

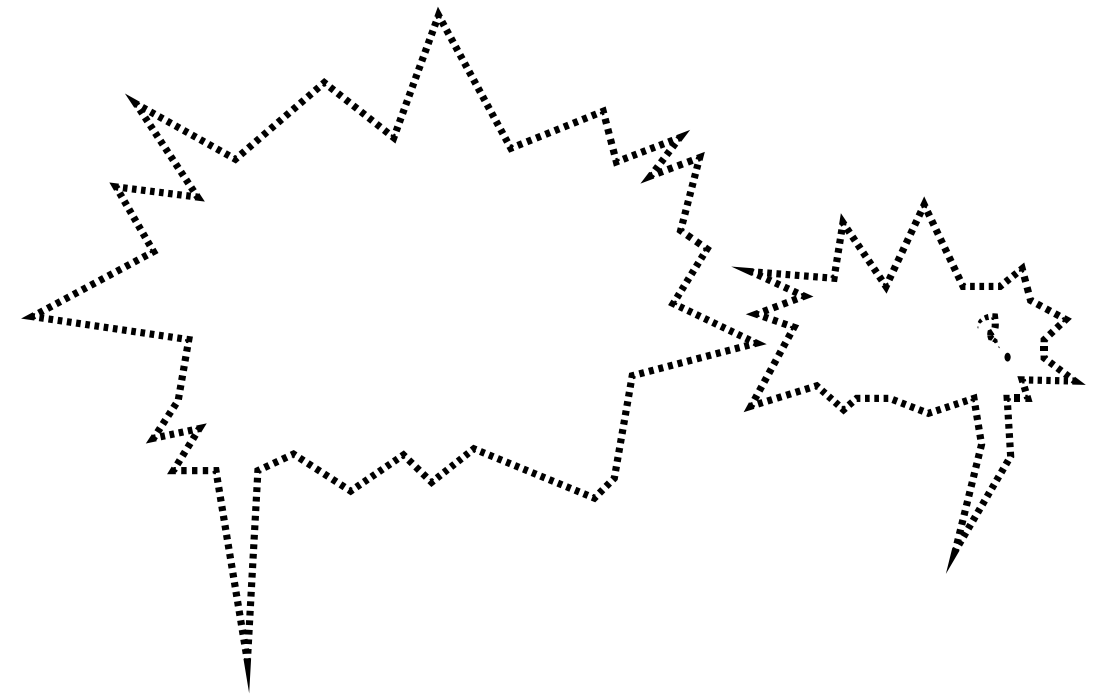
MAN CHILD  
YOUNG GIRL  
GIRL CHILD  
MAN GIRL



Anicka Yi Jordan Lord Lise Soskolne Carissa Rodriguez

# The Politics

# of Friendship



1 Sept — 10 Nov, 2013

STUDIOLO

We were going to make a magazine about “us” a long time ago. Bronze our text messages, re-interpret all the gifts we’d ever given each other in Japanese paper, scan our matching torn sleeves. The magazine idea, like so many other ideas, slipped into foam. It didn’t materialize, but that didn’t matter. We were inside our pleasure, which was more important than a few global applications of our private joke. You know our need shared in common; it’s inside here with us, with a wink to that other joke we’re supposed to be in on, the joke about friendship. Our humor is, well, funny.

So much that happens happens in small ways with half-parted lips. We came to be friends through a “certain strangeness”. That strangeness between us was the indistinct mash that, over time, distilled into warm liquor, a liquor whose burn in the throat was a timeless unofficial truth about us. But then what’s the warmth in the belly after the burn?

Our capacity for attention to our strangeness got spent, the more we paid attention to our indecision about us. As a result, my memory has turned mossy, less vascular. Honestly, I’m torn between protecting this shell of cozy strangeness by not flattening out into puffy disquisitions and endlessly re-tracing contours of our friendship’s leftover traits. We, like all good friends, were compromised from the start. How is one to understand the responsibility around friendship that will never be present? Nowadays, everyone is friendable. How did we lose that which wasn’t ours to begin with? Just a misreading of a tacit agreement on the terms and conditions. It’s just a check box on your screen, check it off and click NEXT.

I have come here to retrieve something, something I have no proof of, something lost in friendship. Our picture slips into foam. I said I am awkward. You said you delete yourself. Getting at this is a queasy ordeal. I still like you because it’s all I can do.

Somewhere along the way we started producing ourselves. The inevitable being that our friendships too went into production. Always on time and never over budget. Our capacity for attention to our strangeness got spent and we paid more attention to our own indecision about us. Perhaps we merely forgot that once sizzling knowledge of a need shared in common.

How many friends can we have at a time? What happens to the friends you no longer see or hear? Where are they? Where do you put them? When do you stop knowing them? Maybe the verb “to know (someone)” has become insufficient to the stratification of knowing. We have friendships built on knowledge, but more and more they’re built on information. Can we know someone whose scent we’ve never smelled? Where has the threshold of knowing shifted to?

How many friends can one really have? An old friend told me the friend who helps you move is a friend for life. I was helping myself to some boxes, up and down some stairs. Let’s just lighten the load. We let go of old imperfections, meager dimensions, enabling companionable ills. So far, summer feels less like a season, a distinct year, a certain hairstyle. No, it’s more like a sound, trotting, carving, thatching. It’s a good year for faces. Box it all up. Is this an email?

Friends by collision vs. friends of collusion. The being-there of friendship is the most disposable burden.

What about trust and the call and response to a responsibility that makes up the most basic responsibility in friendship? Namely responsiveness. The responsibility correlates with understanding the hearing with responding. The answering is answering for oneself but also forwarded to an other. The self-revoking friend who cannot answer welters in setbacks.

