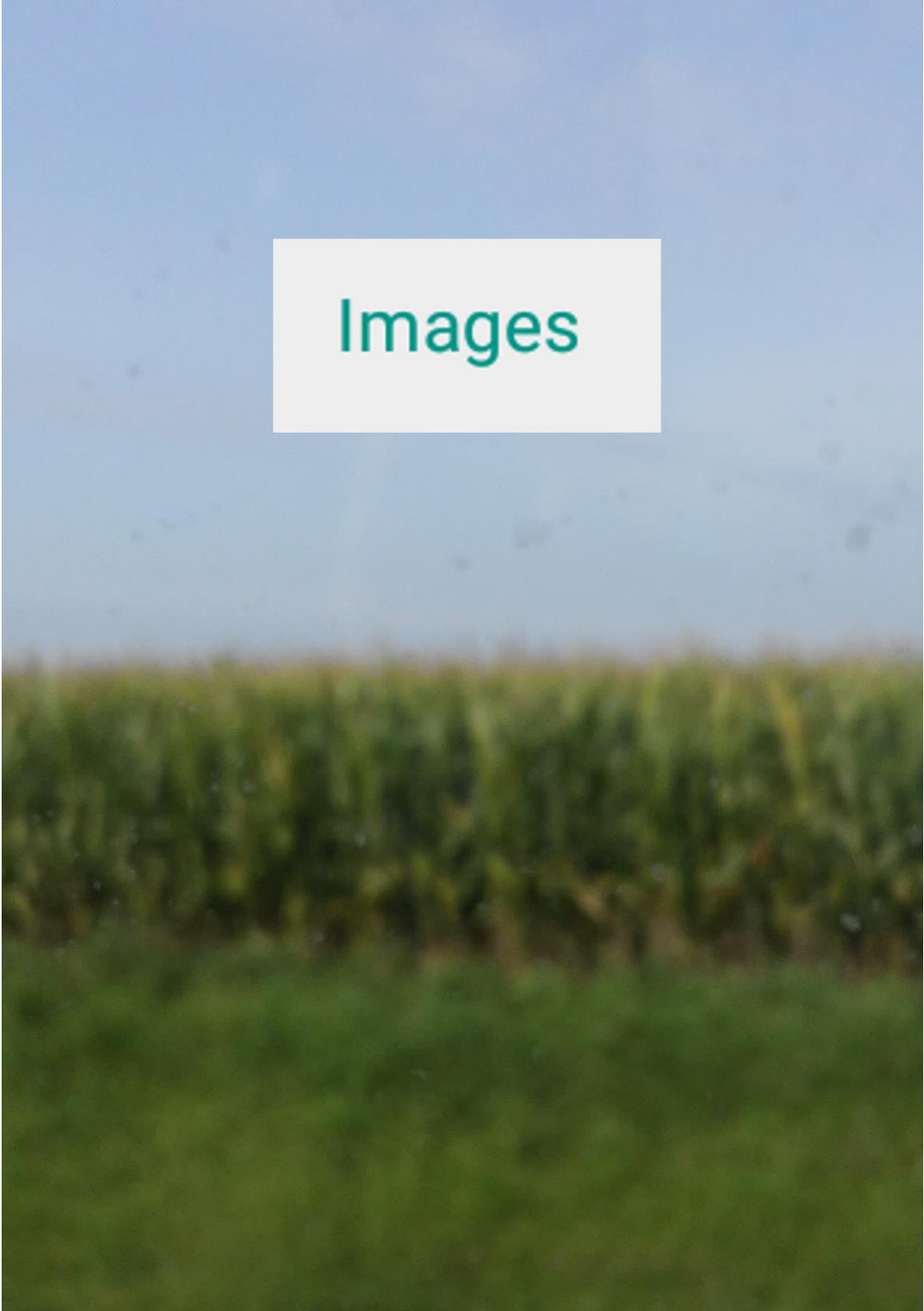

Images

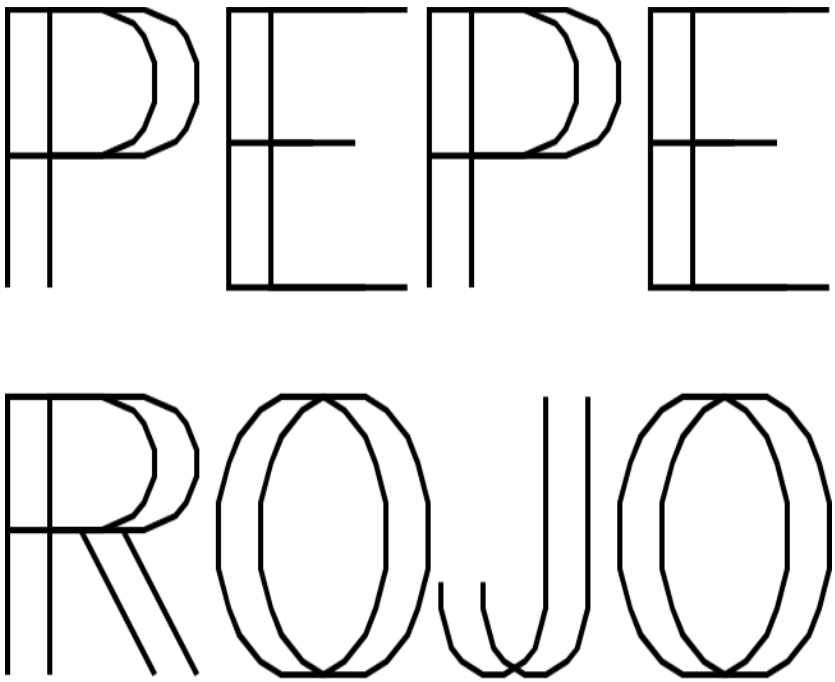
Images

It can be seen that the iconoclasts, who are often accused of despising and denying images, were in fact the ones who accorded them their actual worth, unlike the iconolaters, who saw in them only reflections and were content to venerate God at one remove.

CONTENTS

PEPE ROJO
IMAG/ESP/ECIES: RANDOM NOTES TOWARDS A ZOOLOGY 4
RINA NKULU
IMAGESAREEVERYTHINGIFYOU'REPASSIVEENOUGH 9
CHELSEA MANNING
IMAGINE VISUAL EMOTION 13
TROY ARAIZA KOKINIS
THE HISTORIAN, THE IMAGE, AND THE ARCHIVE 15
TINA HYLAND
PIXELHATE: TO BANISH NEGATIVE INFLUENCES 20
ALFREDO G REYNOSO
TOWARDS A POLITICAL IMAGINATION 23
TODD MOELLENBERG
CONCRETE POEM 29
DEE WARRICK
BAPHOMET'S TITS 32
ALIS MFORM
THE DEATH IMAGE 35
DAVID BIRCHALL
THE IMAGE OF HUMAN RIGHTS 39

ELIZABETH SPARKS
OUT/OUT/THERE/THERE 45
ADAM VEAL
BOURGEOIS DEVIATIONIST PSEUDOSCIENCE 52
CASSANDRA HARTBLAY
PROSPECT PARK, BROOKLYN, MAY 2009 56
KIRBY
IMAGE 69
ZACHARY BUSHNELL
LIGHT SPEED 71
MATTHEW BLISS
“THE NOISE IN THIS SIGNAL” 79
ITZA VILABOY
UNTITLED 82
GRANT LEUNING
THIS PICTURE IS REPRESENTATIVE. THIS PHOTOGRAPH IS REAL. 85


PEPE
ROJO

IMAG/ESP/ECIES

RANDOM NOTES TOWARDS A ZOOLOGY

Images are the species that eyes eat. Eyes eat images, but images consume eyes, because through them, they get to the brain, where they can live cozy lives safe from the uncertainties outside skulls.

Once inside, they can fester with greater ease, and start melding with the eyeballs from the inside, working their way out, and rearranging the world according to their own logic.

Images envelope eyes with a slimy substance, almost undetectable, that will affect their subsequent functioning. The thickness of this image goo is called the gaze. Some believe the gaze is a particular species independent from the eye, the brain, and from the images. Even if it is so, there's no gaze without images, and their inference in both the gaze's reproduction and their symbiotic or parasitic relationship should be further investigated.

Images are famously promiscuous. Gazes are particularly private. That's the extent of their difference.

As a species, images are closer to drugs, viruses and religions than to carbon-based life-forms. Their proliferation derives from the fact that images, after conquering brains, have been able to reproduce themselves in different material substrates. After inhabiting cells and neurons, at first through the device named memory, which is a framing dispositif that allows modifications to the impression of the eyes, images slowly invaded solid matter: rock, skin, wood, cloth. This materialization radically altered their existence and their reproduction, which were enhanced because images ceased to rely on short and random biological cycles for their reproduction. The stability gained by technification was instrumental to their spread throughout the world, akin to the vectors of viruses spreading. The effect images have on those they inhabit is also close to both drugs and religion (visions would be the operating word here). The ability of images to inhabit non-living materials, to appear on the outside world in spite of it, changed the relationship between images, life, space and time.

Images do not know time, because they short-circuit it. Their present is continuous. JFK is always being shot in Dallas, Colosio en Tijuana, airplane hits tower crumbles, Jesus throes cross. Being always present, they are always real. As a distillation of the real, they are always hyper-real.

Brains and bodies are survival machines for the reproduction of images. But so are computers. The survival of the basic components of an image undergoes millions of possible mutations each day, all over the world, in the

screens, which capture eyes so they can be consumed by images.

Nothing can be unseen.

Eyes detest touch. Never get your fingers near one of them. They might get bitten.

Eyes are selective. Their relationship issues are solved through distances. Get too close and they loose their precious symmetry.

Eyes can only touch through the gaze, which is their erotic pseudopod. It is the gaze that bites. It is the gaze that caresses. It is the gaze's insistent touch that makes you turn because you feel someone's watching you.

Images, say some, are a plague that over-runs the world.

Others, whose lot is better in this world, we suppose, rejoice in the exotic exuberance of the species.

Images snare their victims and take their place. The interesting phenomenon is that the victims of such ensnaring behave as if their image is way more real than them. Images are always aspirational. When you talk to someone, you usually are talking to their image of themselves. And vice versa. As far as images as concerned, there's no difference between hunting and fucking.

Eyes have insatiable appetites. The consume images to organize their world. Eyes need a stable diet of images in order to keep the world running. That is why it's so rare to find wild images, even to the point where a raw image might be completely overlooked. Most of the images consumed by eyes are grown and groomed, quartered and

raised, by a cadre of professional care keepers and enablers that produce a steady flow of food for eyes. The world needs artists just as plants need animal shit: as seed bombs.

The conception of images always happens at eye-level, but their gestation occurs on the brain. Images are reproduced in factories: their sameness ensures a common reality. That is why most images are reproduced.

True images are born in fever.


