:

If it is with colors and dance then in any case also with a new form of determination and I have the impression that it is about going into the institutions, a Trojan or with an open visor. Or to invent new institutions like this one. Q

So I'd like to talk about violence. The violence that structures our democracies here - and by this I mean not only the current domestic police violence, which is only one form of government, the governance and behaviour of a so-called crisis as a normal state - by this I mean above all the violence that has always been ingrained in our democracies, ~~in~~ ^{with which} which we have outsourced ~~it~~ to other parts of the world, mostly the more southern ones. The so-called Western democracies have benefited immensely from this and continue to do so today.

And I would like to talk about the powers ^{with which} we will oppose this. I would like to talk about the powers ~~we~~ are going to oppose this.

So I would welcome you to work. As I said, welcome to Wedding. So I would say: we will be a hidden, dancing, intertwined, stuttering, celebrating, banqueting, laughing, infiltrating, spun, scurried, sounded - not straight, not masculine, not supremacist, not patriarchal, not transparent class. The class I would welcome here, the guests in the „Gasthaus zum Ende der Welt“ are not a class with a common fetish, but unequal with various fetishes.

So I would say: those who cannot build new institutions should take the existing ones, infiltrate, occupy, inhabit, change them. Let us absorb everything here, I would say, take as much as possible with us, let us stuff our bags full and then let's get it out, dear friends, and back into all your contexts I would say, let us build new rooms, new institutions or occupy the existing ones, undermine them, undermine them with our impatience.

So I would say:

So I would welcome everyone here with a toast to the left and a cold shoulder to the right. Solidarity, sisterhood, because we would all be here because we see the need to create new institutions against the global authoritarian switch. I'd say there are many opponents, many opposers. Come in, come in so we can get to work.

the servant:

Allow me also to say a few words to you, ähhhm...I am already working here.... I poured you that glass of wine earlier. I held the door open for you when you came in here a little late. It was me who cleaned the room and prepared everything, it was me who made all the phone calls and wrote messages for the artists. I've been here for days, weeks, I'm actually always here. I want this to happen just like you. I was looking forward to her. Now they're in charge of what to do with it, don't you think? But honestly, I would've done it if they didn't make anything of it. That's my connection to this institution here. Which I embody in that I use my body for it so that there is space here for example also for them. But don't get me wrong. I just don't want any thanks here. No way! That would be an insult. Don't bother me with that. I

the servant:

So I'm more likely to thank you for actually coming. You can't imagine what a happy feeling it is when the shop here becomes independent. All this preparation which then suddenly becomes a vehicle that takes up a course with everyone and nobody knows exactly where the journey is going but everyone is happy that it is going. Aren't institutions vehicles? But who steers them? All of us or the guests or the hosts? Don't we all want to have a go?

I clean the wheels and the mudguards every day so that there is a possibility shining up. A possibility of visibility, vulnerability, I don't mean it romantically, I mean it exactly like that.

Vulnerability - vulnerable institutions need people to take care of ^{them} and that is what I do and have decided for myself. Exactly - it's a job - but a self-determined one. A self-help store. Now we help ourselves, we build here rooms in which we help ourselves, by the way also rooms in which we find protection. It is sometimes very uncomfortable outside. ^{safety}

And the only relationship one can have with the structures one gives oneself ^{to} is to use them as a screen to do anything other than what the economy allows. So it means agreeing to this use, this distance.

Again:

The only relationship one can have with the structures one gives oneself ^{to} is to use them as a screen to do anything other than what the economy allows. So it means to agree with this use, this distance.

Okay... thanks for letting me talk once. If I could sing, I would have sung a song, a workers' song. I love my work. I just thought I'd say this to you, you're sitting on the chairs I set up here earlier.

I did this for myself and my own ethics. This isn't for you. But you can make something out of it. But you don't have to. Do what you want. I'll do it too.

the guest:

Dear Host and Institution, dear employees, dear workers and lovers, I'm sitting in the middle. In the midst of all, between all the other chairs, I am also a guest here among guests. When all are guests, all are equal. Thank you very much for inviting me. What do you want from me now? What call do I hear? What do I have to do as a guest? Could I also come as a host? But for now - OK I am one of your guests, as a guest I also want to say something.

A big thank you for this invitation. But I would like to question the huge weight of responsibility which comes along with it. The question about the call, am I the guest able to hear it? From where is it coming? Who belongs to the call, who belongs to this voice? Am I able to respond? Do I really have a voice? As a guest, yes maybe and is there also another way to speak up? Am I allowed to raise my voice to also examine in a critical way the invitation? Is there a chance to get invited without someone waiting to fulfill the hosts desire? Which right do I own as the guest? How can I (do I have to?) participate? Which law do I have to refer to? Can this institution be a shelter for my desire?

the guest:

Guest in Germany, guests in Berlin- Wedding. Work has already been discussed here. Guest workers in Germany were people who came here to work as guests. They were taken or came by themselves because they wanted to and could work. They wanted to support their loved ones, their children and their neighbours. They were employed here in Germany from the 50/60s to serve the so-called upswing. So what right did they have, but above all what right did the hosts have to call them guest workers?

The word guest originally meant spirit or ghost in German. So they were ghostly workers, and that was exactly how it was meant: they should remain „fleeing, fugitive“. Go back again!

But these people knew how to help themselves! They were working on their own guest concept. They behaved as if they were playing the game, but at the same time they are working on a completely new concept of being a guest. They work on moving from ghost into reality in order to be accepted as a body and to remain so. Once this is achieved, there are no longer any hosts, only the community of bodies in a common space. Instead of confirming the real hosts by being a subservient guest, they do not care about the role assigned to them.

They do their own thing and become people who live here. For this we can admire them, for this knowledge, this ability. Knowing what it takes to live under these conditions. They're reaming the situation for their concerns, so why not? We can all learn from them. And didn't we all come together to change things for our own good? It's about how these new, future guests arrange themselves together, everyone is a guest on the planet, that's something. The new role of the hosts is the whole globe, but what does he want from us? Back to the guest workers working on the future guest term. Some here see the „embodiment“ of the „spirits“ and thus their staying a thorn in their side. In Germany there are deep inscribed hostilities and hatred and rejection and devaluation and violence. And there are people who make these new bodies their enemies and attack them. They tried to kill the bodies of the guest workers or even ~~made it~~ ^{made it}. A few, too few, are currently being brought to justice in Munich. But it is not those who, as actual hosts of the guest workers, the ghost workers, are responsible.

Racist terror aims to wipe out bodies. The apparatus of racism also knows more subtle forms of disappearance. The terror of the NSU would not have worked without drawing on a racist knowledge repertoire of German society: stereotypes reproduced in the media. Traditional everyday racism. #metwo Collusion between state and neo-Nazi structures. Lack of empathy. The inability to talk about racism as a society-forming structure and practices. The NSU attack was directed at the entire postmigrant society. But did we all see it as an attack? So who is this we?

from the outside: Why am I not invited?

Knock-Knock

~ Who's there?

The other.

~ The other who?

The absolutely other,

the other you expect not to be expecting, !

the other you're not waiting for,

The uninvited.

My admission to this space is confined through rules that confirm your authority. ?

You can only invite me if you categorize me down, *early*
narrow me down

so that I can fulfill your expectations,

so that I can fill the seat that you assigned to me

so I'm socially acceptable

and not too disturbing,

nor too discordant.

Am I too much?

Am I too much, too long, too many, too subversive, too voluble, too insistent, too loud, too strident, too much-too-much, too complex, too hybrid, too convoluted, too disrespectful, too irreducible, too antagonistic, too insistent, too insistent, too insistent, too repetitive, too paranoid, too . . . excessive. (2)

But I am not one. And neither are you.

Border is a verb and my claim of exclusion is not unidirectional.

border plus border = equates to many borders, *plus border plus*
borders in plural
anxieties compounded.

Uninvited I am the void you cannot fill but with your cheap, singular speculations.

Uninvited you cannot point me to my seat, so for now

I shall occupy all of them.

Chorus: we won't be assigned to our seats.

And if you invited me ?

Are you reconsidering your un-invitation now?

from the outside: Why do you want to invite me?
Do you feel it's your moral duty?
Were you paid to welcome me?
What do you expect from me in return?
Does your invitation benefit you more than me? *!!!*

Do you invite me in order to take credit for including the abject subject?
To tell everyone, "see, she's here because I invited her."
She's here because I am aware. Inclusive.?
She's here because you didn't invite her.
She's here because I noticed she was missing."

Do you invite me to re-assert yourself?

Do you expect me to integrate into the spatial, political, organisational culture that you designed? *that's the main question!*
Do you invite me to assert myself as morally superior? *and this one!*
Did you welcome me to create temporal and superficial feelings of goodwill?
Do you invite me to appear diverse?
Do you feel guilty if you don't invite me?
Are you afraid to invite me?

Will I use this invitation to fragment your authority?
Will I use this invitation to usurp your power and to ultimately destroy you?
Will this invitation lead you to identify with me and lose your boundaries?
Are you worried that you may lose your composure?

I don't pose those questions.
I am those questions.

We refuse to be invited

(totally)

What makes you think that I wanted to be invited in the first place?

My arrival cannot be an undoing. (

Maybe you did invite me, but I just didn't show up?

My arrival cannot be an undoing. |

Maybe you didn't invite me, but I sneaked in?

My arrival cannot be an undoing. |

Maybe you did invite me, but that invitation came so late that it was impossible for me to make it.

My arrival cannot be an undoing. (

from the outside: Maybe you did invite me, but you misspelled my name and I wasn't let in.

| My arrival cannot be an undoing. |
Maybe you did invite me, but you didn't see me.
| My arrival cannot be an undoing. |
Maybe I'm here amongst you right now.
| My arrival cannot be an undoing. |

Or maybe I refused to be invited all together.
coz I refuse what has been refused to me.
I refuse the choices as offered
and I refuse your acknowledgment and recognition.
I refuse to adhere to that which is already decided.
And I certainly refuse to be re-humanised by you.

Chorus : This counter-insurgency of yours will not turn us into your agents.

If you invite us we will merely trespass a border,
or be repositioned across that border,
without moving it one jot.

We are already here.

Chorus :
We are already here.
We have been here all this time.
We preceded you.

We preceded your knowledge.
Our absence was never a deviation from our presence.
The impossibilities that make up our experiences
create the conditions for all that is possible.

| This is not an intellectual exercise. |

We are in uncharted territory.
Unlike yours, our vision knows no horizon.
We are where you cannot go.
Unless you decide to leave behind where you're at.
And enter a space that will never become your own.
Beyond the beyond.

This is not an intellectual exercise.

This place is not a fixed location where one form ends
and another begins

from the outside: it is in the thresholds
in which transformation occurs in multiple and unpredictable ways.
it is in motion
with the final destination being movement itself.

This is not an intellectual exercise.

We will not welcome you and you will not welcome us
You will leave the confines of your discourse,
and you will address us from a horizon of language
that is unknown to both of us.

The first word that has to be said to each other
by way of welcome
is our capacity for remaining silent.

Silence embodies a realm that escapes the laws of belonging

| This is not an intellectual exercise. |

You will understand how it feels to not be able
to entirely translate yourself,
to be compelled to adopt the other's language,
and move in between
tongue interlaced with tongue, as in a kiss
You will realize that any translation is always partial, provisional,
unaccomplished, and fractured.
→ You will have to risk to be wounded.

THE PHANTOM HEIMAT

ARJUN APPADURAI

I use the term “Heimat” in this essay to refer to the same general range of meanings as the English term “homeland.” In so doing, I am aware that I cannot address the many complex histories, uses, and abuses of this term in the German context, about which I learned much during the conference for which this essay was written. Not being trained in German studies, I am aware that my ideas may not seem to fit the German context exactly. Also, I have taken the liberty of presenting my ideas in the form of a set of theses, which are intended to be arguments, rather than to be proven conclusions, and are thus connected loosely but do not necessarily form a single or seamless argument.

T H E S I S 1: Because the nation is an entirely imagined agency, it is capable of doing the most unimaginable things.

I have long been interested in the role of the imagination in social life, mostly as a source of inspiration, aspiration, and possibility.¹ But the national imagination, or the capacity to imagine in the name of the nation, also has a dark side: it is the source of borders, of surveillance, of rendition, of expulsion, of incarceration, and of genocide.² A recent episode in this saga of the unimaginable is the sequestering, imprisoning, disappearing, and abandonment of children by the immigration authorities in the USA, justified even more unimaginably

by a perverse discourse of compassion. The shootings of Palestinian protestors by Israeli army snipers across the zone between borders is another example. The treatment of the Rohingya by Myanmar and other Asian nations gives a new meaning to the word inhumanity

The catalogue of the unimaginable goes on. And yet these unimaginable acts are produced by the most

1 Arjun Appadurai, Marco Aime, Federico Neresini, and Roberta Sassatelli, *The Future as Cultural Fact: Essays on the Global Condition* (Bologna, ITL: Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia, 2013), 651–673.

2 Arjun Appadurai, *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

imagined of communities, in the memorable words of Ben Anderson, one which exists only in and through the imagination, and thus supplants earlier religious, political, and familial solidarities.³ I seek to understand the relationship between the imagined community and its increasingly unimaginable acts.

T H E S I S 2 : When the phantom limb is the stranger, the migrant, the minor, all politics is the politics of amputation.

Some years ago, when contemplating the ethnocidal violence in Sierra Leone and its adjacent countries in West Africa, I used the term “political surgery” to help me understand the frequency of the amputations of arms, sometimes legs, as well as wounds inflicted with an eye to damage, disability and scars.⁴ This form of bodily violence stops short of killing so as to leave the scarred body behind, a living victim of sacrifice, a sign and message to others who may be on the wrong political or ethnic side. In these cases, the victims were literally left with phantom limbs, while they were themselves converted into phantoms of national memory, ethnic poison, and bodily deficit. Since many of these victims of political surgery were children, the idea of the minor was doubly reinforced, as minorities were infantilized and children were minoritized. I rediscovered in the writing of that earlier essay the powerful ideas of René Girard about violence, boundaries, and sacrifice to which I will turn shortly.⁵ For now, let me leave you with the thought that the phantom limb of the minority or the migrant is a reminder of the politics of amputation in the imagining of the national body.

3 Benedict Anderson, *The Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983, Reprint, 2006).

4 Ibid., 2.

5 René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1977). Originally published as *La Violence et le sacré* (Paris: Éditions Grasset, 1972).

T H E S I S 3 : It is the sacrifice of the stranger that establishes the sacredness of the community.

The national community has to be eternally renewed by violence. René Girard was a literary critic and philosopher who was pre-occupied with the continuing importance of Judeo-Christian ideas of sacrifice in our contemporary world. He had two key ideas. One was that humans were driven by mimetic desire, the desire to possess what the other possesses. The second idea was that of the “scapegoat,” the arbitrary, vulnerable victim whose sacrifice allows the parties in competitive mimesis to cease their violence against one another by directing their violence to a partial outsider. The scapegoat is never a complete outsider. They are a vulnerable and marginal insider. Girard believes that in the modern world, without the structuring power of ancient ritual forms, the scapegoat theory is only applied by us to others, whose victims we believe are unfairly chosen, but we never think of our own victims as scapegoats. Migrants, undocumented aliens, and other bio-minorities today are indeed Girard’s scapegoats, but the interesting question is: what mimetic desire do they allow us to resolve by their victimhood? Who is the limb and who is the phantom? I propose that migrants awaken rage about the phantom nature of the nation itself, that object of desire that appears to evaporate when faced with global markets, vanishing jobs, rising debt, and austerity economies. Migrants—who desire the pleasures of the nation-state in the places to which they come—arouse the anger of just those citizens for whom the nation-state has become a phantom presence. Thus, the migrant has to be humiliated, then sacrificed or expelled. But even after the expulsion, the pain of the phantom limb remains because the primary desire that motivates it, namely for a nation which is Real, can never be fulfilled. Migrants remind us that it is nation-states, not outsiders, that have become, in Mary Douglas’ famous phrase, “matter out of place.”⁶ Thus, migrants must be amputated, but the ache they leave is for the nation, once imagined, that now can never be.

6 Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966).

T H E S I S 4 : It is widely assumed that nations produce violence through war, repression, and conquest. But an equal truth is that it is violence through which the affect of nationhood is produced.

The colonization of global consciousness by the nation-form has convinced many of us that the nation produces violence. This violence is best seen in war, where killing and dying in the name of the nation is routinely sacralized and memorialized. Thus, those of us who are opposed to the nation-form see it as the source of such violence and do not also see the reverse: that it is in and through violence that the sentiment and materiality of the nation is produced, by hysterical battles against neighbors, by the hunting and hounding of strangers, by the genocide of minorities, by the persecution of insurgent religiosities, and by the mobilization of armies that are taught to worship the national flag, national borders, and national soil. Thus, violence and the nation-state are co-productive and require an endless dialectic of mutual renewal. In this dialectic, the phantom limb of the foreigner serves to disguise the phantom body of the Heimat. This is also why the migrant in our midst always has an uncanny quality, seeming both too close and yet too far, desiring what we desire and claiming what we claim, but fleeing from or expelled by one phantom Heimat to knock on the barbed wire gates of another. This is the *Unheimlich* maneuver through which the nation persuades its citizens to deny Heimat to the Stranger. We can also see this in the extraordinary ways in which “lucky” migrants can become citizens.

T H E S I S 5 : Today's migrants have to perform heroic feats which inaugurate what we may call the age of acrobatic belonging.

The Spider Man of Paris is the recent and powerful exemplar of this form of belonging which brings together elements of *The Hunger Games* with others from the TV show, *The Survivor*, and movies like *Man on a Ledge*. Images of the stormy ocean, the vertical building, the trapeze, the circus, and the gladiatorial ring now mark the visual spectacles of the migrant in Europe. In other words, migrants now have to perform precarity in order to deserve hospitality.

The fascination in Europe and the United States with the precarious acrobatics of migrants like Mamadou Gassama is that they complicate the idea of bread and circuses into a new logic of address to the migrant: if you want our bread, give us a circus. And this is not the simple utilitarian logic of those sitting in comfortable seats. It comes from a world of European citizens who are themselves living in different forms of austerity, with jobs, homes, pensions, and healthcare becoming increasingly precarious for many people, from Britain to Greece. So, it is important to find more than an arbitrary scapegoat.

Not any one will do. We need someone who is simultaneously heroic and vulnerable to perform the precarity at the heart of the Heimat while also projecting it onto black and brown bodies. But simple precarity will not do. It has to be heroic precarity, for no other sort of precarity will fit the narcissistic needs of the Heimat. The acrobatic migrant, risking death in oceans, tunnels, borders, tall buildings, and airless trucks, performs the heroism of the soldier, the patriot, the commando, acting in the service of the nation. The migrant who risks death in the effort to save a true citizen is the best Samaritan of all, for he has nothing to lose and everything to gain. Unlike the soldier, the fireman, or the ambulance worker, he is unpaid and thus not in the realm of bureaucracy, money, and civil society. He is in the realm of the sublime: of the athletic, the religious, and the poetic, all of which are qualities the Heimat no longer possesses. The limb that performs precarity can and will be saved from amputation.

T H E S I S 6 : Derrida's idea of the gift contains the same impossibility as his idea of hostility in hospitality.

In both cases, Derrida points to an impossibility: the impossibility of the pure gift and the impossibility of pure hospitality.⁷ But what is the source of these impossibilities? For Derrida, the gift can never avoid the demand for return, hence there can be no pure gift. But the hostility of the host towards the guest is more puzzling. Here is a quotation from a review by Martijn Stronks, a Dutch legal scholar who summarizes Derrida's position on the impossibility of hospitality:

The difference between the unconditional hospitality and the rights and duties as condition for hospitality does not necessarily lead to a paralysed desire for hospitality or an abolishment of the demand for hospitality. Both forms of hospitality are however, indissociable. 'One calls forth, involves, or prescribes the other.' *The law of hospitality* requires unconditional welcome and orders that the borders be open to each and every one. But to invite someone to your home presupposes a certain kind of sovereignty over this home, to be a host is precisely to maintain some mastery over your place, which obviously contradicts to the unconditional welcome of *The law*. In this uncertain and undetermined terrain, host and guest meet, negotiating the reciprocal identities that shape hospitable encounters.⁷ This implies that the experience of hospitality is structurally impossible, but it is this very impossibility which enables certain forms of hospitality. Hospitality is a self-contradictory concept; it deconstructs itself precisely in being put into practice.

7 Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to respond, ed. Anne Dufourmantelle (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000). Originally published as *De l'hospitalité: Anne Dufourmantelle invite Jacques Derrida à répondre* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1997).

It never exists as such, it is always to come. This opposition between the unconditioned ideal and the conditioned reality does not, however, lead to some sort of nihilism or despair. It rather poses an important question of trying to transform and improve the laws. It stands at the threshold of what is, and while encountering what is to come, it maintains some elements, while deliberately leaving other elements aside.⁸

This long quotation opens up a question: if we are not convinced by the tension that Derrida sets up between absolute and conditional hospitality, on the grounds that the Kantian argument for unconditional hospitality is flawed, where else can we seek the hostility inherent in hospitality? Derrida sees the source of the impossibility in the mastery of the host over his home, which he must compromise when he extends his hospitality to his guest. But if the sovereignty of the host over the Heimat is already spectral, then the hostility to the guest has another source, which is that the guest exposes the artifice of the nation, the foundation of the Heimat. Hence it is always dangerous, unstable, and unwelcome.

8 Martijn Stronks,
“Re-reading: Of Hospitality.
Anne Dufourmantelle invites
Jacques Derrida to respond,”
Amsterdam Law Forum 1,
no. 1 (2008): 127–130, [http://
amsterdamlawforum.org/
article/view/49/63](http://amsterdamlawforum.org/article/view/49/63), ac-
cessed August 4, 2020.

T H E S I S 7 : The source of the impossibility of hospitality is the tension between the phantom stability of the Heimat and the unshakeable precarity of the migrant.

The spectacle of the precarious migrant endangers the “host body” of the Heimat, bringing liquidity, formlessness, and vulnerability into the nation, threatening to turn the phantom limb into the phantom Heimat. Guests, strangers, and migrants expose the precarity of the nation, its fabricated kinship, its ersatz solidarities, its derivative sacrifices, and the artificiality of all its limbs. The central source of tension is the viral precarity of the migrant, which once allowed to enter the body of the host, activates the precarity of the nation. The nation-form is precarious in two distinct senses. The first is the precarity of a form of imagined community that established its stability by suppressing, repressing, and marginalizing all the forms of Heimat that preceded it, above all of those that we today call “regional” or “local,” which become no more than figments and fragments once the nation achieves domination. This original precarity of the nation always threatens its stability, for the voices of the suppressed never disappear. These suppressed voices, life-forms, languages, territories are also phantom limbs which the nation-state caresses through museumization and commemoration, while denying their claims to any form of sovereignty. This is the founding precarity of the nation-form. The second precarity comes in our present era of globalization, where market, climate, disease, and other forces have decisively established the precarity of the nation as transnational and planetary forces that the nation can neither contain nor regulate.⁹ Migrants threaten the stability of the nation by exposing both these forms of precarity. Borders and migrants are a theater in which the stability of the nation has to be once again established in the face of its own always recurrent precarity.

9 Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

T H E S I S 8 : The migrant challenges us to imagine a Heimat of and for the future; a home for hope and for possibility.

It might seem that the Heimat is doomed to be exclusionary, violent, and inhospitable. But the acrobatic, precarious, heroic body of the migrant points also to another possibility for how to imagine a Heimat which is not primarily about roots, origins, sources, or memories and points rather to the future, a future of possibilities, horizons, anticipations, dreams, and hopes, in short, a Heimat of the future and for the future. The migrant body is a body of hope, a body of possibility, and its precarity is not the historically precarious body of the Heimat but the precarity of risk, and anticipation. It is the precarity of possibility. The figure of the migrant attracts the rage and hatred of the right-wing populist sensibility because it threatens the past-based precarity of the exclusive Heimat with the future-based precarity of a more fluid, open, and negotiated Heimat, where belonging is the sharing of precarious futures rather than the sharing of a stable past.¹⁰

This vision of a future based Heimat might be hard for many to accept because it makes membership a contingent, negotiated, and political reality based on shared aspirations and not a fixed, closed, eternal fact, based on blood, birth, or soil. This futurity is both the promise and the threat of the most important guest of our time—the unexpected migrant. The threat is not to the Heimat as such, but to the Heimat which is the phantom limb of the nation, which calls for constant amputation. For without amputations, we cannot have phantom

limbs, and without phantom limbs, we might have to face the phantom quality of the romantic idea of the Heimat itself and open ourselves to the truly uncanny possibility of a Heimat based on shared futures rather than shared pasts. Such a future based Heimat appears to be an oxymoron but it also challenges us to produce a politics and an ethics that finds Heimat in what Ernst Bloch called the “not yet.”¹¹

10 Arjun Appadurai, “The Capacity to Aspire: Culture and the Terms of Recognition,” in *Culture and Public Action*, eds. Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 59–84.

11 Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, vol. 1. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986). Originally published as *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1954).

DE=HEIMATIZE BELONGING!¹

BILGIN AYATA

Let me begin my talk on the concept of Heimat with a brief anecdote about the time when this term made a first appearance in my life. At the age of eight or nine, I received a *poesie album* as a present. I am not sure how popular this tradition is outside of Germany, but roughly around that age, girls usually receive a *poesie album*, a memory book decorated with flowers, butterflies, and glitter which you circulate amongst your classmates, friends, and family to write an aphorism or poem for you. I had given the book to my teacher whom I liked very much. She happily agreed to write a poem and gave me the book back the next day. In it, she had written the following aphorism: *Vergiß nie deine Heimat, wo deine Wiege stand, man findet in der Fremde kein zweites Heimatland* (“Never forget the Heimat where your cradle was, because away from it, you won’t find a second homeland”). I remember being very puzzled and trying to figure out what exactly my teacher meant by writing this poem to the only child in the class whose parents had migrated from Turkey to Germany. Did she want to say that Germany, where I was born, was my Heimat, and it was thus a futile effort for my parents to drag me each summer to Turkey to visit relatives and maintain some affective bonds with their place of birth? Or, did she actually suggest that Germany was not and will never be my Heimat?

It was on this occasion that the term Heimat began to lose its innocence for me. Over the years, like so many others, I too have struggled on many levels and battled on many fronts to make Heimat a more inclusive concept. Particularly, in the Germany of the 1990s, after the racist attacks in Hoyerswerda, Mölln, Solingen, those of us who were still back then called *Ausländer* were challenging the boundaries of what belonging could and should mean in Germany. For me, it also meant insisting on my equal entitlement to this very Heimat. At that time, I did believe that if only the concept of Heimat

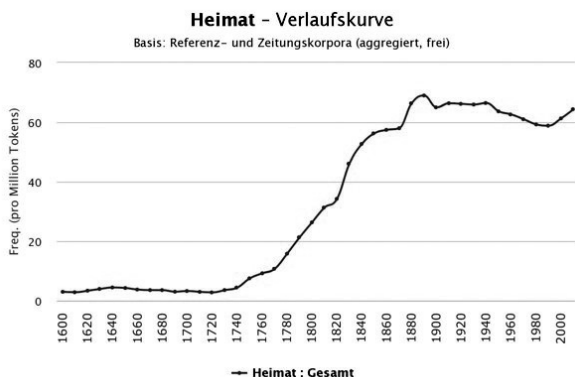
could embrace and respond to the claims of belonging of racialized migrants and their descendants, like myself, then the meaning of Heimat and what it means to be German could be reinvented.

1 Lecture given on the occasion of Invocation I, CARESSING THE PHANTOM LIMB: ‘Heimat’ — Progression, Regression, Stagnation? at SAVVY, Berlin (June 1, 2018).

Today, 20 years later, I no longer have any interest in making the term Heimat more democratic, more inclusive, or more plural. Quite the contrary, I want to propose that today there is no point in denazifying, decolonizing, gendering, or queering the concept of Heimat for the sake of disarming the Rightwing from its favorite “Kampfbegriff,” thus rescuing it for a greater good. There is no greater good in this term, period. Instead, I want to suggest that we de-heimatize belonging and our political debates. By saying that, I am not refuting the importance of thinking about and debating belonging, or the importance of feeling at home, of a home and its affective bonds. Conversely, I suggest that we talk much more about emotions and affects in politics and society; that we speak much more explicitly about the *affective contract* of nation-states and communities in order to better understand the desires of and for the state without having to necessarily resort to the idea of the Heimat.

In this text, I will provide a brief overview of how the term Heimat became popular in Germany and what it actually stands for, to then suggest alternative avenues for an engagement with this concept that does not necessarily try to pluralize it or make it more inclusive, but, as I want to argue, to dismiss it altogether.

HEIMAT IN GERMAN. THOUGHT AND HISTORY



Let's look at this graph from the digital dictionary of the German language, which records the frequency of use of terms per million words. As you can see in the graph, the term *Heimat* enters the German public realm in the 18th century, but it is only in the 19th century that the term becomes popular, reaching a peak between 1880 and 1890. The years 1884–1885 mark the Berlin Africa Congress in Germany, also known as the Congo Conference or Africa Conference, where, upon invitation by Otto von Bismarck, imperial powers convened to divide up the African continent, as if it did not exist before they had “discovered” it. The use of the term *Heimat* remains popular throughout the 20th and 21st century, with an increase of usage since 2010. Many scholars link the emergence of the term in the public with Napoleon's occupation, in reaction to defend *Heimat*. Yet, an equally important historical development is the structural transformation that happened in Germany through the expansion of state bureaucracy, the process of industrialization and urbanization that made the term *Heimat* an important reference point. In the contemporary usage of the term, *Heimat* is often conflated with nation.