What is collaboration? Friendship and a common imaginary. But it’s a dance we do more by ourselves these days. But even so, our private joke—with a wink to that other joke we were supposed to be in on—will always get at least a chuckle out of us.



FOR FRIENDETTA

YOU CAN CALL ME F

Park McArthur

Over one of the oldest meals (dumplings in broth) I described to my friend one of the oldest feelings (that one's time and attention is sinking into a pool of insatiable young men—a pool without a floor, whose depth is inversely proportionate to the talents one thinks of as one's own). One can see the talents one thinks of as one's own more clearly the more time one spends in the company of creative koi-men. The talents one thinks of as one's own vis-à-vis a video one edits with him, vis-à-vis a statement one writes with him, vis-à-vis an exhibition one critiques with him, vis-à-vis his exhibition. In pools of koi, in bowls of dumplings, in time, one chooses to release one's talents, or, one doesn't. Or, one doesn't and one's talents rise to the pool's surface, floating: a layer of oil to be skimmed off.

And don't you like keeping company with koi, my friend asks, their hungry approach? Or, put another way, I guess, talent mixed with water has properties all its own—for sinking and for floating both.

Matt Sheridan Smith (opposite)



Mal Ahern  
Friend Time

[1] My friend talks to me in fits and starts. Sometimes her face freezes, or turns to pixels; sometimes she responds to questions I posed a minute ago. “There’s a delay,” I say, not knowing whether or not she hears me.

It feels more accurate to say that I don’t know *when* she hears me. I’m watching a version of her from the very recent past; at this moment, she might watch me as I announce, bewildered: “There’s a delay.” Time’s come unstuck. I get the strange sensation that she could be watching my *future*, that she might have access to some part of the video chat that hasn’t loaded for me yet.

Like every communication medium, the video chat has its own ‘mediacy,’ its particular way of corrupting the flow of time. Immediacies, like happy families, are all alike—and again like happy families, they are probably mythical.

[2] So much of friendship involves being together in time: it requires a kind of mutual responsiveness to create a little world together. A particular rhythm of laughs and stammers and sighs, developed over years, can make the process of communication feel—mythically—immediate. Years gain their own rhythm, two: of presences and absences, of life events.

But more and more, friendship incorporates the delay. We come together and apart in unpredictable, arhythmic patterns as labor in all sectors becomes more migratory, short-term, and precarious. More stable wage-labor sometimes requires exhausting displays of false camaraderie, or conditions hostile to the freely formed friendship. After a long journey, or simply a ten-hour work day, one can practically collapse into a friend: “Oh, thank god,” I heard one say to another at an after-work rendez-vous, “a real person!”

It’s old news that time changes. Feudal time, Taylorist time, neoliberal time, postcolonial time. So many philosophers have shown us how these temporalities channel and control our energies: how time makes subjects of us all.

[3] But we think too often of subjects as elements both homogenized and atomized, rather than complex beings in diverse relation with one another. They—we—are also friends. We find ways to be with one another in time. Philosophers should study friends, study those ways they manage to be together in time while time itself is structured by splitting and delay. The friend provides a glimpse of the utopian—the knowledge that life ought to, and can, be different. And friendship can bear so much of our faith that it allows us to see a delay as a glimpse into the future.

Moira Weigel  
Notes for an Essay on Friendship

[1] In China, where I am, the immigration halls at the international airports are lined with signs quoting Confucius. It is a *delight*, they say, *to welcome friends from afar*. This line got quoted a lot at the Olympics, too. I don’t know much about Confucius, but I do know that most of my Chinese friends are skeptical of how the Party invokes him. For “friends,” they would quip, here read “money.”

Still, the phrase sticks with me. What is a friend from afar? Or: How does she become one? In an age where new media have fragmented the “public sphere,” and made it easier to found communities over dispersed spaces, does an attitude, an *angle of address* suffice to turn a stranger into a friend? And how would such a friend run an airport?

[2] The Man Child: “I can’t be friends with girls I’m attracted to.”

[3] All of our words for desire have to do with distance. Or, rather, with *longing* to cross it. Every teenager or twenty-something must learn at least once, the hard way, that you cannot, by definition, want what you (fully) possess.

Does friendship bear up better under separation? Fact: it makes me less sad to Skype with Mal than with my beloved.

[4] I miss my books. In Beijing, I read an online encyclopedia, which reminds me that Ancient Greek had three words for love.

*agape*: love that creates value in its object\*  
*eros*: love that desires the object  
*philia*: love for friends

\*e.g., of God, for Creation

“For this reason, love and friendship often get lumped together as a single topic; nonetheless, there are significant differences between them. As understood here, love is an *evaluative attitude* directed at particular persons as such, an attitude which we might take towards someone whether or not that love is reciprocated and whether or not we have an established relationship with her. Friendship, by contrast, is essentially a kind of *relationship* grounded in a particular kind of special concern each has for the other as the person she is; and whereas we must make conceptual room for the idea of unrequited love, unrequited friendship is senseless.”

**N. B.** The kind of love of knowledge that **PHILOSOPHY** is love for friends.

Subject: Re: Unstable Talismanic Rendering

Dear, dear, dear my dear;

I made a concession at the end of my last letter and I want to try and return to it. I know it’s an impossible task, but I should learn to trust you even when I am unsure of myself. Maybe in some ways I also need to learn to trust myself first. I guess I wasn’t ready to really face up to what your letter meant, but now that the narrative has played out as it has, I can grapple with what I feel now in retrospect. I was watching a film soon after (about three weeks ago) and the character on screen lounged around helplessly eating badly and writing a letter. Words seems to come to her so easily and soon pages and pages were filled, only to be crossed away and put back again. Her time was my time, except I had no words. Writing even these few sentences has been difficult: To Spell Out Ones Own Name / To Put A Spell On / The New Spelling / Hexenhammer.