RIINA
NIKULU

IMAGESAREEVERYTHINGIFYOU'REPASSIVEENOUGH

every time that i am on instagram i kind of start to reckon that the will is something along the lines of a resource that can be diminished and more and more i am figuring that imagery is less influential than it is inescapable – all rapid-fire and engulfing, non-stop as the future, *a lot to take in at once,* pulling thumbs down and waiting to see the next few things the stupid little algorithm generates. it's probably easier to talk about *images* as in *pictures,* always, freeze-frames, snapshots, effective little depictions, all flat and glossy. they can move. i imagine it happening in stutters, or under strobe lights – compulsive, less fluid than i'm comfortable with – but more easily moderated in that way, as curated flipbook frames. there is the appearance of total inactivity on a base level. you can blink and miss *something* but not the whole *it;* these are parts, noisy but muffled. you soak them in and then you start to drown in the act of encountering.

lots of them feel like different anxious flavors of bare life in the forms of various "aesthetics" (here, the way you dress, the kinds of things that you like to post or retweet or reblog, the color scheme these all might come in); they have names or get names eventually after a nervous compulsion to brand – at that point the parts that might beat or twitch or ache too hard have already

been long-suffocated. there was this strange trend on twitter for a while, where faceless accounts would put together faceless photographs of *things* - nail-bitten hands holding cigarettes, one pale closed eye, a girl in an adidas cap with her hands over her face, a sketchbook page full of drawings of hands. the captions kind of explanations of representations (of representations) - in this case, those four images were "the messy girl with a life of struggles, cigarettes, drawing, and running away from her problems," all vague and dreamy enough to pick up and hold onto, some aspirational type of character archetype, just as twitchy-as-opposed-to-fluid. i think that a lot of talk about "flattening" is achy and frightening, but so is the anxiety of feeling yourself pushed up against objects that you see without being given the time to process them.

one of the more annoying things about existing online (and knowing that for a lot of my also-teenage peers "online" means twitterfacebookyoutubetumblr) is the inbred futility in trying to assert one's nature or character online - how terribly difficult it is to transfer an identity to a space that isn't one - the decisions made in what to keep or discard or bury entirely; whatever is kept becoming *you*, wholly. there is a whole lot of nervousness in the gaps that are left/the recognition that you're not building yourself a mirror, if it comes, after the confusing expectation that your surroundings know what you are. it's a lot faster to read a profile than a person; the former feels most commonly preferred if not easier because every kind of context creates tension. images take up space as things replicated but never to be realized - tradeable - easy to pick up

and occupy – everywhere. they are objects that you are allowed to want, though the fear is mostly in *becoming*, and with little resistance. the comfort comes in *relatability,* the contortions are necessary to perform the act of relating, in general, to what images can never not obscure in some way (the labor of just existing???) – i guess that's the most common tendency of it all – filling in spaces until there are none at all, over and over – all slowing and strange – you should want to retain the ability to process them…


CHELSEA
MANNING

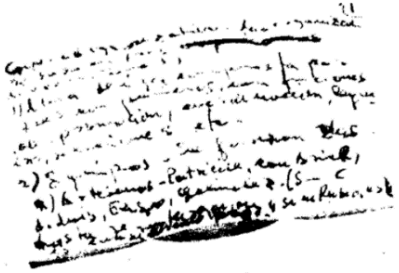


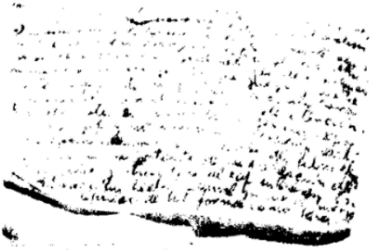
Chelsea E. Manning
@xychelsea

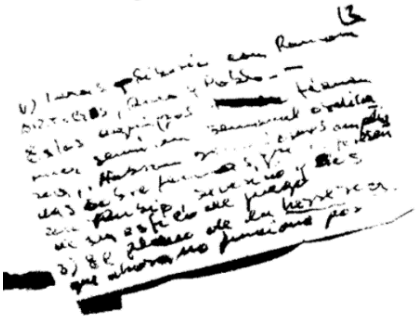
if youre new to emoji: just think about how you're feeling 🤔 and what youre trying to say 😏📢💥 imagine visual emotion, then find closest pic

8:47 AM - 18 Jul 2017

TROY ARAIZA KOKINIS











OPR

INFORMACIÓN
PASADA EN

THE HISTORIAN, THE IMAGE, AND THE ARCHIVE

Contemporary archive-based historical research resembles high stake photo journalism. The image is everything, and there is little time to capture the perfect shot before moving on to the next one. Historians spend countless hours rummaging through archived documents in order to photograph them with our digital cameras, fighting our shaky hands to capture images of relevant text. The folders are endless and overwhelming, and we find ourselves in a battle with time as we set out to take a perfectly clear and legible image, one by one by one. The resolution must be high, and the shot must be still. The slightest movement when pressing the shutter release can make the image irrelevant once transferred to the computer screen. Every blurred bit of text is a few USD thrown out the window. After all, the State Department or the Ford Foundation or the Graduate Studies Office didn't just send you off to the Third World to fuddy dud around and come back with nothing. The pressure is high.

Some documents are straight forward. They willfully offer their text and consent to a clean-reading image. These documents, often meant to be read by an audience in the first place, maintain their prestige as providers of the "official narrative" (i.e. THE media; THE press).

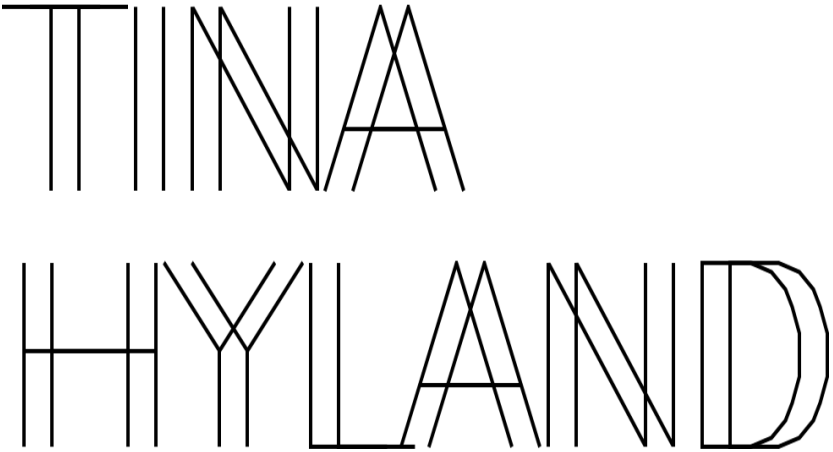
But some documents do not assume their new role as "image." They were not intended for a mass audience in the

first place. This past week, I came across a few of those documents. They were written in code in 1/16 inch size font on a 2"X3" piece of wax paper. They were wrapped in nylon and passed by mouth through kissing when political prisoners of the Uruguayan Anarchist Federation (FAU) were visited by their comrades from the outside. They were a way for political prisoners to participate in strategy-building with members in civil society throughout the late 60s and early 70s, as Uruguay creeped slowly into a CIA-backed civic-military dictatorship by 1973.

After nearly 15 minutes of trying and re-trying to capture an image with legible text, I gave up. I captured this form of the documents instead. Some documents were not meant to translate into what historians would recognize as usable images, but that is because they were not meant to be read by anyone beyond those within a small trusted circle. And I have to be okay with that.

Montevideo (Uruguay), 2 July 2017


IMAGE IS EVERYTHING


TIINA
HYLAND

```
 _____ _          _ _          _
|  __ (_)        | | |        | |
| |__) |__  _____| | |__   __ _| |_ ___
|  ___/ \ \/ / _ \ | '_ \ / _` | __/ _ \
| |   | |>  <  __/ | | | | (_| | ||  __/
|_|   |_/_/\_\___|_|_| |_|\__,_|\__\___|
```

To Banish Negative Influences

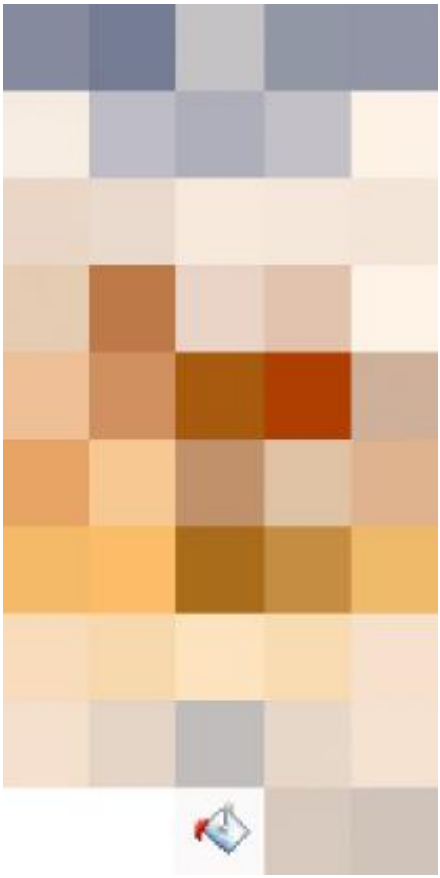
Ex-lovers, abusive partners, bad friends, excessive drugs or drinking. These people and substances can influence us, hurt us, cause us to behave in ways that undermine who we are. This spell banishes such bad influences and can be used to remove a hex.

You will need:

- an image of the person or substance
- MS Paint (other programs may work, if they allow you to resize images by pixel)

Open the image in MS Paint. In the resize menu, click on pixel. Adjust the height to 10. As you apply this change say, "I diminish your influence."

The image will appear very small. Go back to resize by pixel and increase it to 500. Say, "I distort your power."



BEGONE.

The image will now appear as a series of squares. Select the fill-in tool (the bucket) and set it to the color white. Fill each individual square, starting at the bottom right corner, moving counterclockwise.

As you do so, recite the following incantation. Repeat until each square is made blank.

My strength grows
as your hold wanes.
I erase your power,
unlink these chains.

You should be left with a plain white canvas. Now, choose the color red for protection and select the star tool to draw a pentagram across the image. As you do so, say, "Go away. Stay away."

The spell is complete. Close the program without saving the image.

ALFREDO G REYNOSO

TOWARDS A POLITICAL IMAGINATION

The eye does not imply the I

An I is implied in your eye
only if you have the idea
of the image you see

And when you do,
the I that is implied
does not look *through* the eye
but *into* the eye

To have the idea
of an image
is to have the experience
of being looked at
by an imaginary I

Without this other scene
where you are being looked at
by the I of an image
there is no spectator
there is no subject

To be a spectator
it is necessary
to have an eye
not to look
but to be looked at

To be a subject
it is necessary
to be the object
of an imaginary gaze

***

A subject can look through an eye
But the I looks through an idea

An image
can make a spectator
unveil the other scene
where their eye is in front of
an *I-dea*

An image
can be a *trompe-l'œil*
when the eye
is deceived by
an I-dea

The social belief
that there is a fixed I-dea
for every image
is called spectacle

The spectacle
is where the subject
is trapped
in a net of I-mages

***

You cannot have an idea
without an image

(even Plato suggests that)
But:
a) You can have an image
without an idea

And:
b) You can have an idea
(of an image)
outside the spectacle

***

a) An image without an idea
puts the spectator
in a state of unease

There is a dada spirit
in the core of every image
soon domesticated
by an idea

But every now and then
a spectacle is perturbed
by these images
which circulate
without an idea

And the subject
relates to them
with angst

***

b) An idea (of an image) outside the spectacle
is the goal of the political imagination

One can ignore the spectacle
by subtracting a fixed idea of an image
but to confront the spectacle
one has to create new ideas for an image

To create an idea
(of an image)
outside the spectacle
is to take care of the other scene
of imaginary signification

A political imagination
is a production of new ways for the subject
to make sense of themselves
outside the established relations

The spectacle uses images as traps
The political imagination uses images
as openings