However, historically the concept emerged in *opposition* to the nation-state, to the centralization of the state as well as to the introduction of national standards to social rights (i.e., as it occurred in the reforms of the *Heimatrecht* in 1871 and 1894). In other words, with these structural transformations, the “local” had to give way to the “national,” and thus the Heimat as an economic and political unit was no longer a valid parameter, but it had to be replaced by the idea of the nation-state. Before industrialization and the birth of the nation-state, the term Heimat referred to home, that is a physical property and the place of birth. Heimat derives from the Germanic *Ham*, that also forms the base for *Hemd* (the shirt), the *Heim* (the home), and *Himmel* (the sky). Yet, with the change of Heimatrecht laws, the migration from rural to urban areas, and the building of factories, the meaning of the term Heimat mutated from its juridical and political meaning to a memory of the pre-industrial past. In its pre-industrial use, the term was more closely related to the idea of protection rather than belonging. Over time, however, this term came to provide a sense of ontological security in the increasing alienation and individualization of modern life. When the centralized state emerged as “the coldest of all cold monsters,” to quote Nietzsche’s famous phrase, Heimat received its new meaning as the affective container of a nostalgia for an enchanted world free of conflicts. This reflects the phantasma of white male property owners, and certainly not of those excluded from such a form of entitlement—such as women, the enslaved, and the disenfranchised. It is important to highlight the gendered and sexualized constitution of the term, as scholars have already pointed out.

Until the 19th century, Heimat is referred to in the German language as *Das Heimat*, and only after the mid 19th century does the term become feminine, *Die Heimat*. This linguistic shift explains how Heimat begins to symbolize a longing for a unity of the *Volk* with nature and to function as an affective compensation for the loss of innocence that happened through the processes of modernization and urbanization. Not surprisingly, the locus of Heimat becomes childhood memories.

In sum, the use of Heimat in German culture and history configures itself as the affective bond between the local and the national. It is also invoked whenever “deep shifts in the self-definition of Germany as a nation take place.”²

One such deep shift in the self-definition occurred during the Enlightenment, a point that historian Peter Blickle highlights powerfully in his critical theory on Heimat. German romanticists were opposing the subjugation of the German spirit to the critical autonomous subject, which put the capacity to reflect and critique oneself into the core of subjectivity. Self-awareness, the ability to distance oneself from oneself and to be object and subject at the same time are at the heart of the self-perception of the white male subject. Therefore, in contemporary use, Heimat is often rejected as an irrational reaction to the Enlightenment, but Blickle has a more refined argument. He argues that “securing one’s sense of Heimat is a way for the ego to have a sense of oneself without needing to be aware of it, and so the solitude of the individual in the World is nullified.”³ In other words, Heimat is a space free of (self)critique and conflict and arguably exactly because of this quality, it remains so attractive yesterday and today. While I find this point to be very important, I believe it is insufficient for two reasons that I would like to discuss in the rest of my reflection.

2 Peter Blickle, *Heimat: A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland* (New York: Camden Press, 2004), 47.

3 Ibid., 69.

My first critique of the discussions on Heimat relates to the fact that most critical studies in Germany follow the outdated juxtaposition of emotion and reason, or rationality vs. irrationality. The “affective turn” in the social sciences has been fundamentally questioning this juxtaposition, on which the very idea of the western political subjectivity rests, and instead calls us to revisit our intellectual, political, and social paradigms through the lens of affect and emotions. I am part of a large research group at the Free University, Berlin, the SFB “Affective Societies,” which includes over 70 scholars researching how we can rethink the notions of belonging, society, and politics by taking emotions and affect seriously. This is an important effort because in the same way that secularization did not prevent our laws, rules, and political order from being free of religion and religious values, it is equally wrong to assume that states are only “cold bureaucracies,” spaces free of emotions. Such an assumption relegates emotions to the realm of Heimat and the nation by neglecting the affective politics of the state and administration. What I am suggesting here is to extend the lens of affective politics from the discourse of Heimat and Nation to the very analysis of state power and the state apparatus itself. We need to interrogate the desires, the affective economies, and the affective regimes that allows the term Heimat to resonate throughout the last two centuries with such prominence both among supporters of the political right and left.



Kolonie und Heimat Magazine.

My second and much more extensive critique of *Heimat* relates to the complete neglect of the relationship between *Heimat* and colonialism in the critical scholarship on *Heimat*. For instance, with regard to the German bourgeoisie enchantment with *Heimat*, Peter Blickle is able to say the following: “*Heimat* is a kind of toothless German critique of modern western civilization.”⁴ Toothless? You can only say such a thing if you simply ignore the importance and function that *Heimat* has in relation to German colonialism.

Heimat served not only as the affective bond between the local and national, as I stated in this text, but it equally served as THE affective bond between Germany and the colonies. In order to understand this, we need to pay attention both to the internal dimension of *Heimat*, and the external one, which most scholars ignore. If you look only at the internal dimension, *Heimat* appears to be a static, localized, and narrow term. But if you consider the colonial legacy of the term, we see that *Heimat* was in fact a highly flexible and dynamic term that could easily cross borders and seas, and could be even employed for territories overseas. For instance, it was possible in German colonial magazines to affectionately describe the Kilimanjaro

4 Ibid., 20.



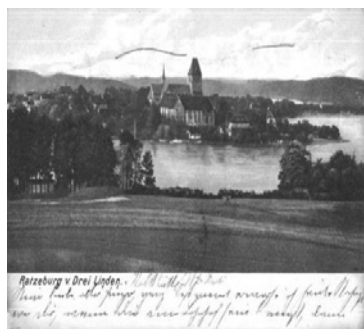
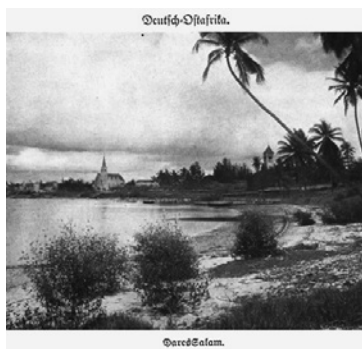
German Kilimandscharo.

as “the highest of all German (!) mountains,” and to systematically extend the notion of Heimat to the German colonies. It is quite interesting to see how nature—the key reference point of Heimat—comes to aid: while the colonized subjects were dehumanized, exoticized, and their *alterity* emphasized, the depictions of nature in German colonial magazines focused on the *similarities*. A study by Jens Jäger, who has examined the images and depictions in both the school books of *Kolonialkunde* as well as visual representations in the magazine *Kolonie und Heimat*, illustrates this point convincingly.⁵

In order to make the colonial project readable for the German audience, the trope of Heimat was employed as the core affective bond between the colony and the metropole. This also introduces a new *temporal component* to the concept of Heimat. While the use of Heimat within Germany entails a intransitive dimension of a conception of a Heimat that is “always already there,” thus located in the past and the space of memories, the colonial employment of Heimat has a future-oriented focus that envisions more colonial settlements to build new Heimats (yes, in the plural!) elsewhere.

So, the colonial use of the term shows us how stretchable the Heimat is both with regard to territory and temporality.

5 Jens Jäger, “Colony as Heimat? The Formation of Colonial Identity in Germany around 1900” in *German History* 27, no. 4 (2009): 467–489.



Comparison of Heimat depiction Ratzeburg Drei Linden.
Dar Es Salaam, Deutsch Ostafrika.

Why is this important for today? I argue that the relation of Heimat and colonialism has very crucial implications for our present discussions on Heimat. If Heimat always has both an internal and external dimension, and if we take history seriously, then it is crucial to ask what configures *today* as the external dimension that is completely neglected in contemporary discussions around the notion of Heimat in Germany.

By focusing the debate on Islam, populist anxieties, AfD, migrants, and so forth, most of the current debates in the German context focus on the internal dimension of the Heimat. In the general perception, all these “internal” anxieties have led to the revival of the term Heimat. But what about the external dimension? How about the renewed and uninhibited involvement of Germany in Africa for the past few years? The contemporary form of this German involvement in Africa is no *longer meant to secure territory, but to secure borders*. This has led to an ever expansion of the EU frontiers onto the African continent.

The highest increasing budget item of the next EU budget plan for 2021–2027 is “migration and border control,” which will grow to about 160 percent. In October 2016, the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, prominently remarked that “the well-being of Africa is in the interest of Germany,” aligning with France and Italy to increase their influence on



Mawda Shawri, 2 years old Kurdish girl killed by Belgian police firing shots at illegal migrants in Belgium on May 18, 2018.

the African continent via EU policies and bilateral migration compacts or documents that establish clear commitments from each partner, to essentially prevent migration from Africa. This is the reason why I have difficulties perceiving a European identity and a commitment to the European Idea as an antidote to proponents of Heimat and nationalism. The emergence of the EU is as intimately connected to colonialism as it is the emergence of Heimat in the 19th century. Sadly, and this is really painful to point out, today the EU border regime, with its foreclosing of safe routes, has killed more migrants than the AfD; and, it has done so since the 90s.

If we care about the over 40,000 dead bodies in the Mediterranean and probably even more in the Sahara desert, it is not sufficient to interrogate the popularity of the term Heimat, but instead we must question an understanding of freedom that rests on the livelihoods of others.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that the problematic nature of Heimat lies not so much in it being a provincial idea against progressive ideas of cosmopolitanism or democratic citizenship. The difference between *Heimatrecht*, *Staatsbürgerschaft*, and *Weltbürgertum* is a matter of scale. All of these concepts protect and violate, they include and exclude, provide and extract. While cruel and violent, it is exactly

this tension inherent to the politics of belonging that has become the motor of change for so many societies around the world. Let's take out the 30,000 skulls, the bones, the treasures, and the artifacts stolen from the former colonies that today are stored in the basements and archives of museums in Germany and return them to their rightful owners. In their place, let's put to rest the concept of Heimat until it becomes dusty and eventually forgotten. Let us not get distracted by the desire to counter Heimat over and again. Let us de-heimatize belonging and seek to remain "grenzenlos" and "unverschämt," as in her poem from 1990, ein gedicht gegen die deutsch sch-einheit," May Ayim famously called for.

WHEN THE
N A T I O N
BECOMES
H E I M A T

MARGARITA TSOMOU

“The old world is dying, the new world is not born yet—it is the time of monsters.” Paraphrasing Gramsci, this is how Žižek describes our current historical phase. And, it seems that these monsters are multiplying at an astonishing speed: for instance, we see former taboos being normalized in German society, shifting the public climate to the right. One of these monsters is the newly renamed German Ministry of Interior, *Heimatministerium* (Homeland Ministry). In the beginning of 2018, the conservative Minister of Interior, Horst Seehofer, took the initiative to rename the state institution using the term “Heimat” (Home/Homeland/Patria), which in German history is closely associated with the tradition of nazist, extreme-right, and racist narratives. A debate on whether one can reappropriate the term and how this will affect the political climate in the country has spread in the German public opinion. The following essay touches upon the semantics of the German term *Heimat* and problematizes the way in which this concept, which once expressed a sense of individual belonging, has been politicized to encompass and describe the nation-state.

HEIMAT, A PLACE OF INDIVIDUAL BELONGING?

Heimat is a quite blurred concept that brings with it a plenitude of semantic associations, ranging from the ethnic-nationalist heritage of the Nazi era to utopian or highly subjective variations of meaning. Commonly, *Heimat* is understood as the cipher of a longing for a place that promises a kind of familiarity; *Heimat* is an idealized construction of an idyllic place, a phantom, or a fantasy that is loaded with memories of childhood. The idea of *Heimat* promises a secure place, a space where one can feel “at home;” a place of authenticity, where she* is no longer a stranger, because “home” is where her authentic origins are firmly rooted. *Heimat* is connected to a personal experience and can be found in all sorts of familiar spheres: the kiosk around the corner in the neighborhood can be *Heimat* or for instance—for some queer

Berliners among us, the familiarity suggested by the idea of Heimat can be represented by a place like the Berghain club.

This individual, “innocent” notion of Heimat was used expansively in German discourse in an effort to justify and destigmatize the problematic aspects of its historic and semantic tradition. But these argumentations clearly miss the point: with the renaming of the ministry of interior to *Heimatministerium*, Heimat ceases to be an individual idea of belonging and instead is folded into the territorium of the nation. Thus, today Heimat returns as a political concept and is expanded into a nation-state frame in the form of the so-called Heimatministerium.

M E R G I N G N A T I O N W I T H H E I M A T

The concepts of Heimat and nation are merged into the invention of the Ministry as the Homeland, which produces a highly toxic and excluding mixture: Heimat becomes a national territorium with borders and laws of inclusion and exclusion. On the other hand, the nation itself becomes Heimat. This implies that those who do not belong to or do not have their origins firmly rooted in the Heimat cannot be considered part of the nation as Heimat. Even if someone has a migration background, they can still be considered citizens of Germany, given the fact that Germany declared itself an immigration society (*Einwanderungsgesellschaft*). But, the renaming of the Federal Ministry implicitly signals that this country can be home only to those who originally and “authentically” belong to the German Heimat. In this way, citizenship, which in Western democracies is normally bound to rights, like the right to vote, to have a German passport, to work and so on, becomes ethnicized and racialized. Even I, a Greek citizen without a German passport, am entitled to community rights, obligations, and claims against the state and therefore I belong, at least partly, to the social body. But whatever I do, even if I wear a Dirndl every day, I will never be able to belong to the German Heimat—certainly not because of my surname, which is clearly Greek. This act of exclusion is of course even deeper if you are a non-European citizen.

So, it is not surprising that shortly after the renaming of his ministry, Horst Seehofer said that “Islam does not belong to Germany.” In other words, although Islam may be part of the everyday lives of 4.5 million German citizens, it will never belong to the “German Heimat.” The press-picture of Seehofer’s newly appointed ministers is an adequate visualization of who is considered part of Heimat and who is not: we see a row of middle-aged white German men. The image conveys that you are not Heimat if you are not white German, male, and heterosexual but also—and this is the novelty—you are not part of the nation anymore, because your type doesn’t comply with the standard of the Heimat-Interior ministry.

HEIMAT AS A NATURAL, NATIONAL TERRITORY

In German, Heimat does not only conjure the idea of a territory, but also it evokes an idyllic past in a beautiful countryside landscape. Between WWI and WWII, Heimat became a counter-force to industrialization and became a romanticization of life in the German countryside and in little provincial towns. The countryside is glorified through a nostalgic longing for an innocent, ideal nature. In a sense, Heimat is perceived as a sort of retreat from the hardships of the urban reality. Heimat is primarily associated with the romantic picture of a return to nature, to an idyllic German landscape punctuated by beautiful mountains, firs, and deers. Thus, Heimat is essentially a retreat to the past.

This is more visible in the tourist campaign of the state of Bavaria and its main slogan, “Bavaria: Welcome to Heimat.” The Heimat sold to the tourists, who are the addressees of the marketing campaign, might be a completely different place today, but Bavaria is and will always be the one and only Heimat, THE Heimat itself. As conceived in this campaign, Heimat is not bound to a biographical experience as a singular experience but to a motive that is trying to preserve the universal Heimat of Bavarian nature and culture. In this logic, *Lederhose/Trachten/Bierzelt* = Heimat = Nation = “Der Islam gehört nicht zu Deutschland.”

Furthermore, this entanglement of Heimat with an idealized nature also implies an essentialist notion. Heimat is fueled by ideas of nature, and nature is the medium of Heimat. The signifiers of Heimat are natural signifiers and thus fixed signifiers. One cannot familiarize with these signifiers, you cannot become part of this concept of Heimat unless you belong to this idealized natural place. If it is not the kind of nature that gave you birth, if you are not natural born Heimat, you cannot become part of Heimat. In other words, you cannot find a place for yourself in this idea of homeland. This only shows the structural essentialist and racist ideology embedded in the imagination of the German nation as Heimat.

THE NATION

The nation is a clearly defined, institutional, and legal entity even if it has always been the fiction of an “imaginary community,” where all individuals belong to the same national type, as the political scientist Benedict Anderson prominently observed in *Imagined Communities*.¹ Nation-building implied an artificial unification that required symbolic and material power to credibly construct a community of equals from a heterogeneous social body. But, as Balibar and Wallerstein emphasize in the volume *Race, Class and Nation*, it is a functioning and tangible fiction: through school, family, law, language unification, and territorial boundaries, the national identity was emotionally and materially imprinted onto subjectivity.² Through this process of normalization, the nation-state constructed a coherent frame of belonging for a formerly heterogeneous group, while at the same time providing guidelines for non-belonging: for instance, through its normative civic requirements, national citizenship is produced at the same time as the criteria of exclusion from this citizenship are established.

1 Benedict Anderson, *The Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983, reprint, 2006).

2 Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London: Verso, 1998).

HEIMAT CONSTRUCTS SAMENESS AND OTHERNESS AS AN INNER BORDER

We are witnessing how this inner border between belonging and non-belonging becomes again the dominant topos of contemporary nationalisms. Nationalism used to be predominantly a promise to unite different subjectivities in a territorium, under the umbrella of a national type towards an external other—another nation. But today, the nation as Heimat does not divide the inside from the outside. Rather, it shifts the division between “sameness” and “otherness” to an inner border. The current strengthening of the national goes hand in hand with exclusionary attitudes toward minorities, says social scientist Naika Foroutan.³ Similarly, professors María do Mar Castro Varela and Paul Mecheril⁴ observe that in this process, a national ethno-culturally coded “we/us” is invoked, where the “others” are portrayed as a threat. Thus, nation does not refer anymore to an inclusive national “we,” but to half of this “we,” meaning this “we” that not only form the nation, but also that belong and hold onto the Heimat. In this political climate, the nationalist expansion of Heimat further narrows the space of belonging for all those “others” who are not identified as part of the Heimat, reducing it to an essentialist border of exclusion. The new hype of this nationally framed Heimat is to be under-

stood as a symbolic-political act and a rhetorical concession to the discourse of the populist and extreme right supporters.

In the face of the current expansive feeling of fear and anger of concerned (*besorgte*) bio-German citizens, the blurred, elastic term of Heimat as an idyllic imaginary past becomes a screen onto which people can project the image of a safe and predictable world, a world that, for some, was once believed to be safe and predictable. The Heimat

3 Andrea Dernbach, “Es ist unser Land, verteidigen wir es gemeinsam” *Der Tagesspiegel*, July 22, 2018, <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/migrationsforscherin-naika-foroutan-es-ist-unser-land-verteidigen-wir-es-gemeinsam/22830476.html>, accessed August 4, 2020.

4 María do Mar Castro Varela and Paul Mecheril, *Die Dämonisierung der Anderen: Rassismuskritik der Gegenwart* (Bielefeld, DE: Transcript Verlag, 2016).

becomes the phantom of a return to a reality that existed before industrialization, before neoliberal demands for flexibility and mobility, before global capital governance and migratory movements. Thus, the national community is currently welded together by a regressive transfiguration of the past as the memory of an intact homeland that was never actually there.

NATION AND HEIMAT AS MASCULINE CONCEPTS

The concepts of nation and state have always been criticized in feminist theory because they were conceived within a patriarchal framework. The forefathers of the idea of nation-state did not think of women as a part of the national *citoyens*; women became citizens of the nation only much later, after their battles for the right to vote. Furthermore, in the collective imaginary, the defender and the protector of the nation—the soldier—is always male. As in his book, *Männerphantasien* (1978), Klaus Theweleit observes, the core of male being is national (or better: at the core of the nation-state is man). The wars are carried out by a “Männerbund” (male-bonding) in the army. It is no coincidence, says Theweleit, that the feminist movement called male supremacy “male chauvinism” which resonates with “national chauvinism.” This clearly matches the image of Seehofer and his minister’s inauguration which only includes white German men. If nation merges with Heimat, Heimat also needs to be represented by the male protector. Which does not mean women had no role to play in the aggressive projects of nation and colonialism. They played a role as mothers, reproducing the “Keimzelle der Nation,” the nucleus of the nation. We can observe the same narrative being repeated today by the women’s movement of the extreme right; it is an anti-feminist movement composed of women who declare their loyalty to the nation and to the Heimat; who oppose abortion and other reproductive rights; a racist movement that works for white supremacy, the supremacy of the white male over the migrant or moslem or refugee or person of color, and for masculinity itself.

The idea of nation has always been a patriarchal construct, a masculine exclusionary concept. The migrant or ethnic “other” has always implicitly contradicted the supposed hegemonic vision of a nation as a unified and homogeneous group, and instead contributed to a process of pluralization of the social body, which is considered alien to both the concept of nation as well as that of Heimat. In this respect, we should not be surprised then that the term, in its nationalistic version, has become so popular in German debate. Nationalistic tendencies are still part of the formation of the individual and the idea of collectivity.

In the face of “unsecured times” (*entsicherte Zeiten*), as Wilhelm Heitmeyer discusses in *Autoritäre Versuche* (2018), not only extreme-right but also conservative parties are offering the premises of safety by returning to the false idea of a homogeneous social body. The progressive “neoliberal block,” as Nancy Fraser calls it,⁵ of the status quo is thus part of the problem and is not to be defended if we want to work towards alternative politics that promote transcultural societies as a home to everybody.

5 Nancy Fraser, “Wir brauchen eine Politik der Spaltung,” *Philosophie Magazin* (2018).

M I G R A N T
K N O W L E D G E
A N D T H E
N S U = C O M P L E X

IBRAHIM ARSLAN & MASSIMO PERINELLI

NOTIONS OF HOSTIPITALITY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE MIGRANT STRUGGLE

From the mid 1950s to the early 1970s during the reconstruction period, Germany implemented a system of so called *Gastarbeiter* (guest worker) to hire more than two million workers, predominantly coming from Southern Europe. But *Gastarbeiter* were never really considered guests, nor were Germans ever hosts. In 1973, when the oil crisis hit Germany and the industrial sector was in crisis, partly due to strong pressure exercised by the waves of migrant-organized strikes and protests, the German government decided to end the bilateral contracts with Spain, Italy, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Greece, and Portugal, urging the *Gastarbeiter* to go back to their countries. Many industries fired tens of thousands of migrant workers.

So no more guests and no more hosting. Yet, a ghost remained: the autonomy of migration. The guest workers didn't care about the push and pull factors of *Wirtschaftswunder*—also known as the “Miracle on the Rhine,” which describes the rapid reconstruction and development of the economies of West Germany and Austria after WWII—in Germany. Instead, they decided to stay in the country and move from the cramped barracks of their companies into rundown places in inner-city areas where they started to renovate the old abandoned buildings. They brought their families to Germany with them and within a few years, despite governmental pressure and programs to send the guest workers back to their homelands, their numbers doubled as they started an economy of their own made of small family-run shops and restaurants. Migrants from Turkey, Italy, and other countries populated and revived neighborhoods like Berlin-Kreuzberg, Hamburg-Ottensen, Dortmund-Nordstadt, as well as Kassel-Nordstadt, Munich-Westend, and Cologne-Mülheim. All neighborhoods with a majority migrant population later became the targets and crime scenes of the NSU-terrorist attacks.

And this wasn't an accident. During the late 1970s and 1980s, when the government tried to get rid of the former migrants, the once "guest workers" officially became, in the language of the state, "immigrants," excluded from the many basic rights they fought for—for instance, education for their children, proper housing, decent wages, proper health care, and collective enfranchisement. With their battles, however, it is migrants who expanded the democratic character of this country—we could also say that they democratized post-nazi Germany. And it was precisely the democratic character of this multitude calling for the respect of guest workers and migrants' rights that enraged the networks of the neo-Nazis, while also disclosing the hidden desire of many Germans to keep immigrants in their "place." The neo-Nazi-attacks are directed against the "Society of the Many," which had undermined the imagination of a homogeneous white Germany. This is why the NSU did not attack the most vulnerable: for instance, asylum-seekers in remote camps or refugees without basic rights, but rather the fully established migrant communities of shop owners, members of the second generation of immigrants, some even with German passports. The purpose wasn't to get rid of all citizens of foreign descent—a plan impossible in the face of more than 10 million migrants living in this country. Rather, it was a plan to destabilize and subordinate those communities.

The terrorist nail-bomb on Cologne's crowded and lively Keupstraße, on a warm afternoon in June 2004, was aimed at killing as many passersby as possible. With its many shops, cafes, and restaurants, the Keupstraße is the heart and the economic backbone of the Turkish community, not only in the district of Cologne, but in the whole of North Rhine-Westphalia. Miraculously, no one was killed by the 700 torrid nails. However, more than 22 people were severely injured. While investigating the crime, the police went immediately after the victims, rather than looking for the perpetrators of the attacks. They followed them in the hospitals, demanded samples of their DNA, and interrogated the still bleeding victims for hours. It was only one and a half hours after the bombing that the

police excluded the possibility of a terrorist act. One day after the event, the Minister of Interior excluded—“to the best of his knowledge”—the possibility of a terrorist attack.

The investigation never considered that the attack might have been organized by the German Nazi scene. The media sucked up the message. For years now, it has fabricated stories of gloomy migrant neighborhoods and the criminal tendencies, and thus the danger, of those foreigners. The mayor of Köln-Mülheim called the Keupstraße a “ghetto” and Germans tried to avoid this part of the city. In the years following the attack, many shops went through economic hardship. For seven years, the suspects of subsequent terrorist attacks were believed to be part of the migrant population, until evidence of an NSU cell surfaced. The family members of the nine murdered victims of the hate crimes—Enver Şimşek, Abdurrahim Özüdoğru, Süleyman Taşköprü, Habil Kılıç, Mehmet Turgut, İsmail Yaşar, Theodoros Boulgarides, Mehmet Kubaşık, and Halit Yozgat—became the main suspects and the target of Germany’s structural racism. These events invited the destruction of the community, as families fell apart, people lost their friends and their jobs, and the weight of debts loomed on the horizon. Some even preferred to leave. A community isolated, stigmatized, and destabilized—the goal of the NSU seemed to have been reached, through the collusion of German institutions, politics, media, and the public with neo-Nazis.

Soon after the Nazi attacks, the afflicted communities experienced racism mixed with generalized ignorance and further stigmatization from the media and irresponsible journalists. They came to understand the racist attacks on their lives as a result of the ongoing erasure of their civil rights, which they had fought for since their arrival in Germany. The NSU is deeply rooted in German society, yet no one really listened carefully to what was going on—neither the liberal of Germany nor the leftists nor the artists.

Kubaşık and Halit Yozgat, their families organized a rally in Kassel with 4,000 members of the Turkish community. They demanded from the state the immediate ending of the

series of murders. Again, the media and the public ignored this massive outcry. After the NSU cell came to light in November 2011, a large movement in solidarity with the victims of the crimes and their families grew stronger, partly thanks to the strength and courage of the victims who spoke up. The centrality of their knowledge became the foundation for a large anti-racist campaign and the condition for any attempts to unravel the NSU-complex.

By Massimo Perinelli

RECLAIM AND REMEMBER: THE VICTIMS ARE THE KEY WITNESSES

My name is Ibrahim Arslan. My sister Yeliz Arslan, my cousin Ayşe Yılmaz, and my grandmother Bahide Arslan were killed in 1992 in Mölln, when two young neo-Nazis set fire to our house. My cousin was visiting us; it was her last week in Germany. She returned to her family in Turkey in a coffin. My grandma died in the flames, after rescuing me. My father, who wasn't home that night, was immediately accused of committing the arson attack despite the fact that the criminal was caught shortly after the attack and confessed the crime.

Despite the horrors, the survivors of my family decided to stay in Mölln. The city offered us a prefabricated house designed for refugees, which we refused. We moved from one lodging to another until our burned house was renovated. At this point, we had to decide to either move back to our old home, where our family had been destroyed, or move to the next temporary accommodation. After the events, life in Mölln became difficult because the city treated us like a disgrace, as the name of this city became a symbol of the racist violence that accompanied the German reunification. We were not recognized and respected as victims, but as if we were the ones to blame for the terror. Despite the fact that my sister, my cousin, and my grandmother were the first people to die from a racist attack since the fall of the Berlin Wall, Chancellor Helmut Kohl did not participate in the funeral service, with the excuse of not wanting to become part of what he described as "condolence-tourism."

Only three weeks before the arson attack against my family and another house where Turkish families lived, an anti-racist demonstration marched through the streets of Mölln in protest against what had happened in Rostock-Lichtenhagen, where only weeks before a pogrom against refugees and former contract workers took place. People were asking whether Mölln would become another Rostock-Lichtenhagen. However, the police did not investigate well

known people belonging to the local neo-Nazi scene, which had already tried to burn down a new housing complex for refugees.

The arson attack was only the first attack against us. In the years following the hate crime, the city of Mölln has organized a day of commemoration, which, however, does not include members of my family. In the beginning, we attended the ceremony as guests. However, the problems began when we started talking on our own behalf. And so, we moved away from the grim town of Mölln to Hamburg, where we could find solidarity and support, and started to organize our own commemoration. Each year, the 23rd of November, you can either visit the official event in the town hall of Mölln, or our privately organized remembrance in front of our old house on Mühlenstraße, together with friends and anti-racist initiatives. Stripped of the official support of the city, every year we also organize the Mölln Speech in Exile.

With our idea of Reclaim & Remember, we reclaim and remember the victims of racist violence. The survivors have the right to decide for themselves how they want to remember the violence and commemorate the deaths of their relatives, and how to shape an adequate commemorative culture. We, as the victims, are not background actors, but the most important voices and key witnesses of the history of racism in this country. Our memory is the purest form of remembrance.