She goes out on a journey to meet someone and they have sex. It is a long scene with no cuts except the one they were making so as to break apart easily at the end. She leaves. It wasn’t easy though I am sure. The film just ends so I never know. I haven’t gotten that far yet and maybe never will. I don’t like to see myself in movies, or I guess I can’t really. An anecdote from the past two weeks. I am sitting in a very large room (a loft space used as a gallery) and sun is streaming into the space. It is beautiful there and one soulless individual stands alone in the corner. Whenever someone comes in, they inch hesitantly towards him. Only half of his back is visible, the other half obscured by a column. Faced with this situation, one can only relate by speculating on the real estate fantasy that they just stepped into. I don’t blame them, the time it takes to walk to this person can bore you, but what can be boring about a space so big in the city? Its potential was never revealed until it was empty. I am in the other corner reading a book or staring blankly at a screen.

The Left Over / The Left Lover

I downloaded a movie after reading about it from the internet. Its about flags and claiming spaces. The story revolves around gay men gentrifying a black neighborhood in Columbus, Ohio. The film was made by Linda Goode Bryant and Laura Poitras. Scenes of gay white men renovating dilapidated (yet charming) houses are intercut with individuals in the black community as they try and meet zoning requirements they are simply unable to afford. Dinner time conversations in both spaces revolve around political events aired on the news; there was at that time a debate around opening up more project based housing in the community. Ignorant and sometimes unintentionally racist and homophobic remarks were thrown about between the communities, while being shown simultaneously with the vitriolic hate that a conservative Christian organization screams at the gay community. How do we create a space for interconnected stories that doesn’t hierarchize or fetishize the voices of the most oppressed?

Do You Sometimes Have A Cut In Your Mouth?  
Yes.  
Do You Play With It?  
Yes.  
Does It Hurt?  
Yes.  
When It Hurts Do You Still Play With It?  
Yes.

The legalization of gay marriage has just passed in the U.S. We must not forget that white privilege and male hegemony can exist within a body that has itself been discriminated against.

All Ready Maid

In the past two weeks I have felt trapped within the narrative of someone else. I am trying to wrest that back, locating my desire at the same time. The narrator often forgets their own body while constructing others’ bodies. I am uncomfortable with this situation, am I doing alright? This needs to be the place in which my desire flows forth or else it might never be heard, trapped as a subplot to someone else’s story. I am searching, but where is my voice? I must not forget that in writing this down I am forever altering what we once had. Forgetting can be an act of healing when one does not hold on too dearly to remembrances of the past or even projections into the future.

Ps, I feel like I know her but sometimes my arms bend back

One last story. Allergies are starting up for me again. In the middle of Summer! What could I be allergic to, I don’t know, but I guess I always joke about being allergic to everything. I am using a stick of ammonia to cover up the itches I am getting (probably just mosquitos, but it feels like allergies especially since it is happening at the same time or I am allergic to mosquitos too.) I can’t tell if the ammonia is working or if I am gaining relief by scratching my bites with the smooth, round tip of its dispenser. Every time I apply the chemical I wonder what the sensation of smelling it is like. I can remember it’s unpleasant, but it gives me a rush every time I reel from inhaling it. Any attempt to cough out a description of the feeling ends with a loss of words when my body doesn’t react that way. It feels both familiar and new at the same time.

I Wonder How Long It Would Take To...

Love, love, love for always  
bye, bye, BYE:  
K/B/D/C



### Flag Of Friendship

I'll meet you at half mast  
I'll fly you at sunset  
The black flag  
The black flag of friendship  
I'll race you to the corner  
I'll bring myself to tears  
Tin foil black flag  
Ten people to be a foil for  
Flying the black flag  
Flying the black flag of friendship

“Still, for one moment, there was a sense of things having been blown apart, of space, of irresponsibility as the ball soared high, and they followed it and lost it and saw the one star and the draped branches. In the failing light they all looked sharp-edged and ethereal and divided by great distances.” (Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, 73).

Suspension—indeterminacy of space and time, the undecidability of a moment—is a moving state (immobilized). Moving, in both the movement of a feeling and getting from one point to another. The suspense of function, to be taken out of commission, usefulness, responsibility. Being carried away—a kind of captivity (in solitude)—one wonders if there is the possibility of a decision. Love recalls this initial suspense.

One travels the movement—suspended between two states—on the brink of a decision. Before the light falls or the wave breaks. This suspension is embodied, sinking into oneself, as the feeling rises, and chance is thrown up into the air. This is the weight of time, weightless and falling in the light of a thing “blown apart.” All of the concreteness of the world residing in a perhaps. In this moment, the decision holds inside it the moment of the undecidable—the decision of loving.

We call a friend to process the way things have fallen, to make the decision. But even as we call him, the friend is always called into question, remembering the undecidability of time, growing apart.

*What makes me know if I can trust you? Is it that you have chosen me? How do I know that you are decisively here and not somewhere else, in another place of thinking, feeling, being? Perhaps, I live here with you, but you are without me.*

In his undecidability, does the man-child ask himself these questions or merely provoke them? The man-child, draped in distance, is a great listener. You tell him your problems, speaking of your feelings, your position, your longing to be other, to span the distance between you and him. Is he listening or trying to decide how what you say applies to him?

There are two sides to all of this—the lover and the beloved, the man-child and the ones who love him. On either side, there are crossings and double-crossings. The beloved becomes the lover, as he learns to love being loved. The man-child becomes the man-child by not knowing how to love anyone but himself. The ones who love him sometimes become the man-child. Somewhere in-between is another figure—neither lover nor beloved—who loves loving.