We do not need more images

We need to be open
to the virtual possibilities
of relating to an image

Maybe that way
a subject outside the spectacle
is possible

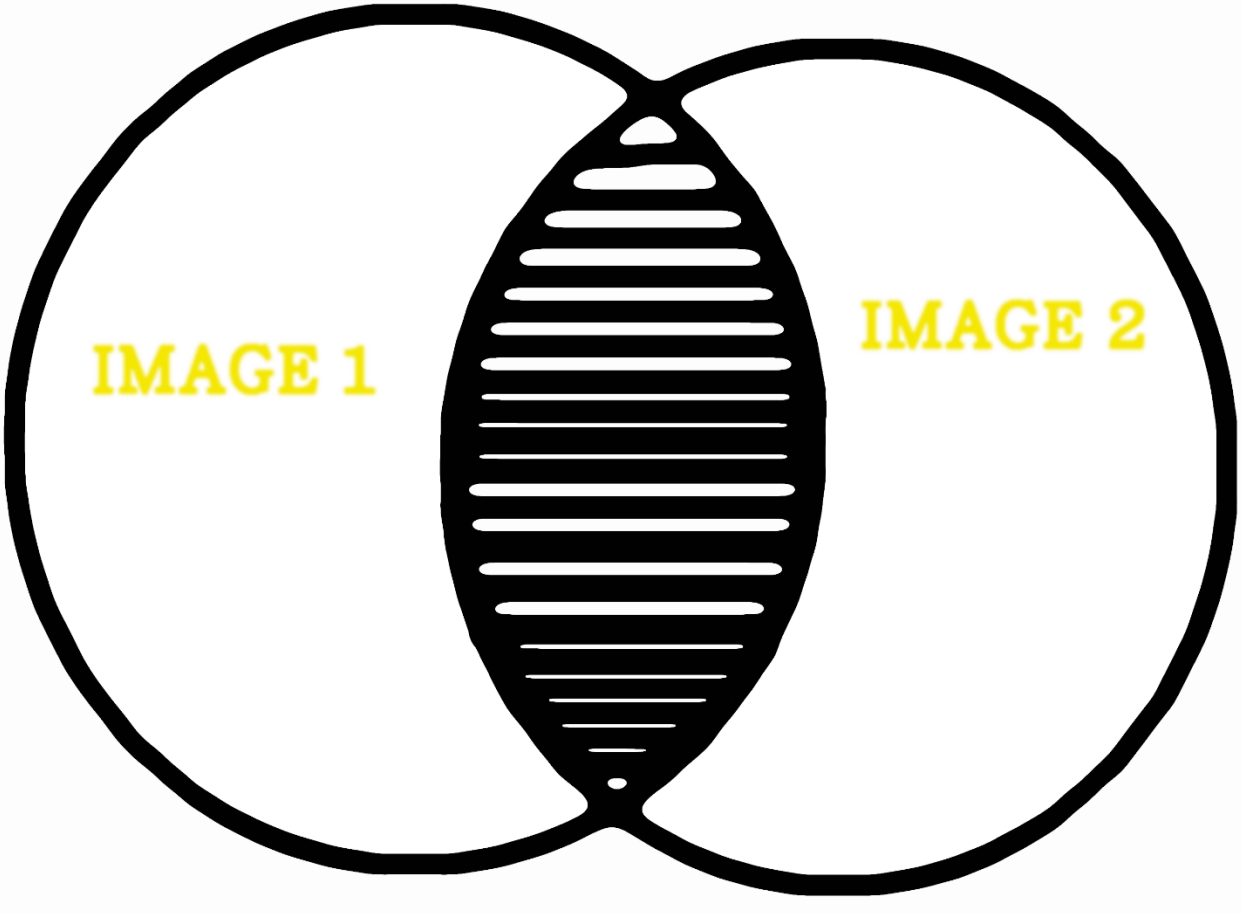


IMAGE 1
IMAGE 2

TODD MOELLENBERG

CONCRETE POEM

I squint the
sidewalk in-
to cigarettes,
skyscrapers,
fingers, and
rain sticks
from the mar-
gins of neg-
ative space,
and safely
suppress the
impress of a
print when
it's all set
in stone.


Image

DEE WARRICK

BAPHOMET'S TITS

I envy Baphomet's tits. I wish they were mine. Mine currently disappear when I'm naked. I unhook my padded bra and slide the straps down my arms and climb into the shower or into bed, and I'm reduced in an essential way, made less of myself until the next opportunity I have to build myself again. Not Baphomet. Her tits remain always. They're really nice, too, not extremely large or extremely perky or even extremely sexualized in the way breasts so often are (although, of course, they are sexualized in a different way). And although Baphomet keeps getting reproduced into the modern day, her tits retain a sort of classical-art imperfection that I find unspeakably pretty. I fixate on Baphomet's tits because she, like me, also has a penis. Indeed, she often has three, or sometimes just the one with a pair of snakes reared up on either side, a genital configuration both familiar and totally alien.

Someday, when the hormones correct the damage done to me by testosterone, I hope my body will look like hers. I hope I will sit like her, without urgency, my legs crossed, my breasts bared. I hope I, like Baphomet, will represent something powerful and subversive, a sort of magic you really shouldn't fuck with but which you will nevertheless feel compelled to fuck with. She (and yes, I know, traditionally Baphomet is referred to with male pronouns; what garbage) hurts to look at precisely because she is so beautiful, and because her beauty is so strange.

Occult images like Baphomet have become a remarkably prevalent part of my transition. She joins Ouija boards, alchemical notations, weird geometrical designs the spokes of which intersect and snake into fleur de lies. I don't believe in literal magic, at least not in any sort of fantasy-novel, roleplaying-game, black-metal sense. But it's hard to resist the allure of the notion that coal could be transformed into gold. That the line between dead and alive could be transgressed. That there is a secret strength I can access by embracing as beautiful images I was raised to understand as obscene. Those are powerful ideas, contained within and projected from powerful images. But none are as powerful to me as Baphomet, who I hope to one day become. Baphomet, occult avatar of trans girls and champion of trans power.

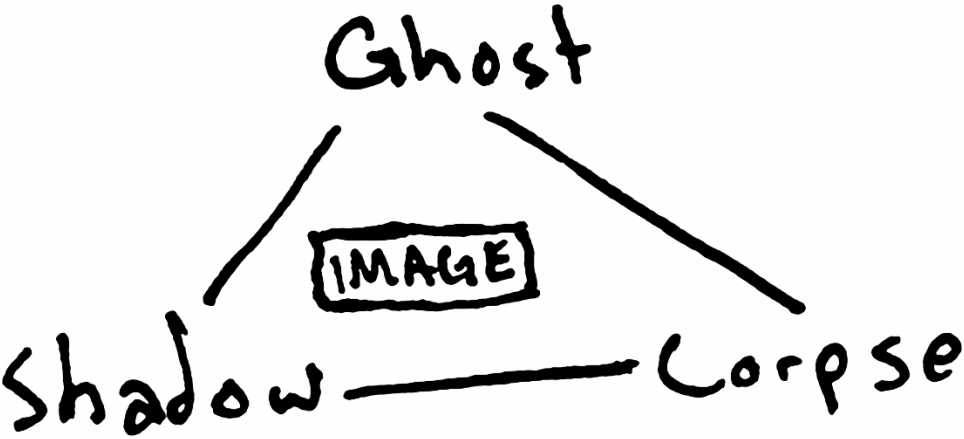
The image we call Baphomet was originally designed by the French occultist Eliphas Levi. He drew her for his book, *Dogma and Rituals of High Magic*. And I include this information not to play-act at academic rigor (oh look, she cites the image's origin, ain't she a fuckin genius) but to illustrate what I think is an important point. Namely, that Levi never intended Baphomet to resonate with me the way she does. Levi used male pronouns to refer to Baphomet ("His one arm is female, the other male like the ones of the androgyne of Khunrath, the attributes of which we had to unite with those of our goat because he is one and the same symbol,"). He views her as a symbol of balance, of unity found through the fusion of extremes. I view Baphomet as an embodiment of the extreme and of a rejection of the notion that a particular "side" ought to in some way be synthesized with its "opposite" in order to achieve some sort of precarious transcendence. I do

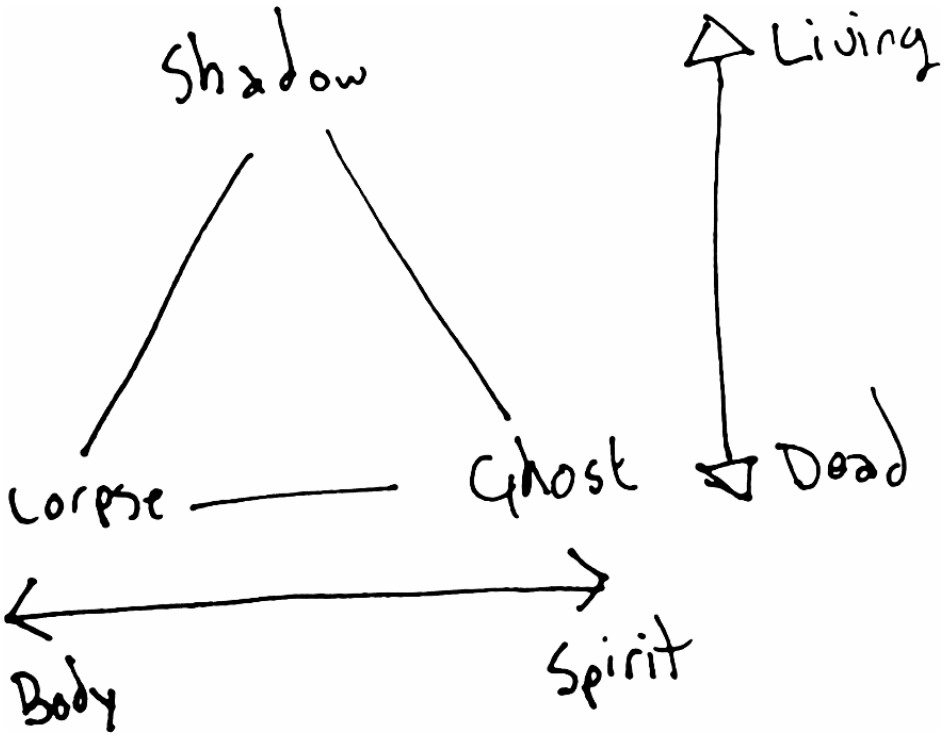
not simply believe that my interpretation of Baphomet is personally valid in some sort of Barthesian way. I believe my read on Baphomet is more correct than that of its creator. And I believe it's important that we reject the original read, and those who would cling to it. Here's why.

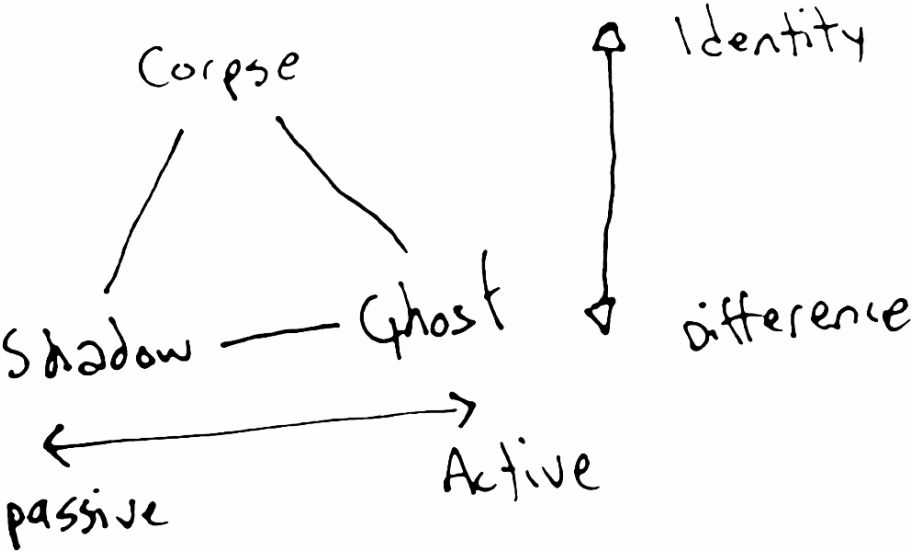
The promise that occultism makes to those who find themselves attracted to it is this: that the powerlessness you experience contains baked within it a secret escape hatch, and that through ritualized action and reaction, you are capable of actualizing a transcendence from all the bullshit that makes you sad or angry or threatens your safety or your life. It is ironic, then, that occultism as a culture and community is so thoroughly dominated by people who already possess such a comparatively huge amount of social capital. Your economically exploitive, intellectually unremarkable Aleister Crowleys and Anton LaVeys. Your fascist, edgelordly Douglas Pearces and Varg Vikerneses.