My family and I took part in the Tribunal Unraveling the NSU-Complex, an event which took place in Cologne in May 2017. Since the 1980s, we have gathered together many family members of other victims of racist aggressions and/or the murdered. We collaborated with survivors of the Shoah, reminding us that the NSU is neither the first nor the last racist terror group. Together, we, as the victims, built a strong network of solidarity with thousands of supporters, activists, and initiatives.

Society needs to learn our stories, our fates, and our names. When I talk in school, in front of school pupils, nobody knows the names of the nine men who were murdered by the NSU. But, they all know the names of the Nazi-terrorists. This has to change. The victims are the experts on racism—they

are the protagonists of Germany's history, and their perspectives legitimize the struggle for human rights and initiatives against any form of fascism and racism. I continue to tell their stories until every victim raises their own voice. That is what solidarity is all about. Not only does it benefit the victims, but also the activists in a mutual process of self-empowerment.

We have to ask ourselves, *where have we been all this time?* What did we do when the newspapers wrote about "Döner Killings"? Why did no one emphasize the fact that the victims were not Döner meat, but human beings who had been killed?

We, as victims, are not weak but strong. We embody the capacity of a new historical memory that should be at the core of any education. Our stories have to be taught in schools. From today on, the perspective of the victims has to be the perspective of the society in its entirety.

My name is Ibrahim Arslan, and I will not be silent anymore.

By Ibrahim Arslan

MEINE
BLUMEN
SIND NICHT
FÜR
BLUMEN

FARKHONDEH SHAHROUDI

In this performance I used methods of storytelling borrowed from the Shia ritual Daste Gardani as well as from modern revolutionary forms of protest—all to tell a variety of stories: from “traum” to “trauma.” The stories I tell in my performance range from being an artist, an activist in the 1970s in Iran, to the turkish flower seller who got murdered in his kiosk in Germany. In June 2018, poetry banners, protest flags, and objects were carried by a group of 40 peoples from Neckelplatz to SAVVY.















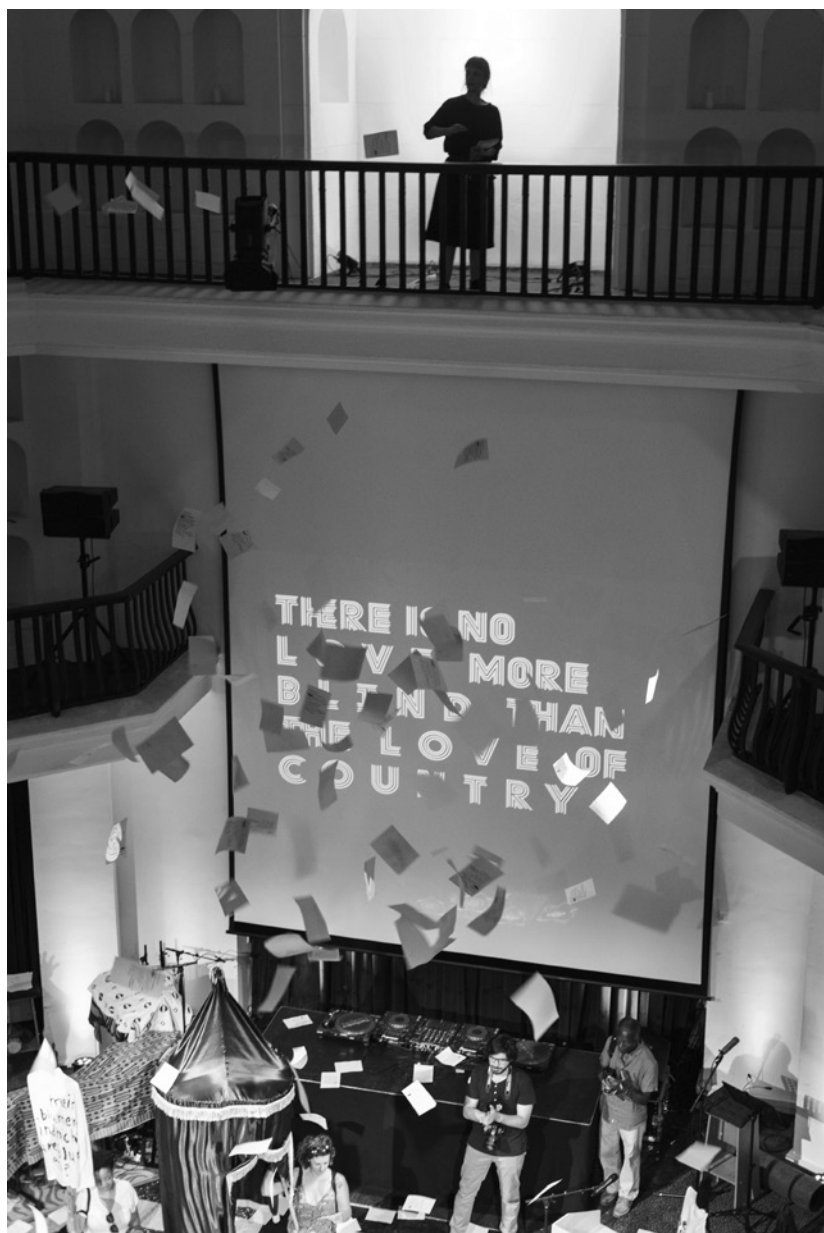












Farkhondeh Shahroudi, "Meine Blumen sind nicht eure Blume?," collective procession performance, Berlin, 2018.

I GUEST...

I HOST...

WHO
IS THE
GHOST?

THE
GHOST=FACE
BROTHERS =
NATIONALISM
AND
COLONIALISM

TANIA WILLARD

Close your eyes and picture a country, any country. Now, let your mind imagine the “traditional dress” of that country. What do you see? What do you see for America or Canada? I am betting you will picture Indigenous peoples. “Indians.” Maybe some feathers and buckskin or a Pow Wow. Now, next time you are out and about, pay close attention to tourist ads and how countries attract visitors. In my context, in Canadian advertisements and promotional material, it is often with images of dramatic wilderness landscapes, the snowy North, wild animals, and... Indians. The ethnographic image in the service of national branding has a detailed history and often continues with states and companies trading in cultural appropriation or in the legends of extinction and extirpation, in the echoes of what is left after the cultural genocide of Indigenous peoples, knowledges, languages, and ecologies. When peoples and things are no longer a threat to white supremacy, they become absorbed into the *color* and culture of dominant societies.

This might all be obvious to an Indigenous/educated/enlightened reader; however, I think it is still important to trace the trajectory of this brand of ethnography that acts in the service of nationalism. Or more specifically, how extirpated species and Indigenous peoples become “brands” for the story of a nation, especially in the face of ongoing resistance against colonialism and conflict over Indigenous land rights. How does this affect how we see the faces of nationalism today? How does building a wall between Mexico and the US employ the same rhetoric as measuring the physical characteristics of a vanishing race or building the eugenics of racial theory?

This text is a twisting, thinking, empathetic, and enraged ride through the connecting threads of racism, how my rights as an Indigenous woman in Canada are connected to the root systems of injustice for refugees and migrant laborers, and how the ethnographic framing of our struggles keeps us divided

through an acceptance of cultural iconography and a rejection and suppression of actual legal rights. Glen Coulthard calls this process *the colonial politics of recognition*.¹

1 Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

Indigenous peoples seek recognition of their rights, and to do this we are led into the minefield of the politics of recognition which have not historically served to deliver actual legal rights to our land-bases. This is true especially in the context of British Columbia, a province that signed very few treaties and then tried, mostly unsuccessfully, to enter into modern day treaty negotiations. The struggle of Indigenous groups for land rights in British Columbia has been entangled with the development of anthropology.

In this paper, I want to discuss the physical anthropology and face-casting of one particular land rights advocate and chief from my nation within the context of one of our most fundamental rights-based documents, The Sir Wilfrid Laurier Memorial (1910).² The memorial was written by a number of chiefs in the Interior of British Columbia, and it makes a case for Indigenous rights by outlining Indigenous land-rights with private property through the use of an analogy about a ranch, the most common form of settler land dispossession (wherein Indigenous land was usurped and large white-owned ranches fenced Indigenous peoples out of their own lands), and ideas of hospitality, within a particular Indigenous framework. These ideas around hospitality and ownership still work today to think about inter-territorial practices, cultural encounters, and conflict. It is also important here to delineate the ways in which ideas of being Indigenous or “original” and rightfully occupying territory can be undermined and used to prop-up nationalism. Instead, it is the floor that should be pulled out from under the feet of nationalism, and important distinctions need to be made between Indigenous struggles against colonization and the rhetoric of nationalism. The following passage from the Laurier Memorial is one that without context and an informed understanding of Indigenous practices and concepts could be looked at as enforcing nationalist ideas:

2 This memorial was written on the occasion of Canada's Prime Minister, Laurier, visiting Kamloops and Prince Rupert in 1910. It was written by the Secwepemc, Nlaka'pamux (Thompson/Couteau), and Okanagan leaders and witnessed by over 80 other chiefs who had gathered in Spences Bridge to meet about the issues raised in this memorial.

We never asked them to come here, but nevertheless we treated them kindly and hospitably and helped them all we could. They have made themselves (as it were) our guest.

Here the idea of “making” oneself a guest should be understood as a dishonorable position. The sacred guest is taken care of, it is a sacred act to visit another’s territory. With it, one brings new eyes to see the land and the people and new ideas and items for trade, and when a visitor approaches with honorable intentions, they are welcomed. However, this text uses the language, “they have *made themselves* our guest.” One must also understand that this is coming from an Indigenous perspective and early interactions with the Crown and French settlers as some of the first white settlers in Canada did promise nation to nation relationships. Until today, Indigenous rights advocates point to the 1763 Royal Proclamation to articulate the original relationships we had to settlers, as guests and partners. The dishonor then is the way in which the Crown and settlers used this kinship-based governance and generosity inherent in Indigenous territorial relations to overrun and occupy Indigenous lands. They never had any pretense of partnership, the Americas were always a colonial resource extraction operation, and in many ways still is.

With us when a person enters our house he becomes our guest, and we must treat him hospitably as long as he shows no hostile intentions.

This is an indication of the protocol and sacredness of the guest. We *must* receive them and treat them with hospitality. Perhaps this is especially resonant in a European context in the wake of controversy over the refugee crisis. When Europeans came to the Americas, it was part of our practice to treat them in this way, in a sacred way, in a hospitable way. So, nowadays for Europeans to reject refugees is hypocritical if we consider how they were received in the Americas, as guests—despite their colonial intentions. Perhaps this is much too sweeping

a statement that fails to contextualize many different historical moments, but this generalization is a characterization of the face of colonialism, the ghost-face of the guest.

These people wish to be partners in our country.
We must therefore, be the same as brothers to them, and live as one family. We will share equally in everything-half and half- water, timber etc.
What is ours will be theirs and what is theirs will be ours. We will help each other to be great and good.

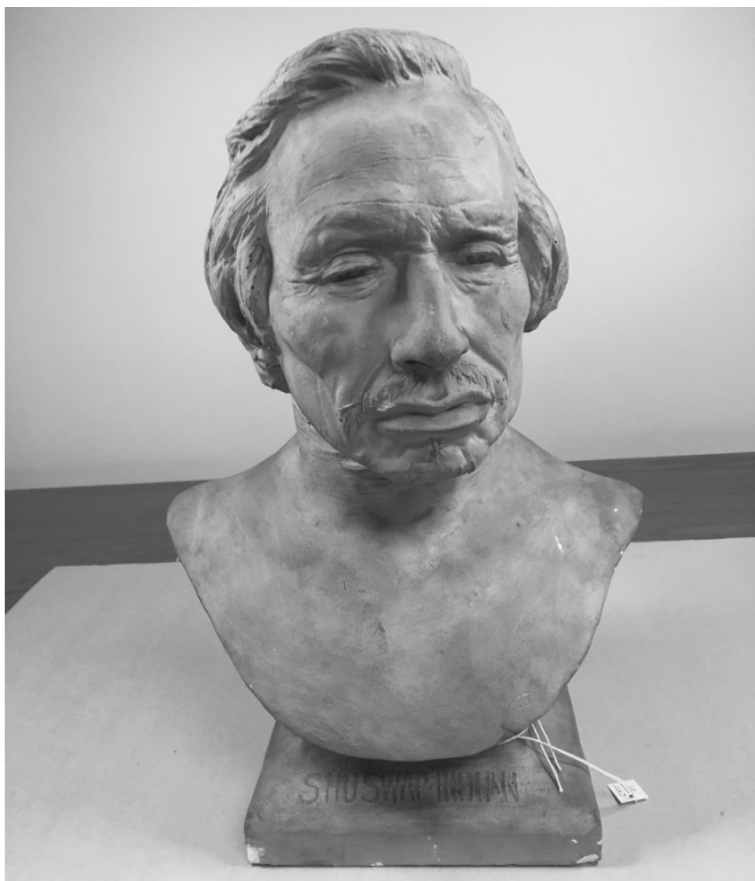
The ghost-face is the face that devours. The true identity of the ghost-face has become known. This is not a guest that has arrived to be grateful for hospitality, or to honor the host with their good relations. This is the devourer.

They have stolen our lands and everything on them and continue same for their own purposes. They treat us less than children... They say that the Indians know nothing, and own nothing, yet their power and wealth has come from our belongings. The Queen's law which we believe guaranteed us our rights, the British Columbia government has trampled underfoot.

These ghost-faces have boots, jackboots.

This is how our guests have treated us—the brothers we received hospitably in our house.

This memorial quoted above was read out loud by Chief Louis Clexléxqen, who was an important land rights chief and who was also a subject in the anthropological record of Shuswap or Secwépemc people. Chief Louis was photographed and subject to physical anthropology in 1897, having a facial cast made of him and deposited in the American Museum of Natural History in New York.





This measurement and anthropological study was part of the North Pacific Jesup Expedition whose leading anthropologist was the German American Franz Boas, the “Father of American Anthropology.” The practice of physical anthropology was motivated by ideas of salvage anthropology, and the anthropometrics and facial casts that were collected from Indigenous peoples in British Columbia were made to preserve the facial characteristics of the “vanishing race” of Indigenous peoples. This “vanishing race” was also to become an active ingredient in the branding of the West. It became the subject of many advertising campaigns and nationalist agendas in the Americas, making the culture of Indigenous peoples an artifact of the Americas and usurping power through both its active denial and suppression as well as its simultaneous appropriation of Indigenous culture drained of Indigenous politics and bodies within a stolen land.

But, this is not just a case of Chief Louis as a victim, though he was lied to in the process of the anthropological study, and ancestral remains were taken from the community without permission during the expedition by another anthropologist. His cast now stands as a demonstration of agency. Though in 1897 Boas was not present during the physical anthropometrics gathered from the Secwepemc people, the field work was conducted under his auspices. The men were convinced to participate in the process through Father Le Jeune, a local minister who worked extensively in the Secwépemc communities in T’kemplúps (Kamloops, British Columbia) and who worked with James Teit, an anthropologist married into Nlaka’pamux community, at Spences Bridge. Le Jeune, acting as the community contact, worked with the expedition’s leading archaeologist Harlan I. Smith to convince the people into accepting the practice by saying their representations would go to museums and places where people would come to learn about their culture. Admittedly, the church at this point in time also held a lot of authority in Indigenous communities as missionizing was very active during this period in British Columbia. In recent scholarship, Marianne and Ronald Ignace document Smith describing the ruse used to get Chief Louis to consent to the physical anthropological investigation:

I am afraid that in trying to coax him to submit to the operation, I gave him a rather wrong impression in regard to the character of our work... I told him that the Queen desired to see the great chief of the Shuswap, and since she was too old to visit him, I had been requested to take his portrait and bring it to her, and that at the same time she had asked me to present him with his own bust, which he was to place in his house, so that his people might understand how important a man he was. This argument removed all his objections, and after he had consented, there was of course no difficulty in getting just as many men of his tribe as I pleased.³

As Ignace continues,

[o]f course for Chief Louis and other Interior Chiefs the Crown symbolized unextinguished title and land rights.⁴

If we look at the plaster-casts within their colonial context that exploited lands and concurrently bodies of Indigenous peoples through measurement and dispossession, we come to cast light on the Boasian way that anthropologists failed to see the fundamental settler project that was the cause of the “vanishing race” they demonstrated:

[A]n inability to see or read Indigenous sovereignty and politics in any form other than the reduced, the primitive, or the ethnographically classic, a reading that disappears Indigenous political form, is blind to or, easily hitches it to other things, or dismisses it altogether.

3 Marianne Ignace and Ronald E. Ignace, *Yerí re Stsq'ey's-kucw: Secwépemc People, Land, and Laws* (British Columbia, CA: Shuswap National Tribal Council, Ontario, CA: McGill-Queens University Press, 2017), 75.

4 Ibid.

The settler governance of Boas's time and of ours loves this sort of social science because it keeps things—and people—in a possessive form and, presumably, thus in place.⁵

We can see in review that land and Indigenous rights are deeply intertwined with the Boasian legacy of physical anthropology. Rendering Indigenous leaders and bodies as white plaster echoes of themselves, these are the hosts of the ghost-face brothers, whose colonialism and nationalism simultaneously ghosted their hosts.

Though much is allotted to Boas's work to record Indigenous cultures, it is important to understand that within the context of their work, this was, in fact, acting in accordance with the state's (nation's) disappearing and dispossession of Indigenous peoples and their land. In her article "Why White People Love Franz Boas; or, The Grammar of Indigenous Dispossession," Audra Simpson articulates the question as follows, "[y]et what was being lost was not culture but land—Indian land, and lots of it."⁶

In discussing the social scientist approach and Boas's arguments that simultaneously disproved racial theories of superiority while also continuing to re-ascribe colonial methods, Simpson says that Boas "worked in concert with a settler state that sought to disappear Indian life and land in order to possess that land and absorb that difference into a normative sociopolitical order."⁷ These social science methods were not neutral, they were absolutely in concert with the colonial project of extinction or at the least, a more liberal, assimilation.

Today, this anachronistic cast, a semblance of Chief Louis Clexléxqen, in its colonial rigidity and European sculptural bust form, reminds us that he was using the means

available to him to speak to his future ancestors, the people to come. To piece together these histories and to remember that the conflicts today are linked to the injustices of the past... that the face

5 Audra Simpson, *Why White People Love Franz Boas* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018), 178.

6 Ibid., 169.

7 Ibid., 167.

of nationalism is the brother of colonialism, working together to prop up ghosts amid their hosts.

So close your eyes again, and imagine these ghost-face brothers, in any country, in Europe, America, Canada—they are all brothers, each one ready to devour our sense of humanity, our lands, our solidarity with others, our ability to be extraordinary hosts. Close the door to these ghost-faces. Open the door to welcome the sacred guest, who comes to witness, who comes to honor us by sharing like family in our lands, our homes, and our communities. The ghost-face brothers will try to trick you and get you to invite them in where they will make war and devour from within. You will know them when they turn you to stone, plastered white and rigid, frozen in place a semblance of yourself.

There is one thing that can destroy these brothers: our love for one another. Tear Down All Walls. No One is Illegal. Destroy White Supremacy. These ghosts will lose even their own selves. We will win.

OFFERING(S) TO THE GHOST(S)

PETER MORIN

First, a primer, a working definition of decolonization:

Colonization is the forced removal of resources from Indigenous territories. Decolonization is the interrogation and the dismantling of the privileges you receive as a result of the removal of resources from Indigenous territories.

Second, some resources to help you to develop a decolonial reading of this text.

Movies to watch:

“Kanehsatake: 270 years of Resistance” directed by Alanis Obomsawin.

“Is the Crown at War with Us” directed by Alanis Obomsawin.

“Trick or Treaty” directed by Alanis Obomsawin.

“The Journals of Knud Rasmussen” directed by Zacharias Kunuk.

“Hands of History” directed by Loretta Todd.

“Rhymes for Young Ghouls” directed by Jeff Barnaby.

“Pow Wow Highway” directed by Jonathan Wacks
Firesong directed by Adam Jones.

Books to read:

HalfBreed written by Maria Campbell.

Split Tooth written by Tanya Tagaq.

Buffy Sainte-Marie, The Authorized Biography
written by Andrea Warner.

Arctic Dreams and Nightmares written by
Alootook Ipellie.

As We Have Always Done written by
Leanne Betasamosake Simpson.

Islands of Decolonial Love written by
Leanne Betasamosake Simpson.
Monkey Beach written by Eden Robinson.
The Lesser Blessed written by Richard Van Camp.

Poets to read:

Layli Long Soldier.
Joy Harjo.
Janet Rogers.
Louise Bernice Halfe.
Tommy Pico.
Sherwin Bitsui.
Jordan Abel.

Albums to listen to:

Power in the Blood by Buffy Sainte-Marie.
Many a Mile by Buffy Sainte-Marie.
Link Wray by Link Wray.
Animism by Tanya Tagaq.
Pepper's Pow Wow by Jim Pepper.
Contact from the Underworld of Redboy by
Robbie Robertson.
A Tribe Called Red by A Tribe Called Red.

Indigenous artists to know:

Rebecca Belmore.
Norval Morrisseau.
Bill Reid.
Olivia Whetung.
Dayna Danger.
Cheryl l'Hirondelle.
Tania Willard.
Maria Hupfield.

I met Aaron in Brandon, Manitoba. He taught (teaches) in the School of Music at Brandon University. I taught in the Visual and Aboriginal Art Department, also at Brandon University. But we first met as friends.

My work focused and continues to focus deeply on our experience of space and how collaboration creates space for redress, return, and remembering. In 2013, I had been in England to do performance-based research that focused specifically on how an Indigenous body is re-affected by performing Indigenous power within the colonial matrix; within the context of England and its colonization of what was known as British North America. I held a month-long Research Fellowship at the Indigeneity in the Contemporary World: Performance, Politics, Belonging Project at Royal Holloway University in London. This opportunity led to the creation of 14 performance interventions called *Cultural Graffiti*. The focus of these interventions moved between performance of Indigenous power as sabotage to performance of Indigenous power as remembrance. The 14 performance interventions were shaped around public singing on buildings, monuments, more specifically singing onto the place where the monument met the ground. At the base of the performance interventions is the teaching of our Tahltan songs to the rocks so that they may continue to sing them after I've left their territory. The idea also centered Tahltan Nation song as a sonic structure for Tahltan knowledge and knowing. The final *Cultural Graffiti* intervention took place at Buckingham Palace. In the final performance, I walked towards the palace. Once there, I placed a blanket on the land in front of the palace. Standing on this blanket, I put on my button blanket regalia which included a button blanket mask. As a way to begin the performance, I lay my body down on the blanket and sang my Tahltan Song into the land underneath the palace. After singing into the land, I stood to face their gate and sang my song at the palace. From the gate, I moved and sang around the monument in front of their palace. Afterwards, I walked up to

their gate wearing my button blanket regalia and carrying my hand drum. I placed my lips on their gate and said the words:

You do not win. We remain. We are still vibrant.
We are idle no more. You did not win. You do
not win. In fact, today you lose fucking everything.

I am a Tahltan Nation citizen. The Tahltan Nation is an Indigenous Nation within what is now known as Canada. The Tahltan Nation is currently comprised of three communities located in British Columbia: Iskut, Dease Lake, and Telegraph Creek. The Tahltan Nation territory is 3,857.06 km from Toronto, Ontario and 1,095 km from Vancouver, BC. On October 18, 1910, Tahltan leaders signed a Declaration of Independence from Canada. This document declares Tahltan sovereignty and foregrounds the future of Tahltan political, philosophical, and economic life as determined by/for Tahltan people. The first gold rush took place within our territory several years before the Yukon gold rush (1892). This means that Canada has been removing gold and other resources from our territories longer than it has been recognized as a nation.

O F F E R I N G 2

Our performance took place at SAVVY over two sessions, June 9 and 10 2018.

One of the main questions for structuring our collaboration was focused on decolonizing the trombone and its history. Aaron is a classically trained musician whose primary instrument is the trombone. I am a performance artist, trained in both western european and Indigenous methods. I work with the hand drum. Aaron and I were talking about sonic languages and sonic landscapes. Can the drum, with its history of being silenced by colonization, speak with the trombone, which has a history of colonizing? Aaron taught me that the trombone was once the main instrument of the Royal Court, affectionately referred to as “the voice of God” because of its ability to be the loudest instrument. Royals entering the Royal court needed to

be announced by the voice of God. In our research, we talked about sonic colonization of Indigenous peoples and how the trombone was implicated in this, because of its role in early music compositions; early compositions that would have been heard in every early church in Canada.

These words described the work:

Affect(ing) music

To build a ghost house on your territory.

These disparate histories stand with us when we perform: Indigenous worldview. Classically trained. Music as language. The spirit of travel. The spirit of family. History and territory standing together and singing. History and body standing together. History and land are also conceptual territories. History of oppression attempts to curb our abilities because power corrupts. In our ongoing considerations of decolonization, the hand drum and the trombone are combined for the purpose of experiencing a new sonic landscape. The hand drum and the Trombone are seen as having crossed purposes because of their specific histories. In our ongoing practice of decolonization, the purpose is to contribute, practice, and possibly build a better relationship to the beautiful land.

The work is composed and performed in four parts:

1. Travelling to a new territory (Berlin), being affected by and affecting that territory through a performance (hand drum and trombone).
2. This collaboration (Peter Morin and Aaron Wilson) exists beyond the colonial imagination.
3. The voice of God (trombone) collaborating with the heartbeat of the nation (hand drum) shouldn't exist.

4. In order to hear this new song, we need to build a ghost house on your territory. A collaboration of energies and actions that call to the intangible histories of colonization.

O F F E R I N G 3

During the work and our time on the land now known as Berlin, I kept worrying about the ghosts that believed all Indigenous bodies were dead. I am not dead. Indigenous culture is not dead. Indigenous knowledge is still affecting the world. I remember telling Aaron what if these ghosts get so mad at the sound of my drum that they go back into their buried bodies and crawl out of their graves.

Will you protect me?

O F F E R I N G 4

We are a people. A people do not throw their geniuses away. And if they are thrown away, it is our duty as artists and as witnesses of the future to collect them again for the sake of our children, and, if necessary, bone by bone.
—Alice Walker, *Zora Neale Hurston*, 1979

Performance Notes:

Begin in the courtyard. Aaron starts at a distance. Aaron is playing the exact song that was played when Columbus landed in the “new world.” He plays this towards you. You are singing a very old Tahltan Nation song. Crouched over a stone. Singing into the stone. Shaking. Shaking a rattle. Singing and chanting. The stone is amplifying the song into the earth. The stone is amplifying Tahltan knowledge. The stone is learning the Tahltan song. Proof of life. Proof of knowledge. You hear Aaron coming. But you do not know where he is, because your eyes are closed. You hear Aaron coming. You feel where he is. Eventually Aaron aims his trombone bell overtop of your crouched body. He is singing this song through your body, through the stone, into the earth. You try to protect the stone. Eventually the Christopher Columbus song is moving through your blood, your body, moving through your song; sonically taking over your body. Eventually there is only the Christopher Columbus song. Eventually there is only noise.

You are called by Aaron. Witnessing him. Put the rattle down. Stand away from him. Awake. Wake up. Grab your drum. Then the attack. Sing at him. He sings at you. Instrument vs. instrument. The voice of God. The heartbeat of the land. At a distance. Moving towards each other. The attack echoes. Pushing. Pushing. Pushing. Pushing. Towards each other. Eventually there is no more breath or voice. No more singing. No more heartbeats. The songs are over. Stand and witness each other. Exhausted. The sonic landscape includes the breath. The sonic landscape includes our heartbeats. Take apart the trombone. Wrap the pieces in red cloth. Put tobacco on the ground. Wrap up the drum. Wrap up the instruments together. You have made a sacred bundle on the territory now known as Berlin. This bundle lasts one night and is reopened tomorrow.

On the next day, pen the bundle. Tell those gathered why we did this. Speak about the drum. Speak about

the trombone. Speak about the drum speaking to their little brother, the trombone. Speak about the possibilities of this happening. Open the bundle. Sing a hand drum song. Blow onto all of the pieces of the trombone. Blow life back into the pieces. Aaron assembles the pieces. Aaron plays his composition to honour Indigenous territories in the place now known as Canada. Then we reorient the trombone. Aaron sings into the mouthpiece. You sing into the bell. Together, we sing a song to honor Indigenous territories and knowledges.

Research Questions:

What does it mean to sing a song into this land?

How does a new sonic landscape affect our experience of colonization, across bodies and knowledge systems?

Can these two sonic languages speak to each other?

Can we build a ghost house on your territory?

Can we use this ghost house to make ceremony?

Can we decolonize the trombone?

The Archive is a slow performance
—Jennifer Gonzalez, 2005

the bus stations are empty and sobbing,
the unemployment lines are runny
like broken eggs, the construction sites
pile up endlessly, nothing is finished.
—Dionne Brand, 2006

Yes, but how does it change?

I don't want to risk being called romantic about performance, performative interventions, or performance ethnographies, even if these theories live inside and contribute to what was performed at SAVVY and in the territory now known as Berlin. I don't think that all of the difficult political histories leave us because we lived deeply inside of a performance moment. My research of the past 15 years lives within and is continually shaped by performance as research methodology. This methodology also enables Tahltan Nation knowledge to be practiced within colonized spaces. Performance as a practice has the power to redress, return, remember the agency of my Indigenous body at all times.