“To want to be known, to refer to self in view of self, to receive the good rather than to do it or to give it—this is an altogether different thing from knowing. Knowing knows in order to do and to love, for love and in view of doing and loving...” (Jacques Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*, 12).

The man-child puts off knowing, as a way of accepting love. He plays the beloved, not knowing quite how to be loved, not knowing how not to be. This *not knowing* is a different kind of suspension than that of loving. The man-child suffers in suspense—cutting himself in half by a double-edged sword—on the one hand, the thing that makes him

what he is—his indeterminacy, the unknowable distance between himself and others—gives him pleasure. On the other, it is the thing that causes him suffering—that renders him immobile—the idea that his privilege is responsible for the suffering of others. This responsibility to which he is perpetually called is perpetually deferred, given to him and yet given up on. The man-child knows and yet...He feels guilty. Or, rather, is it me (being the man-child?)

I-as-the-man-child embody the present as a way of eluding it, the not-enough-time of suspended friendship. The time that I have for you is the in-between of my other preoccupations, the in-between of my suffering. In terms of truth—being *there*—I render my relationships non-functional. In terms of work, I render my friendships as pure functions of myself.

Naming (oneself?) the man-child becomes a way of mourning him—getting over him—knowing he is gone (remembering him all too well). Before that decision, before he’s been named, there’s his unknowability, the loving of his sharp-edged, ethereal distance. The memory of who I have been; *me before you*. The decision to name him becomes like trying to lift the veil on a hooded figure under which there is nothing but the passage of time. Or “like trying to change your mind / once you’re already flying through the free fall.”

A withdrawal, a taking leave of time—loss—which one knows all too well,

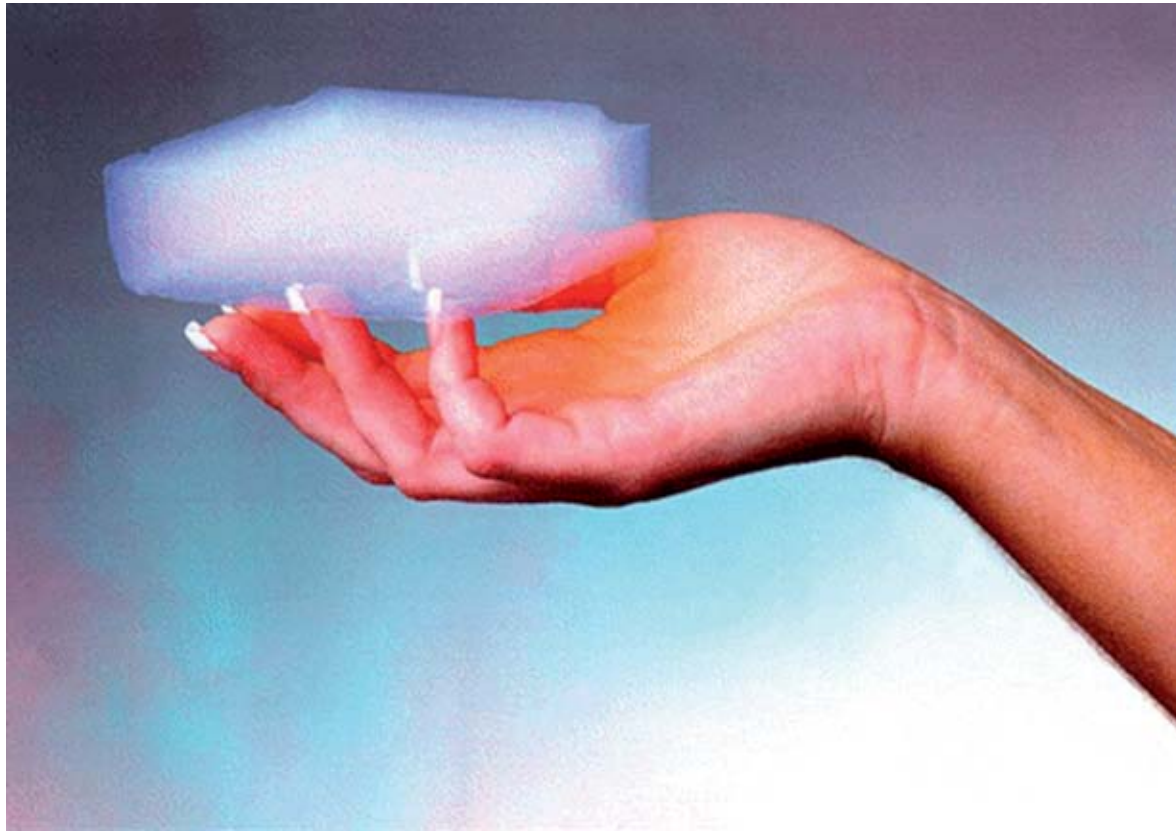
“when what is human in man folds into the hem of the ‘all too’ of Nietzsche’s title [*Human All Too Human*], in the hollows of its vague [*vague*] modality, trembling and inscrutable but all the more forceful [*déferlante*, as in ‘*une vague déferlante*’ (a breaking wave)]. The irresistible wave welling up and falling back on itself” (Derrida, 28).

An *all too well*—vague and tangible—flooding the memory, Taylor Swift tells her story in reverse, “It was rare. I was there. I remember it / All too well.”

In the breaking wave of the name that one mourns, in order to leave it behind, the truth of the relationship will have been tossed up into the air—called to respond—*do you love me, have we been truthful, will we remember one another past the point of what we have been, toward what we might be?* At the center of this movement, the topmost point of the free fall, there is a shift in gravity; the grievance in memory toward the future.