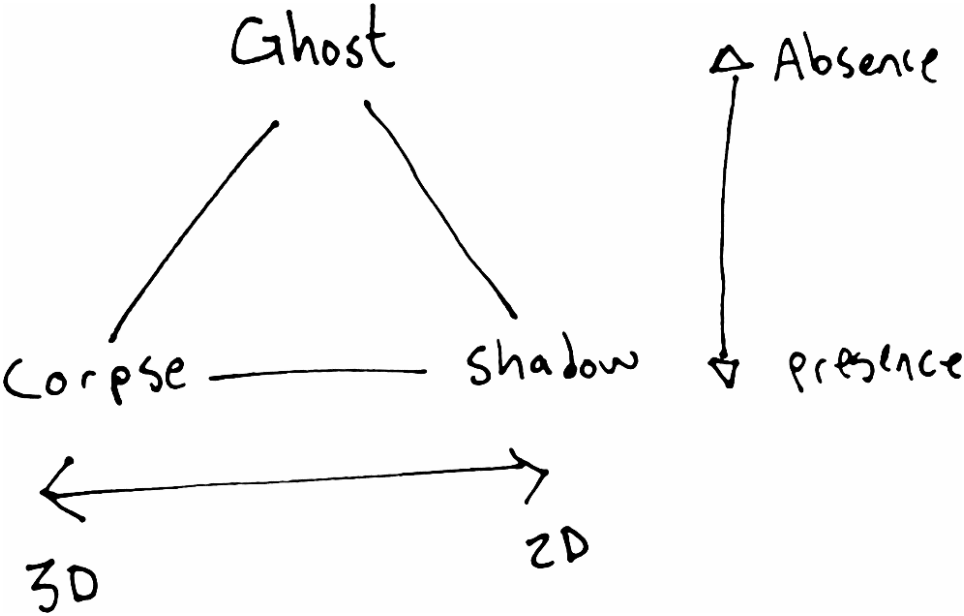
No, the occult should be queer. It should be un-white. It should be anti-colonial and anti-capitalist and anti-fascist. There is none of Levi in Baphomet. There is a fair bit of me and of my sisters in her.

So, for me, my adoration for and aspirations toward Baphomet-ness require a rejection of (and indeed, a revolt against) occult orthodoxy. Every morning, I cast a spell. I put on my padded bra, and I shave and make up my face, and I do my hair, and I perform a ritual. I make phone calls and write emails, inching closer with each response to acquiring the arcane serums I need to become myself forever. I sacrifice the body I was chained to as payment for receiving the body I consent to. I pray to Baphomet, bid her embody me. And in that way, I am made strong.


Ghost
IMAGE
Shadow
Corpse


Shadow
Living
Corpse
Ghost
Dead
Body
Spirit


Corpse
Identity
Shadow
Ghost
difference
Active
passive


Ghost
Absence
Corpse
Shadow
presence
3D
2D

DAVID BIRCHALL

THE IMAGE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The image of human rights is two-fold. There is the image of violence, of violation, of victim; and there is the subsequent sanitization of the violence. The former is constituted by the human rights movement, and the latter by the regime.

The movement is the activist, on the ground, decrying horrors and imploring the world to see how horrific these horrors really are. This creates the first image of human rights:

A tiny starved baby is cradled in the arms of a cowering, flinching, mother. A brutish man above her wields a machete. The scene is dusty, burning shacks and weapons of war are the backdrop. The dead and injured and maimed lie around them; men, women, children. Ferocious looking men with machine guns form a disordered rabble around them. This image is never singular, but one constantly repainted, with new, sickening details each time. Reports, statistics and speeches embed these images in a context of totalizing evil.

The image must be savage, to spur global attention, and prompt governments to act. This initial requirement entails that all the goriest and most rage inducing details be highlighted. It entails that modern norms go out the window, and activist is drawn to the suffering of mothers, girls, babies; and the violence of angry men. It needs to be so savage that the usual crowd back home cannot sneeringly dismiss it.

But once this is achieved, the image quickly needs a radical redrawing. This image serves a political purpose,

but is traumatizing, alienating and retributive. The price of global attention is to rile global anger, the anger that leads to Gaddafi's videotaped murder, war and civil war and unending chaos. It is not the image of justice, but of rage. Human rights therefore offers a second, sanitizing, image, through the human rights regime, where the barbaric acts so described are transposed into legal frameworks and a technical vocabulary. The second image is of the international courtroom:

Smart suits and wood paneling and grave people discuss the events in even-handed, rational tones. Emotion is gone, the dead are mentioned infrequently and only as numbers. Only certain evidence-backed events are highlighted; most victims are forgotten. The trials and legal discussions are lengthy. We are no longer talking about victims and savages, but *mens rea* and whether for the purposes of international humanitarian law the combatants were under the defendant's control. Complicated legalese and lethargic proceedings construct the event more passively. Years later, a verdict will be given, and justice will have been served.

Concurrently, the same regime is at work locally, building and repairing and generally sanitizing, to draw attention away from the horrors and towards hope. Gone is the narrative of crazed barbarism, of drugged child soldiers and torture, and in its place comes the new narrative of reconciliation. The 'hordes of butchers and rapists' that once plagued the area dissipate. The victims draw less attention, as the rebuilders take centre stage.

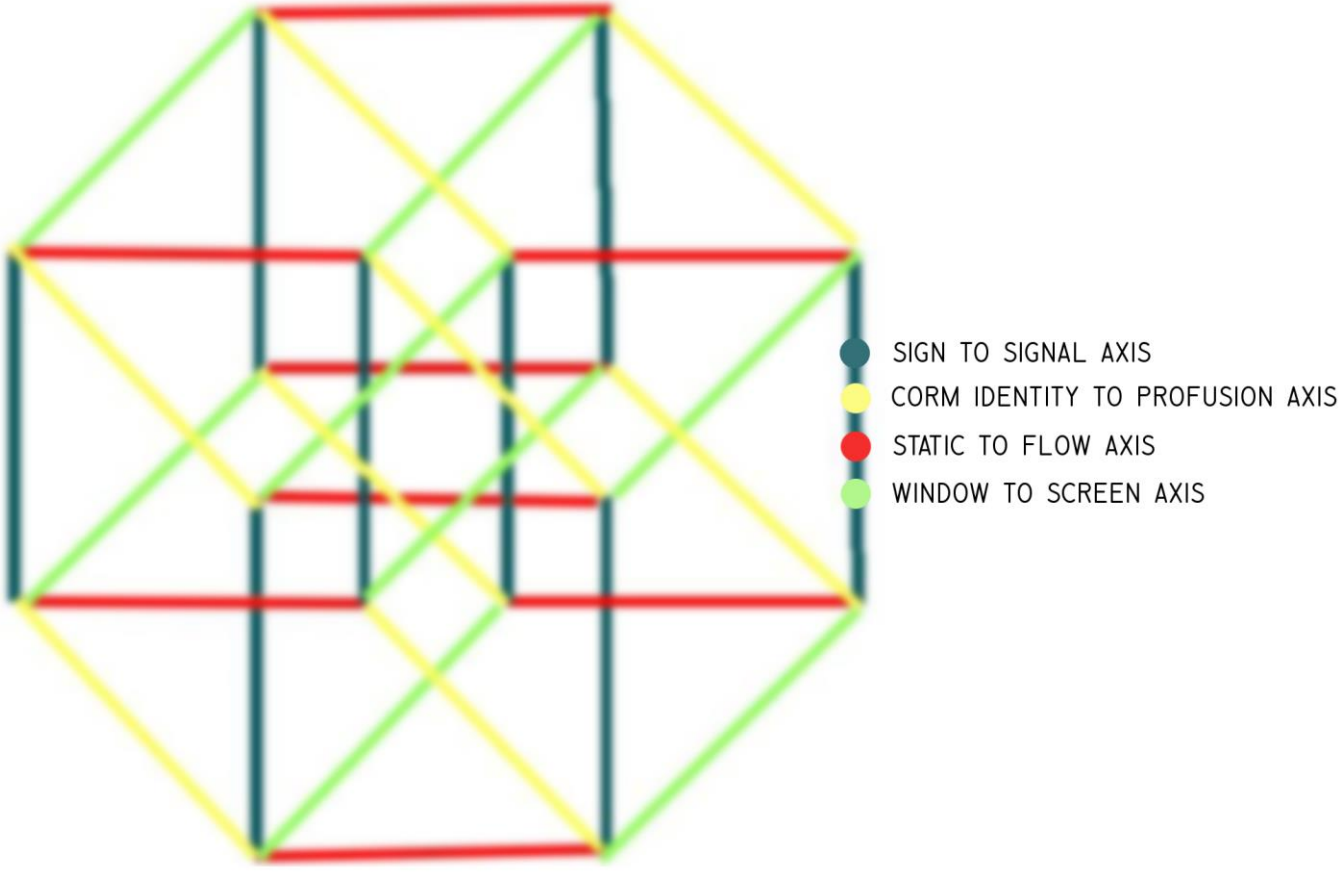
Human rights is therefore an imagery rooted in contradiction. The lens of human rights refracts the real into evil, and then evil into the technical. The images work to shape and reshape our understanding of one far-off event within the specific context so demanded. The

magnification of terror, followed as swiftly as possible by the de-magnifying sanitization of the event. Both are lens on real events and real people, and both serve a political purpose in the name of human rights. Neither are false, but neither are unbiased.

There is one major flaw in the imagery, perhaps true for anything based on powerful imagery, and that is that it occludes much potential for real understanding. Rage and hatred shifts to justice, to hope, and soon it is all forgotten. By working through powerful images, there is little space for nuanced understanding, something for which both human rights activists and lawyers are frequently cited. The images are forms of propaganda that dictate the normative orientation the public (should) have towards the event at each of its stages, directing the evolution of emotions. As such, it is a requirement that each are forms of superficial unreality, and therefore it is inevitable that nuance is lost.

The imagery of human rights has shaped the worldview of atrocity and war since the development of mass communication technologies. The image is at every stage a crass simplification, first vilifying beyond reason, and last rationalizing beyond sensitivity. But the imagery has also spurred action, often too much and too cack-handed action, sometimes too slow and tepid an action. It has allowed the world to see victims as part of a human family, and eventually even to sympathize with perpetrators.

HYPERSTRUCTURALISM THE IMAGE




ELIZABETH
SPARKS

OUT/OUT/THERE/THERE

I am a child. I do not see my image reflected anywhere. I do not see it on "Family Ties." I do not see it in advertisements for AJAX, featuring a beleaguered, suburban mother, fresh from hauling the brood back from soccer practice in her faux-wood-paneled Chrysler Town and Country. I do not see it at the after-school ice cream social, where the dads discuss football and other things I could not care less or know less about.

I do not see it in my ultra-conservative, 1980s Phoenix neighborhood, where each yard is adorned with a tiny American flag on a stake. And festooned in fingerless gloves made from black mesh, wrists heavy with plastic bangles, unbrushed hair piled high, like I am desperately seeking Susan, I do not even see my image reflected in the full-length mirror of my childhood bedroom. My image is conspicuously absent. Always. Everywhere.

I am in kindergarten. I think I see my image reflected in another girl. They call her a "tomboy." She does karate and only hangs out with the boys. I think she is divine. She is the closest to my reflection I see and still, I do not do karate, no one calls me a "tomboy," though I do mostly hang out with the boys.

It is summer and I am in theater camp. I think I see my reflection once more. She wears a The Who's Tommy t-shirt and Doc Martens she buys directly from the factory when her singing group tours in the UK. I follow her to

art school, but she is not there. It is the wrong art school.

At the middle school bus stop, I think I find my image reflected once more. She is awkward and stands alone, separated from the group, always. She is all dark curls, crooked glasses, oversized skater kid clothes, and pink birthmark against pale skin and hunched shoulders. She is the most beautiful fucking thing I've ever seen. When she becomes a bagging girl at the grocery store, I take a deep interest in grocery shopping with my mother. I don't think that woman goes to the grocery store without me for the better part of a year.