Within colonial space, the decolonial lens helps the body to feel Indigenous knowledges. Decolonization does not make Indigenous knowledges clearer or easier. In fact, a decolonizing methodology will make a space for Indigenous knowledges to be present. However, it is a mistake to think that this "presencing" is all that is required. We don't necessarily carry the tools to enter into the matrix, we have to earn them. The word Indigenous is an invitation to the conversation. It is not the end, but a beginning. Thomas McIlwraith writes, "hunting and speaking shape connections between people and between people and animals at Iskut Village.

But managing those relationships is always a challenge. Contradictions abound.”¹ This statement is offered here as an attempt to articulate interpretation of Indigenous knowledge and practices. Written in collaboration with Tahltan Elders and Knowledge Keepers, McIlwraith’s book focuses specifically on environments that are shaped by Tahltan Nation knowledge and praxis. Performance art can mediate contradictions and will aligns itself with the experience of practice-based Indigenous knowledges, oftentimes by invading controlled environments. Performance art as a research methodology can reveal the gaps in our experience and perception. Performance art’s objective is moved forward by risk-taking and has the potential to hold up a mirror to the structures of power that are endeavouring to control our experiences. My Indigenous brain, shaped by Tahltan Nation knowledge, tells me that these structures of power are alive and with a spirit, and they want to continue to be alive.

O F F E R I N G 7

During this performance offering, I lived deeply on the territories that are now known as Berlin. I wasn’t a tourist there. I wasn’t made invisible. I wasn’t a ghost. I wasn’t a romantic vision of an Indian à la Karl May. I lived. The performance collaboration with Aaron broke open a space for this living. Our collaborative action of building a ghost house on this particular territory remains as a broadcasting site and as a beacon for more Indigenous bodies for future works. It is a subversive act that addresses a history of settler colonialism. There is so much to unravel in thinking through the difficult political histories that endeavour to shape our lived experiences. The global conversation on colonization and decolonization isn’t just a nicely wrapped parcel. The global conversation involves dynamics of power that can, and do, cost lives. Adding to these complications, in the colonial imaginary is the travel of Indigenous bodies towards Europe.

1 Thomas McIlwraith, *‘We Are Still Didene’: Stories of Hunting and History from Northern British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division; Canadian First edition, 2012), 71.

We have to shift our thinking to how Indigeneity meets the world first (and always has). This shift in focus and practice helps to reorganize our experience of and dependence on colonial tropes to determine meaning in our relationships. The research question Can we decolonize the trombone? is perhaps a bit pedantic and yet, within our collaboration, creates the most possibilities. Colonial power makes indigenous bodies ghosts. Colonial power also has the ability to make us all into ghosts. There are moments when it doesn't, and we can make a ghost house. We can make a situation where the drum speaks to its little brother, the trombone, and we can make connections to place and bodies which are profound.

I am a grandson of Tahltan ancestor artists. Their work speaks to me as much as my work speaks to them. I am the son of Janell Morin (Crow Clan) and Pierre Morin (Quebecois). I am grandson of Dinah Creyke and John Creyke (Crow Clan and Wolf Clan, respectively). I am also the grandson of Adrienne and Clermont Morin. I was given the Tahltan name Ezeck-Tah by my grandmother when I turned 13. I refused to believe that

these ancestor artists never dreamed, conceptualized, materialized, that our knowledges would never reach across the oceans. I refuse to make ghosts. I refuse to remake ourselves into their ghosts.

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Our task is not to find the maximum amount of content in a work of art, much less to squeeze more content out of the work than is already there. Our task is to cut back on the content so that we can see the thing at all.

—Susan Sontag,
Against Interpretation, 1964

NEGRTUDE:
THE GRAMMAR
OF THE
CALIBAN

JACQUES COURSIL

The poets Léopold Sedar Senghor and Aimé Césaire, co-authors of the term *négritude* in the 1930s, are grammarians (this is significant), as well as unfailing friends: “Senghor has revealed to me a part of myself,” Césaire was wont to say. Nonetheless, this *négritude* they jointly coined both distinguishes and opposes them. Jean-Paul Sartre is the first to point this out, in *Orphée Noir* [Black Orpheus], his preface to the *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache* edited by Senghor. He writes: “Strange and decisive turn: race [the *négritude* of Senghor] is transmuted into *historicity* [the *négritude* of Césaire].”¹ This clarification has not sufficed, however. Today, three quarters of a century later, the myth of race inherent to the *négritude* of Senghor has practically obliterated Césaire’s historical approach; in other words, race has repressed history. From the early 1950s on, and later still, momentous post-*négritude* texts by writers such as Frantz Fanon, Édouard Glissant, Maryse Condé, and Wole Soyinka were published. It is their critiques that are under discussion here, namely because endeavors to overwrite *négritude* at times amount to nothing more than a revival *in petto* of the obscured Césairian traits on which it is premised.

1 Jean-Paul Sartre and John MacCombie, “Black Orpheus,” *The Massachusetts Review* Vol. 6, No. 1 (Autumn, 1964–Winter, 1965): 13–52; here, 47; emphasis in the original.

The point of convergence for the writers on *négritude* hailing from various colonized countries is 1930s Paris, where they meet as students. This is the Paris of surrealist activity, Negro arts, cubist painting, jazz, and atonal music. Equally, it is the Paris of the Workers Internationals and, above all, the capital of the powerful colonial empire of which these writers are not citizens, but subjects and victims.

Like all his comrades in their respective countries, Césaire has endured colonialism in Martinique. In Paris he discovers it to be a system. Was the colonial yoke necessarily perfect and opaque in order that *la condition nègre*² would reveal itself only in mainland France, and not in the colonized territories themselves? It is in Paris, the capital of the empire, that the founders of *négritude* discover the global scope of colonial imperialism. "Europe has given me Africa," Césaire will often tell his visitors. And so it is: Édouard Glissant writes of alienation, "one must look for it *elsewhere*, in order to be aware of it."³

The term *négritude* turns an everyday insult, some five hundred years old, into a gratifying means of identification. *Nègre*, for Césaire, is "my revolt, my face, my name."⁴ In personally reclaiming the insult as a name, anyone who has been called *Nègre* is able to establish himself, without the Other, in an identity without negation. Jean-Paul Sartre was the first to note, in *Orphée Noir*: "moment of negativity, he picks up this word 'Negro' which was thrown at him like a stone."⁵

"Who and what are we?"⁶ Césaire asks. The response to that which he ironically calls "a most worthy question"⁷ is a scream, "the great Black scream [uttered] so forcefully—*d'une telle raideur*—

2 The author wishes to retain the original term *nègre* (Negro) throughout, as here, in "the Negro condition."

3 Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, trans. J. Michael Dash (Paris, 1981; Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989), 23, emphasis in the original.

4 Aimé Césaire, "Prophecy," in *The Collected Poetry*, trans. Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith (Berkeley: University California Press, 1983), 121.

5 Sartre and MacCombie, "Black Orpheus," 13–52.

6 Aimé Césaire, "Notebook of A Return to the Native Land" in *The Collected Poetry*, trans. Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith. (Berkeley: University California Press, 1983), 75.

7 Ibid., 75.

that the world's foundations will be shaken."⁸ Thus, *négritude* is the refutation of a denial: the denial of a voice and, in consequence, that of existing as a human subject in the eyes of the Other. *Négritude* by its very adamancy—*raideur*—shakes to the core a colonial society that on its own terms admits no dialogue, having supposed the colonized subject to have no discourse of his own. In thus turning things around, *négritude* makes of the hitherto excluded being a human subject in the order of verbal exchange and, at the same time, inverts this subject's regard for his own condition. *Négritude* blasts open (Césaire) with its sound the entire complex of denial inherent to the colonial condition: the denial of humanity, the denial of history, the denial of culture, of morality, of beauty, and of rationality. In short, if the Black man is a man, he is a man without qualities. Thus the idea of the *nègre*, Whitey's metonymic specter, finds itself transmuted, by *négritude*, into a categoric subjective reality.

But which subjective reality is this? For Senghor, Negroes are the Black people of Africa and the Americas. This ethnic hypothesis explains the problematic title of his *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache* [An Anthology of the New Negro and Malagasy Poetry, 1948]. Madagascans, to his mind, are not *nègres*. For Césaire, on the contrary, this problem would not have arisen since, in his view, anyone who bears *la*

condition nègre is a *nègre*. Two fraternal authors for the same poetic cry yet each with a different agenda. The *négritude* of Senghor is positive and ameliorative; it magnifies that which colonizers have sought to destroy, namely the Negro civilizations of Africa. Conversely, that of Césaire draws on the negative meaning of the reclaimed insult. While, for Senghor, it is a cry of "pride," this cry, for Césaire, is choked in the throat by "a thousand bamboo fangs."⁹ This fettered cry (*cri*) "spurts" onto the page, because *négritude*, and in this lies its strength, is *écriture*.

8 Aimé Césaire, *And the Dogs Were Silent*, in idem, *Lyric and Dramatic Poetry: 1946–1982*, trans. Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1990), 1–74; here, 47. The play was originally published along with lyric poems in idem, *Les Armes Miraculeuses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1946).

9 Aimé Césaire, "Note-book of A Return to the Native Land," in *The Collected Poetry*, trans. Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith (Berkeley: University California Press 1983), 55.

Césaire recalls:

All the dreams, all the desires, all the mounting resentments, all the hopes unspoken or repressed during the centuries of colonial rule, all of this needed to come out; and when it comes out, when it expresses itself in a great spurt, indiscriminately sweeping before it the individual and the collective, the conscious and the subconscious, past experience and the prophetic, then its name is poetry.”¹⁰

In this era of triumphant colonialism, the 1930s, the term *négritude* declares itself antithetical to a social order that has only ever talked to itself. The term is destabilizing by virtue of its very apparition. Césaire declares: “This is to say that recourse is taken here, naturally, to this essential language that is poetry; and, too, that poetry plays here in full its role of emancipatory act.”¹¹ In revolutionary times, poetry that in principle has no impact on actual events is nevertheless an absolute weapon, inasmuch as it is at the vanguard of cultural change. While colonialism (its politicians, moralists, colonial biology) had anticipated everything, including revolts, including complaints—poetry took it by surprise.

10 Aimé Césaire, *Liminaire, Nouvelle somme de poésie du monde noir* (Paris: Présence Africaine 1966), 85. “Tous les rêves, tous les désirs, toutes les rancunes accumulées, toutes les espérances, informulées, comme refoulées, pendant des siècles de domination coloniale, tout cela avait besoin de sortir, et quand cela sort et que cela s’exprime et que cela gicle, charriant indistinctement l’individuel et le collectif, le conscient et l’inconscient, le vécu et le prophétique, cela s’appelle la poésie.”

11 Ibid., 85. “C’est dire que le recours est fait ici naturellement à ce langage de l’essentiel qu’est la poésie, et que la poésie joue ici à plein son rôle d’acte libérateur.”

Prospero: Caliban, Caliban!

Caliban: Uhuru! [...]

Prospero: Yet another return to your savage tongue.

—Aimé Césaire, *Une Tempête*, Act I, Scene II.¹²

The poets Senghor and Césaire are both sticklers for grammar and also, no doubt, Mallarméan enough to know that poetry is written not with ideas but with words, often by destroying words. Hence, the term *négritude* is conceived as a linguistic distortion forged in the grammar of a Caliban. Jean-Paul Sartre did not like it, declaring: “The rather ugly term ‘*Négritude*’ is one of the few Black contributions to our dictionary.”¹³ For the philosopher, this “noir” [Black] neologism as twisted as a Caliban is improper and ill-formed inasmuch as it brings together in a sole and quirky sign two incompatible elements of grammar: the stem *nègr-* and the suffix *-itude*; because while *nègre* gives *négritude*, *Black* does not give *Black-itude*, nor *white*, *whit-itude*, nor *yellow*, *yellow-itude*, nor *redskin*, *redskin-itude*, nor *arab*, *arab-itude*. In 1948, the term sounded shocking to Sartre and all other Francophones. In the meantime, its undeniable success has inscribed it in popular usage as well as in dictionaries. Nowadays, people are happy to speak of *négritude* but whether they do so in praise of it or critically, the poetic cockiness of the term, linguistically so disarming, has vanished beneath the concept. All the more important then to recall that *négritude*, when it first appeared, the great written-cry that was to deconstruct the entire complex of colonial denials, rang out in everyday language like a fake homeoteleuton, a violation of etiquette. The rule is simple: the stem *nègr-* can be found in *nègr-e*, *nègr-esse*,

nègr-illon, *nègr-illonne*, *nègr-o*, *nègr-aille*, *nègr-isme*, *nègr-ier* (certain of which uses contradict one another). In a quite other register, one knows that the suffix *-itude* can be found in *serv-itude*, *lass-itude*, *sol-itude*, and *hab-itude*.

12 Aimé Césaire, *A Tempest*, trans. Philip Crispin (London: Oberon Books, 2000), 18–19.

13 Sartre and MacCombie, “Black Orpheus,” 13–52; here, 24.

In plain English, then, the stem posits a (binary) concept outside of time (i.e non-temporal) in opposition to a (non-binary) suffix that connotes a span of time. Language resists this amalgamation, because one says *vér-ité*, but not *vér-itude*, *grav-ité*, but not *grav-itude*; one says *human-ité*, *african-ité*, *judé-ité*, *créol-ité*, but not *human-itude*, *animal-itude*, or *african-itude*. Simply put, *-ité* is conceptual (non-temporal) while *-itude* is narrative (temporal). Thus, *négritude*, a term born of broken grammar, installed itself by means of forceps at the morphological heart of the master's language. Césaire recalls the resistance that he encountered at the time: "People criticized my grammar but they didn't want to see the basis for it, which is to say, the Negro condition."¹⁴ Thus, *négritude*—or *négr-iture*, like Caliban's *écriture*—is born of a violent *glossalgie* (a language pain), the point of the exercise being to introduce *la condition nègre* as a conceivable category of thought.

The term *négritude*, which exists neither in French nor any other language, is the brainchild of poetic *écriture*. For sure, it comes into being long after the texts and struggles of its great American predecessors of the Harlem Renaissance, who had broken much new ground. It comes in the wake of revolts or, indeed, of revolutions, notably that of Haiti. Nevertheless, by virtue of its poetic force it establishes itself as a primary voice, the voice of those oppressed and humiliated by the global colonial system: "My lips shall speak for miseries that have no mouth" (Césaire).

14 Jacqueline Sieger, "Entretien avec Aimé Césaire," *Afrique 5* (Oct. 1961): 64–67, https://www.potomitan.info/cesaire/entretien_1961.php, accessed August 4, 2020, "On me faisait des critiques grammaticales, mais on ne voulait pas voir le fond, c'est-à-dire la condition du nègre."

Interpretation of the *-itude* suffix by Senghor, like Césaire a maestro of grammar, is at times contradictory and awkward. Thus, he notes: "First of all, Césaire said 'Négritude' and not 'Négrité.' And rightly so. For the suffix *-itude* has a more concrete [...] meaning than the suffix *-ité*. This was an appraisal not of value but of identity [...] which, being more concrete, as we have seen, better translates 'rootedness.'"¹⁵

Later, he maintains by means of a grammarian sophism and against all linguistic logic that the *-itude* suffix is of an abstract (and not temporal) sort. He declares: "The suffix *-itude* has been added rather than the suffix *-ité*, to move thus from the concrete to the abstract, from the material to the spiritual."¹⁶ Thanks to this sophisticated abstraction, Senghor takes *négritude* out of time, which is to say, out of the historicity of *la condition nègre* as defined by Césaire, in order to retain of it only a (non-temporal) Black essence.

15 L. S. Senghor, "De la négritude," in idem, *Ce que je crois* (Paris: Grasset 1988), 115–153, esp. 137. "Tout d'abord, Césaire a dit 'Négritude' et non pas 'Négrité.' A juste raison. C'est que le suffixe en *-itude* a une signification plus concrète [...] que le suffixe en *-ité*. [...] Ce n'était pas un jugement de valeur, mais d'identité [...] qui, plus concret nous l'avons vu, traduit mieux l'enracinement."

16 L. S. Senghor, "Francité et Francophonie," in *Ce que je crois*, 155–197, esp. 158.

"Le suffixe *-itude* a été ajouté plutôt que le suffixe *-ité*, en ce qu'il passe du concret à l'abstrait, du matériel au spirituel."

17 Ibid., 158, "Quant à la francité, je la définis comme l'ensemble des valeurs de la langue et de la culture, partant, de la civilisation française. De même que j'ai défini la Négritude comme l'ensemble des valeurs de la civilisation noire."

Elsewhere he remarks: "As for *francité*, I define it as the sum of the linguistic and cultural values ensuing from French civilization. Just as I have defined *négritude* as the sum of the values of Black civilization."¹⁷ Later still, he will not hesitate to note a rapport between *négritude* and *germanité*. But whatever this bizarre rapprochement may supposedly entail, Senghor doesn't dream for an instant of words such as *francitude* or *germanitude*.

Thus the stem *nègr-* connotes a race, an essence, while the suffix *-itude* shifts the focus from race to history. The suffix supposes a duration, which is to say, a beginning and an end that define *la condition nègre* as a delimited narrative. Senghor, thanks to his sophistry,

empties the suffix of its finitude. For him, *négritude* designates an immemorial racial essence: for Césaire, by contrast, it is a deconstructed and diffuse memory to recollect; the one defines it as a biological attribute, the other as a historical epithet that remains an insult even if turned around. To summarize: Senghor's *nègre* belongs to the Black race while Césaire's belongs to "the fallen race" that he mentions in his tragedy *And the Dogs Were Silent*. This race in servitude is that of the *Works and Days* of the Greek poet Hesiod, who divided the universe into the race of gods, the race of kings, then that of warriors, of clerics, of merchants and, finally, of servile laborers. For Senghor, racial essence is more important and more fundamental than the history of the slave trade, tyranny, and colonization.

The interpretation of *négritude* as a racial essence has been greatly popularized by L. S. Senghor and many others before and after him. This widespread reading of the term now ranks, consciously or not, among everyday certitudes. The poet Senghor sings the *Black* essence of being, the *Black* essence of his place of origin, *Black* Africa. In Senghor's view, this *négritude* is inscribed in the individual's genes and in the very soil of the African continent. It is from this original dual matrix that "Black culture" emanates. Thus, for Senghor, *négritude* is a bio-anthropological quality that is anchored, above and beyond the phenotype, deeply in the genotype.

Senghor's argument, Gobineau's ironic victory, is typical of raciological thought. It begins by asserting a dogma that maintains the objective and original existence of human races and then puts this down to genes by citing biologists who are, incidentally, at pains to say the opposite. We know that the findings of geographical haematology are statistical and that even in the opinion of these doubtfully cited authorities, and of many others, this inductive data does not permit any deduction and hence justification of the racial classification premised at the start. It is, thus, not logically possible to deduce from stochastic studies of biology any concept of human races. For Senghor, *négritude* is an "ethnotype," the presupposition here being that Negro culture is biologically transmitted.

This “anthropological heresy” backtracks through the prehistory of Africa in order to avoid at all costs the historicity of colonial racism. He writes: “Especially since, in Africa alone, Prehistory is more important perhaps than History.”¹⁸

Senghor speaks of “Black Africa” while Césaire speaks of “Mother Africa.” These are two distinct myths: for Senghor, an essence pure and perennial; for Césaire, a history that begins with the Atlantic slave trade. For the descendants of African slaves who made the Middle Passage, “the true origin of the Caribbean peoples is the belly of the Negro boat, the plantation shack...”¹⁹

In other words, Césaire’s Africa is no paradise lost but a lacunal memory, a “lagoonal calendar.”²⁰ What would the people of the Antilles be today, what would African Americans be, without this truncated point of origin? For Americans descended from the slave trade, any search for origins by genealogical means founders in the continental space of West and Central

Africa. Not a cousin, not an ancestor, anywhere, who is more than imaginary. Who in the West Indies and, more broadly speaking, throughout the Americas has “Bambara ancestors”? Certainly, Césaire writes: “my country is the ‘lance of night’ of my Bambara ancestors”; but, he continues: “it shrinks and its tip desperately retreats towards the haft...”²¹ Thus Césaire himself warns us of the pitfalls of the “Mother Africa” trope: “I inhabit a sacred wound—I inhabit imaginary ancestors.”²²

Césaire and his West Indian and Guianian companions returned Africanized to the native country (American native country), without ever having set foot on the African continent. What counted, for them, was not so much Africa in territorial terms as its entry into historical discourse.

18 L.S. Senghor, “La Préhistoire africaine,” in *Ce que je crois*, 27–73, esp. 29. “Il y a surtout que, pour l’Afrique, la Préhistoire est plus importante peut-être que l’Histoire.”

19 Edouard Glissant, *Traité du tout-monde* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1997), 36. “La véritable genèse des peuples de la Caraïbe, c’est le ventre du bateau négrier et c’est l’antre de la plantation.”

20 Aimé Césaire, “Lagoonal Calendar,” in idem, *The Collected Poetry*, ed. and transl. Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 383.

21 Aimé Césaire, “Note-book,” in *The Complete Poetry of Aimé Césaire: Bilingual Edition* (Middle-town: Wesleyan University Press, 2017), 55.

22 Césaire, “Lagoonal Calendar,” 383.

The Africa that Césaire discovered, while drifting around Paris, dwelt there. This Africa, present in Paris, was still absent from the Antilles and possibly even from Africa itself. It was only in the framework of colonial imperialism as debated in the *capitale métropolitaine* that Africa, the slave trade, and the Americas were revealed to be a single entity.

To return to the “native country” was to come full circle but also to fall into a trap one could lose oneself in, and in which many did lose themselves. Consider certain positions on the return to Africa. The former slaves who founded Liberia in the nineteenth century brought with them their American experience of servitude and a part of America much larger than the part of Africa their ancestors had been able to take with them when they departed for the New World as “naked migrants,” to use Glissant’s term. Plainly put, these were not Africans returning after several centuries of slavery but Americans embarking on a new form of colonization. Césaire’s concern was, hence, not a dream of Liberia but the place this Africa held in the lands of the three Americas, which were (and still are) so full of Europe, since European culture in the Americas has left little space to pre-Colombian, African, and other cultures. The presence of Africa in the “native country” (Martinique)—diluted, transformed, repressed, however undeniable its traces—justified its mythical dimension: imaginary, certainly, but also vital, in order to fill the five-hundred-year-old memory gap.

Et si je pousse un grand cri il ne sera point nègre.

—Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*.²³

From the 1950s on, the great voices of a new and rich generation of writers and intellectuals begin to make themselves heard: Frantz Fanon, then, later, Édouard Glissant, Maryse Condé, Wole Soyinka, Yambo Ouologuem, and many more. In their post-*négritude* discourse one must acknowledge on the one hand a radical refusal of the Negro myth but on the other, and first and foremost, an analysis of the inadequacy of *négritude* in face of the societal struggles and political conflicts then unfolding in the still-colonial and post-colonial world. Édouard Glissant underscores this limitation when

he writes: “Conceived as a fundamental inspiration for the emancipation of Africa, it never actually played a part as such in the historic episodes of this liberation. On the contrary, it was rejected as such, first in the context of anglophone Africa (which rejected its generalizing nature), then by the radical fringes of the African struggle (perhaps under the influence of revolutionary ideologies).”²⁴

While fully acknowledging the initiatory merit of *négritude*, Fanon (1952) works on the “destruction” of its psychological consequences, on how to escape the vicious circle of the, to quote Sartre, Senghorian “anti-racist racism” at its root. But the linguistic trap has already closed. Thus, even now, racialized language is the only means of expression available to us. Breton—“Un Grand Poète Noir”²⁵—and Sartre—“bouches noires”²⁶—came up with nothing but “noir” [Black] to address this;

23 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2008), 13.

“And if I utter a great shout, it won’t be Black.”

24 Édouard Glissant, “The Known, the Uncertain,” in idem, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, trans. J. Michael Dash (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1989), 13–52, esp. 24–25.

25 André Breton, “A Great Black Poet,” in Aimé Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, eds. and trans. Clayton Eshelman and Annette Smith (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001).

26 Jean-Paul Sartre and John MacCombie, “Black Orpheus,” *The Massachusetts Review* Vol. 6, No. 1 (Autumn, 1964–Winter, 1965): 13–52, here, 13. “When you removed the gag that was keeping these black mouths shut, what were you hoping for?”

they found no other forms of expression. Language, “the old bourgeois language,” as Césaire called it, trips up on its own lexical closure. Thus, while people had ended up admitting that human races were figments of a so-called scientific imagination, there is worse to come: race proves to be a language, a closed system of signs, a cage from which there is no escape. Not a word uttered that isn’t caught in the racial-logical trap of language, hence Fanon’s fury: “The handsome Negro says ‘Fuck you, Madame!’”²⁷ In Senghor’s view, blood is Black; blood is dark. For Breton, Césaire is a Black man who writes better than a white man. For Sartre, the cries of revolt issue from Black mouths. More generally, one says Black continent, Black civilizations, Black music, and Black associations, one slogan of the last of these being: “Nous, les noirs de France” [We, the Blacks of France]. Fortunately, there is also Rimbaud in *Une saison en Enfer* [A Season in Hell]: “I am a Negro. [...] You are false Negroes”; and there is Genet’s question, too—What’s his color?—followed by the delightful response of the phenotype esthete: *Black is the color*. The semiotic trap of race closes in on itself to the point of absurdity: How long have you been white, in your family? Hence, it is not by means of an anti-racist racism that one retrieves oneself from the raciology of language, no more than one climbs out of a swamp by tugging at one’s wig, as the adage goes. Therefore, when the poet Bernard Nanga speaks of having “overcome his former *négritude*,”²⁸ his critique, like that of many others, touches as yet only on the stem *negr*-. The Césairean suffix (which is to say, the poetics of language) is skipped over.

Wole Soyinka’s work, *Myth, Literature and the African World*, is typical of this generation of post-*négritude* African writers. Soyinka reviews a line of verse that Senghor wrote and never disavowed despite the endless scorn heaped upon it: “Emotion is Negro, as reason is hellenic.”²⁹ Soyinka ironizes that which he calls the Negritudinistes’ “propaganda for creative separatism,”

27 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2008), 94.

28 L.S. Senghor, “What the Black Man Contributes” in *Prose and Poetry*, trans. John Reed & Clive Wake (London: Heinemann Educational, 1976).

29 Ibid.

but he is indignant too: "...oh yes, the Gobineaus of the world are right; Africans neither think nor construct, but it doesn't matter because—voilà—they intuit!"³⁰ All of that is well known and widely debated. Let us quiet our legitimate but facile indignation nevertheless, because the poets are wily even when they are wrong. At the first hemistich we raise our voices to ask one another: But just who do they think they are, these "Greeks" (Whites), to monopolize human reason this way? At the second hemistich we have a similar reaction: Just who do they think they are, these Negroes, to monopolize emotions this way?

Further on in the same work, Soyinka attacks *négritude* with the meanwhile famous statement: "a tiger does not proclaim its tigritude."³¹ In other words, the tiger is no more a tiger when he shouts about being a tiger. This argument premised on the *tigr-* stem is strictly anti-Senghorian. But in ignoring the Césairean suffix, Soyinka fails to see that the *-itude* tells a certain story, namely that on American soil, on the far side of the ocean, the captive tiger proclaims his servitude. His "tigritude" is not an essence of tiger (*tigr-ité*), but rather the historical misfortune of having been caged, freighted overseas, and put in chains. "I hear coming up from the hold the enchained curses," writes Césaire.³²

Maryse Condé, in her critique, writes: "Négritude takes a lie as a basic premise, the worst lie of colonization [...]." But the Negro does not exist. Anxious to legitimize his exploitation, Condé distinguishes between the two aspects of *négritude*:

"In fact," she writes, "we should be talking about two Negritudes: Césaire's Negritude which seems to belong to the past and Senghor's Negritude which [...] strives for advancement to the rank of ideology for the Black World."³³ While, without a shadow of a doubt, Senghorian *négritude* is the dominant ideology in the Black world today, it is equally evident that the Césairean poetics of the term, its Caliban grammar, because it is historical, is alive and well, and at no risk of being overwritten.

30 Wole Soyinka, *Myth, Literature and the African World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 129–30.

31 Wole Soyinka. See also <https://jimsigh.wordpress.com/2013/08/05/tigritude/>, accessed August 4, 2020.

32 *The Complete Poetry of Aimé Césaire: Bilingual Edition*, trans. A.J.

Arnold and Clayton Eshlemen (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press 2017), stanza 51, 37.

33 *Ibid.*, 73.

Hannah Arendt, in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, recalls that criticism of the concept of colonial races is nothing new. In the seventeenth century, in his *Caractères*, La Bruyère notes that, “Reason belongs to all Climates.”³⁴ Herder (in the late eighteenth century) emphatically rejects “this ignoble word of race for humans beings”; and he declares, further, (in line with today’s geographical haematology): “There are neither four nor five races [...] on earth [...]. Colours run into one another, [spread] through all the places and ages of the earth.”³⁵ Later, in the nineteenth century, Tocqueville writes to Gobineau regarding the latter’s racial doctrines: “I believe they are very likely false and quite certainly pernicious.”³⁶

For each of these writers, Fanon, Glissant, Condé, and Soyinka, *négritude* contains the seeds of its own destruction; it is a transition, not a conclusion, a means, and not an ultimate end. Thus, there is no *négritude* without finitude, because the word *nègre* neither designates an essence nor goes beyond a certain history. Maryse Condé concludes: “It seems simply to us that Negritude will undergo another metamorphosis and that we will go on being Negroes.”³⁷ In effect, we are caught in the trap of a word: “Negritude will never cease to disappear.”³⁸

For Fanon, in 1952, a history of the Black world is subterfuge. The “ruse of a Black world,” as he calls it, is an obstacle to a history of the world and of worlds, which is a painful history, to be sure, but one common to us all by the very fact of global colonialism. His analysis leads to self-evident conclusions such as this: *négritude* happens to be, by definition, a history of people both Black and white, a history that is simultaneously antisymmetric and proper to both groups, because race, always, is the history of the Other. Thus *négritude* is not simply a Black question, because

34 Jean de La Bruyère, *The Characters, or Manners of the Present Age* (1713), 262.

35 Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Ideas Toward a Philosophy of the History of Man*, trans. T. Churchill, (London: J. Johnson, 1800).