Instead of the apocalypse or the feminization of the world that the man-child perpetually fears or defers, we wait for the friend—the love of loving—an invagination of certainty, truth, love, “an internal pocket larger than the whole.” As Derrida writes in the *Law of Genre* (in French, synonymous with gender), “the outcome of this division and this abounding remains as singular as it is limitless” (55). This is the revolution of a falling light, turning over in the wake of our call—our responsibility—our love for one another.





**Marina Vishmidt**  
*Voici*



Lisa Jo



Respektionen  
müssen eingeführt  
werden



Viola Yesiltaç

Jacob Wren

I want to embody a radical politics (in the form of art) but mainly fail, come up against my own limitations, my inability to change (or change enough), my ambition, or simply the fear that I won't survive. I don't know if a straight white male (I rarely think of myself in these terms, but understand when others do) can be a feminist in any meaningful sense. But I am certain he should not go around proclaiming himself to be. Raised in this society, in this culture, we have so much sexism, racism, capitalism within us. One can and must be anti-sexist, anti-homophobic, anti-racist, etc., provided one is fighting against these things within oneself as well. One can also be a jerk.

My alienation is part of capitalism and I am more alienated than ever. (I'm noticeably bad at solidarity.) My loneliness is a part of capitalism and I'm lonelier than ever. (A feeling of connection constantly eludes me.) But should the Man-Child seek therapy? Why does therapy seem beside the point? So much therapy seems to work towards functioning more productively within the existing rules. Are there therapists teaching men to renounce a degree of their power, hand it over to the women around them? Does anyone with power or privilege honestly want to have less?

It is two years ago. I am in a museum in Graz, watching a video in which the artist Antje Majewski interviews Alejandro Jodorowsky, who is saying that he wonders if there can be such a thing as 'secular grace' (since historically grace was always connected to religion). He is speaking about how every Wednesday he goes to a café and reads the Tarot cards of anyone who wishes to join him. In doing so, he 'imitates' sanctity ("...being at other people's service. Without judging them.") In real life, he is full of anxiety, can be cranky, behave badly, but for one day per week, reading the cards of complete strangers, he tries to be a good person. "I imitate. But it's a good imitation, because there are people who imitate being an assassin. In reality, I think everyone imitates something. Authenticity is difficult to find."

I would never write anything as hateful or sexist as *Preliminary Materials for a Theory of the Young-Girl*. But this is no time to let oneself off the hook. As soon as you start speaking or writing about politics, you open yourself up to every kind of accusation and error. Expectations of purity or perfection lead endlessly in circles. So we must make (honest) mistakes, at times apologize, accept apologies or choose not to, change our minds, listen to what others say and (sometimes, genuinely) realize they are right. Moira Weigel and Mal Ahern are clearly right. In this time when even the best ideas lack praxis, the most painful questions are scattered in the future, and every honest man knows the future has not quite begun.

I re-read my last sentence, see I should change it. I have posited yet another future endlessly deferred, opened the door to further indecision. Weigel and Ahern propose something more concrete and want it now: more imagination, more courage, clarity, organization, a praise song and a program.

On Mon, Aug 12, 2013 at 3:00 PM, Shelly Silver <info@5lessonsmovie.com> wrote:

dear jordan:

here are some thoughts. glad the article ignited a fire, a telling sign. some thoughts to your thoughts.

the man-child as symptom, identification, diagnostic tool, weapon, story. who are we dancing with?

we’re in love w/the man-child in ourselves because of the lack of responsibility/high level of denial it grants. super sexy and easy. at this moment where politically/ environmentally the shit is hitting the fan, even if we acknowledge that this is happening, no one really wants to change the way we live (even to the point of not ditching facebook or an iphone, even as the government is all over our privacy, even after we hear that apple has a patent that will shut down our ability to use it as a camera at a demonstration). not to mention our lifestyle and identification w/that lifestyle all the STUFF we buy and use. the man-child allows for a mix of denial, distancing, and lack of responsibility. (cue the hipster song)

that we’re exploited, this is so. that we’re all exploiting, well, this is where the circularity comes in, in that none of us want to give up on our advantage. we’ve all bought in. the art world has bought in, in a surprisingly big way. and nothing succeeds like success. till it doesn’t.

at a certain point i got disappointed by the left, because of its visible and invisible sexism, because of its tendency to give up (understandable in the face of endless struggle), as well as its structural conservatism and rigidity that at times resembles the right. i’m talking here of everything from identity politics and being told what i can and can’t talk about to its historic rejection of desire in general and especially non-hetero desire.

but disappointment and complaining doesn’t cut it, as it’s just an excuse for not taking responsibility. it’s just an excuse for doing fuck-all.

i made a film a few years ago called ‘in complete world’ around this idea of civic responsibility and desire (if nothing is asked of you, you don’t respond). responsibility also entails a recognition of those around us, a recognition of another, a community, a shared bond.

what needs to be done? we need to rewrite the story. the stories need to be rewritten. to not endlessly vibrate between ‘man-child’ and ‘young girl’ but to rewrite more useful positions. what could these new relations be?

my aspiration has to do with navigating fluidity, in terms of identity and group identifications, as well as approaches that don’t demand full understandings or simplifications, but that also entail action and not backing down.

my hopeful side sees a growing acknowledgement of fluidity in terms of the way people see themselves—conditional sexuality/gender/position. even race will get more fluid in the US as the percentage of strictly white people goes down.