I am always looking for my image to be reflected somewhere, in someone, because it hardly ever is. Image absent, even in my own cramped, suburban room. I, like most children, am only ever a reflection of what I see. And I do not see me. But I know something is not right. Something always feels off. Something is always missing. But it is hard to point to the absence of something and say, "yes, there!" because, in the words of another soon-to-be post reflection/den "mother of us all" of love and artistry I will build upon in adulthood, "there is no there, there."

I grow up with a gay uncle. In 1980s New York City, he is just my uncle with the roommate. Perhaps if I stay in the city, my image will be reflected in storefronts, or in distorted subway windows, or in my own bedroom mirror, but I do not and so it is not.

I am uprooted and moved to the Sonoran Desert - a place where reflections are never really reflections but cartoon mirages that wave with the heat over blacktop in abandoned lots or desert-for-now-before-it-is-developed-into-yet-another-gated-community. Everything

vibrates with the heat and you cannot stay one place long enough to see anything reflected so, instead, like all of the animals adapting to the harshest of conditions, you resort to mimicry and think it is the same thing as reflection. Instead it alters the original image, which is another thing entirely.

If I stay in the city, it is possible that my uncle and his "roommate" might become reflections, perhaps some June when they hang a rainbow flag from their exterior window, high above 9th Avenue.

I hold a boy's hand in Stratford-upon-Avon and think, "this is easy." I think that no one can hurt us and it feels different, lighter, simpler. It is easy not to have to hide in the darkest part of night, in the darkest part of the park, in the coldest part of winter, when the desert becomes a place of pendulous extremes, when night is decades colder than day. It is easier to walk in the light, unafraid. Normal. Average. Regular. Image reflected everywhere, in everyone.

So I hold that boy's hand in front of a judge and promise to hold his hand for always. I drive a Chrysler Town and Country, just another beleaguered mom, except now they're Seventh Generation commercials because AJAX probably causes cancer.

Harvey Milk encouraged coming out to break the illusion that people with an image like mine are rare or, even, nonexistent. We are, of course, everywhere, whether we drive minivans or diaper babies or do none of those things or do, instead, other things. We need to see our images reflected everywhere in everything because we are social animals. We require reflection of image, reflection of behavior, to know that what we are doing is normal, average,

regular. And the truth is that the people who fight the hardest against laws of inclusion, a culture of inclusion, know exactly that. That's why they resist our images being everywhere. When they say that we will encourage children to be gay what they really mean is we will encourage children to feel less hatred towards themselves for being gay. And they can't have that. Because the second our images are everywhere, the second children see themselves reflected, the second they'll start to feel human, whole, normal, average, regular. And the second they begin to feel those things, the attempts to dehumanize them, to remove their images, now permanently etched in their memories, will become infinitely harder.

I am a closeted gay teen in Russia, writing frantic, secret letters to my love, fearful that I will be found out, fearful that I will be loathed or targeted or worse. Adults tell me that there are no gay people in Russia. Gay people, you see, had only existed during a brief period of Stalinist USSR, and they were swiftly killed, and now they no longer exist. I guess they have not been reborn or something. Of course, when I point out to my sister that our neighbors are a lesbian couple, she assures me I do not understand the situation. You see, the one neighbor is just a lovely woman who has taken in another woman in need. The woman in need, mind you, is a veterinarian, and seems quite capable of caring for herself. This fact seems irrelevant. I am not to see my reflection there.

Our high school has an American Peace Corps volunteer. She sees me reflected in her. She slips me bootlegged Ani DiFranco cassette tapes. My image is reborn, huddled over my tiny boombox, in the room just adjacent to Babushka's, desperately falling in love with someone I have never seen,

but someone whose image I have crafted in my mind, built from her voice and violent guitar strums. When I finally see her, blue hair and huge shoes, supine in a fish bowl, I will be out/out and in the room of that same love, to whom I have written so many frantic love notes, only this is before I break everything, including her heart because I am not really out/out, because I still only see my reflection during Gay Pride month. That is not enough reflection for me because I am a Type-A, oldest, female child, desperately seeking approval even when it should be — and is — totally unnecessary.

The highest Court in the land says that we were all equal and you can hold anyone's hand now in front of any judge in any state and promise to love anyone for all time, not just on a Parisian hillside like Gertie and Alice. But it is a moment and moments are built inside tiny spheres that float like bubbles on pressurized air. And sometimes that means they float away. And sometimes it means they pop. And sometimes it means that people with ugly souls will seize power and say "fuck you" to your moment and "fuck you" to your reflection and "fuck you" to feeling normal, average, regular. But this time, those images are etched in our memories. This time, we know what there is to lose. We have already painted our images onto city buildings. We have already written them into family programming. We have already placed them at the helm of classrooms. We have already elected them to office. We can see ourselves this time, reflected. Everywhere. In everyone. And at least in our memories, those reflections cannot be erased.


DEATH OF
IMAGES
and


ADAM
VEAL

BOURGEOIS DEVIATIONIST PSEUDOSCIENCE

I'm listening to FKA Twigs', "M3LL155X",
which uses lots and lots of multi-layered tracks—
sorry, this is a stupid way to talk about the song, I'm
not fluent in proper music terminology—
so there's these multi-layered tracks, and they're
all flat, right? Her voice isn't flat, the base
isn't flat, but it sounds like
she's walking through some saturated mediascape—
like there are flat screens floating everywhere
and neon—
which is actually really pretty and fun, but kind of
overwhelming, too, because it's
constantly interrupting itself.

An image is something that's really meaty
but that we pretend it's not really there,
like a painting, but if paintings
had writhing tentacles like sea
anemone—
even the quiet,
peaceful ones drift and wait—
which is appropriate, because
they both catch
attention, things to eat. Wikipedia
tells me "anemone" means "daughter of the wind",
and that Venus made them from a mixture of
nectar and blood,
like blood with sweetness
and maybe drunkenness, a ruddy golden color,
like a curtain with a silhouette on it.

Is the internet an image?
The internet has a body that presents itself as
bodiless—
The internet eats my attention like attention
is its favorite food and really nutritious, the life
of a city is where the people are—
I get up and go out
into the humid summer night, there are people
and colorful lights flickering everywhere, all the bars
and restaurants
are crowded,
everybody I know can know
where I am, I can
know where everybody I know is—


AESTHETI
CS IS THE
AUTONOM
OUS WILL

CASSANDRA HARTBLAY

PROSPECT PARK, BROOKLYN, MAY 2009

Prospect Park. It is suddenly summer, in the big meadow, and all of Brooklyn is out and reveling.

Lenore is reading the NYTimes magazine in paper edition. She is stomach-down on an old airline blanket, facing toward one corner, the magazine splayed open below her elbows, the top half of her under the shade of a maple tree. Lenore's right ankle is hooked over the brown, gleaming calf that extends out of Mia's cut-off shorts, and ends in her ugly feet. Mia is arranged on her stomach, too, at a diagonal from Lenore, so that from their ankles they form a sort of scissor. Lovers reading, a picturesque, thinks Lenore. And truly, Lenore has the magazine open, but she is so distracted by the glow of contented nowness of her very own life at this particular moment that she can hardly focus on the text in front of her. She is buzzing with caffeine from the morning coffee she and Mia carried up the street to the park from Mia's apartment; she is buzzing from the very nearness and hotness and HOTness of Mia's corded body, her yoga arms tensed as she supports herself on elbows over the novel she has moved on to, having paged through the Times and declared it a sham and travesty. Right now for instance, Lenore somehow out of the corner of her eye, sees or feels or happens to know that Mia has just lifted her right foot, hinging at the knee, toe pointed upward toward the sky, as if in some kind of kinetic choreography with the maple behind them. Slack with heat, Lenore feels the slant of the earth

beneath her chest and pelvis, running up to the roots of the maple's trunk, and she hears some kind of buzzing of some unknowable metropolis of insect, and the whole thing pulses with YES.

I am HERE, Lenore thinks, and lets her left cheek drop onto the magazine page, her face turned inward into this thing of beingness that is at this very moment her and Mia. She lifts her face slightly to adjust the angle of her neck, the magazine page sticking to her cheek, then settles again, content.



[Illustration: QR code to: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/17/magazine/17wwln-safire-t.html]

Mia snorts, suddenly, flips back to the cover of her novel, a New York Public Library volume with a woman's profile outlined in white on a black cover, a constellation etched out in stars or map points. She flips back to her page, and slumps her face toward it, her bare-nailed fingers combing into her tawny hair to cradle the side of her head. Lenore takes this in, barely breathing, feeling herself blink, feeling the slight moisture

collecting on the backs of her knees, watching this being, her almost-girlfriend *be.*

Mia's jaw slackens a little as she reads, her lips loose and open, gravity just so dragging her flesh downward. Now, she snaps her mouth closed, and through the crook of Mia's elbow, Lenore can tell that she has pouted her lip a bit and furrowed her brow.

"Ha!" she croaks, indignantly, sitting up all at once, knees tucked beneath her and stretching her shoulders, arms thrust forward like a diver. She sits back on her heels, and reaching down beside her produces a bottle of water (which, Lenore notes, is of course not a *bottle of water* as in *bottled water* with some label from the Coca-Cola corporation with a name that tested positively with thousands of consumers for a positive association with qualities including *purity* and *refreshingness,* but a hard plastic *water bottle,* of the kind that certain people might take hiking or camping, filled from the spigot filter in Mia's apartment). Mia tips her head back and takes two gulps, and the second one still in her mouth begins to turn her head left and right in disbelief, working up to a comment as she screws the cap back on to her *water bottle.*

Mia turns to Lenore, and making eye contact shakes her head again. "I can't believe this!" she exclaims, or really, croakingly extorts, in her very particular New England girl way, an intonation halfway between *Clueless* valley girl and Sylvia Plath midcentury transatlantic.

Lenore looks up at her and smiles lazily. "What?" Even as she says it, Lenore is conscious of the slight breaking of her heart, with the recognition that she is ABSOLUTELY IN LOVE with the fact that she never knows what is going

to come out of Mia's mouth next. If you paid her $9,000, she could not for the life her begin to imagine what Mia is about to say. Lenore inhales into the place in her chest that has just hollowed out to make room for a new chamber of awe dedicated to Mia, a place that is at once a ping of pain and fear and wonder.

"I mean listen to this! No one ever fucking questions *normal force,*" she bemoans. "It's like, GAHHH!" Mia says, closing her eyes and flaring her lips in a gesture of exasperation. She pauses to gather her thoughts. "Everyone's always so concerned with forward or backwards that they never stop to consider the fact that the *ground* is holding them *up.*"

"What?" says Lenore, lifting her face and bending her head forward to crack her neck, then sliding her hand palm down to pillow under her cheek.

"Listen to this:" asserts Mia, lifting the book to read. "They're talking about this philosophical drawing, or, well, the philosophical interpretation of this little sketch." Then, in her Reading Voice, "We're presented with a picture of a man climbing a slope, in profile, one leg in front of the other as he progresses, marking motion, walking up the incline, facing the top, eyes directed at the top, all the standard climbing-association stuff. Et cetera et cetera. So it's a picture of a man walking up a hill." She pauses to skip something. "Dr. Wittgenstein says hold on now, pardner, because the picture could just as clearly and exactly and easily represent the man sliding *down* the slope, with one leg higher than the other, backwards, et cetera. Just as exactly." Deep breath as she again pauses to skip ahead. "And then we're invited to draw all these totally fecal conclusions about why we just automatically

assume from just looking at the picture that the guy's climbing and not sliding. Going up instead of coming down."[1]

The sun is slanting down on them hard now, and Lenore lifts her right hand to shield her eyes and rolls a bit onto her left side, opening toward Mia as she looks up at her to signal listening, go on.