36 Alexis de Tocqueville, “First Letter on Algeria (23 June 1837),” in *Writing on Empire and Slavery*, 5–13.

37 Condé, “Césaire’s Negritude, Senghor’s Negritude,” 80.

38 Ibid., 80.

every chain has two ends, at which points there are subjects, each telling his fragmentary and imaginary version of one and the same real history. Prospero and Caliban (Césaire), the master and the slave, tread the same boards to speak their enchained discourses: and in this theater there is only one history, not two. Thus, it is not through the protagonists' narcissism that history will be decided, because what is this *négritude*, after all, if the Whites don't play their role?

Translated from the French by Jill Denton, Berlin.

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CANNIBAL POEMS

SAFIYA SINCLAIR

Have I forgotten it—
wild conch-shell dialect,
Black apostrophe curled
tight on my tongue?
Or how the Spanish built walls
of broken glass to keep me out
but the Doctor Bird kept chasing
and raking me in: This place
is your place, wreathed in red
Sargassum, ancient driftwood
nursed on the pensive sea.
The ramshackle altar I visited
often, packed full with fish-skull,
bright with *lignum vitae* plumes:
Father, I have asked so many miracles
of it. To be patient and forgiving,
to be remade for you in some
small wonder. And what a joy
to still believe in anything.
My diction now as straight
as my hair; that stranger we've
long stopped searching for.
But if somehow our half-sunken
hearts could answer, I would cup
my mouth in warm bowls
over the earth, and kiss the wet dirt
of home, taste Bogue-mud
and one long orange peel for skin.
I'd open my ear for sugar cane
and long stalks of gungo peas
to climb in. I'd swim the sea
still lapsing in a soldered frame,
the sea that again and again
calls out my name.

Father unbending father unbroken father
 with the low hanging belly, father I was cleaved from,
 pressed into, cast and remolded, father I was forged
 in the fire of your self. Ripped my veined skin, one eyelid,
 father my black tangle of hair and teeth. Born yellowed
 and wrinkled, father your jackfruit, foster my overripe flesh.
 Father your first daughter now severed at the ankles, father
 your black machete. I remember your slick smell, your sea-dark,
 your rum-froth, wailed and smeared my wet jelly across
 your cheek. Father forgive my impossible demands. I conjure you
 in woven tam, Lion of Judah, Father your red, gold,
 and green. Father a flag I am waving/father a flag I am
 burning. Father skittering in on a boat of whale skeleton,
 his body wrapped in white like an Orthodox priest. Father
 and his nest of acolyte women, his beard-comber, his Primrose,
 his Dahlia, his Nagasaki blossom. Mother and I were none of
 them. Father washing me in eucalyptus, in garlic, in goldenseal.
 Fathering my exorcism. Father the harsh brine of my sea.
 Making sounds only the heart can feel. Father a burrowing
 insect, his small incision. No bleat but a warm gurgle—
 Daughter entering this world a host. Father your beached
 animal, your lamentations in the sand. Mother her red bones
 come knocking. Mother her red bones come knocking at the
 floorboards,
 my mother knock-knocking at his skull when he dreams.
 Scratching at your door, my dry rattle of Morse code:
 Father Let me in. With the mash-mouth spirits who enter us,
 Father the split fibula where the marrow must rust—
 Father the soft drum in my ear. Daughter unweeding
 her familiar mischief; Mother jangling the ribcage: *I am here.*

When I was a child
I counted the Looper moths
caught in the dusty mesh
of our window screens.

Fed them slowly into the hot mouth
of a kerosene lamp, then watched
them pop and blacken soundlessly,
but could not look away.

I had known what it was to be nothing.
Bore the shamed blood-letter of my sex
like a banishment; wore the bruise mark
of my father's hands to school in silence.

And here I am, still at the old window
dying of thirst, watching my girlself asleep
with the candle-flame alive in my ear,
little sister yelling fire!

Father the soft drum in my ear. Daughter unweeding
her familiar mischief; Mother jangling the ribcage: *I am here.*

NOTES ON THE STATE
OF VIRGINIA, I

Child of the colonies. Carrying the swift waves of oceans inside of you. The wide dark of centuries, the whole world plunged down, sewn through the needle's eye, the old crow's glisten in your gullet. Eyes beetling through black. You wear your mother's face in the mirror. Your mouth closed around all those pills like teeth, each one so heavy your tongue falls numb. Think of your friend who only wanted you to find sleep, whose face asked you not to choose the worst. Dull wretch, slack-jaw orphan, you always feel sorry for yourself. And swallow each capsule like the last pearl your grandfather pressed into your palm. How he had dived three whole days for it. Your grandfather who loved you but could not say it. All the men who love you and cannot say it. Jamaica, old fur sticking to the roof of my mouth, the one long dream that holds me underwater, black centipede I still teethe on. Ruined train clattering through my track. Here, I could come up for air. Here, I could wake with a name I can answer to. Where Thomas Jefferson learnt how to belittle a thing. How to own it. He created the word and wanted my mouth to know it. He wanted the whole world pulled through me on a fishing string. Where I will find my fingers in the muscle of my throat, where I will marvel at the body asking to live.

NOTES ON THE STATE
OF VIRGINIA, II

February, I am an open wound—woman discarded and woman emerging. Scars devising scars.

To live here we know precisely how to be haunted. Sundown sun, a sterile sky come running, sweet gallow-grass whistling; Ghosts.

All year we learn that chainsaw hymnal, outside the Lawn, another excavation—slave quarters found concealed in the student dorms; buried rooms choked, sounds bricked off. Two centuries' thorns may break sudden bloom. What can we say? No one speaks of it. I dream pristine. And skirting the caution-tape instead, we clasp hands with each other in complicity.

Somewhere, the ghost-arm of history still throttling me. Taste of old blood on the wind, the crouched statue of Sacajawea shrouded behind the pioneers. Creature of unbelonging, un-name this new silence. Magnolia explosion, its Leviathan shade.

Then fall, what sick messiah. Fall, I am coughing in the aisles again, where bare triage of voices pour molasses in my ear. Where a bald insurrection of tongues. Then squashed rebellion, scrutiny. Indoctrination. To live here we know precisely how to be hunted.

P O R T R A I T O F E V E
A S T H E A N A C O N D A

I too am gathering the vulgarity
of botany, the eye and its nuclei for mischief.
Of Man, redacted I came, am coming,
fasting, starving carved
myself a selfish idol, its shell unsuitable. I, twice
discarded, arrived thornside, and soon outgrew
his reptilian sheen. A fine specimen. Let me have it.
Something inviolate; splayed in bird-lime,
legs an exposed anemone, against jailbait August,
its X-ray sky. This light a Gorgon-slick, polygamous
doom. And God again calling much too late, who aches to
stick an ache in my unmentionable.
His Primal Plant remains elusive—
Wildfire and pathogen, blood-knot of human
fleshed there in His beard. How I am hot for it.
Call me murderess, a glowing engine
timed to blow. Watch it go with unjealousy, shadow.
Let me have it. This maidenhead-primeval
schemes what ovule of cruel invention;
the Venus-trap, the menses.
And how many ways to pronounce this guilt:
whore's nest of ague, supernova, wild stigmata.
Womb. I boast a vogue sacrosanctum.
Engorging shored pornographies, the cells' unruly
strain, rogue empire multiplying for a thousand virile
thousand years; my wings pinned wide
in parthenogenesis, such miraculous display.

INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

JIHAN EL-TAHRI

I walk between darkness and light
The night of exile and
The shining memory of home.
The land I knew
Is given up to strangers
There is the sunshine
Do they feel my shadow?
—Unknown Poet

I first read these words written in traditional Palestinian cross-stitch and hung in a frame at the *Marna House*, a Bed and Breakfast in The Gaza Strip run by an unsung hero of resistance called Alya Alshawa. I stayed in the rundown villa in 1988 covering the first Intifada for the BBC, when children used stones to drive out the Israeli occupation. For me, these words captured the essence of the blockaded people in Gaza. The Gazans were regarded as an easily forgotten tribe, left in its squalor behind barbed wire that everyone could ignore, until they made headlines. Once the Intifada started, their status became an issue of confusion; some referred to them as “refugees from 1967,” as “internal immigrants,” as displaced etc..

These verses haunted me for years. Yes, the poem captured the plight of those under occupation in Gaza, and similarly, of the tens of thousands of immigrants in detention centers across Europe, in refugee camps in Kenya, the homeless in New York, and the *sans-papiers* in the streets of Paris. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that this situation touched me so profoundly because it also applied to people like myself, exiled artists and intellectuals. Others perceive me as a traveller, a globetrotter, and even as a citizen of the world or some other fancy terminology, but is my sense of displacement any different?

SAVVY’s invitation to reflect on immigration through Derrida’s concept of “Hostipitality” immediately brought this verse from the unknown poet to mind. Debating hostipitality seemed a simple task. I have many stories to tell in this regard, including many memories from my nomadic life.

But there is one anecdote in particular that stands out: an exchange with my daughter in 2008. At that time, I was living in Johannesburg. The news of the outbreak of the first wave of xenophobic attacks shocked me to my core. Most of the victims were from Zimbabwe, Congo, and Mozambique. The murdered Mozambicans were regular workers seeking better lives in neighbouring South Africa. After all, the two countries, Mozambique and South Africa, have been exchanging favors for quite some time because for many years, Mozambique had been home to the South Africans' diaspora during the struggle for liberation. Their country was even bombed by the Apartheid government to force them to reject the ANC exiles, but Mozambicans remained steadfast in their support for Black rights and ending apartheid. Why is it then, that now local Black South Africans were "hunting" their fellow Mozambicans and other Africans from further north, killing them with machetes and even setting them and their belongings ablaze?

We were horrified, and with some friends we decided to film the townships and offer our help. As a French speaker, I quickly became the translator for Congolese and Ivorian immigrants caught in the violence engulfing their new homes in the township of Alexandra. Their homes and belongings had been destroyed, but they were lucky to have saved their lives. So, I helped translate their depositions at the police station. There were many awkward and confusing moments during these interviews. The officer was the representative of the SA state's hospitality and yet, his hostility toward the migrants was palpable for, deep inside, he sympathised with his fellow South Africans who wanted these immigrants out. It was all very distressing for a Pan-Africanist like myself. And at the time, I really couldn't wrap my head around why everyone—the immigrants as well as the policeman—dealt with me as some kind of diplomatic mediator rather than as a fellow African immigrant who cared enough to come lend a hand.

One day, once the wave of violence had calmed down, I was taking my daughter to school and trying to explain xenophobia to her. I couldn't imagine that an eleven year old

would really understand the complexities of xenophobia, but I thought it was nevertheless important to share my anger about the facts and my wonderings as to why we were personally exempt from such violence, even though we too were immigrants. Was it perhaps because, as a “North African,” my skin colour was lighter than my fellow Africans who were being hunted down by the mobs? Or was it because I lived in the suburbs rather than in the townships? Her response was very unexpected and profound. She said: *But mum, it’s because you are not an immigrant, you are an “expat”*... I was perplexed. However, that distinction lies at the core of my personal displacement and the vantage point through which I would like to address the concept of hostipitality today. I too had moved to South Africa to find a job after being inspired by Nelson Mandela and what his newly independent country could become. I was a migrant worker but unlike the hordes of migrant workers trekking down from the north, I was not seen as a threat. On the contrary, I easily acquired a permanent residence under the label of “skills transfer.”

My daughter was right: I was an expat rather than an immigrant, the key difference being privilege. I had not lived the indignity of occupation nor the humiliation of refugee and detention camps. Yes, my living conditions were radically better, I was certainly in a privileged position, but I believe that we shared the same profound sense of displacement. Although I have learned to integrate or ignore my nomadic existence (external displacement), it is this internal displacement that gets the better of me. Being away from the space of belonging presumes the possibility of return, even if sometimes this option is improbable. However, internal displacement is about how our thoughts, our systems of knowledge, our references, and our very understanding of who we are have been shifted forever with little possibility of turning back.

My external displacement started at birth! My father was an Egyptian diplomat and we moved from country to country every four years until I was about 13 or 14. I grew up knowing I was Egyptian, and all things “Egyptian” were constantly around us. We even managed to get Egyptian food while living in Finland.

However, the Egypt that nurtured me was that of an idealized world that had certainly vanished...

Cairo, I was told, was a city of two million people with wide boulevards and French built Haussmannien buildings, and as soon as you leave, downtown palm trees line the streets and green fields lie at the edge of the city. My parents had pictures and even 8mm footage that helped consolidate this image of the beautiful Cairo in our minds. Cairo was the cosmopolitan city often referred to in the 1950s and 1960s as “the Paris of the Middle East.” Cinema, theatre, but mostly music bonded people from all walks of life. My father would play a vinyl called *Take me Back to Cairo* by Karim Shukry on Sunday mornings and take us with him into the nostalgia for his homeland, a homeland that I had never even visited. I too yearned for returning “home.”

I would like to share the words of Olu Oguibe’s “Imaginary Homes, Imagined Loyalties: A Brief Reflection on the Uncertainty of Geographies” (2005), in which he writes that,

Our bond with the site of our nativity is a one-way affair. It is an ambivalent bond borne out of a one-sided loyalty and a proclivity to possess, a desperate striving to belong, to lay claim to something that lays no claim in return. Severed from the womb and the body that bore us and hauled into the void of life and existence, we crave to attach ourselves to something, a moment, a location, an event; we crave an anchor which we readily find in the contours of the house of our upbringing, in the streets of our childhood, in the city of our birth. But the city has a different desire and a different response, for we need the city more than the city needs us.¹

In the mid 1970s, returning to Egypt as an adolescent was a massive culture shock. The Cairo my parents had told us about was nowhere to be found; the city that

1 Olu Oguibe, “Imaginary Homes, Imagined Loyalties: A Brief Reflection on the Uncertainty of Geographies” in *Interzones: A Work in Progress*, eds. O. Zaya and A. Michelsen (Copenhagen: Tabapress, 1996).

was once built to host a population of two million people was now home to over ten million... traffic jams were never ending and permanent hooting seemed to rise over the sound of any music. The city was oppressive, confusing, and people spoke Arabic, a language that I needed to learn fast in order to adapt. I was ready to adapt, I wanted to finally really be Egyptian. I was lucky that in “our Egypt” I did not need to deal with details like learning proper Arabic. We were the privileged so we all spoke English, French, and even German, but our Arabic was weak. The real common language was what we called “salad,” a mixture of English spiced with French and a sprinkle of Arabic.

Driving through the northern coast of Egypt, one encounters a paradisiacque coastline that we refer to as *Al-Sahel*. It is where the rich and educated and some of the famous gather to spend their vacation. The last 100 kilometers of the road leading to the resort are lined with billboards offering all sorts of luxury goods, new housing developments, and even cleaning services; all the commercial advertisements are written in English without arabic translation. When I pointed this out, I was told very simply: “Here there is no space for those who do not speak or understand English.” Indeed, the children of Egypt’s upper class today pride themselves for not speaking Arabic even when they have never once left the shores of Egypt. They are now so modern and advanced that they are fully globalised; they no longer need to know who they are and what heritage it is they carry... complete internal displacement means that they are not even questioning that there is a problem with what they have become.

Our privileged bubble exists in every country on the continent. My circle of the post-colonial privileged class is conscious, western educated, successful, and keen on development and modernity. We all connect easily and speak the same languages and have read the same books. We talk about doing something for our country. That is shorthand for doing something that would alleviate ever so slightly the plight of the 80 percent of our indigenous populations that live on barely two dollars a day. The irony is that this 80% of Egyptians

that we so much want to identify with—"the masses"—sees us as aliens. We go to the local market and we are seen as tourists; we are rightfully targeted for a quick buck to be made off of, a foreigner who has much more money to spare.

However, it is not just about the money, it is also about disconnection with what is actually happening on the ground. The "masses" can sell us anything (culturally, politically, or socially) because we, "the elite," do not have a clue what the real Egypt wants or suffers from. So, when I arrive at the market speaking the Arabic we speak in privileged circles, the vendors systematically and kindly ask, "Where are you originally from? You speak good Arabic!"

Yes, in Egypt my Egyptianness is systematically questioned. This displacement is actually much harsher for me than being physically away from home; at least abroad I can claim my identity without it being contested and eyed as fraud. In the West, I am an Egyptian, I can be a refugee, an exile, or an immigrant, and the place I come from is never contested.

My first major identity crisis came with the first Gulf War in 1990. I was a foreign correspondent working for a major US newspaper. Iraq, an Arab country, was being bombed to the ground by US troops, and the Egyptian army was the second largest contingent helping to wipe away the Iraq that Saddam Hussein had built over the past few decades. So, as an Egyptian how was I supposed to feel? What was I supposed to think? And why did it all feel so wrong despite the implacable logic sold to us about the necessity of that war?

What happened to the ideologies of the new post-colonial Egypt? Were we not supposed to be Pan-Arab and Pan-African? Why was my country fighting alongside the US to destroy another Arab country? This confusion led me to question the very essence of what it meant to be Egyptian. Who are we? Are we Arabs, Africans, or simply an extension of Europe that lies on the opposite side of the Mediterranean? I was constantly required to choose because for some reason that I could not quite grapple with, I was not allowed to be both an Arab and an African, I had to choose.

It took me a couple of years of intensive reading and finally finding the inaccessible writings of Cheikh Anta Diop for me to make peace with my identity. I was an Egyptian who is indeed both Arab AND African. My claim to both was an act of resistance, an act of refusing the way we Egyptians were brainwashed by the colonial powers to dissociate ourselves from the continent. After all, the erection of the colonial edifice in Africa was dependant on separating Egypt from the continent intellectually. How else would the colonial claim of “civilizing the barbarians” hold if the seven thousand years of Egypt’s traceable civilization remained connected to the African continent at large!

I brandished my Africanness and worked to build a bridge to reconnect us from the north—especially Egyptians—to our natural depth south of the continent. Once again I was seen and treated as not African enough. Was it just because of my light skin colour? No, Black Nubians from Egypt were also seen as not quite African... Africa in our day and age is now limited to “Sub-Saharan Africa.”

That distinction between “Sub-Saharan Africa” and the rest of the continent bewildered me mainly because I could not find any map to pinpoint the borders of that region. Why was Mauritania on the very northern edge of the continent regarded as “Sub-Saharan” and Sudan, which mostly lies below the great Sahara, is considered “middle east”? Where did these regional re-groupments come from? The terminology was certainly not handed down from colonial literature. In colonial times there was the “far east” and the “near east;” when and where did the term “Middle East” come from? Similarly, where did the term “Sub-Saharan” come from? And more importantly for me, how is it that we Africans have adopted these terminologies and now see ourselves through their prisms?

In trying to track down the contours of our divisions on the continent, I realized that we no longer followed the dividing lines drawn on a map during the Berlin Conference of 1884. The European powers occupied, divided, and colonized African territory to regulate their trade and interests. So, how did the dividing lines change after the end of the Empire?

The Sahara was never a barrier between the north and the south of the continent. On the contrary, historically it was a space of sanctuary, hospitality, trade, and most of all, cultural exchange. The University of Timbuktu educated scholars from the entire continent side by side for centuries. When and how did the Sahara become a belt of nothingness above which live the “Arabs” and below which live the “real Africans”? How did we accept the convenient divide and proceed to stigmatize the Sahara as space of arid hostility?

It took a while to pin down that it was western scholars that coined the term “Sub-Saharan Africa” after the Second World War. In 1956, the resignation of British Prime Minister Anthony Eden—as a result of the Suez Crisis in Egypt—was the final, clear sign that the old colonial order was dead and buried. It would be a matter of a few years before almost 50 new African countries would claim their independence. The US, the new world power, had no experience in Africa and knew nothing about this plethora of nations that would soon join the UN and would each have its vote. The American administration understood that to safeguard its future interests and its sphere of influence, it needed to understand these new countries and how to build future alliances.

By 1966, the escalation of The Cold War encouraged the US to carve up the world into sections for specialized study, and almost 300 million dollars were poured into a new academic discipline called “Area Studies.” Corporations like the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the CIA invested in scholarships that would support America’s ability to respond effectively to perceived external threats. Ironically, until today the contours of so-called “Sub-Saharan Africa” do not appear on any map, but the great divide embraced by the academics has somehow been transformed into our assumed reality.

My personal education, like that of almost the entire elite on the African continent, is in one way or another a product of Area Studies and the economic aid attached to its promotion. School curriculums kindly offered, as part of the cultural aid packages, scholarships to the top western universities

to the best minds on the continent, and the promotion of handpicked African content in the arts and the sciences have all become part of the modelling of the new African mind.

It was a real shock for me to realize that I was the perfect product of Area Studies. The premise of my thought process and the tools I use to analyse everything come from the toolkit of western scholarship. I was educated in the American system, but the same goes for the thousands of Africans who got scholarships in the former communist bloc countries. The very structure of how I reason today is based on the transmission of knowledge from western sources. Every book I have read as a student be it about Egypt, Pan-Africanism, or even Chinese politics was written by a western, mostly American, scholar.

That is what I call internal displacement, whereby we, the so called well-educated elite of Africa, have been slowly and subtly forged to become an intellectual appendage of Europe. No wonder our less privileged, thus less educated countrymen, “the masses,” see us as foreigners! I do not state the above as some sort of conspiracy theory; this transformation has been underway since independence simply because little else is on offer. The world order does not allow for our indigenous knowledge systems to occupy the same status as that of the west. The history of the Mandinka people, for example, has been transmitted through an uninterrupted lineage of Griot since the 13th century that orally recount the stories of every aspect of the Empire. But this form of transmission of knowledge would not be acceptable as “fact” while writing a PhD. To qualify for the high status of acquiring a PhD, one needs bibliographies and footnotes that render our African knowledge systems obsolete.

Can we unlearn or at least try to integrate our own indigenous knowledge systems to allow the next generation to partially relieve this sense of internal displacement? Can we develop an integrated education that values our diversity and builds a common space of belonging that transcends privilege?

It is certainly too late for myself and my generation to wipe the slates of our brains clean. Recognizing that I am personally a living product of Area Studies is a harsh

reality of internal exile, an exile from which no immigration officer can send you back or set the record straight. However, it is this very recognition that divisions on the continent are but artificial constructs that should push us to stop doing the dirty work on behalf of our former or current colonizers.

Divide and rule has been an age old methodology to keep the continent locked in its shackles, so the great divide between the north and south of the continent is but a new artificial construct, similar to the colonial construct that erected nation state borders, often separating a single tribe. If we choose to perpetuate divisions today, we cannot just blame the colonial powers who imposed them. Each one of us, Africans, is a participant in the perpetuation of this divide.

DANCING AND EMBODYING HISTORY: C U M B I A AS A FORM OF RE=EXISTENCE

(INTRODUCTION TO THE DANCE GROUP
CANOAFOLK AND MUSIC BAND MAKONDO)

RAISA GALOFRE

In the times of the colonization of the Americas and the Caribbean, a music and dance rhythm emerged as a collective form of imagination and sensuality, embracing both life and death, pain and joy, past and present, hostility and hospitality... After five hundred years, Cumbia is still the rhythm that calls for togetherness, vividly expressing the knowledges and spiritualities that were the basis of its creation.

Indio, busca tu palito de cartón
Negro, trae el eco de tu tambó
que ya no viene de España
el recio conquistador
con su velero cargado
de humillante sumisión
Sólo quedará la gaita
y el eco de tu tambó

*lamento zambo*¹
—Adolfo Pacheco

Before the unexpected guests violently took control over the land in which they had accidentally arrived, the Natives of the Caribbean coast of South America hadn't heard the beat of an African drum ever before. The encounter of Native Americans and Africans took place in a space of hostility. It is at the heart of this space that Cumbia music was born.

Taking advantage of the hospitality of the indigenous population, who had mixed feelings of curiosity and fear towards them, the Spanish colonizers imposed themselves as the hosts of a land they hardly knew, whereas the actual hosts became *ghosts* in their own land: dispossessed, appropriated, subjugated, and almost exterminated in the name of economic and religious power. The Africans, who were violently taken away from their land and brought as slaves to the Americas and the Caribbean by the Europeans, were also strangers to the Natives... However they shared similar feelings of dispossession and loss.

1 Cumbia Song, 1984.

Displaced in different ways by brutal forms of violence, because and likely in spite of this hostility, these *ghosts* made another home for themselves; a home they could create together and share; a home where the music is the host and to which we all can have access to, beyond nationality, race, or religion.

It was near the slave settlements on the Caribbean coast of Colombia, in the city of Cartagena, and during their only free day in the year, that Indigenous people and Africans used to get together and make music. Dressed in Spanish clothing lent or given away by the colonizers, Africans would play the drums setting the rhythm, and the Indigenous would accompany them with the winds of the flutes. Combining African and Indigenous dance movements, this musical dance encounter, this space of joy, sorrow, imagination, and sensuality, marks the beginning of what we know as Cumbia.

Considered both a music and a dance genre but also a social practice, Cumbia is a form of re-existence; every time we, Colombians and Latin Americans, dance and play Cumbia, we revive the knowledge and spirituality that modernity and coloniality couldn't erase. We dance the history inscribed in its movements, in the presence of its instruments, in its mestizo character. We embody its origins with an awareness of its painful and violent past... while also embracing the rhythm of life and its various manifestations; when it is re-imagined, when it finds ways to re-emerge even in the most hostile of situations.

Let's experience the togetherness of the Cumbia with Canoafolk and Makondo!

Canoafolk:

Director, choreographer and costume designer:
Rocio Klug-Correa.

Makondo:

Juan Otalora (gaita), Arley Soto (gaita), Annette Wizisla (tambora), Benjamin Sarmiento (alegre), Pia Secondo (llamador).











Canoafolk dance group and Makondo band, Colombian Cumbia dance performance, Berlin, June 2018.

RIDING

THE

ON

HOS

CAP

TIDE:

TPH=

ITALISM

2018, 1971,
1931, 1911,
1888, 1850,
B E F O R E ,
A S L A V E S H I P
K E I J A U N
T H O M A S'
"M Y L A S T
A M E R I C A N
D O L L A R"

JOSHUA CHAMBERS-LETSON

For the embattled, there is no place
that cannot be home
nor is.

—Audre Lorde, *School Note*, 1978

1971. A U S H I G H S C H O O L
I N O K I N A W A

Senior year of high school my mother, a mixed-race Black and Japanese woman, tells her white, American guidance counselor that she wants to go to college. The guidance counselor encouraged her to find work in the hospitality industry instead; something more fitting her station in life. For a number of years after graduating from university, no one would hire her, so she took work as a housekeeper. This made her *at least* the fourth generation of women in her family to perform this kind of work. The women of the fifth-generation back were slaves.

2018. H U M A N R E S O U R C E S ,
L O S A N G E L E S , C A L I F O R N I A

May 7, 2018. Human Resources, a hollowed-out movie theater turned into a performance and exhibition venue in Los Angeles' Chinatown. The inside is an expansive, white warehouse-like space where we've gathered for Keijaun Thomas' performance of *My Last American Dollar*, after a screening of two Nicolas Bermeo films.

Inside HR, there is a round expanse of fake grass. Objects have been carefully placed atop the turf: brown paper bags, black plastic gloves, a couple of buckets, empty plastic cups, and what looks like a box of wine. In works like *My Last American Dollar*, or *Distance is Not Separation* the audience may be confronted with space full of an architectural configuration of such commodities that Thomas performs around and with for the duration of the piece. As she performs, Thomas' body is often exposed, presenting the spectator with the explicit sight of Black flesh. She'll be naked or clad in scant nylons,

lingerie, or a skull cap with hair attached to approximate a ponytail. She moves through the space to interact with the spectators in any range of purposeful ways—mirroring or mimicking their poses, or asking them to interact with her, inviting them to pour and throw glue, honey, and other substances onto her body that draw the dark tones of her skin into relief. Her movements are sinuous, drawing on the gestural vocabulary of Black femme performers who work in some relation to sexual economies. And though Thomas centers Black people and blackness in particular, the work often generously expands out into an inclusive minoritarian commons, recognizing the way in which blackness is both fundamental and has always been a generative condition of *being with*.

There comes a signature moment at the conclusion of the performance where she performs a gesture of hospitality or care for Black audience members or other audience members of color. At the conclusion of a performance of *Distance is Not Separation*, for example, she moved through the audience, reserving a minute for an exchange with every member that she could identify as Black, stepping briskly from person to person to say, “I love you.” Sometimes they’d reply, “I love you back” or “thank you.”