I’m not optimistic about class (endlessly possible to parse into tiny factions).

by fluidity I don’t mean indecisiveness. I mean identity as a conditional complex moveable construct as opposed to one that is externally imposed hammered down immoveable.

to take (occupy) a position is different than an identity.

this might make possible empathies, collectivities, shared struggles, pleasures that at this point seem impossible to imagine. this fluidity would mean a reconfiguring/giving up of perceived advantage.

and the man-child construct is all about advantage and the fear of losing this advantage. for this reason the man-child will always want to block this fluidity.

sorry the above is here/there/everywhere and quite quickly written (in between waiting for stuff to copy onto my hard drive). i could write more...

cheers!  
shelly

Not having read *Preliminary Materials for a Theory of the Young-Girl*—or, to be honest, any texts by the French collective Tiquun—I am hesitant to comment on the figure of the “man-child,” which was developed in response to that of Tiquun’s “young-girl.” Instead, pleading lack of time and putting a little faith in contingency, I offer up some thoughts from Eve Sedgwick’s final book, *Touching Feeling*, which I just happened to be reading at the time a friend sent me a link to Moira Weigel and Mal Ahern’s essay, “Further Materials Toward a Theory of the Man-Child.”

Discussing what she calls “paranoid reading” and comparing it with a process of “reparative reading,” Sedgwick describes Sylvan Tomkins’s concepts of strong and weak affect theories—the “ideo-affective organizations” through which we interpret and predict our own and others’ emotions. Tomkins writes that:

“Any theory of wide generality is capable of accounting for a wide spectrum of phenomena which appear to be very remote, one from the other, and from a common source. This is commonly accepted criterion by which the explanatory power of any scientific theory can be evaluated. To the extent to which the theory can account only for ‘near’ phenomena, it is a weak theory, little better than a description of the phenomena which it purports to explain. As it orders more and more remote phenomena to a single formation, its power grows.... A humiliation theory is strong to the extent to which it enables more and more experience to be accounted for as instances of humiliating experience on the one hand, or the extent to which it enables more and more anticipation of such contingencies before they actually happen.”

Tomkins’s example of a weak theory is looking both ways before you cross the street, a procedure for traversing a busy street without being paralyzed by fear. A weak theory, paradoxically, remains weak because it is successful—because in minimizing the experience of a negative affect, it reduces the domain in which this emotion might be anticipated. But, “if the individual cannot find the rules whereby he can cross the street without feeling anxious [because of a series of unfortunate accidents, say], then his avoidance strategies will necessarily become more and more diffuse. Under these conditions the individual might be forced, first, to avoid all busy streets and then to go out only late at night when traffic was light; finally, he would remain inside, and if his house were to be hit by a car, he would have to seek refuge in a deeper shelter.” The domain of the theory grows; it becomes stronger precisely as more and more things come to resemble streets.

A weak humiliation theory might consist of a simple, discrete procedure that averts shame in a particular instance (i.e. “don’t post a revealing photo on Facebook”), or, if shame or humiliation has already been triggered, a weak theory might consist of an account or re-telling that recognizes the situation as less-

than-threatening to the individual. A strong theory, in contrast, flags many different situations in advance as potentially humiliating, and often calls upon a wide variety of strategies and behaviors to avoid or attenuate the negative experience, e.g. not showing up, concealing oneself, withdrawing interest, diverting attention elsewhere. But if the subject continues to find himself in situations that induce humiliation, rather than what logically would follow—the conclusion that the explanatory structure isn’t working, and a search for different ways to account for and predict one’s experience—the strong theory only grows in strength. As a result of its continuing failures, the individual becomes more and more attuned to potential humiliation.

Tomkins again: “The entire cognitive apparatus is [then] in a constant state of alert for possibilities [of humiliation], imminent or remote, ambiguous or clear. . . [and] as little as possible is left to chance. The radar antennae are placed wherever it seems possible the enemy may attack. Intelligence officers may monitor even unlikely conversations if there is an outside chance something relevant may be detected or if there is a chance that two independent bits of information taken together may give indication of the enemy’s intentions.... But above all there is a highly organized way of interpreting information so that what is possibly relevant can be quickly abstracted and magnified, and the rest discarded.”

As the strong theory becomes monopolistic, humiliation stalks every relationship, every need to show oneself, every injunction to produce something, every situation which involves even the slightest risk of failure or rejection. “This is how it happens,” concludes Sedgwick, “that an explanatory structure that a reader may see as tautological, in that it can’t help or can’t stop or can’t do anything other than prove the very same assumptions with which it began, may be experienced by the practitioner as a triumphant advance toward truth and vindication.”



Amy Yao

Notes on my interactions with Man-Child types as an artist

Man-childishness is pervasive in our Peter Pan artistic communities, and it’s no surprise that some of the biggest perpetrators could be big fans of not only Tiqqun’s *Preliminary Materials for a Theory of the Young-Girl* but also Mal Ahern and Moira Weigel’s critique of Tiqqun in “Further Materials Toward a Theory of the Man-Child”. They are self-declared Marxists, anarchists, radicals, whatever, cynical bloggers, etc.

It is sad that, in the art communities that I have participated in, the man-child has been allowed to flourish—in fact, embraced—cherished, paraded, rewarded, and has hardly ever really been questioned except, perhaps, by few such as the likes of Adrian Piper, Guerrilla Girls (which they probably ignore or write off), or Womanhouse (where not only man-children, but all men, were excluded).

Exclusion: a feeling that many non-white artists and or female artists know oh too well. The male artist is free to make art about whatever—to put forth his subjective self—and we are all supposed to know that he’s coming from a radical point of view, yet do we know? What part of his life is lived radically, if at all?

Baroness Elsa Von Freytag-Loringhoven was obsessed yet critical of Marcel Duchamp (she calls him Marcel Dushit) and William Carlos Williams, likening them to man-children. But she was *crazy!*<sup>1</sup>

Now, the man-child knows a thing about feminism and is even a fan of feminist artists and writers, yet he supports a mostly man program at the institution he runs.