"This is exactly the fucking problem with the whole world," Mia says, in her Mia-on-a-mission voice now, "with

---

[1] From the Wittgenstein:

(*b*) I see a picture; it represents an old man walking up a steep path leaning on a stick.—How? Might it not have looked just the same if he had been sliding downhill in that position? Perhaps a Martian would describe the picture so. I do not need to explain why *we* do not describe it so.

140. Then what sort of mistake did I make; was it what we should like to express by saying: I should have thought the picture forced a particular use on me? How could I think that? What *did* I think? Is there such a thing as a picture, or something like a picture, that forces a particular application on us; so that my mistake lay in confusing one picture with another?—For we might also be inclined to express ourselves like this: we are at most under a psychological, not a logical, compulsion. And now it looks quite as if we knew of two kinds of case.

What was the effect of my argument? It called our attention to (reminded us of) the fact that there are other processes, besides the one we originally thought of, which we should sometimes be prepared to call "applying the picture of a cube". So our 'belief that the picture forced a particular application upon us' consisted in the fact that only the one case and no other occurred to us. "There is another solution as well" means: there is something else that I am also prepared to call a "solution"; to which I am prepared to apply such-and-such a picture, such-and-such an analogy, and so on.

What is essential is to see that the same thing can come before our minds when we hear the word and the application still be different. Has it the *same* meaning both times? I think we shall say not.

the problem of MEN as philosophers. It's all about interpretation and the problem of interpretation, and the questioning of the possible capacity of each and every one of us to properly interpret anything, an image or a text or whatever. And then on top of it all, the *parameters* of what counts as potential *variables,* of what can possibly be interpreted or questioned, becomes utterly *binary,* when really, the thing that's asinine or *fecal* or just plain shitty is the issue of the thing that's totally taken for granted in the whole equation." She pauses, having delivered this monologue wholly to the page in front of her, and turns to Lenore, shifting her haunches sideways and down onto the blanket. "What I'm trying to say is, you take that whole passage, that whole philosophical *exposition,* and what's never even *mentioned* is the assumption that the diagonal line symbolizes a hill, and symbolizes the earth, and the fucking assumption that the earth holds us UP." she pauses slightly. "That you can't fall through the earth," she finishes.

"This is a novel?" Lenore asks.

"Yes, it's a novel," she says emphatically, sighing the sigh of the unbelievably patient, backing up, allowing for context. "It's the first novel of this very important, well-received, celebrated-genius contemporary writer who is now dead (suicide), and we're all supposed to appreciate the amazing philosophical and rhetorical backflips he makes and the incredible manner in which the form of the novel itself critiques the very question of narrative or plot as, like -" and here she waves her hand in the air in a sort of circular churning-over motion trying to gesture toward the correct phrase to finish her sentence. "Like - as both inside of us and outside of us as self-

conscious beings." She looks down at the blanket, and picks up some sort of seed pod that has landed there, and rolls it between two fingers.

"But that's not the point, exactly… the thing that I'm talking about," she says, suddenly very quietly, and looks up from the seed pod into Lenore's face, seeming to search her expression, calculating her interest in/comprehension of this clearly very important and critical topic that she has proposed.

Lenore nods, ever so slightly, like, go on… I have no idea what you're talking about yet, but go on.

Sitting back a bit so that she can now use both hands to attend to the work of pulling apart all the tendrils of this seed pod, Mia begins again, still very quietly, like, if you're not going to listen to me like really LISTEN, if you don't understand why this is important I am not going to force it on you. This is a tone of voice employed by someone making a point that they have attempted to make many times before but to little avail, the voice of someone who suspects that present audience probably will *not* be the one other person to finally understand this Very Important Point, but who is willing to soldier on in order to give said person the benefit of the doubt.

"When I was in high school, we had this physics class with this monumental IDIOT, Mr. Whatever, and he was like, *not* a particularly good teacher, and we were always all getting Cs and Ds on his tests, even though- it was an honors class, and like, everyone in it was very smart. It was like he would just *fail* to *explain* fundamental concepts, and then we were all seniors and everything, and we would get him off on some tangent, and we wouldn't do

the lesson, and then suddenly there would be this scheduled test, and like half the class would be totally in the dark about whatever it was we were supposed to have learned. But we were like, all already getting our college letters back and shit, so we didn't really care, and he would eventually have to like let us have a retest because so many people did so poorly that it was clear that he had totally failed to *teach* us whatever the concept was. But every now and then there would be like something really IMPORTANT that if you asked him about it – like really ASKED him – he would like, try to explain it, but he could only ever explain things ONE WAY, and so there is like this fundamental gap in my education when it comes to basic physics."

Here she let the tendrils of the seed pod fall back onto the blanket, and began collecting them, brushing them into a little pile with the side of her hand. Lenore felt her shoulder starting to go numb under the weight of her head, but keeps still so as not to interrupt. Lenore is highly alert, in spite of her posture, and thinking very quickly about how she can possibly, whenever Mia finally comes to the point here, convince her that she, Lenore, is the one who finally understands this thing, or at least make her laugh, so that they can be in it together. The way the sun is slanting over them now, Mia's eyelashes are *actually making* a shadow of eyelashes on her right cheek, in that way that is just totally unbelievable it's so fucking beautiful, and Lenore, even more than ever now, even as she is paying attention to Mia, is continually pinching herself on the inside, thinking, this is happening right now, this is happening, this is my life.

"So there is this one concept in, like, elementary physics, which is called normal force—" she stops herself and slows down to repeat this more slowly, "*normal force* – which says that like, if you put a coffee cup on a table, the cup won't fall through the table. Which is like duh, obviously the cup doesn't fall through the table. But what's so funny about it is that in order to make physics *work*, in order to make the mathematical *equations* hold up, physicists had to like *quantify* this thing that stops the coffee cup from falling through the table. They had to invent a *number* that is the actual *force* that stops the coffee cup from falling through. And we had to do this lab where you had to deduce what this fucking number is, like a *coefficient* or something, by rolling things down a ramp, and figuring out what the number could be to account for the fact that the fucking rolling thing didn't just fall straight THROUGH the ramp, or whatever."

Here she exhales forcibly, and glances up to check that Lenore is listening, which, obviously, she is. Mia begins pinching up all the seed pod fragments and sprinkling them back into the cupped hollow of her left palm. All around them the park is throbbing with the very beingness of life. Over Mia's shoulder, Lenore watches as toddler on one of those plastic tricycles approaches and rolls by on the nearby path, causing a godawful racket, and his self-satisfied parent figures walk smugly behind him, arm in arm in utter disbelief at the idyllicness of their lives and their adorable offspring.

"So, the physicists whenever, way back when, they decided to call this thing, this coefficient, *normal force*, I guess because it is like so fucking normal that we all take it for granted. Like every other thing in all of

physics is named after some guy who quote-unquote *discovered* it. But not normal force, because it's just so fucking pervasive and normal that we apparently don't even need to *discover* it or investigate it or anything, it's just normal and the way things are, and the counter-effect to gravity or whatever. Do you see what I'm saying?" she asks, sprinkling her seedpod scraps into the grass just beyond the edge of the blanket.

"Um," says Lenore, taking the moment to shift herself off of her now painfully tingling shoulder and sit up a bit. "So what you're saying is that the physics people had to come up with a name and a number for the thing that keeps things from going through other things."

"YES!" says Mia. Her brown eyes are wide now, like okay, we're getting to the *thing*. "So like, it's as if all of physics is organized around this one principle that's totally dismissed as being too obvious to warrant consideration. The ACTUAL name of the THING is *normal* force, as if to assert that it's so totally mundane that we don't ever have to think about it once we've determined what this coefficient is."

"What is it?" asks Lenore.

"I have no fucking idea," croaks Mia, about to be annoyed. But then suddenly she's smirking and looking up at Lenore and kind of laughing. And now she actually leans forward, and puts her cheek on Lenore's stomach, and Lenore rolls back onto her back, with her elbows out and hands fold under her head, so that they right now are lying there, on this blanket, in Brooklyn, for the whole world to see, just like that. Perpendicular, and together, and talking about something real.

And for a moment they just kind of smile at each other, and Mia is so happy that Lenore is listening to her crazy pontification, and Lenore is just about to die from the way that Mia's eyes keep seeking her out, like she is the only person on the planet, who, right at this minute even matters at all. And Mia's cheek is hot on Lenore's stomach through her tank top, and Lenore's right hand just kind of lands in the spill of Mia's hair over her stomach, and the crickets (or whatever nameless insect metropolis) roar.

Mia sighs, and rolls a bit, and draws her knees up, so that she is facing the sky and the maple tree, whose shadow has fallen over them most of the way now. She puts her hands up in the air as she begins to talk again, so that she can gesture into the abyss like she's conducting some sort of symphony.

"Basically, in the end, I don't know anything about fucking physics, but it just always really got to me that all the guys who are supposed to be so fucking *smart,* and like unlocking the Secrets of The Universe or whatever, are just taking for granted this very *basic* thing, just because somebody at some point decided to call it *normal*. Like they are all such fucking tools that they totally accept the normalcy of something that is named *normal*. Yes- okay, it's true that we don't fall through the earth, but WHY? Why *don't* we fall through the earth? *Why* is that fucking coffee cup just going to stand on that table for eternity? And Mr. What's-his-fuck could never answer that why question. He just kept saying over and over how we *determined* the coefficient, like that should be enough."

Mia puts her hands down on her stomach for a moment, and glances up and back at Lenore, who, double-chin be damned, lifts her head to glance back at her. She moves

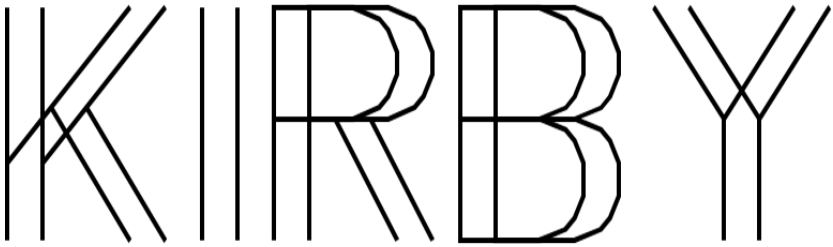
her hand across the waterfall that is Mia's hair. Mia looks back at the sky and is silent while an airplane passes overhead, and the breeze picks up.