During these passages white audience members (or other audience members of color) may feel their exclusion from the circle of hospitality or affirmation, rendering explicit the ambiguous nature of hospitality identified by Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung in a postcolonial reading of Jacques Derrida’s theory of hospitality. Derrida describes “an essential self limitation built right into the idea of hospitality, which preserves the distance between one’s own and the ‘stranger,’ between owning one’s own property and inviting the ‘other’ into one’s home.” The host-guest relation is underscored by the regime of private property, which affords the host the ability to delineate the line between inside/out, self and other, mine and yours. This, Ndikung concludes, results in the establishment of a power dynamic through which the host gains the capacity to exercise power over the guest, “[the power of] keeping your guest at your mercy, especially if there is an existential, economic, and

political dependence. Also, the power of making the guest the ‘other,’ constructing the subordinate through a process of identification the guest might be stamped or categorized.”¹

Thomas’ act of *serving* hospitality is rich with ambivalence and ambiguity and suffuse with the generative force of blackness, queerness, and transness. In the announcement for *My Last American Dollar*, Thomas writes, “it is complicated. it is blurry. it is rooted and unrooted in my peoples history. my people being black people. it is difficult and hard, it is attached to my spine, it is connected to the middle passage of the Atlantic slave trade, it is in my blood.” Whatever “it” is, it cannot be distinguished from the legacy of slavery, nor disaggregated from Thomas’ own body—her spine and her blood. But “it” is also a gesture to a people, “my people being Black people.”

If, as Ndikung and Derrida suggest, the laws of hospitality are grounded in private property, what does it mean for a Black body on display to serve up hospitality when the Black body labors under the lingering effect of having once been property? And what does it mean for a Black femme subject to perform the service of hospitality when the racialized division of labor within modern capitalism—which emerged from and in the wake of trans-Atlantic slavery—commonly circumscribes Black and brown labor to the domain of hospitality work? The answer is complicated. And it is blurry. And it is rooted in Black people’s history. My people being Black people.

1 Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, “Whose Land Have I Lit On Now? Contemplations on the Notions of Hostipitality,” in *Whose Land Have I Lit On Now? Contemplations on the Notions of Hostipitality* (Berlin: SAVVY/Archive Books, 2019).

My grandfather, Cleo Mack Chambers, was born to Emma and Dan Chambers in 1931. This is everything I know about his childhood: He loved his mother. And his siblings. And even his father in spite of it all. He was born in the small town of Valiant, Oklahoma near the border of Texas and his parents worked as sharecroppers. At some point during his childhood Cleo and his younger brother Clifford narrowly avoided being lynched but were forced to watch as one of their kin was murdered in their place. I don't know if this is the reason the family left Oklahoma, or if they were displaced from their farm. It was not uncommon during the era of lynch law for Black people—whole families and communities—to be chased out of their homes and towns.

The family moved to Colorado where life was marked by the perennial registers of inhospitable antiblackness. No one would hire a Black man and the pressure led his father Dan to drinking. Since one of the only forms of labor available to Black and brown women was domestic work, his mother Emma supported the family by performing domestic service in the home of an affluent white doctor. When Cleo came of age, he turned to one of the few industries willing to hire Black men in large numbers and enlisted in the military. The US marines assigned him to a position they thought befitting a young Black man. He was made driver to one of the generals overseeing the US occupation of Japan.

My grandmother, Tatsuko, was born in Kobe, Japan in 1930 and is a survivor of both the bombings of Kobe and, by a series of twists in fate, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. After the war, Japanese workers were uprooted from their devastated homes in search of work. Many pooled around the US military bases popping up across the country to take work serving the occupying forces. She found a job in a seamstress's shop in Yokosuka and one day a handsome Black marine, the admiral's driver, walked through the front door. He could not speak Japanese; she barely knew any English. But in the days and weeks that followed, he'd return, tearing his own clothing

for an excuse to spend more time with her. Their twin daughters were born in 1954. They would have four in total: Shirley Ann, Sharon Marie, Carmen Jean, and Sonia. Cleo and Tatsuko were not legally married when their first two daughters were born because the white consular official working on the base refused to issue a marriage certificate for a “nigger” to marry a “Jap.”

After Cleo was discharged from the military, the family lived out a short, unhappy stay with Cleo’s parents. But Dan was furious that his eldest son had married a Japanese woman and work was still elusive so they set out for California. Their first night on the road they stopped in a motel with a vacancy sign. The clerk took one look at them and the vacancy suddenly vanished. They spent the night in the car with their girls. The motel charged them for the use of the parking space. They called ahead to line up apartment viewings. When they arrived, weary from the journey, most landlords took one look at Tatsuko’s husband and the apartments suddenly vanished. They stayed with friends for a while. Tatsuko found work cleaning rooms in a hotel. I do not know if that hotel would have denied her family a stay, though it seems likely.

2018. HUMAN RESOURCES, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

During the performance of *My Last American Dollar* at Human Resources, Thomas changed things up when she got to the hospitality section of the event. This time, she performed the gesture for a broad minoritarian commons, reaching out to Black, brown, Asian, Latinx, and Indigenous people as she could identify them. Instead of saying, “I love you,” to audience members of color, she would ask something like, “Are you okay? Can I get you something?” before an offer to serve: “I have wine or water in the cooler.” Most people accepted the offer and she methodically moved through the space to retrieve the water or find and pour a glass of wine, before returning to serve it to her guest.

It’s a generous act, but it also looks like work. As she speaks, her tone is gracious, warm, and soothing, so it was easy

to feel good about taking the drink she offered. But Thomas is a skilled performer, so one might be left wondering how she really feels about serving the wine. It can be hard to spend so much time taking care of other people's needs, and hospitality is a type of labor that is often demanded of Black women and Black femmes. But in the hospitality industry, workers are trained to put their guest at ease and are expected to smile through the pain.

1911, ARKANSAS

Cleo's mother Emma was born to Easter Hayes and Elijah Archie in Arkansas in 1911. Both of Emma's parents were freeborn, but her grandparents were emancipated slaves. Her family was poor and like her mother, she was married by the time she was fifteen. She had the equivalent of a third-grade education. She gave birth to fourteen children total. Twelve survived, in order of birth: Laura Lou, Cleo, Clifford, Imogene, Billy Don, Bertha Nell, Julius, Cora, Kenneth, Diane, Gwendolyn, and Judith. After moving to Colorado, Emma and Dan got their hands on five acres of land. The white people who owned it only sold it to Black people because they didn't think it was worth anything. But it was priceless to Emma, whose grandparents could not have their own property because they were property to someone else.

I ask my mother what she remembers of Emma during her childhood: "By the time when I met Emma I was twelve and she was working as a domestic in Denver. You know, I think about that all the time because all the Chambers family always talked about how nice [her employer] Doctor Bondi's home was. But she was a *domestic*. She still had to wear a uniform all the time and call them 'Doctor and Mrs. Bondi.' They like to say that they treated her like family. Oh bullshit. I didn't even believe that as a kid. She was still a servant." Life could not have been easy for her in Dr. Bondi's home, but it was not easy for her in her own home either. Dan was broken after years without work, and when Dan drank, he got mean, and when he got mean, he got violent. Dan beat Emma, brutally

and often, I believe. Whatever horrors Dan visited on his wife, she loved her babies, and Emma's children, grandchildren, and (yes) great-grandchildren loved her fiercely until she died when I was a teenager. Before she died, my mother asked her, if she had to do all over again, would she? "I love all my babies, but no," Emma replied, "No woman should ever have to do that."

THE DIVISION OF LABOR PART I

But the truth is that Emma was not likely to have been the first woman in our family line to *have* to perform *that* type of labor. As the stories I've been telling you have meant to suggest, within the racialized division of labor organizing life in and beyond the United States, Black women—and other racialized, gendered laborers—are often circumscribed to the realm of reproductive labor (including, in particular, domestic labor, care, hospitality, and sex work).

This division of labor is inextricable from the role of slavery in the development of modern capital and capital's historical and ongoing appropriation of Black women's productive and reproductive labor. Historian Jennifer Morgan teaches us that during the early development of the slave trade, slave owners in the Caribbean and the Americas adopted "implicit expectations that their wealth and, indeed, that of entire colonial empires, derived from the reproductive potential of women."² From Sojourner Truth and Angela Davis to Hortense Spillers and Riley Snorton, Black feminists have argued that under slavery the gender norms governing white European gender *and* sexuality were commonly codified via the exclusion and ungendering of Black women, or other racialized and colonized subjects.

Unlike their white counterparts, Black women performed hard labor in the fields alongside Black men, but they were also vulnerable to the appropriation of their sex, sexuality, and reproductive capacities. "The act of forcing Black women to work in fields

2 Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 9.

both required and resulted in work and sex becoming intrinsic to one another, [and] as slave owners contemplated women's reproductive potential with greed and opportunism, they... inscribe[d] enslaved women as racially and culturally different while creating an economic and moral environment in which the appropriation of a woman's children as well as her childbearing potential became rational and, indeed, natural."³ Within a racialized and gendered division of labor, sex, sexuality, and reproductive work became synonymous with Black women's work.

For Marx, the division of labor—the separation of work into different tasks—is a foundational part of the process of capital accumulation since there can be “no exchange without division of labour, whether this is naturally evolved or is itself already the result of an historical process.”⁴ This separation of work into different tasks correlates with the “distribution of the members of society among the various types of production (in effect) the subsuming of individuals under definitive relations of production.”⁵ In other words, the worker's lives are determined not only by the fact that they must work in order to survive, but also by the type of work that is available to them based on their place within the stratified field of social relations in which work is divided and distributed.

Having noted the retroactive means through which the slave owners used the appropriation of Black women's reproductive capacities to justify their enslavement as “rational and, indeed, natural,” we need to place pressure on Marx's reference to the distinction between the “natural” and “historical” processes responsible for the division of labor. Marx's invocation of the “natural” gestures to a theory that Engels would expand on, writing that, “The first division of labour is that between man and woman for the propagation of children.”⁶ This entirely impossible to verify hypothesis was itself predicated on a set of problematic assumptions about race, sex, and gender, all masquerading as natural law.

3 Ibid., 6.

4 Karl Marx, *Karl Marx/Frederick Engels/Collected Works: 1857–1861*, trans. Ernst Wangermann, vol. 28 (New York: International Publishers, 1986), 36.

5 Ibid., 33–34.

6 Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, trans. Alick West (New York: Penguin, 1985).

As generations of critical race, queer, and feminist theorists have shown us, race, gender, and sexuality are mutable and the result of differential social and historical processes, culturally inflected, while discursively and performatively enacted. And in the United States—arguably the first state *founded* in the service of capitalism and white supremacy and established atop the triumvirate of bourgeois liberalism, slavery and indigenous dispossession—gender and sexuality are deeply entangled with economy and race. In other words, the division of labor is always already gendered and racialized.

2018. HUMAN RESOURCES,
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.

If the racialized and gendered division of labor rearranges and disarticulates neat distinctions between care work, hospitality, reproductive labor, and sex work, it's worth noting that performance is deeply implicated in each of these areas of work. As gender theorist Paul Preciado observes, the scene of sex work is founded in "a relationship of spectacle, one involving representation and communication more than consumption."⁷ Or as queer journalist Toshio Meronek simply puts it, "Sex work almost invariably involves an element of performance," to which trans and sex worker rights activist Miss Major Griffin-Gracy responds, "with sex work, you gotta be on."⁸

The convergence of performance and the sexual economy is regularly invoked in Thomas' work. Here, gender is not determined by biology so much as it is self-determined through performative enactments. As Thomas performs, she undoes normative presumptions about gender, blackness, and the body, if not underlining the way in which normative presumptions about gender are codified against and denied to the Black body. Through performance

7 Paul B. Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*, trans. Bruce Benderson (New York: The Feminist Press, 2013), 306.

8 Miss Major Griffin-Gracy, CeCe McDonald, and Toshio Meronek, "Cautious Living: Black Trans Women and the Politics of Documentation," in *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*, eds. Reina Gossett, Eric A. Stanley and Johanna Burton (Cambridge, MA/London: MIT Press, 2017), 29.

she generates, as Snorton might describe it, “other ways to be trans, in which gender becomes a terrain to make space for living, a set of maneuvers with which Blacks in the New World have had much practice.”⁹

Thomas’ 2017 prose work *She Hard, She Q* (sections of which appear in *My American Dollar* as pre-recorded audio that Thomas speaks with and atop at different points) thinks through and articulates love for Black queer, Black femme, and Black trans life. “She’s punk. she’s been a fucking punk, she grew up punk. southern punk,” Thomas purs, “she a Black femme punk nigga bitch.”¹⁰ At times, the text is like a worker’s manual complete with friendly warnings about the risks involved in the hospitable acts performed by the sex worker, “gasp for the next breath. For a clear path in the air flow, blowing on a hard dick is dangerous.” Thomas’ poses may evoke figures like Nicki Minaj or Beyoncé whose own gestural vocabularies often reference Black women’s situation within sexual economies.

If the racialized division of labor established under slavery presumes Black women’s availability for sexual exploitation, one of the lingering effects of this has been recruitment and circumscription of Black women, Black queers, and Black trans people to sex work. Trans women of color may choose or are driven into sex work when other forms of work are not available—which is often. During the height of the AIDS crisis, for example, when care workers were in demand as few would work with AIDS patients, Griffin-Gracy describes the convergence of labor discrimination and sexual harassment confronting trans women who sought out care work for AIDS patients, “when I started applying for clinic jobs, the first thing they wanted to know was, how big were my tittes, and how long was my dick.”¹¹ Griffin-Gracy’s resistance to these harassing overtures had damning repercussions, “‘oh, so you don’t get the job.’ And the hospitals wouldn’t hire us, because we had no work history.”¹²

9 C. Riley Snorton, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 175.

10 Keijaun Thomas, “She Hard, She Q,” *Nat. Brut*, 2017, <https://www.natbrut.com/keijaun-thomas>, accessed August 4, 2020.

11 Griffin-Gracy, McDonald, and Meronek, “Cautious Living: Black Trans Women and the Politics of Documentation,” in *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility* (2017), 28.

12 Ibid.

These everyday forms of antiblack and transphobic labor discrimination may further entrench trans women of color within a racialized and sexualized division of labor. And then, as Preciado notes, “one of the indices of the degree of exploitation of sex work... is the social immobility of its laborers... At a time when work is becoming flexible and professional reinvention routine, sex work seems to most effectively reduce workers to a natural essence, branding them for the rest of their lives and making employment in other markets very difficult.”¹³ And this is if the job doesn’t kill you first. “You always think you is safe,” Thomas writes, “seeking safety under the low lights. KEEP MY SISTERS OFF THE FUCKING STREETS.” In the context of Thomas’ body of work—which embodies and explores the alternative, generative, and feminist powers of *performance as a form of sexual labor*—this statement seems less a disavowal of sex work than of the dangerous working conditions to which sex workers are exposed. And it frames the sex worker as more than hospitable care laborer, as a subject in need of care. “They always want to see us on our hands and knees,” she continues, now invoking Nina Simone and Lorraine Hansberry’s anthem for the devalued, “Don’t forget we need too. And needing ain’t that fucking easy. When you are young, gifted / and Black / and brown.” After all, who is there to take care of your needs when it’s your job to tend to the needs of everyone else?

DIVISION OF LABOR PART II

Marx argues that while the production process “may appear as naturally evolved,” it is in fact socially and historically determined: “Through the process of production itself they [the relations of production] are transformed from naturally evolved factors into historical ones, and although they appear as natural preconditions of production for one period, they were its historical result for another.”¹⁴ Historically

13 Preciado, *Testo Junkie*, 290.

14 Marx, *Karl Marx/Frederick Engels*, 28, 34.

(meaning, socially developed) processes create conditions that are ultimately

experienced by those who inhabit them as naturally occurring preconditions. This process of retroactive naturalization is commonly aided and abetted by the dominant ideologies which govern the social relations of a given community as social formations such as race, sex, and gender are assumed to be paradigms of “the natural” order, before being mobilized to reify the racialized and gendered division of labor as a natural occurrence.¹⁵

Of course Marx insists that Capital is ultimately disinterested in the specific form labor takes, “labour, not only as a category but in reality, has become here a means to create wealth in general, and has ceased as a determination to be tied with the individuals in any particularity.”¹⁶ As Lisa Lowe has noted, “The specific history of the United States and the crucial role of racialized immigrant labor, however, reveal the limits of Marx’s analysis... [insofar as] Marx’s theory cannot account for the historical conditions through which U.S capital profited precisely from racializing Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino immigrant labor in distinction to white labor and excluding those racialized laborers from citizenship.”¹⁷ Race, in other words, has been a central component to the process of capital accumulation in the new world order of global capitalism. This is perhaps nowhere more obvious than in the case of slavery.

15 The Marxian theory of the division of labor is itself tangled up in the dominant racial ideologies of its time. Marx and Engels based a significant part of their analysis of the origins of the division of labor on US American anthropologist Lewis H. Morgan’s 1877 study, *Ancient Society*. Morgan based his conclusions about ancient civilization on observations of modern Native American life—life that was anything but ancient or untouched, but in fact in the throes of radical disruption, destruction, and reorganization

after centuries of brutal European and US settler colonialism. Morgan’s assumption, which locked the indigenous subject in a primordial past, bolstered the denial of indigenous presence in the present, underscoring the settler colonial state’s aggressive and bloody campaign for indigenous dispossession and elimination.

16 Marx, *Karl Marx/Fredrick Engels*, 28, 41.

17 Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 25.

As famously exemplified by Hegel and many of his contemporaries, enlightenment ideology constituted the very idea of history as founded against an “unhistorical and undeveloped” Black

Africa—a narrative used, in turn, to justify colonization and the slave trade.¹⁸

As Cedric Robinson writes, “The ‘Negro,’ that is the color Black, was both a negation of African and a unity of opposition to white... The Negro had no civilization, no cultures, no religions, no history, no place, and finally no humanity that might command consideration.”¹⁹ Hegel, in turn, insisted that the Negro lacks even the capacity to imagine freedom, justifying slavery insofar as the negation of freedom experienced in slavery was expected to prepare them for freedom: “they are altogether deficient... Since slavery is so prevalent [in Africa], all those bonds of moral esteem which we cherish towards one another have disappeared, and it never occurs to the Negroes to expect of others what are entitled to demand of our fellows.”²⁰ So if, for Immanuel Kant, every “human being enjoys a universal right to hospitality because they share a space, the ‘surface of the earth,’ the figure of the Negro functioned as the limit figure against whom hospitality and, indeed, humanity could be defined.²¹ It thus became the Black worker’s lot to perform hospitality that would never be extended to her: “The creation of the Negro, the fiction of a dumb beast of burden fit only for slavery, was closely associated with the economic, technical, and financial requirements of Western developments from the sixteenth century on.”²²

18 Hegel describes the entirety of the African continent, and the myriad ancient civilizations contained there, as “that unhistorical and undeveloped land which is still enmeshed in the natural spirit, and which had to be mentioned here before we cross the threshold of world history itself.”: Georg Wilhelm

Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction, Reason in History*, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge, England/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 190, emphasis added. Montesquieu thus defined this figure as having no soul, making it antithetical to human definition: “[it is] impossible for us to suppose these creatures to be men”: Charles-Louis de Secondat Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2002), 239.

19 Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 81.

20 Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction, Reason in History*, 184.

21 As Hegel concluded, “their lot in their own country, where slavery is equally absolute, is almost worse than this; for the basic principle of all slavery is that man is not yet conscious of his freedom, and consequently sinks to the level of a mere object or worthless article.”: *Ibid.*, 183.

22 Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, 81.

Race was so thoroughly embedded in the process of capital accumulation that, “in contradistinction to Marx’s and Engels’s expectations that bourgeois society would rationalize social relations and demystify social consciousness, the obverse occurred. The development, organization, and expansion of capitalist society pursued essentially racial directions, so too did social ideality. As a material force, then, it could be expected that racialism would inevitably permeate the social structures emergent from capitalism.”²³ Modern capitalism would thus incorporate racial ideology into a division of labor that in turn routinely circumscribed the racialized worker to a future of servitude, framed as the natural order of things.

1888. LOUISIANA

But there is nothing natural about the way millions of Black people were stolen from their homes, stripped of their names and kin, and sold into generations of subservience and exploitation. There was nothing natural about the colonial powers’ occupation and carving up of the world. And there is nothing natural about a division of labor that exploited the sexual and reproductive capacities of Black women and Black femmes, often circumscribing Black femmes to precarious, undervalued, and unprotected forms of work that can both diminish and destroy.

I don’t know much about Emma’s mother save that Easter Hays, my great-great-grandmother, was born in Louisiana in 1888, was married to her husband Elijah Archie by fifteen, and was the daughter of born slaves. The census lists her occupation as “homemaker”—another kind of domestic worker. As Peggy Cooper Davis teaches us, following emancipation, and during reconstruction in particular, newly freed Black families experimented with the adaptation and rearrangement of bourgeois and white gender conventions in an attempt to perform mobility, social respectability, and uplift.²⁴ Easter was born in Louisiana where, according to family lore, our family had been

²³ Ibid., 2.

²⁴ Peggy Cooper Davis, *Neglected Stories: The Constitution and Family Values* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1997).

held on a Louisiana sugar plantation. I know nothing of her mother or her mother's mother except that they were slaves.

While the slave may perform hospitality work, she is not conceived of as a subject worthy of hospitality. Since the laws of hospitality are governed by the logic of private property, the gesture of providing hospice to a stranger within one's own home meets its limits at the figure of the slave who *is* private property. "The most universal definition of the slave is a stranger," writes Saidiya Hartman, "Torn from kin and community, exiled from one's country, dishonored and violated, the slave defines the position of the outsider. She is the perpetual outcast, the coerced migrant, the foreigner, the shamefaced child in the lineage."²⁵ The slave is the limit against which the limits of hospitality can be defined not just because she has lost all claim to belonging or property—she has no kin, no name, no people, nor even a home—but in so doing, she also loses all claim to her humanity and to her universal right to hospitality.

BEFORE, A SLAVE SHIP

We can't know what the first generation of women experienced as they were stolen from their homes and loaded aboard ships for the unknown, though we can sense some shape of this impossible story's outline. In 1927, Zora Neale Hurston carried out an extended ethnography with Kossala, or Cujdo Lewis. Kossala was born in the town of Banté in Benin, West Africa, the second child of Fondlolu, a woman of the Isha of the Yoruba people. He is the last known survivor of the Middle Passage, carried to the Americas as contraband aboard the *Clotilda*, a slave ship which made the journey across the Atlantic nearly fifty years after the slave trade was formally abolished in the United States.

Describing his transformation from a man named Kossala to a slave called Cujdo, he recounts being held for days in the barracoon (stockade) before the arrival of a white man, "He lokee hard at de skin and de feet and de legs and in de mouth.

25 Saidiya V. Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*, 1st ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2006), 3.

Den he choose. Every time he choose a man he choose a woman. Every time he take a woman he take a man too.”²⁶ Morgan describes a similar scene from an earlier moment in the slave trade in which, as men and women were legally transported through the Bight of Biafra in relatively equal ratios, “the slow realization of the women that they were being treated as property would have been inextricable from their experience of the ratio of men to women.”²⁷ This dawning would have facilitated “the clarity with which they came to understand the implicit link between their new productive and reproductive purpose in the Americas.”²⁸

The transformation of humans into cargo required the stripping of kin and name, but also of clothing. As the captives were marched into the sea in chains, they were loaded into boats coming to and from the slave ship, and as they prepared to move from boat to ship, the crew “snatch our country cloth off us. We try save our clothes, we ain used to be without no clothes on... Oh Lor’, I so shame! We come in de ‘Merica soil naked and de people say we naked savage. Dey say we doan wear no clothes. Dey doan know de Many-costs [slavers] snatch our clothes ‘way from us.”²⁹ The stripping of the slave meant to render them subject to less than bare life. It made them into living commodities. But even under such conditions, the captives clung to their humanity, producing new forms of kinship amongst the strangers in the hold. As Katherine McKittrick argues, “The ship, while materially and ideologically enclosing Black subjects—economic objects inside and often bound to the ship’s walls—also contribute[s] to the formation of an oppositional geography: the ship as a location of Black subjectivity and human terror, Black resistance, and in some cases, Black possession.”³⁰

From the womb of inhospitality, in the hold of a ship that gave rebirth to the captives as commodities who would perform the work of hospitality in perpetuity, performances of Black queer care

26 Zora Neale Hurston, *Barracoon: The Story of the Last “Black Cargo,”* ed. Deborah G. Plant (New York: Harper Collins, 2018), 53.

27 Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery*, 52.

28 Ibid.

29 Hurston, *Barracoon: The Story of the Last “Black Cargo,”* 54–55.

30 Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis, MN/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), ix-x.

and community became integral to the practice of keeping each other alive. Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley cites an eyewitness account of the arrival of a slave ship in Parimbo in which "the female enslaved 'had marked each others' heads with different designs, suns, half moons, without the help of a razor, without even soap, only with a piece of glass."³¹ This performance of beautification and self-care, Tinsley suggests, was an act of survival. And it was likely accompanied by queer practices of care and sexuality that also occurred within the hold, "even as they beautified each other in the belly of the ship, women loving each other in those sex-segregated slave holds was also part of how they survived and remade themselves in the Atlantic crossing" such that, even today, for those who live with the legacy of their ancestors having been stripped of clothing, kin, and home, "making yourself beautiful, and doing it to light another woman's fire—isn't just a frivolous Saturday afternoon. For a long time, it's been an act of resistance and rebirth."³² Or, as Thomas writes in *She Hard, She Q*, "Rebirth. Rework. Resist everything these days."

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We're nearing the end of the performance. Thomas moves to the middle of the space to invite anyone who identifies as a person of color to join her on the green field. She has made a place of us, she tells us. A mass of bodies—about half the room—comes to the center of the space. She delivers a toast for us, exemplifying Black performance's capacity to make place for the placeless, or—as José Muñoz might describe it—minoritarian performance's transformative and worldmaking capacities.³³ Then she invites us to lay down on the floor, touching each other, to create a network and become a Black and brown commons.

31 Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley, *Ezili's Mirrors: Imagining Black Queer Genders* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 56.

32 Ibid., 56–57.

33 "Minoritarian performance labors to make worlds, worlds of transformative politics and possibilities. Such performance engenders worlds of ideological potentiality that alter the present and map out the future": José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 195.

As people begin to lie down, a Black woman behind me raises her voice to speak. She says she supports the gesture but insists that she does not identify as a “woman of color” out of a concern for the way such a designation might strip her of the specificity of her blackness. Her voice is shaking, nervous, and Thomas soothingly responds that in handing out the cups she was trying to identify Black and brown people, and other racial minorities, but invited all other people who might identify as a person of color to produce an inclusive community.

The woman behind me joins that provisional community on the ground. We lay there, our bodies pressed together, as Thomas continues to perform for the standing audience members and I become acutely aware during this moment that the white spectators are now standing in a circle around us, looking down at us. In our rush to embody a Black and brown commons, we have concentrated our bodies, becoming a spectacle for (white) visual consumption. From my horizontal vantage point, I can’t see the other people on the ground around me. But as we lay there, stacked next to each other with no space to move, I think about the ones who were stacked next to each other with no space to move in the hold of a ship, and I think about a passage from *She Hard, She Q*: “Who’s the captain of this ship? How many waves we traversed to get to here. To get to these. These shores.”³⁴

I don’t want to say that in that moment we were *like* the slaves in the hold, so much as their hold on our present became palpable and visceral. Thomas’ invocations of the Middle Passage in *My Last American Dollar* achieve what Huey Copeland describes in his study of Black visual practices that engage the legacy of slavery: “As spectators we are suspended among these contradictions, which constitute both slavery’s terrain and that endless site of construction known simply as blackness. Positioned there for a moment, we might not entirely grasp what it was to be a slave back then, but we can surely see what it means to be an embodied subject now, everywhere caught up in economies of race, affect, and reification whose coordinates remain

34 Thomas, “She Hard, She Q.”

as much real as imaginary.”³⁵ As Thomas choreographed our bodies into the arrangement on the floor, she did not forge us into approximations of the slaves within the hold so much as she used performance’s powers to bend space and time and remind us that those figures are always already in the room with us, touching us, and shaping our movements through time and space. “I, too, live in the time of slavery,” Saidiya Hartman writes, “by which I mean I am living in the future created by it.”³⁶

In the closing moments, Thomas brings the audience back together, suggesting that there might be “space for everyone on the field.” The white audience members come to the center of the space, but standing together, there is little pretense that we have been reborn into the universal humanity required for Kantian hospitality. The effect is more subtle, but still—we have been rearranged, anarranged, undone, redone, reworked, transformed. Leaving the space, we are faint, living remainders of Thomas’ deployment of the work of performance to materialize (in Snorton’s words) “further imaginative capacities to construct more livable Black and trans worlds.”³⁷

Rebirthed. Reworked. Resisting everything these days.

35 Huey Copeland, *Bound to Appear: Art, Slavery, and the Site of Blackness in Multicultural America* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 22.

36 Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*, 133.

37 Snorton, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*, 14.

AMONGST
WHITE S:
WHAT IT
MEANS
TO BE
PRIVILEGED

MOHAMED AMJAHID

The Press Club on the 19th floor of the Axel-Springer high-rise is like the Rotary International of Germany's media-makers and is one of the most exclusive addresses in the Federal Republic. Veteran editors-in-chief and influential department heads regularly meet here with the who-is-who of politics, culture and society. In the wood-panelled club room, surrounded by old leather furniture and wall ornaments, you can take in the antiquarian scent of a long gone past. Admittedly, not everyone can simply walk in here. In 2010, however, I was granted exceptional access to this very special institution. I was to report on a speech held there by the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanjahu.

I had a unique view of snow-covered Berlin from the topmost floor of the high-rise—and of the whole world; A huge world map hang stuck on one side of the glass façade in the conference room. While Netanjahu posed for the press photographers after his speech and the other journalists clustered around him, I made my way to the window. From up close, I realised that the colourful continents on the map were creatively filled with words. The familiar outlines of America, Africa, Europe and Australia were made up of words that were apparently meant to reflect the particular regions and nations: Europe and North America were “democracy,” “prosperity,” “light” and “peace.”