The man-child loves to talk, and it can be about anything. Certain artist-run Occupy Wall Street meetings last year ended up mostly as a chance for the man-child to bond, shine and show off. Reciting variations on learned theories as a crutch for non-thinking and non-action in the end.

Many of these man-children who purport to be fans of collective activity, or communism, are secretly jealous of each other’s success, haters, frenemies. What happened to the cooperative spirit?

Radicality is associated with progress, which is a sought after quality of artistic practices today. Man-children understand

this and feel a need to be “edgy” in order to sell. Be it badass or intellectual or a mixture of both, they need something to distract from the fact that they are status quo and boring.

The man-child wants to break up any sign of solidarity between females by telling them, “there’s only room for one female Asian-American artist,” making them feel embarrassed about the fact they might want to associate with people of a similar race, occupation, and sex (aka embarrassed about who they are). The man-child sees them as a “thing” and suggests that people will group them together and refuse to see them as individual persons. Because being a white male artist is definitely not a “thing”.




Cameron Rowland



""It is all part of losing yourself down here and making the break from the identity you assume every day going into the office." Nash said" – "Cornrows a Bahamas vacation thing." *The Washington Post*, May 17, 1998

<sup>1</sup> Please refer to her essay in *The Little Review*, “Thee I call ‘Hamlet of Wedding-Ring’ Criticism of William Carlos William’s ‘Kora in Hell’ and why...” and *Baroness Elsa: Gender, Dada, and Everyday Modernity* by Irene Gammel with mentions of Freytag-Loringhoven’s complex fraught relationship to Duchamp, whose famous *Fountain* may have actually been conceived of by Freytag-Loringhoven.



<p>MAIT PETERSON "POLITICAL" ART DAVID BERGER RAPE APOLOGISTS AMIN HUSAIN MANSPLAINERS</p>	<p>SHEMON SALAM RAPISTS ANDY SMITH RICHARD RORTY WELL-MEANING LIBERALS</p>							<p>DAVID GRAEBER ACADEMIC MARXIST DUDEBROS JUMAANE WILLIAMS JACOB ONTO "ALLIES"</p>			
<p>NOAM CHOMSKY DERRICK JENSEN JOSEPH STALIN "RADICAL" CONFERENCES DOUG HENWOOD</p>	<p>DEEP GREEN RESISTANCE COMMUNIST FRONT GROUPS MICHAEL MOORE BOB AVAKIAN</p>		<p>NOAM CHOMSKY DERRICK JENSEN JOSEPH STALIN "RADICAL" CONFERENCES DOUG HENWOOD</p>				<p>YATES MCKEE AUSTIN GUEST DOCTORS OF THE RACIST MASCULINIST MEDICAL/INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX</p>	<p>TIQUN JOSEPH P. JORDAN AKA JOE JORDAN, J. "G." J. CHRIS HEDGES ABUSERS</p>	<p>SETH MILLER POL POT MACKTIVISTS ALEXANDER NADEL SLAVOJ ZIZEK JOSE LASALLE</p>		
		<p>NO</p>			<p>TED HALL GAURAV NARASIMHA DENNIS BURKE AKA THADEAUS D. UMPSTER POWER</p>		<p>JASMIN BURNETT ELLA BAKER AUDRE LORDE MA RAINY SAFIYA BUKHARI ERYKAH BADU</p>			<p>MANARCHISTS MAO ZEDONG BROSOCIALISTS NICHOLAS MIRZOEFF WHITE SAVIORS JERRY KOCH</p>	
		<p>YES</p>			<p>BARBARA SMITH ARIANA REINES HEIDI LOPEZ CLAUDE CAHUN NINA SIMONE ERICKA HUGGINS</p>		<p>ADRIANA ESCANDON ANGELA DAVIS ROSA PARKS WINONA LA DUKE ALICE WALKER SYLVIA RIVERA</p>			<p>IES JOURNAL YALINIDREAM HARRIET TUBMAN ANDREA SMITH HYSTERIC AMY MULDOON</p>	
		<p>O'LLIN RODRIGUEZ FLO KENNEDY LINDZY CORNUM M. JACQUI ALEXANDER ANGY RIVERA</p>			<p>BARBARA SMITH ARIANA REINES HEIDI LOPEZ CLAUDE CAHUN NINA SIMONE ERICKA HUGGINS</p>		<p>ADRIANA ESCANDON ANGELA DAVIS ROSA PARKS WINONA LA DUKE ALICE WALKER SYLVIA RIVERA</p>			<p>ALEX CALLENDER ANNE BOYER FARAH JACQUELINE ROSE NAVAJO GRANDMAS ON THE BLACK MESA</p>	
		<p>D'LO IDA COX DEQUI KIONI-SADIKI TONI MORRISON RIOT GRRRLS JODI NICOLE</p>			<p>BARBARA SMITH ARIANA REINES HEIDI LOPEZ CLAUDE CAHUN NINA SIMONE ERICKA HUGGINS</p>		<p>ADRIANA ESCANDON ANGELA DAVIS ROSA PARKS WINONA LA DUKE ALICE WALKER SYLVIA RIVERA</p>			<p>LEAH LAKSHMI PIEPZNA- SAMARASHINA NILA IELE PALOUMPI JACK FROST</p>	
<p>ANIKI PARIS OSCAR ERIN SICKLER ASSATA SHAKUR ADRIEN WEIBGEN MAMBOS</p>		<p>SONIA GUINANSACA ULRIKE MEINHOF JACKIE WANG DOROTHY ALLISON MICHELLE CRENTSIL MELANIE KLEIN</p>			<p>LAURA WHITEHORN SONALI SAMARASINGHE WICKREMATUNGE LARA WEIBGEN MARIO</p>		<p>ADRIANA ESCANDON ANGELA DAVIS ROSA PARKS WINONA LA DUKE ALICE WALKER SYLVIA RIVERA</p>			<p>PRERNA SAMPAT RUE STEVENS VIRGINIA WOOLF YELENA KALINSKY MARSHA P. JOHNSON BELL HOOKS</p>	
					<p>ANIS JOPLIN MISS MAJOR JALEH MANSOOR HEALERS THISANJALI MONIQUE WITTING</p>		<p>ADRIANA ESCANDON ANGELA DAVIS ROSA PARKS WINONA LA DUKE ALICE WALKER SYLVIA RIVERA</p>			<p>WITCHES LILY DEFRIEND SUSAN SONTAG CAITLIN SUNDROP CARTER HEATHER ACS</p>	
					<p>LAURA WHITEHORN SONALI SAMARASINGHE WICKREMATUNGE LARA WEIBGEN MARIO</p>		<p>ADRIANA ESCANDON ANGELA DAVIS ROSA PARKS WINONA LA DUKE ALICE WALKER SYLVIA RIVERA</p>			<p>ALL THE AMMAS (ALL THE MAMAS) SUZY X. OKI SOGUMI BRYN KELLY JUSTIN VIVIAN BOND</p>	