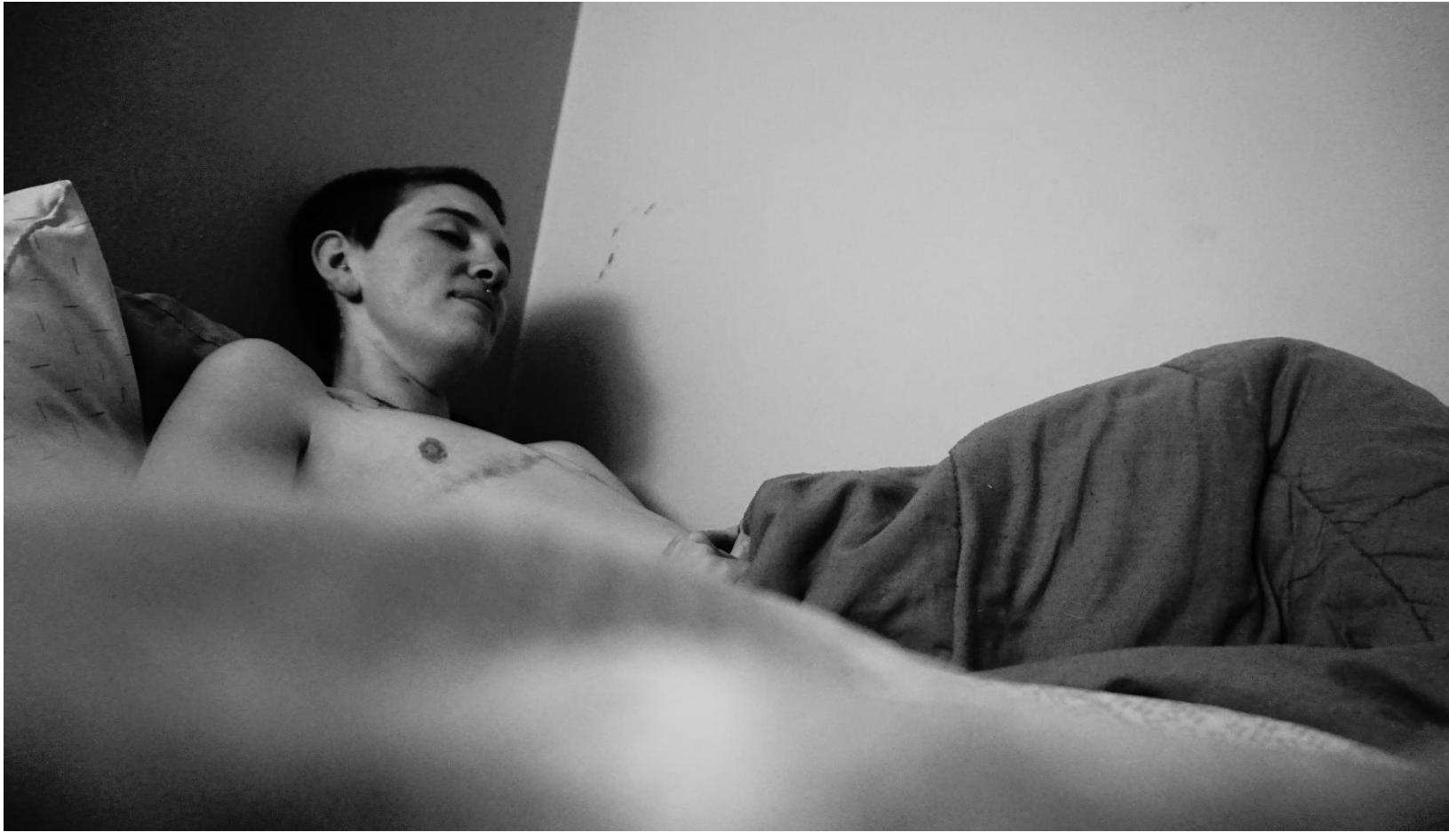
"I'm not saying that we should be falling through the earth right now. I'm just saying that reducing everything to a fucking coefficient kind of ruins the *wonder* of it all, you know? And that I don't understand why these fucking douche bags keep getting Nobel *Prizes* when they've overlooked this key element; like – like, WHY is it okay for *physicists"* and here she says physicists like it's a scathing insult, "to accept deductive reasoning as truth, AND, even WORSE, to believe in something just because it's called *normal?"* She lets her hands fall onto her forehead.

"THERE IS NO NORMAL!!!" she shouts, to the sky, and then dissolves into giggles, kind of curling up into a ball, and Lenore is laughing now too, and Mia kind of rolls over onto her stomach so that now her face is right by Lenore's.

"There is no normal," she whispers, blinking into the current that is running between them.

"There is no normal," Lenore whispers back. And they kiss, then pull back. "Those fuckers are morons," Lenore whispers, pushing the magazine away, and getting back up on her elbow to kiss this fucking crazy beautiful girl again. And the earth pushes up at them, and *something* physical is pulling their bodies toward each other, hot and tingling, and it almost hurts to want to press into each other so much. But it is the park in the daytime, and there are frisbees and babies and *moms,* and they pull back grinning sheepishly, and Mia sits up, but even now with two whole feet between them, they are both feeling it: they are moving like one thing.


KIRBY



ZACHARY BUSHNELL

LIGHT SPEED

Give up on imaging. Focus on building
densities through decorrelation.
—MS Puckette

I.

Development is nothing but a hypothesis of domination.
—Jacques Lacan

Which is why my dance is a refusal to move. Tatsumi Hijikata knew. For the final ten years of his life he choreographed, until finally he stopped even that. Only he wasn't able to commit—he moved enough to raise glass to his mouth; enough to swallow the sun and the water in it; enough to refill the cup when its diluted star was out—thus he developed liver disease. Whereas I am still completely.

Which means that, no, I do not scratch my ass—because to scratch is a development of the narrative itch: 'scratch' is an itch's antithesis; it's clear what follows. Nor do I pick the snot from my nostrils, for any intentional dislodgement therefrom is a gross metaphorical jump in the booger's arc. If the mucous goes of its own, such is its prerogative. I observe its departure with neither remorse nor gratitude; either is an evolution of mood.

II

The current theory of light presents at least three paradoxes:

1. Light's existence as both wave and particle, called wave particle duality, or, simply, duality. First observed in 1801, by way of Young's slits, an experiment in which a coherent beam of light—as in a laser—is projected through a screen cut with two vertical apertures onto a photosensitive plate: what develops is an interference pattern comprised of a plethora of dots. The interference pattern confirms the wave characteristic of light, while the millions of points that compose the image support the perspective that light also manifests as a particle—the photon. Young's slits gave rise as well to the idea of complementarity, which proposes that to detect which aperture in the screen photons 'choose' to pass through destroys the interference pattern produced on the negative; and the reverse: if one only registers the light with the photographic plate, it is impossible to say whether a photon has reached via the left or right hole. This relationship between observational intent and data is analogous to the uncertainty principle, which states, in a neat little chain of symbols ($\Delta x \Delta p \geq h/2$), that one can never accurately calculate both the position (x) and momentum (p) of a given subatomic particle. Moreover, the law proposes an inverse proportionality between the two quanta, such that, the greater precision with which one cares to determine **p**, the fuzzier is **x**, and vice versa.
2. "Light's capacity to illuminate objects of knowledge but not itself" (DeLoughrey, "Radiation Ecologies and the Wars of Light." *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, Vol. 55, No. 3, Fall 2009, p. 471), which is, as Grandy suggests, "the origin of otherness" ("The Otherness of *Light*: Einstein

and Levinas." *Postmodern Culture* 12 (2001): 47, par. 9). This means light needs matter to be recognized. كنزاا كنت أعرف لكى لق خ لقتال خ ف أعر ن أ ف أحب بت مخ فياا [I was a hidden treasure, and I desired to be known, so I created the world, that I would be] (*Hadith-i Qudsi*, from *Tafsír-iHadith-i-Kuntu Kanzan Makhfíyyan*, by Abdu'l Bah, first published in Baghdad ~1861, translated by Moojan Momen as "Commentary on the Islamic Tradition 'I Was a Hidden Treasure…'" *Bahá-i Studies Bulletin*, 3:4, 1995-12, pp. 4- 35. Reprinted at Bahá-i Library Online; last edit: 2014-01- 08 16:05 EDT. [https://www.bahai-library.com/abdulbaha_kuntu_kanzan_makhfiyyan] Mirrored with permission from http://www.momen.org/relstud/kkm.htm, updated from the original *BSB* version in 1999 and 2006. Edits, proofreading, and updates by M. Momen, A. Marshall, M. McCarron, J. Winters, A. Bolhuis, and B. Lyons in 1999, 2006, and 2013-14. [http://www.bahai-library.com/793]). Light is seen as aspects of its effects.

3. Light's universal limit: according to the math of relativity, *c* (299,792,458 metres per second) is the fastest an object can travel through ideal space (i.e., a vacuum). However, to go *c*, the object would also require zero mass, since equations show that it takes infinite energy to accelerate matter to *c*. Light speed is asymptotic. An object with zero mass has zero substance, and technically cannot exist. If light is particle and wave at once (*vide* 1), the photon either has zero mass, or light can never move as fast as itself. Thanks to the famous formula for mass-energy equivalence ($E=Mc^2$) we know that whatever has mass has energy, and the converse. So if the photon has zero mass, it has zero energy. Acceleration=Δvelocity/time=v_f-v_i/time. Objects with no energy have no velocity, and certainly have no change in their velocity; acceleration and deceleration both require the application of force (energy) to matter, and if the photon has zero mass, it is also without matter.

0/any number=0: the amount of energy necessary to push light's particle to light speed is truly infinite. But say the photon does have mass, and that it's ~10^{-18}eV/c^2 (note: this value employs the conversion posited by $E=Mc^2$, so the mass of the photon is described by a unit of energy, the electronvolt, translated by division of the square of light speed), then photons, even in a vacuum, could never travel as fast as the speed of light, given that it would take infinite energy to push that particle to c, and matter with infinite E is infinitely massive. To get even close to the speed of what the photon is meant to communicate, it would have to be huge; there would only be one, as large as the cosmos. In order to exist, the photon must eradicate all of existence.

III

Chemistry claims that color arises through the molecular absorption of photons (which explains why detection of which slit a light particle traverses destroys the interference pattern: the observational device assumes the photons observed and deteriorates the coherence of the wave): atoms absorb UV radiation and emit what they don't keep as tones. When we see green, we see the negative image of the object's energetic resonance. What is green absorbs the red and violet ranges of the electromagnetic spectrum; color registers an object's reflection.

Electrons orbit atomic nuclei in specific and predictable forms determined by their state of excitation. At lower energy levels, these orbital figures are spheres. As more energy is applied to the atom, the

orbital structures increase in complexity. The level that succeeds the sphere appears to be a 3D lemniscate (∞): symbol for infinity. When an atom receives some electromagnetic impulse it leaps from lower- to higher-order orbitals—from ○ to ∞, for instance—absorbs the ranges with which it resonates and emits the rest. Chlorophyll absorbs the red and violet fields of the spectrum, so we see leaves as green. Color is a measure of excitement.

This movement can be correlated to respiration and digestion. With breath, we take in air, assume the oxygen it carries, and supplant that with the CO2 produced from previous cycles, which we then let out. Do plants know us by the color of our breath? When we breathe, we inhale more than we need, and exhale less. So too with food: we ingest material that is composed of a variety of molecules, assume what nutrients and other properties our bodies require, are able to absorb, and then expel the rest. Does the earth know us by the hues and saturations of our urination and defecation? Is color electromagnetic excrement? When an atom absorbs radiation, electrons' leaps match the imparted frequencies; atoms retain what resonates alone, or with the compound of which they are components, and what it cannot remember and does not recognize is released. Can color be a symptom of fundamental repression? Does the beauty I see reflect some primary and inarticulable melancholy inherent to matter?

The Electric Universe model, which perceives the cosmos as a closed electromagnetic system, reinstates, in place of the vacuum required by relativity, the ætherial plenum: space not just filled with but made of and replete with matter—neutrinos. Energy is matter in motion with respect to the rest of the universe. Matter is a measure of the distortion, instead of acceleration, of subatomic particles in response to the electric forces from all other matter. Light, the transverse electrical disturbance (wave) in the æther. Æther is a dialectric medium. The wave carries energy through the medium, which is absorbed by the first atom in instantaneous resonance with the atom that transmits the signal. This gives the appearance that a photon has moved between a sender and a receiver—appearance. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mINsiT700HE)

Light is a message. If color is the spectral emission atoms produce as they accept and release a measure of light—light the transmission of waves of charge—light is always-already nothing but a field of color an electron leaps to receive. Atoms bear what they can and resolve to the limit of their capacity, then pass the remainder on. In the case of neutrinos (ν)—which are infinitely light and traverse all matter in the cosmos—they hold almost nothing, and transmit light signal as near to complete as possible, but never entire; since these ghosts are existent, so have mass, neutrinos keep infinitesimal quanta of

the message with which they are charged. The notion of pure light is idealistic. Waterwheels turn, their wood saturated with the water that is their cause. If Olympic runners slow, stop, or run too fast, their torch could be extinguished. The buckets we pass before the flames, paradoxically brimming with fire.

V

Pathetic; yet these are consolations that attend the dance of momentum. I keep the lights out. In preparation, I purchased those special dense curtains. At first, I practiced even the curtailment of breath, however these sessions ended in unconscious collapse, wherein I would begin to breathe again, and I realized that to perfect asphyxiation constitutes development. The only recourse against the development of frustration was to accept such redundant corporeal motivations and assimilate them into the choreography of my performance. To avoid the development of dehydration, occasional water; against advancements of disease, green tea; to stave off starvation, eat. Progress=entropy: dance homeorhetic.