In contrast, Africa consisted of “poverty,” “hunger” and “HIV.” The Middle East consisted almost only of “conflict,” “terror” and “war.”

I could not illustrate the narrow view of many decision makers in Germany and Europe any better than this. This cliché-filled image of us here in the West and of the others in the rest of the world is a biased perspective which does not have much to do with reality. Such a distorted

gaze on humanity does not exist on the 19th floor of the Axel-Springer high-rise only, the problem is much bigger than Europe's largest publishing house.

This is an excerpt from Mohamed Amjahid, "Unter Weißen" (Among Whites). What It Means To Be Privileged. Published by Hanser Berlin, 2017.

In Germany, immigrants and their descendants (21 percent of the total population) as well as women (51 percent of the total population) are starkly underrepresented in many political parties and almost all parliaments. Of the 50 most influential German entrepreneurs, 43 are white German males, a big proportion of employees in transnational IT companies is also male and white;¹ the majority of producers and directors in the German film and culture industry are male and white, many actors of colour only get roles to portray non-white clichés²; up to 95 percent of stock exchange operators at the important financial centres in New York, London or Frankfurt are male, where up to 80 percent of them are white.³ The list is very long, the resulting implication unequivocal: white men sit at the helm of politics, economics and culture, they make decisions—often amongst themselves—without considering the others.

Apart from the plain injustice of disproportional representation, such an unequal distribution of positions and influence raises further questions: how does this homogeneity actually affect political and entrepreneurial decisions which affect all of us? What does the fact that not all sections of the population are adequately represented mean for the quality and relevance of journalistic reporting and academic research?

Within the German media environment in which I have been acting for a while now, and that is used here as an apt illustration of the extent of the

1 On proportion of immigrants in relation to the total population, cf. <https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/GesellschaftStaat/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/MigrationIntegration.html>, accessed August 4, 2020. On proportion of women in the total population cf. <https://www.rp-online.de/panorama/deutschland/in-deutschland-leben-mehr-frauen-als-maenner-aid-1.1998682>, accessed August 4, 2020. On immigrants in parliaments cf. <https://mediendienst-integration.de/artikel/mehr-abgeordnete-mit-migrationshintergrund.html>, accessed August 4, 2020. Cf. <http://www.motherjones.com/media/2014/05/google-diversity-labor-gender-race-gap-workers-silicon-valley>, accessed August 4, 2020. On list of entrepreneurs in Germany cf. <http://www.businessinsider.de/forbes-ranking-die-reichsten-deutschen-2016-3?op=1>, accessed August 4, 2020.

2 <http://www.bento.de/tv/deutsches-fernsehen-nur-wenig-schauspieler-mit-migrationshintergrund-vertreten-01800/> or http://www.nachtkritik.de/index.php?view=article&id=5600:migranten-spielen-auf-den-sprechbuehnen-keine-rolle&option=com_content&Itemid=84, both accessed August 4, 2020.

3 Cf. <http://www.cityam.com/205658/how-diverse-is-the-ftse-100-no-surprise-white-men-dominate-executive-roles-and-its-getting-worse>, accessed August 4, 2020.

homogeneity problem, an estimated maximum 3 per cent of journalists have a so called immigrant background; even fewer People of Colour work there, and almost 95 per cent of the editors-in-chief of regional newspapers are white men.⁴

“You could feed swine with white German journalists,” an editor-in-chief of a big daily lamented to me once. He had too many white men in his editorial department who were well-versed in white German topics only. They could write excellent essays about Konrad Adenauer’s chancellorship or put nostalgic recollections of the good old Bonn Republic to paper, they could easily pen clever texts on Wagner orchestrations in Bayreuth or spontaneously philosophise about the future of the German automobile industry. And yet it was with some effort that they had to familiarise themselves daily anew with not-so-new developments in a country of migration, a globalised and networked world with accelerated migration flows. The editor-in-chief made no effort to flatter himself or his staff.

He did praise his colleagues who, on the whole, practiced their trade in a decent manner but he complained about foreign correspondents with no command of foreign languages, and a commentariat which had a strong opinion but did not really understand what was happening out there in Africa aside from poverty and HIV, or war and terror in the Middle East.

As the first Syrian war refugees arrived in Germany at the latest, one would have expected that every editorial department

in the country would be doing its best to increase intercultural competence and proficiency in other languages within its teams. Still, the change in mind-sets and in the editorial departments is advancing only sluggishly—because very few white males are willing to make room for this to happen, but also because many fail to see why more diversity would be good for quality journalism. In this respect, the earlier mentioned editor-in-chief put it very drastically, “We either go with the times or go under.”

4 Rainer Geißler: *Zur Rolle der Medien in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft*, <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/wiso/07394-20100820.pdf> or <http://mediendienst-integration.de/artikel/mehr-vielfalt-als-weg-zur-integration.html>, accessed August 4, 2020. On women in the media, see <http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/gesellschaft/pro-quote-daten-projekt-fraen-in-region-alzeitungen-unterrepraesentiert-a-III3646.html>, accessed August 4, 2020.

After completing my degree, I applied for jobs at almost all the big German media houses. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) kept it short and uncomplicated and quickly sent me a reply. “Unfortunately, we are looking for a different kind of profile,” the rejection letter read. Up to now, there are almost no journalists of an immigrant background working at the FAZ, and incidentally, only about nine percent of its departments are headed by a woman.⁵ In 2008, Erik Betterman, *Deutsche Welle* director at the time, with rare frankness explained how such figures arise at the decision-making levels of individual media houses: “In all [...] editorial departments, I have appointed people that are German or come from the Western Christian cultural region.”⁶

In an interview, Betterman had been asked how he kept an overview of everything in an editorial office that united many languages and employees from different nations. It is obvious that a multicultural programme as that of the *Deutsche Welle* cannot be run by white men only. At the time then, it was all the more shocking to many DW-employees that the director, nevertheless, actively limited the promotion prospects of editors of Colour.

The mind-set of other editorial boards, department heads and newsrooms is comparable to his and it is changing only very slowly—while, on the other hand, social reality does not wait on the media. Since I know that many German publishers pay great attention to numbers, one could even appeal to economic common sense and argue: From a business point of view, homogeneous editorial teams cannot yield sustainable returns. There should not be such a huge mismatch between the potential readership and what journalism has to offer.

Of course white males can also do very good journalism. All too often, however, they deal with topics that primarily concern white males. Consequently, stories on racism or sexism are automatically underreported, or they are handled with glaring ignorance, or unnecessary awkwardness. Foreign correspondence usually has something of what I call the Peter-Scholl-Latour-gaze: white men describing exotic cultures and alien peoples.

5 <http://www.pro-quote.de/statistiken/>, accessed August 4, 2020.

6 See FAZ Interview of November 20, 2008, Number 272, 40.

In 2011 for instance, many German journalists more or less naively faced the events of the Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions. In 2014, in various German editorial departments, there were no Russian-speaking reporters who could have explained Russian perspectives on the Crimea crisis to the readers. In 2015, as Syrian refugees came to Germany, numerous media houses realised how practical it would be to have employees that could directly communicate with the new arrivals. Instead, the logic behind the simplistic world map at the Axel-Springer high-rise is regularly reproduced in newspapers, radio and television programmes in a less charming manner.

By way of an example, since 2013, the children's television channels of ARD and ZDF have been producing a programme called *The Camp of Courage* (*Das Mutcamp*).⁷ The concept is easily defined: German, for the most part white, children travel to Africa and have to face daring tests of courage on this "dangerous continent" rife with poverty and disease, fraught with crime and covered in wild nature. The children's team with the highest scores in adventure games emerges as the season's winner.

When Lenno, Matz and Jannick, when Elsa, Lea and Lena leave Europe for Africa, and even as their white grandfathers and grandmothers did, it is with motives obviously similar to those of the colonial era: whites want to learn and do research, they would like to overcome their fears, amuse themselves, demonstrate strength, conquer foreign continents. At least, the programme constantly puts it that way in one way or another, or makes similar suggestions. According to the announcement for the third season: "The Courage Campers fight hard for their dream of an untroubled life."⁸

Thereby, they experience adventures on a safari in dangerous South Africa, carry out a project in a poor township and while there, slip into the white-saviour role as well as paint the front of a kindergarten. In between, they must drink "a traditional African cocktail of zebra blood and locusts."⁹

7 <http://www.kika.de/das-mutcamp-30/index.html>, accessed August 4, 2020.

8 <http://www.kika.de/das-mutcamp-30/index.html>, accessed August 4, 2020.

9 <http://www.taz.de/!5219632/>, accessed August 4, 2020.

The show rehashes old colonial modes of thought and in the process creates images of non-white people that lodge themselves in the minds of the young viewers. Black children are simply a part of the backdrop and at most play the role of extras. The first time I watched the programme, I wondered how Afro-German children possibly react to these images. The children's channel has a clearly formulated educational mandate that is supposed to benefit *all* the children in Germany. An editorial department in which non-whites also had something to say would perhaps implement "The Camp of Courage" differently, or create a better, inclusive format that could do without old, discriminatory clichés.

To my mind, ensuring more diverse editorial departments would definitely be worth it in terms of quality. Nevertheless, it would not be an easy task for all involved to appropriately turn the media environment around and make it fit for the new millennium—not only owing to internal resistance, but also because significant external resistance was to be expected on the part of the consumers. Technically speaking, this kind of opposition already exists. A study by the British *The Guardian* revealed that white, male journalists and authors received comparatively little to no criticism from readers. In particular, critique aimed at their skin colour, their sex or their sexual orientation is virtually foreign to these journalists.¹⁰ Hate speech and baiting are mostly directed at female and/or non-white journalists, regardless of the topic on which they are writing.

I once interviewed the Easter Bunny in 2014. Alright, it was a mini jobber that dressed up as a bunny at Easter and performed at company parties in Berlin. During our conversation, he described to me how he sometimes sprung out of huge cakes in his bunny costume. So it was assuredly a harmless interview amidst the news slump of the holiday season. Nevertheless, concerned citizens filled up my in-box with their ridicule and racism: How dare I, a "Musel", "besmirch" a symbol of the Occident? Just the supposition—from looking at the author line,

10 Cf. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/apr/12/the-dark-side-of-guardian-comments>, accessed August 4, 2020.

for example—that a text may not be from a white, male author makes some readers livid. As already suggested, this opposition does not only come from the outside, as illustrated by four small scenes from my journalistic career.

1. HURDLES BEFORE KICK - OFF

In 2009, while at a leftist daily, I was greeted with “hallo Ahmadinedschad.” A department head, a perfect stranger to me, referred to me with what the officially chosen leader of the “axis of evil” at the time was called—it was my first day as a trainee. Shortly thereafter, the man sat down with me and quizzed me on my capabilities. We were going to discuss what themes I would take on, which reports or what kind of research I could support—or so I thought. It proceeded differently, since he opened the conversation as follows: “Where did you learn to speak such good German? And more importantly: is your written German as good as your spoken German? We recently had an intern with a veil, her writing was not so good. I did not like her style [...], So now I have become more careful about having foreigners in my department.” He spoke fast and breathlessly. Welcome to the left-wing press, I thought to myself silent and astonished.

2. DISCRIMINATION IN EVERYDAY WORKING LIFE

A couple of years later at a big local paper, a colleague referred to me as a “hipster Salafist” in the corridor. Up until that point, I had not had much to do with the editor in question. And then our paths crossed in front of the elevator, he took in the combination of my orange trouser and turquoise shirt—and spontaneously called me a “Salafist”. A day prior to that, there had been a commentary in the paper demanding tougher measures against Salafist Imams in Germany.

3. LACK OF APPRECIATION FOR DIVERSITY

In the open plan office of another newspaper, colleagues complained after I had held a telephone conversation with someone from Iraq for an article: "Could you please not hold phone conversations in foreign languages in here? It bothers me. German is fine, English too but if it's Chinese, Turkish or even Arabic, I simply can't concentrate on my own work." From then on, I took the phone calls that I could not hold in German or English in the offices of colleagues who happened to be away on holiday. I had to hide myself in order to work.

4. FEAR OF THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

In yet another editorial department, I was addressed by an executive editor at the urinal. I was just zipping my trouser shut as the elderly gentleman next to me suddenly said: "Ah, you're the new Arab! Come to my office some time, I'd like to explain a few things to you." A few days later, his secretary served us coffee and he talked my ears full on why the essence of the Arab was not compatible with the Western concept of democracy. However, he intimated that it was certainly practical to have someone like me on the editorial team. "Because we can make good use of you for our aims," he said. When I asked him whom he meant with "we," the conversation was suddenly over.

As mentioned, German editorial departments are simply examples for the effects of having a homogenous decision-making elite. The realm of science and research is another social field of great significance, only that here too, social reality—its transformation—is hardly mirrored. In the academic structures where I studied and worked for five years, I was also able to learn why it is not for the good of everyone when only white men, more or less, make all the decisions.

My favourite professor, one of the few women in a leadership position at my former institute, once told me

about the kind of hurdles she had to surmount within the university in order to be recognized at all: From day-to-day sexist comments about her looks and her dressing to impenetrable white-men-cliques in which the professors support each other to keep the rest out, everything that could hinder the advancement of a woman in the academic system.

The memory of Professor H., a tall man, is still fresh in my mind. Donning a tie, smart suit and patent leather shoes, he strutted around at the front of the auditorium and instead of holding an academic lecture, would proudly recount stories of someone or other whose hand he had shaken while recently in Berlin, London or Brussels. He described every one of his friends in politics as “a very intelligent man.” Right there, in the higher echelons of power, all was still well with the world for him—contrary to what he saw before him in the lecture hall. That is to say, the familiar image of academia as he had experienced it to date was crumbling. Each new semester, more and more students who had not had the opportunity to take an exchange year in the US sat in the lecture halls. Instead, there were more of the kind of students who required extra time to hand in their term papers because they were forced to job on the side for financial reasons; or more students who had to admit that they had never read a line of Kant or Hegel because their parents did not have a suitable home library.

In one of the first sessions, Professor H. held a lecture on the “exaggerated political correctness these days” and “di-ver-si-ty.” He drew quote marks in the air as he drew out this word. In his perspective, the institute of the university had been going down the drain ever since the focus had shifted away from grades, excellence, and personalities—unlike in the times of the Professor’s youth: “Because then everything was better, back then, only achievement and talent counted.” The myth apparent in such a view, of the unbiased performance society that only focused on hard work and talent was, and is, misleading. Studies show that white, male professors tend to mentor, primarily white, male students and support them into leadership roles¹¹—Often in such cases, performance

and talent only play a secondary role. According to data from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the (social) background of young people in Germany is of significant importance for their chances in education.¹² In almost no other industrial nation of the world is there such limited access to education based on social conditions as it is in Germany. This means that in this country, professors' children more or less automatically enter academic careers as well, while on their part, children of the cleaning personnel will most probably work an equally poorly paid job in future. An additional factor is that, at the university level, non-whites¹³ and women¹⁴ are institutionally disadvantaged. For instance, in the appointment of professorships—because the decision-making bodies at higher institutions of learning are almost always only white and male. And so it is that almost 80 per cent of Germany's professors are white males.

Clearly less often, others were accorded the opportunity to bring their knowledge and perspectives on important questions of living together to academic discourse—and to public debate.¹⁵ In any case, this whole new “di-ver-si-ty” thing, and the slow opening up of academia to people like myself, made Professor H. unmistakably angry.

11 <http://www.michaelmessner.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/white-guy-pdf>, <http://gawker.com/ivy-league-admissions-are-a-sham-confessions-of-a-harv-1690402410> and <https://heimatkunde.boell.de/geschlossene-gesellschaft-universität>, accessed August 4, 2020.
 12 <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/oecd-studie-100.html>, accessed August 4, 2020.
 13 e.g., <http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/universität-zu-koeln-umfrage-offenbart-diskriminierung-und-680.de.html?dram:arti->

[cle_id=346577; https://www.zeit.de/studium/uni-leben/2014-05/fotokampagne.diskriminierung-student.hochschule; www.asta.uni-goettingen.de/studie-zur-diskriminierung-an-der-universität/](http://www.zeit.de/studium/uni-leben/2014-05/fotokampagne.diskriminierung-student.hochschule;www.asta.uni-goettingen.de/studie-zur-diskriminierung-an-der-universität/); www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/uni/1-916280.html, http://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/publikationen/Diskriminierungsfreie_Hochschule/Leitfaden-Diskriminierung-Hochschule-20130916.pdf?__blob=publicationFile, all accessed August 4, 2020.

14 <http://www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/job/frauen-in-der-wissenschaft-an-uni-und-hochschule-selten-a-973841.html>, accessed August 4, 2020.
 15 www.tagesspiegel.de/11154276.html, accessed August 4, 2020; and Christina Möller: *Herkunft zählt (fast) immer, soziale Ungleichheiten unter Universitätsprofessorinnen und Professoren* (Weinheim und Basel, 2015).

In the seventh session of Professor H.'s lecture series, a Power Point slide with a table was shown on the wall. "Crime rate and its development over time" was entered into the upper line, in the line below it, were statistics on immigration to Germany. Figures were arranged together which did not make sense to me but which, according to Professor H.'s interpretation, said the following: "The more migration we observe, the more the rate of crime increases." On taking a closer look at the data, however, it became clear that the Professor saw mono causality where there was none to note. Nevertheless, he presented his "knowledge" about immigrants in Germany and their supposedly criminal energy with such unparalleled conviction and confidence, as if it was nothing but the truth.

I was sitting in the middle section of the hall and my gaze fell on white students to the left and to the right. They were diligently jotting down notes—even though the professor had forbidden it for didactic reasons. Some revolting after all, I consoled myself. Nobody in the hall displayed even the slightest scepticism at Professor H.'s analysis. No one expressed reservations and pointed out that statistics such as these were distorted by offenses like "illegal border crossing," which could only be committed by migrants after all.

Nobody explained that migrant population groups are younger on average and that young people commit more offenses on average.¹⁶ Nobody inquired if crimes like tax evasion were considered in this table. No one made the analysis that owing to racist bias, such statistics are often drawn from homogeneous research groups. On trying to pose a question, Professor H. deliberately ignored me and simply moved on to the next topic. As the only student of Colour, I had no allies in the class. Sometimes, as in this situation, it was really uncomfortable to be all by myself amongst whites. I know enough young non-whites who could not put up with the associated pressure and dropped out of their studies. Unfortunately, the system lacks then as now experience with the new diversity in previously white-only spaces, but it is

16 For more information, see <https://mediendienst-integration.de/desintegration/kriminalitaet.html>, accessed August 4, 2020.

also the case that there is still insufficiently organised exchange between affected non-whites who arrive as new university students. Too many are struggling along in isolation.

I too found no one I could share my experiences and observations with in these first few months of my studies. For instance, about the scribbles in toilet cabins: “Arabs = Hisbollah, we will bomb you to pieces!,” or “whites stay in power!,” or “Turks belong in the doner kebab shop! Applications to the snack bar at the subway station.” In my courses, white German fellow students spoke to me in all too familiar paternalistic tones. To some extent, it was even worse than the time in that village in Hessen where my sister lived, where people explained the concepts of bicycle paths and cemeteries to me. During one class on development politics, a student opined that I could not have an objective perspective on the topic: “I mean, you are from the Third World yourself.”

In another course Michael, Christian and their friends from the Young Union and the liberal university wing, sat in the second row—right up front, and of course with a folding table—all white students who, like Prof. H, believed in the performance society. An exchange student from China was holding a presentation and meanwhile, the white students whispered Chinese jokes to each other: “Oul plesentation about the Intelnatioanal Lelations and Films...” In this moment, I could only think to myself: there he sits, Germany’s white, male new blood, making fun of a Chinese person’s English—in a poorly done Japanese accent at that. In the foreseeable future, these white men—and that was actually the tragic side to it all—will most probably make decisions amongst themselves, in politics, in the economy and in the media; decisions that affect us all.

KNOCKING ON HEAVEN'S D O O R ?

LIONEL MANGA

Let us say, yes, to who or what *arrives*, before any determination, before any anticipation, before any *identification*, whether or not it has to do with a foreigner, an immigrant, an invited guest, or an unexpected visitor, whether or not the new arrival is the citizen of another country, a human, animal, or divine creature, living or dead, male or female.
—Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality* (1996); 2000¹

With its bucolic, alligator-less wetlands, long, sheltered beaches of fine sand, and Hyannis Kennedy Museum, the Cape Cod peninsula in what is now the state of Massachusetts on the eastern coast of the United States is a vacation hotspot especially popular among the American establishment. It was here, on November 11, 1620, that the *Mayflower* dropped anchor after departing Plymouth, England, with various Europeans on board. Among those women and men aspiring to a better future were a breakaway religious bunch in fear of their lives; and not without reason, for they were fleeing the bloody persecutions of England under the reign of James I. Undoubtedly, the Nauset natives extended a welcome to these strangers whose very pale complexions contrasted their own; yet, while Thanksgiving Day commemorates an encounter arising then under amiable and laudable circumstance, we now know that this hospitality fully concordant with Derrida's above recommendation completely changed tack within the space of a century, to the great detriment of the indigenous population, who were dispossessed over time of their vast ancestral domains by these newcomers who devastatingly turned invaders.

Yet just as the *natives* reduced in the meantime to a mere fraction of the US population are dumped into so-called “reserves,” so too the boundless fascination for the arrogant bastion of capitalism still passes without a murmur over the founding genocide of the magnetic *American Dream*. In other words, the land of Manifest Destiny springs from the despicable act

1 Jacques Derrida and Anne Dofourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 77.

of trampling a precious gesture of humanity. But is there even a glimmer of this in the mind of the weird Donald Trump? After all, one of his first moves as POTUS—until the judges used their constitutional right to intervene and revoke his ruling—was to decree the citizens of seven Muslim countries *persona non grata* on American soil. One can well believe that there is not, as his virulent anti-migrant rhetoric all throughout the midterm election campaign of fall 2018 has amply attested, taking in its sights the caravan of Hondurans gaining ground day by day on the northern frontier of Mexico, where, on his orders, barbed wire and some 5,000 soldiers of the National Guard have been deployed to stop it and, moreover, to separate parents from their children, without an iota of shame or compassion.

The recent federal shift to zero tolerance for the Dreamers speaks volumes, thus, about the current White House tenant's formidable sense of hospitality. And yet, given that his invective fails to impress the Caravan marchers, the standoff between the two opposing camps entrenched each on its position reveals itself to be at the least historic, if not downright biblical. Some 4,000 Earthlings, 1,700 among them children, amassed at a border? This exodus is unique in history, in numerical terms, and bears no comparison with the usual border crossings routinely intercepted. It will surely go down in the annals of the transition to the post-national epoch. Are perhaps the banks of the Rio Grande to be the backdrop for an ad hoc prologue to the coming human surge that climate change is now inducing at every spot on the globe? How could we not hear Bob Dylan's *Knocking on Heaven's Door*?

Hospitality is, therefore, an amiability extended to the stranger and the first step into politics. It comprises a range of attentive signs and gestures likely to make the similar-yet-different person feel not like an intruder whose presence is apt to disturb or upset the harmony among his hosts but, rather, most welcome there, by virtue of the everyday expression signaling this reasoned rupture of privileged segregation: “*Make yourself at home!*” The fact remains nonetheless that the category “stranger,” seen through the prism of the attentions accorded each individual, covers a spectrum of disparate realities ranging from devoted attentiveness to outright neglect, from *listing vessels* to *vacation rentals*, *displacements* to *place settings*, all of them contiguous/interlocking markers of hospitality (or its absence) in time and space. A Chinese citizen in Paris for *shopping and fucking* pays to enjoy these costly services: and, being the client he is, will complain and seek redress should ever the least gaffe occur in the delivery of such service, so pervasive the status of “exceptional being” conferred on him by the substantial power of his purse. In the Metro, alongside English, Spanish, German, and Arabic—but for sure not Swahili, anytime soon—the Parisian Transit Network signage has resorted to Chinese ideograms to plot the pilgrimages undertaken by these compulsive consumers in thrall to the “seductive climate of an integrated shopping experience,”² who are spending money like there is no tomorrow. Conversely, and in striking contrast to this VIP treatment, the City of Paris, in spring 2018, had no qualms at all about cutting off the water supply to those public fountains located near migrants’ makeshift encampments. The reason being to prevent *fixation abscesses* in public space, so the authorities said (and for which several relief

organizations then censured them): a willingness, hence, to rob men and women in dire straits and psychologically at risk of a basic means of hygiene and, thus, of their dignity.

2 Peter Sloterdijk, *In the World Interior of Capital: For a Philosophical Theory of Globalization*, trans. Wieland Hoban (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press 2013), 195.

When *hostipitality* sinks to such iniquity in the so-called “cradle of the Enlightenment,” we pinch ourselves hard: “Hey! What the hell is this, in Rimbaud country? Less than zero politics.”

So, in terms of hospitality, notions of the stranger diverge widely at the heart of the Great Installation; the latter being, in the expressionist language of Peter Sloterdijk, the “world interior of capital,”³ where “being human becomes a question of spending power.”⁴ Some are treated there with maximum respect, while others suffer the opprobrium reserved for “ragged people” and on account of such disdain endure the biting winds of fate more often than they should. Like those unaccompanied minors from Africa who, since often in limbo on the banks of the Seine and instantly under suspicion of lying about their age, find themselves shunted back and forth by civil servants on the lookout for a telltale trait. Yet as long as differences persist between the global zone of conveniences and that of inconveniences, they will continue to sustain the momentum of border crossings, those high-risk journeys driven by the canny spirit of lucre through the contingencies of a more or less porous realm. All the more so, given that we find ourselves in an increasingly dense world, more often than not “in forced proximity to countless chance bedfellows.”⁵ Partaking thus in that which the literary critic Yves Citton calls “affective gestualities,” hospitality in action depends on individual agency, certainly; yet since the public authorities of the nation state are *no less of* as well as *implicated in* this oppressive situation propelled by the ongoing displacement of exiles, there is a pressing need for creative policymaking within a yet to be invented legal framework, if ever we are to confront what is happening, in the sense both of what is coming at us and what we are moved by.

3 Ibid., 12.

4 Ibid., 14.

5 Ibid., 177.

Was it not a show of grave political vacuity and, at the same time, of pettiness in Leibniz's sense, something between ignorance and collective repulsion on the part of the Europe of 27, to hedge its bets from one delaying tactic to the next, in that critical period in the summer of 2018, when *the Aquarius*, with exhausted children, women, and men on board, was desperately seeking safe harbor? Was not Matteo Salvini's murderous and base maneuver worthy of a *mafioso Godfather*, given that he called upon Panama to retrieve its paradisiacal flag of convenience from the ship that the association SOS Méditerranée had chartered for its rescue missions at sea? To weigh thus, by the same calculating criteria, human lives in peril against the trivial interests of a blatant tax haven, as if to say, *it's one or the other, it's up to you*, is to display the most shameless and vile cynicism ever. The Italian deputy prime minister could not have done more to torpedo this humanitarian initiative than to block *the Aquarius* by such odious means. This despicable move—a signal to the electoral base that campaign-trail promises on freezing immigration are being kept—despoils the memory of Giuseppe Garibaldi and Leonardo da Vinci. What happened to those values of which WhiteLand in its guise of civility boasts from the rooftops at every opportunity?

Ever since the 1970s “oil crisis” brought the postwar economic boom to a grinding halt, the dedicated champions of the privileged residents of segre[gated] communities have never hesitated to use the specter of immigration for electoral gain, even though the number of migrants rushing to seize an opportunity for a better life in WhiteLand, which is by no means guaranteed as *such*, is infinitesimal in regard not only to the overall population of each European country but also to the mass migrations taking place without further noise or ado on the African continent; and even though the legitimate exasperation of those disadvantaged in post-apartheid South Africa has been unleashed more than once on foreigners. Such acts of violence prohibit *de facto* any romanticism about

closeness and the notion of a natural empathy inscribed quasi in our genes; in fact, this commonplace illusion shatters in face of the “systemic impossibility of materially organizing the integration of all members of the human race into a homogenous welfare system under the current technological, energy-political, and ecological conditions.”⁶

Clinging to their personal portion of comfort at the heart of the Great Installation, constantly titillated to this end by an ad hoc propaganda, and snug in their piteous complex of the pseudo-besieged settler, many of its inhabitants see the newcomers only through the blinkers of mimetic rivalry, as candidates longing, like themselves, for the immunizing advantages of what is still called, at least for the moment, economic growth; almost as if hordes of lustful Huns were descending once again upon post-Christianity and menacing with the most brutal outrages its young and luscious virgins. Which is not the case, as it happens, but this portrayal purposely biased by the dominant ethnocentric discourse sustains here and there, ad infinitum, the prevailing rise of populism in Europe, as several election results attest. Democracy is having a rough time and the malaise takes the form of an epistemological aporia regarding universal suffrage. This scheme of validation and political accreditation is based still on the quantity principle whereas the stakes and challenges called to mind by the future of our species’ days on Earth are qualitative, in essence. The permanent slander of migrants by the *talking heads* of populist demagoguery plays a crucial political role in public affairs in the North, by perpetuating the status quo under capitalism’s aegis: self-hypnotic narratives of the nation blind us to the historic bedrock of the social model that the allegedly mass arrival of the dispossessed would trouble: namely the many centuries of attrition suffered by the non-western worlds.