MATTHEW
BLISS

“THE NOISE IN THIS SIGNAL”



4.5 by 3 by 1 inches
brass, copper, solder, oil paint, sanded window glass

I make objects that fall under an ordinary idea of art. I have made peace with handmaking one-off sculptures and works-on-paper. I’ve heard of commodity fetishism. I’ve heard of the trendy dualities; form & content, theory & practice.

In my mind I don’t make representational images.

My objects are formed out of shapes lines textures tones transparencies opacities. Glass metal pigment. Paper pencil watercolor ink. Material physical stuff.

I use painterly illusion as well as built form; effects that are commonly perceived as motion and dimension, not flat not static.

I use disorienting scale; little things that feel small, finely done in parts, roughly in others.

Combined these physicalities give me feelings and thoughts.

People have told me the sculptures remind them of things out in the world. Little building wannabes, walls doors windows. Or skies. Or body parts. Or ancient artifacts. They remind me of stuff too.

But mostly I think of them as if music with enigmatic lyrics, naming titles that I have made up after the physical object is done.

Seeing a made object as an image seems a separate concept. One that I have little desire to talk about.


ITZA
VILABOY

UNTITLED

He can't sleep. No faith in anything should last more than an hour. With slight revision, he might have the shortest running work in the Chicken Soup for the Soul series: no faith in anything should last more than two minutes. This, most curiously, happens to be the average time of human coitus. The image is a coward.

He turns on his side. She left behind her mother-of-pearl hand comb. The nacreous handle not unlike the one he saw on a pistol once while looking for a screwdriver in his father's toolbox. He picks it up and immediately thought of stealing it but he left it where he found it after running a few shorts in his mind. The hand comb shimmers in the moonlight. He thinks of a blue crab scuttling in the clear water of a tide pool.

His medical gadgetry and a couple of candy wrappers resemble the washed-up trash you get instead. He took her blood sugar just for fun. The thought was pretty to him: her blood sugar 96 to his 200. Would that impress her?

O the grand idea that I'm a fleshy anachronism born into a conscious sensibility. How much more sense the world seems to make if all a sudden I imagine it fashioned in the image of what lies beneath Britney Spears's fluttering eyelid than in the arid breath of an ageless grey god. I'm

an archaeological site and all these young girls have dust brushes and clam-digging khakis.

A kind of intoxication rises out of this dim memory. I sometimes wonder if whether everything we experience may not be fragmented pieces torn from some ancient entity that was once put together wrong. I should stop talking about tits and cry a little. I have no idea what she's reading. The night I pulled her into the linen closet and shut the door behind us. The things she has the nerve to tell me.

Last spring a beauty mark blossomed on the arch of my instep, see?
These funny marks on my belly resemble tea stains.
Do you think my laugh has a lot of bass?
Do you think Gide used pick-up lines?


GRANT
LEUNIING

THIS PICTURE IS REPRESENTATIVE.
THIS PHOTOGRAPH IS REAL.

“THIS PICTURE IS REPRESENTATIVE.”
“THIS PHOTOGRAPH IS REAL.”

What a weird thing to say about an image.

There feels no need to describe the content, to relate it, to transfer it into words, to generate: “They play golf near a forest fire.”

We only need to say “Is that real?” and “Yes, it is real.” To say “This is our world” and “This is a picture of our world”.

Representation pretends to be both absolutely banal, the everyday reality of all things, and radically hierarchical. Every photograph is a photograph of our world, and yet some are better. Being-better, they are *more*, that is, more photographic or more representative or more clear. Whatever the meter, a good photograph is *more* than a bad photograph. A bad photograph is less, is something partial. It is “not representative”. Meaning “not representative of the whole”.

What is *the whole?* Looking at this representative picture, the whole is: “They play golf near a forest fire.” Not quite. The whole is the extension of the two elements; the fire, riding the chain of signification along to earthquakes and hurricanes and environmental devastation,

and on to generalizable systemic catastrophe, and the golf played, the frivolity, the game, the obscene waste of resources in order for a very few to cordon off a false, pictorial nature, that they have destroyed the real one in the process. That the fire is in the playing, and the system is in the fire. Not quite. There is some of the terror of simulation in the photograph but these chains of meaning take time and a specific style of attention. The chains can be run through differently from different locations, and there can be some stumble block or idiosyncrasy at any point along the route. Presumably you recognized the chain that I described, but you would have done so differently, maybe in a different order, maybe I did not extend it far enough.

What we are forced to see, what arises as generally *recognizable*, that which has some autonomy from the particulars of our signifying, is the Cut, between the foreground and the background. This cut means, is, a failure of reciprocation. It is a lack of being in-common. Whatever is, wherever the cause of both lies, whatever analysis can add, this image is a background which is burning and a foreground which is unburnt and unbothered by the burning. That is the whole. The cut between.

So what is the picture then? Not accidentally, it is a direct copy of another picture, again representative, again enginned by the failure of reciprocation between a foreground and a background.

This prior picture is of a group of young people casually enjoying 9/11.

These people have protested for years that they were soberly discussing the events in sadness and fear. Was the photograph not representative because it did not show what was happening there? Or was it representative, was it "This is", because it showed the cut that was known but invisible, the cut between events and their subjects, between us and the terror that attaches to us?

Then what is in the first picture? A fire. A golf course. A game. Men. The fire is big, battering the frame, it is the world that is on fire. The world burns. A dash of "The Dark Knight", *some men just want to see the world burn*, but the core of the cliché is more direct. They are not swimming in the foreground, or running or skiing, something with a verb like "go", they are golfing, something with a verb like "play". They are playing while the world burns. A crown of Nero's nettles to fit around their visors.

This rooting cliché is a problem. This photograph appears to be visual. It seems to replay an earlier visual depiction, but we are bewilderingly back among the words. "Nero played the fiddle while Rome Burned". The cliché exists in life, we have seen it. And having seen it, it bursts into our conceptual world with a speed of recognition that is breathtaking. It is representative. How?

Because it is words. Images do not have a settled nature. They show, but they show what is absent. By the time the photograph is seen, the men on the golf course are asleep in their beds. This isn't a mystery cult. It's the way the photograph is supposed to work. But it means that

photographs do not transmit a stable circumstance, they show a fragility that has already burst. A photograph is said to “fix” or “capture”, but compared to words, it fixes nothing, because it is too attached to the world, to a roaring fire, already burnt out or passed on. A photograph exists because it was “here”, the light fixing to the plate was passed directly from the event to the depiction, it says “I was here”, but embeds its own retort “if that was so meaningful, then we must note that you are no longer here, that here has become a there, and you have become me, who was never anywhere near”. But a word attaches only to itself and other words, “I mean this,” it embeds its own validation, its judge inside itself.

“Fire”, in your mouth, moves to my mouth, “Fire”. In speaking either to each other, we also whisper “Both are fires the same”. A word means itself already.

Itself, it means itself. Does the word do the work that the photograph pretends? No. Meaning is a con-man, a trick that works by tone and context, not by reference and content. It works aesthetically, it works by sparking a small world, where it reaches around to the other side and touches its own reverse, changing the angle of the light in its own sphere, and making every object and eye shine by its particular spark. A word does this because it is self-conscious. It is not aware or alive or minded, a self-conscious word has started a circuit where its validation is itself.

Photography’s insistence that it can touch the world itself dooms it to falter, it submits to a sphere of reference beyond itself, so it relies on words. It is a

backdoor to an authority. This authority, unlike the world of reference, is valid because it is a depiction. The old trick still works. If a picture doesn't show the world, it at least shows itself.

This is why we say, "This is our world. This represents our world. This is what the world is like today." Because Words recognize a subservient, obsequious follower. The picture submits to the order of words and, because it is self-conscious, it says nothing other than "This is what things are." This is what things are. It represents that there is a *this* and there is a *what* and there is a *things are* and there is an arrow passing through these, a direction of growth and movement. There is a background affected by the foreground and not the other way around. There an arrow of time and space, the blithe playground of the past cannot see the inferno of the future.

This is where we need to intervene. Representation and self-consciousness are not released to themselves, in reality. They are screens which announce that their backdrop has been stabilized, that the self in question, photographic or linguistic, will last the length of the message transmission. The fire is gone, but we feel remains everywhere, because of the sense that representations must *convey* or *transmit*.

If the picture conveys, it is not because it shaves the wooly edges off, smooths a careful bullet that fits down the barrel to travel farther and harder. It is because the rot of the gun going off deafens us to anything else.

Representation works by assuming the stability of the represented. It posits a self to be sent and then insists

this circuit is more meaningful for appearing sealed. But it is still a way of making a world. It is a world of sending, of transmitting, of conveying, and in this world, there need to be solidities for the sending to make sense. This is not the only world, and this self, this circuit, is an unnecessary guarantee. It is neither necessarily this self, nor does it need this self to judge, in self-conscious maturity, that is final and adequate. Images do not need to be parasitic upon the clumsy hollows of self-consciousness, of auto-definition and recognition. These are not illegitimate powers or techniques, but they are specific to transmission. They answer the question, how does it move, how does it travel?

Look at the picture again. The foreground is space, open, the field, the wideness of a green, the background is a coming, a future, a time. Space toward time. Travel. What goes unsaid, what does not fit in saying, what cannot be sent or thrown, are all the other arrows, directions, sentiments and suggestions. Not the self-spinning trajectory which spits off hotlight flares, grounds itself to spin forward, but the murky moment, the unstables said adequately sent. Because we are still circuitous, still too busy talking-

(we know we should stop but we are not ready)

because we are still circuitous, it is the other direction. Time first. What is this condensation? What is the ricochet of things that starts to slow them into a place, that gives the whiff of the stable to be stolen, not the open held open but the act of prying open a space, where angles start to move in the same direction and at the same

speed? If we stop seeing, what does it sound like, how do our hands buzz and legs tremor, where does it hurt to see our world curdled and wrenched out of place and sent elsewhere to work?

Here we can be charged with hypocrisy. If images are submissive to the regime of word self-consciousness, isn't the problem that they aren't actually self-conscious? That we need more self-consciousness, more expansive and three-dimensional styles of self-adequacy? Is the problem that the world of transmission isn't *represented* by the style of the photograph, and that we are again in falsity? Immediately we have to reply that hypocrisy is only a worry for words, that they do not say flatly and samely to each of us flattened and be-samed.

But a problem badly phrased (which is to say phrased) can still be a problem. Representation makes a world. There's no pretending it doesn't, and without the delegitimization of identity there is no saying that its world is lesser for not being what it says it is. Critique also makes a kind of world, a spectral world, puffy and gnomonic, where the dream of the roiling undifferentiated flux is called on, where romance says if only we stop getting it wrong, we might let the world speak for the first time to get it right. And art-making is another style of world, where sense will suss itself, where the lines of looks-right get limned into tentative shapes, and we play as if through their more shocking angles we can hear another world being born.

But these are only three, and for being only three they are nearly worn out and their virtues are collapsing. If

not transmitting, if not pruning, if not attending to the sound of the new stability, there are other routes to take before they become routine.

Photography is representative because it is self-conscious. Photography can be good or bad. That is, more photographic and less photographic. That is, more representative and less representative. That is, it can generate both the sense of an arrow to an elsewhere and the sense of satisfaction that the elsewhere has nothing to add. The boldest pictures are submissive to language, to a self that is not their own. We call photographs "This" or "This is the world today" because we can see that is what it is really saying. Pushing through the chains of meaning, the syntax, through the aesthetics, through the reference and representation, all it says, again and again, is "I am representing, Recognize me."

This is the circuit of words. Perhaps pictures have a different circuit to run, more adequate to their self. Perhaps better, there are ways to be besides rotation, perhaps better, there is more to life than pointing.

WHAT DOES THIS PICTURE REPRESENT?