Hospitality tailored to the look of a client, which is to say, to his spending power, is not really a tenable option for the post-national era up ahead. Sixteen million exiles from the Middle East and Africa will seek to reach Europe over the next twenty-five years, the philosopher Étienne Tassin claims. In this light the Mediterranean Sea is a watery grave, a stage set for the major crime of failure to assist persons at risk. War or the global community: Which shall it be? We still must make our choice. Twenty years ago, the jurist Monique Chemillier-Gendreau pointed out that European immigration policies in their entirety were unjustifiable. Today, with the summertime tribulations of *the Aquarius*, the height of ignominy has been reached, if not to say, its lowest point ever.

The willingness to welcome *Others* with all their disconcerting foreignness necessarily means sharing, letting go and, logically enough, breaking with self-sufficiency in the very sense of that unconditional hospitality so dear to Jacques Derrida. Yet it is this, precisely, that the faction of the European electorate suffocating in its repulsion towards migrants objects to. The formulation and implementation of a sound xeno-policy, i.e., one geared to foreigners and requiring their participation, will never happen unless a “utopian shift” overthrows the demonization, criminalization, and victimization now so commonplace in the Great Installation, this eminently reductive outlook never ceasing to hinder objective understanding of migrants’ situation. As long as populist majorities hold sway in the national legislatures, the legal framework for a policy on—and forged with—foreigners will not be on the agenda anytime soon, in the name of that sovereignty now besmirching Article 13 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights which asserts a person’s right to come and go on this planet at will.

With this in mind, it seems misleading to distinguish between refugees and migrants, between the “valid cases” who go into exile for political reasons and those deemed inadmissible because they do so on economic grounds.

Whether one or the other, it is a matter first and foremost of situations rendered untenable by the dominant global order. “The offence of a life deprived of work and, hence, of resources, the condemnation to misery and to the stagnation that such misery entails, the privation of a future and accomplishment, such as comes in the wake of damnation to bare survival, are no less violent and unacceptable” says Etienne Tassin, “than the political crime of lives enslaved and liberties revoked, of exposure to police, military, and religious violence, of submission to the tyranny of military regimes and terrorist militias. Not only are these exiles unfortunate because they have left their homes; their misfortune is that they were sentenced to a life crippled by broken societies and corrupt political systems, due to the cumulative impact of European colonization, the global economy, and the relief business.”⁷

This long quote sounds like a sonorous *cri du coeur* and goes straight to the point. Since the advent of the vegetal realm and throughout the animal one, the *modus vivendi* of any living creature in nature has been to enhance its wellbeing by optimizing the conditions of its existence; and the big-brained biped is no exception, especially considering its unique privilege in the terrestrial biosphere. The heliotropism of plants attests it, as does the seasonal migration of birds that switch hemisphere according to the climate, or that of the gnus in southern Africa. Just how far will the blindness and egotism of the privileged caste go? In this saturated globalization, the main aim of which is the exclusive right to a life of ease for the moneyed happy few, geographical bounds will increasingly be of no importance, the ties between a person and a fixed location being likely to loosen until the rupture between them is irrevocable and complete. I ought really be at home everywhere and anywhere on a planet floating in the Milky Way, regardless of what language I speak, my school of (political) thought, the color of my skin, or my sexual preferences. Above and beyond this incommensurability

7 Étienne Tassin, “Exil, hospitalité et politique,” *Médiapart* (blog), July 8, 2017, <https://blogs.mediapart.fr/edition/la-jungle-et-la-ville/article/080717/exil-hospitalite-et-politique>, accessed August 4, 2020.

of difference proposed in the postcolonial field by identity entrepreneurs intent on refuting western-centered universalism, what we all have in common, first and foremost, regardless of cultural traits, is a fundamental and inescapable vulnerability: it is to this primary, shared, and irrefutable “quality” that unconditional hospitality is extended. Because I too may find myself in a delicate and difficult situation, some day, and the assistance of a third party will be most welcome.

H O M I N E S C E N C E

Is our era about to give birth to a new humanity, in light of the “crisis spanning millennia” we are going through? “Nothing can arouse our concern more than this,” says Michel Serres, who coined the neologism *hominescence* to designate the phase of hominization attained by our proliferating species thanks to its patent and unique totipotency. And the Stanford scholar immediately adds that “the road in front of us doesn’t resemble any of the ones History has followed, so it can hardly serve as support for us” as we step into the future. Thus, we are warned. “The term *hominescence*,” Serres continues, “says these hopes mixed with worries, these emergences, fears, and tremblings.”⁸ What better way to bring home to us the colossal challenge of initializing the times ahead? It goes to show that transnational exoduses, now and in the future, are part of a fundamental cultural transition.

Gestures of hospitality will accordingly be decisive, if ever the corset of arrogance presently holding together the “success collectives” in the conveniences zone is to be undone; and they will be rendered by those “beautiful ones” whose absence the Ghanaian writer Ayi Kwei Arma deplored in the eponymous novel which brought him to fame and proved prophetic on Africa’s post-independence trajectory.⁹ Flags and frontiers in concert have already perpetrated haunting bloody massacres all over the globe. Nonetheless we have not yet seen the last of them hitting the headlines

8 Michel Serres, *Hominescence*, trans. Randolph Burks (London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 11.

9 See Ayi Kwei Armah, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968).

with their distressing parades of human and material damages. While migrants are not a species threatened by extinction, their grueling condition relates them to those creatures deprived for the time being of clearly identified rights congruent to their situation which, however singular it may be, cannot fail to remind us that all authentic existence is tantamount somehow to exile. The prospect of climate change, a factor now driving the anticipated mass displacements, enjoins an urgent update of our program. No one on Earth can ignore this, and the European countries with a colonial past must face up to the feedback of the creditors: those who were looted yesterday and are now hammering at the door. Populism as a political barometer has had its day. Planet Earth belongs to no one.

Translated from the French by Jill Denton, Berlin.

INVOCATIONS





















Raísa Galofre presenting the Colombian Cumbia dance performance.













Farkhondeh Shahroudi, *Meine Blumen sind nicht eure Blumen?*, collective procession performance.















































Hospitality Suite, performed by Jacques Coursil (left)
and Marque Gilmore (right).

- Enemy - Populism
- Victim - Humanitarianism
- Hero - Activism





Scholar Denise Ferreira da Silva in video-conference
with curator Denise Ryner.









Sepake Angiama and Clare Butcher (aneducation)
with curators Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung
and Elena Agudio.

BIOGRAPHIES

ELENA AGUDIO

is a Berlin-based art historian and curator. She studied Art History at the University of Venice Ca' Foscari and holds a PhD in Contemporary Art and Design. Her interests focus on curatorial practices as forms of troubling, and its performative and relational aspects. Since 2013 she has been artistic co-director of SAVVY Contemporary, where she initiated and co-curated exhibition projects, discursive programmes and series, among others, *Speaking Feminisms/We Who Are Not The Same* dedicated to an exploration of current feminist practices and alliances; *That, Around Which The Universe Revolves* investigating rhythm analysis and the interrelations of space and time, memory, architecture and urban space; *How Does The World Breathe Now*, a film screening series critically reflecting on our now and the role of art in the society. She is also artistic director of the non-profit association *Association of Neuroesthetics (AoN)*, *Platform for Art and Neuroscience*, a project in collaboration with the Medical University of Charité and The School of Mind and Brain of the Humboldt University encouraging both dialogue and lasting cooperations between contemporary art and the cognitive sciences. She is member of *foundationClass at the Weissensee School of Art in Berlin, where she teaches art histories. In 2017 and 2018 she was Guestprofessor at HfBK (Kunsthochschule für Bildende Künste) in Hamburg and Resident Fellow at Helsinki University of the Arts. Curated projects include: *Exlamating Still! On the Noise of Images* (Rencontres de Bamako – African Biennale of Photography); *Ultrasanity. On Madness, Sanitation, Antipsychiatry and Resistance* (SAVVY Contemporary); *Soil is an Inscribed Body. On Sovereignty and Agropoetics* (SAVVY Contemporary); *Ecologies of Darkness. Building Ground of Shifting Sands* (SAVVY Contemporary); yet *incomputable. Indetermination In The Age of Hypervisibility And Algorithmic Control* (Sammlung Falckenberg, Deichtorhallen, Hamburg); *Ivana Franke: Retreat into Darkness. Towards a Phenomenology of the Unknown* (Schering Stiftung, Berlin), *Feedback Control Mode* (HALLE 14, Leipzig),

Giving Contours to Shadows (Neuer Berliner Kunstverein n.b.k., Maxim Gorki Theater, SAVVY Contemporary, VANSÄ Johannesburg, Kär Thiossane Dakar, Marrakech Biennale), *The Ultimate Capital is the Sun. Metabolism Metabolismus in Art, Politics, Philosophy and Science* (nGbK Berlin), *In Other Words. The black market of translations-negotiating contemporary cultures* (nGbK Berlin and Kunstraum Kreuzberg Bethanien).

ULF AMINDE

is a Berlin-based artist, filmmaker, and teaching activist. His film work is mostly characterized by collaboration and experimental practices of working together. In Cologne, he is developing a film and participation-based monument to the memory of those affected by the racist bomb attacks perpetrated by the terrorist NSU network in Probezeitgasse in 2001 and in Keupstrasse in 2004. Since 2016, together with Miriam Schickler, Ulf has been building the programme *foundationClass at (but not of) Weißensee Academy of Art, Berlin. Supporting people who have migrated and/or fled to Germany to get equal access to art academies, the *foundationClass tries to create a social space within which everyone's resources are acknowledged and validated.

MOHAMED AMJAHID

is a reporter and editor for the weekly newspaper DIE ZEIT. His book *Unter Weißen – Was es heißt, privilegiert zu sein* was published by Hanser Literaturverlage in 2017. He studied political anthropology in Berlin and Cairo.

ARJUN APPADURAI

is the Goddard Professor in Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University, where he is also Senior Fellow at the Institute for Public Knowledge. He was previously Senior Advisor for Global Initiatives at The New School in New York City, where he also held a Distinguished Professorship as the John Dewey Distinguished Professor in the Social Sciences. Professor Appadurai was born and educated in Bombay. He earned his BA from Brandeis University in 1967, and his MA (1973) and Ph.D. (1976)

from The Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago. Currently, he is a visiting Professor at the Department of European Ethnology at Humboldt University in Berlin. Among Appadurai's latest books are: *The Future as a Cultural Fact: Essays on the Global Condition* (New York: Verso, 2013) and *Banking on Words: The Failure of Language in the Age of Derivative Finance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

IBRAHIM ARSLAN

As a 7-year-old, Ibrahim Arslan survived the neo-Nazi arson attack in Mölln in 1992, during which his sister, cousin and grandmother died. He fought ever since to reclaim and remember the attacks against his family and other victims of racist violence. He founded the *Freundeskreis Gedenken Mölln* 1992 and organizes the annual *Mölln Speech in Exile*. He gives talks as a contemporary witness on questions of remembrance and commemoration. In 2012, he cooperated with the documentary film project *Nach dem Brand*. Since 2016, he has worked as a political educator in various schools in the context of *Gegen Vergessen – für Demokratie* e.V. In 2017 he significantly contributed to the *Tribunal NSU-Komplex auflösen*.

BILGIN AYATA

is a Professor of Political Sociology at the Department of Social Sciences at the University of Basel. Previously she taught at the Freie University Berlin. She obtained her PhD in Political Science at Johns Hopkins University, and her MA degree from York University. Her research interests encompass migration, conflict, memory, affective politics, and postcolonial studies. Her regional expertise includes MENA and Europe, in particular Turkey, Kurdistan, and postcolonial Germany. She has published on transnational movements, the politics of displacement, affect and politics, Genocide denial, memory regimes, and EU migration policy. She is an associate member of the research cluster "Affective Societies" at the Freie Universität Berlin with an ongoing research project on the affective dynamics of urban protest and political transformation in the Middle East.

FEDERICA BUETI

writes, edits, teaches and occasionally curates exhibitions and public programs. She is the founder of... ment, a journal for contemporary culture, art and politics, which she ran between 2011 and 2015, and is editor of the SAVVY series published with Archive Books. Her research focuses on poetics of refusal and feminist practices and politics of writing, reading and desire. She co-curated the exhibition *ECOLOGIES OF DARKNESS*. Building Ground on Shifting Sand at SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin (2019), and initiated the research, exhibition and performance projects *We Who Are Not the Same* (2018) and *Speaking Feminisms* (2017), curated with artist Nathalie Mba Bikoro and curator Elena Agudio, also at SAVVY Contemporary. Bueti regularly writes on art and social theory for international art magazines such as *Ocula*, *Spike Art Quarterly*, *frieze*, *BOMB*, as well as critical anthologies and artist monographs. She earned a BA in Cultural and Media Studies (2004) and an MA in Critical and Curatorial Studies (2007), both from the University of Milan. She finished her PhD in Writing with a dissertation on poetics of refusal at the Royal College of Art, London. Born in 1982 in Scilla, Calabria, she lives and works in Berlin.

JOSHUA

CHAMBERS - LETSON

is an Associate Professor of Performance Studies at Northwestern University. He is the author of *After the Party: Performance and Queer of Color Life* (New York: NYU Press, 2018) and *A Race So Different: Law and Performance in Asian America* (New York: NYU Press, 2013). With Tavia Nyong'o, he is currently co-editing José Esteban Muñoz's final book *The Sense of Brown*. He is also co-editor of the "Sexual Cultures" series at NYU Press.

JILL DENTON

(born in Manchester, UK; based in Berlin) translates French and German into British or American English for artists, academics, non-profits, galleries, festivals, museum, etc.; primarily broad-ranging essays and exhibition content on architectural conservation, contemporary art, cultural studies, and the history and theory of architecture,

urban planning, and art, occasionally also screenplays and campaign materials.

J I H A N E L - T A H R I

is an Egyptian and French award winning director, writer, visual artist, and producer. Her recent work as a visual artist include exhibitions in France (Centre Pompidou), Berlin (HKW and IFA Gallery), Norway (National Museum), Mexico (San Ildefonso), and Poland (Museum of Modern Art), alongside acclaimed artists like John Akomfrah, the Otolith Group, and Kader Attia. Jihan El Tahri started her career as a foreign correspondent covering Middle Eastern politics. In 1990, she began directing and producing documentaries for the BBC, PBS, Arte, and other international broadcasters. Her documentaries include *Egypt's Modern Pharaohs* (2015), which premiered in the official selection at Toronto International Film Festival; *Behind the Rainbow* (2009); *Cuba! Africa! Revolution!* (2007), and the Emmy nominated *House of Saud* (2004). Her writings include *Les Sept Vies de Yasser Arafat* (Paris: Editions Grasset, 1997) and *The 50 Years War: Israel and the Arabs* (UK: Penguin Books, 1998). El-Tahri is also engaged in various associations and institutions working with African Cinema.

D E N I S E F E R R E I R A D A S I L V A

addresses the ethical questions of the global present and targets the metaphysical and onto-epistemological dimensions of modern thought through her academic writing and artistic practice. Currently, she is an Associate Professor and Director of The Social Justice Institute (GRSJ) at the University of British Columbia. She is the author of *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007). Her publications include *The Racial Limits of Social Justice: The Ruse of Equality of Opportunity* and the *Global Affirmative Action Mandate* (Critical Ethnic Studies, 2016), and texts for publications linked to the 2016 Liverpool and Sao Paulo Biennales, advising Natasha Ginwala, in connection with the Contour 8 Biennale (Mechelen, 2017).

R A I S A G A L O F R E

is an artist, photographer, and researcher born in Barranquilla, Colombia and is

based in Berlin, Germany. She holds a degree in Communication Sciences and Journalism from the Universidad del Norte (Barranquilla, Colombia) and an MA in Photography from the University of Arts and Design Burg Giebichenstein Halle (Halle/S, Germany). In 2018, she was short-listed for the Lucie Foundation Fine Art Photography scholarship award and in 2015 she was one of the winners of the New Talents Awards from Canon Profifoto. Her photographs have been exhibited in the Photokina Academy in Köln, the Contemporary Art Fair Ruhr (C. A. R.), and the Stadtmuseum Halle, among others. Since 2017 she is part of the curatorial research team of the independent art space SAVVY Contemporary, where she assisted in the curation of the exhibition and symposium *WHOSE LAND HAVE I LIT ON NOW? Contemplations on the Notions of Hospitality*, and she is currently working and researching on photography, modernity and coloniality as part of the Design Department and its project *Spinning Triangles: Ignition of a School of Design*. Raïsa teaches photography at the University of Arts and Design Burg Giebichenstein Halle and the Vitruvius Hochschule in Leipzig.

S E L O U A L U S T E B O U L B I N A is a theorist of postcoloniality and decolonization of knowledge. She works on political and cultural issues. Currently, she is an Associate Researcher (HDR) at the *Laboratoire de Changement social et politique* (Paris Diderot University) and was previously a Program Director (Decolonizing Knowledge) at the *Collège International de Philosophie* (2010–2016). She was a Visiting Professor at Beijing Normal University (China, 2013), Gaston Berger University (Sénégal, 2014), and Universidade de Brasília (Brasil, 2018). As an author, she published *L'Afrique et ses fantômes, Écrire l'après* (Présence Africaine, 2015); *Les Arabes peuvent-ils parler?* (Blackjack, 2011/ Payot, 2014); *Le Singe de Kafka et autre propos sur la colonie* (Sens Public, 2008), and *Grands Travaux à Paris* (La Dispute, 2007). As an editor, she published *La Migration des idées #1 and #2* (Rue Descartes, 2013 & 2014); *Décoloniser les savoirs* (La Découverte, 2012); *Monde arabe: Rêves, Révoltes, Révolutions* (Lignes, 2011); *Un monde en noir et blanc* (Sens Public,

2009) and *Réflexions sur la postcolonie* (PUF, 2007). She has contributed to many books and reviews.

LIONEL MANGA

born in Dschang, is a Cameroonian writer and cultural critic based in Douala. His 2008 book, *L'Ivresse du Papillon*, discusses Cameroonian visual artists such as Goddy Leye, Guy Wouété, and Joseph-Francis Sumégné, among others. After graduating with a Science Baccalaureate in 1973, Manga arrived in France after the crisis caused both by the first oil crash and by the Chilean political turmoil. He embarked on an Economic Analysis and Business Management course at the UER (Paris 1 – Tolbiac). Passionate about rock and jazz-rock, with Fela Ramsone Kuti and Manu Dibango as a backdrop, he joined far-left movements, delved into the writings of major philosophers such as Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Kostas Axelos, and Herbert Marcuse, who challenged the mechanisms underlying capitalist domination and alienation. He was part of the first output by *Les Têtes brûlées* in 1988, having introduced the late Zanzibar to the music of Jimi Hendrix. From 1992 to 1996, he presented an extremely popular morning program three times a week at 7:45 on environmental challenges entitled *Klorofil*, dubbing himself *The Little Green Man*. He was the first to organize rap/hip-hop concerts in the mythic venue of Yaounde as well as a memorable Bob Marley tribute in 1997, which was broadcasted live. In 2004, he settled in Douala, his childhood and teenage town just in time to write the text-manifesto of the *Ars & Urbis* program initiated by the Doual'art Contemporary Arts Center. In February 2011, he stayed in Karachi alongside Dominique Malaquais, for a residency with the visual artist Amin Gulgee, under SPARK's sponsorship. His article on Cameroonian bass players was published in *Chimurenga* and earned him a collaboration credit on *I'm not your weekend special* dedicated to Brenda Fassie.

NAEEM MOHAIEEM

combines films, installations, and essays to research vanquished left utopias and incomplete decolonizations—framed by

Third World Internationalism and World Socialism. In spite of underscoring a left tendency toward misrecognition of allies, a hope for an as-yet unborn international left, as the only future alternative to current polarities of race and religion, is a basis for the work. Autobiography and family history as canvases for thinking through how borders make new people and how passports militate against class privilege are throughlines in his material. Furthermore, his grandfather's faith in the English language as succor from "Hindu domination" in British India, a great uncle's tragic error of seeing the German military machine as the only available weapon against British colonialism, and the complex family alliances generated by the 1971 war that split Pakistan and created Bangladesh repeatedly come up in his projects.

PETER MORIN

is a Tahltan Nation artist, curator, and writer. Morin's practice-based research investigates the impact zones that occur when indigenous cultural-based practices and Western settler colonialism collide. This work is shaped by Tahltan Nation epistemological production and often takes on the form of performance interventions. In addition to his object making and performance-based practice, Morin has curated exhibitions at the Museum of Anthropology, Western Front, Bill Reid Gallery, and Burnaby Art Gallery. In 2014, Peter was long-listed for the Sobey Art Prize. Morin is an Assistant Professor at the Visual and Aboriginal Arts Department at Brandon University.

MASSIMO PERINELLI

From 2006–2016, Massimo Perinelli worked as Assistant Professor in the Department of History at the University of Cologne. Since 2016 he is senior advisor for migration at the Rosa *Luxemburg* Stiftung in Berlin, and since 1998, he is also member of "Kanak Attak." In 2013 he co-founded the Initiative *Keupstraße ist überall* in Cologne, and in 2015 he initiated the *Tribunal NSU-Komplex auflösen* which took place in May 2017 at the Schauspiel Köln and in 2019 in Chemnitz.

MIRIAM SCHICKLER

is based in Berlin and works at the intersection of research, activism, and the sonic. She has studied social and cultural anthropology in London and Berlin, and her works have been published, exhibited, and broadcasted across different channels and platforms. She also uses the moniker Miranda de la Frontera. Together with Ulf Aminde, Miriam has been building the programme *foundationClass at (but not of) Weißensee Academy of Art Berlin since 2016. Supporting people who have migrated and/or fled to Germany to get equal access to art academies, the *foundationClass tries to create a social space within which everyone's resources are acknowledged and validated.

FARKHONDEH SHAHROUDI

was born in 1962 in Tehran. In 1990, she left her country and found political asylum in Germany. She currently lives and works in Berlin. She studied painting at Al-Zahra University in Tehran, followed by studies in art and design at the University of Dortmund. Her installations and performances focus on the symbolism of middle eastern carpets, transformed in her diverse works into "mobile gardens," which serve as emblems for the condition of the artist outside of her place of birth. Her works are housed at several museums, including the collection of the British Museum in London and Vehbi Koç Contemporary Art Foundation. Her personal and collective exhibitions include: *Urban*, Kommunale Galerie Berlin, Berlin, 2016; *Symbiosis of Two Worlds*, Palais Namaskar, Marrakech, 2013; *Farkhondeh Shahroudi: Kunst und Text*, Solo Exhibition, Art Laboratory, Berlin, 2007; *Word into Art*, The British Museum, London, 2006; *Wächter/Guards*, Solo Exhibition, Museum Pergamon, Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin, 2005.

DENISE RYNER

is Director/Curator at Or Gallery, Vancouver and a writer and educator who has been based in Toronto, Vancouver and Berlin. She has worked in commercial, public and artist-run galleries in Toronto and Vancouver for over ten years including Art Metropole, Justina M. Barnicke Gallery,

the Vancouver Art Gallery and recently SFU Galleries where she developed a series of public projects such as Art + City + School, Rain or Shine Saturdays and Projections at the Perel. Ryner completed her BA and MA in art history at the University of Toronto and the University of British Columbia respectively. Ryner has also worked as an independent curator, writer and educator presenting exhibitions, screenings and talks at the Jackman Humanities Institute, Canadian Heritage's Toronto regional office, VIVO Media Arts Centre, Roundhouse Community Arts Centre, the Contemporary Art Gallery (CAG) Vancouver, Beleven Project Space, and has taught studies in curatorial practice at Emily Carr University of Art and Design.

SAFIYA SINCLAIR

is the author of *Cannibal* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016). She was awarded with the Whiting Writers' Award, the American Academy of Arts and Letters Addison M. Metcalf Award, the OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Poetry, the Phillis Wheatley Book Award, and the Prairie Schooner Book Prize in Poetry. *Cannibal* was selected as one of the American Library Association's Notable Books of the Year, and was a finalist for the PEN Center USA Literary Award, as well as being longlisted for the PEN Open Book Award and the Dylan Thomas Prize.

BONAVENTURE SOH BEJENG NDIKUNG

is an independent curator, art critic, author, and biotechnologist. He is founder and artistic director of SAVVY Contemporary in Berlin. He was curator-at-large for documenta 14 in Athens and Kassel and guest curator of the 2018 Dak'Art Biennale in Senegal. Together with the *Miracle Workers Collective*, he curated the Finland Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2019. He is currently guest professor in curatorial studies and sound art at the Städelschule in Frankfurt. Recent curatorial projects include: *Geographies of Imagination*, SAVVY Contemporary (2018); *Whose Land Have I Lit on Now? Contemplations on the Notions of Hospitality*, SAVVY Contemporary (2018); *WE HAVE DELIVERED OURSELVES*

FROM THE TONAL—Of, with, towards, on Julius Eastman, SAVVY Contemporary (2018); *Every Time A Ear di Soun*—a documenta 14 Radio Program, SAVVY Contemporary (2017).

M A R G A R I T A T S O M O U

is a Greek author, editor, publicist, dramaturge, and curator. She published and co-edits the pop-feminist *Missy Magazine* and writes for German newspapers and radio, among others. She is a permanent author and co-host of the Greek program of rbb *Elliniko Rantevou*. As part of her work, she cooperated with institutions such as u.a. Hebbel am Ufer, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Gorki Theater, Goethe-Institut Athens, and Onassis Cultural Foundation Athens. In August 2018, she curated a conference titled *Heimatsphantasien* about the renaissance of the concepts “Nation” and “Heimat” at the International Theater Kampnagel in Hamburg. She wrote her doctoral thesis on the crisis of representation during the financial crisis in Greece in 2010. She belongs to the publishing collective *b_books* and the artistic activist group *Schwabinggrad Ballett*.

T A N I A W I L L A R D

Secwepemc Nation, works within the shifting ideas of the contemporary and the traditional as they relate to cultural arts and production; often working with bodies of knowledge and skills that are conceptually linked to her interest in the intersections between Aboriginal and other cultures. Willard has worked as a curator in residence with grunt gallery and Kamloops Art Gallery. Willard’s curatorial work includes *Beat Nation: Art, Hip Hop and Aboriginal Culture*, a national touring exhibition first presented at Vancouver Art Gallery in 2011. Willard’s personal curatorial projects include BUSH gallery, a conceptual space for land based art and action led by Indigenous artists.

WHOSE LAND HAVE I LIT ON NOW?
CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE NOTIONS OF
HOSTIPITALITY

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Die Publikationen in dieser Reihe reflektieren und dokumentieren die Aktivitäten und erweitern die Forschungs-, Diskurs-, Performance- und Kurationsprojekte von S A V V Y Contemporary | The Laboratory of Form-Ideas. S A V V Y Books zielt darauf ab, die epistemologische Vielfalt zu fördern in Einklang mit Boaventura de Sousa Santos Behauptung, dass „ein anderes Wissen möglich ist“. Indem wir die Grenzen und Fehler der akademischen Disziplinen anerkennen und für Prozesse des Verlernens eintreten, schaffen wir eine Plattform, die außerdisziplinäres Wissen bestärkt und unterstützen das Denken und Schreiben von Autor*innen, Künstler*innen, Philosoph*innen, Wissenschaftler*innen und Aktivist*innen, deren Praktiken westliche Erkenntnistheorien in Frage stellen und sich mit epistemischen Systemen aus Afrika und der afrikanischen Diaspora, dem asiatisch-pazifischen Raum, dem Nahen Osten und Lateinamerika befassen.

Diese Reihe vereint S A V V Y Books und Archive Books in einer Zusammenarbeit, die auf dem gemeinsamen Interesse an einer Vielzahl von Wissen jenseits des westlichen Kanons beruht. Gemeinsam verschreiben wir uns der Förderung von kritischen Diskussionen und dem Aufbau von neuen Kooperationen und Koalitionen. Wir betrachten die Bücher in dieser Reihe als „Grenzgebiete“, um einen Ausdruck der Chicana-Poetin und Feministin Gloria Anzaldúa zu verwenden, womit wir Räume meinen, in denen „eine neue Geschichte zur Erklärung der Welt und unserer Teilnahme daran“ erarbeitet und erzählt werden kann; Räume, in denen epistemologischer Ungehorsam (Walter D. Mignolo) und abweichendes Denken ausgeübt werden können.

*Man of misery, whose land have I lit on now?
What are they here—violent, savage, lawless?
or friendly to strangers, god-fearing men?*

Odysseus upon his return to Ithaca (13.227-29)

The unlikely seemed possible in the summer of 2015, as thousands of immigrants from mostly Syria made their way to Germany and Angela Merkel made the statement “Wir schaffen das” (We can do it/ we can cope with it). A German's venture into open hospitality was being witnessed as the country celebrated its newfound “Willkommenskultur.” Soon enough, however, the summer of grace became the autumn of rage and the winter of nightmares, as the initial goodwill turned into the resurgence of the extreme right in Germany. Much is happening today that calls for a reflection on hospitality in Germany, in Europe, and in the world at large. Taking as a point of departure Derrida's notion of “hostipitality” – that is the presence of hostility in all hospitality and hosting–this anthology brings together original contributions from artists, scholars, activists, poets, curators, and musicians who reflect on different experiences and notions of hospitality.

In an age of flourishing resentments and antipathy towards all that seems conceptually or physically “strange”/ a “stranger,” in a time when the historical violence of the guest (as a colonizer) over the host is reiterated and fortified; in an era that has turned hospitality into a neoliberal commodity, it becomes urgent to reconsider hospitality's gradients of power.

**S A V V Y CONTEMPORARY
THE LABORATORY OF FORM-IDEAS
B O O K S**