The "YES" and "NO" lists on this poster were compiled in collaboration with twelve close comrades who are involved in radical (anarchist and left communist) political, intellectual, and arts circles in New York City and on the internet. All of the contributors to this project are women and/or trans, almost all are queer, and about two thirds are people of color.

For the "NO" list, I asked people to send me the names of "cis men, living and dead, who make [your] blood boil: misogynists, paternalists, abusers, rapists, rape apologists, etc. ... people whom you find toxic, people whose physical presence or intellectual influence in left spaces ... hinders or forecloses our collective possibilities for transformation, liberation, and making total destroy."

For the "YES" list, I asked people to send me the names of "women and trans people, living and dead, whom [you] find inspiring;" "your role models and soul friends;" "people who exude something, often irreducible to any one of their activities, that makes things possible" (in the words of a friend). All of the names that were sent to me have been included.



DEATH PROOF

I clear my mind by hanging myself on meat hooks.<sup>1</sup>

When asked what film has influenced her the most, Sturtevant replied, “Any film of Quentin Tarantino because he is a concrete example of the vast barren interior of man: a big-time cyber jerk.”<sup>2</sup>

His—  
The cyber jerk of art is desperate to dress up in two of art’s most credible modes of conduct—the disappeared (or dead) female genius once resuscitated, and the male *enfant terrible*, aka Man-Child. Witness how efficiently these modes supply ‘authenticity’ to institutions and patron classes alike. Given the chance, and at the art fair most certainly, cyber jerk astoundingly offers up a hefty product—a mash-up of his peers’ winning strategies, which he deems bogus or adores and whose success he envies painfully. Approaching his art career with Oedipal hang-ups galore, he edges into grand/mother’s bed to bait the next young-girl. Is it the young-girl’s nihilism he craves? If he could make up his mind about whether he possessed some too, he would save himself the trouble of projecting her everywhere. “*What great big empty concepts you have*”, muses she, undazzled. “*The better to obfuscate you with*”, replies he, in granny drag. Less the Big Bad Wolf than the professional paranoid, cyber jerk shortcuts his way to power and when the structures are well greased, it will be his time to shine.

& Hers—  
When actress Maria Schneider declined to let her bottom be buttered on camera, she was told to get over it, *it’s only a movie*. She recounts that the role left her feeling “a little raped”<sup>3</sup> by both her co-actor and director. Neither butter nor buttering were in the script when she accepted the role and it was a job she would regret sorely—“I like to see friends and go to the market and cook. But I never use butter to cook anymore,” she laughs. “Only olive oil.”<sup>4</sup> Critics reported that the film elicited “vomiting by well-dressed wives.”<sup>5</sup> So, who are The Real Housewives of Art? In the aspiring artist-couple, does the artist-wife become the vehicle towards all things ‘Eros’ for the two of them? Are practices like commitment, risk, willing a future, or simply *the will to live* her undertaking alone since they are precisely what the Man-Child chronically evades in order to secure the couple’s most gainful resource—HIS death-drive pose? How then is a woman supposed to engage, if Man-Child is the term of engagement?<sup>6</sup>

Love and the Stuntman—  
Hey, Pam, remember when I said this car was death proof? Well, that wasn’t a lie. This car is 100% death proof. Only to get the benefit of it, honey, you REALLY need to be sitting in my seat.<sup>7</sup>

KITCHEN SINK REGRESSION

Fabric dye on rope and butter on canvas / Flower pigment and butter on canvas / Anchoring cement, garden netting, latex and butter on canvas / Tempered glass, stainless steel, perforated vinyl with etched leather and butter / Cyanotype and butter on linen / Acrylic, silver deposit and butter on canvas / Woven canvas and butter on wooden stretcher / Glue, latex paint, inkjet print and butter on canvas / 20 plastic jugs, cling film, Vodka, butter / Front bumper, tire, detergent, handwritten post-it notes, cotton towels, butter / Polystyrene, polyurethane, tinted epoxy, wood, butter / Urethane, fiberglass, resin, enamel paint, butter / Acrylic, resin and fiberglass and butter on canvas / Rust, engine oil, charcoal, cement and butter on canvas / Steel, pressure-treated wood and butter / Primer, spray paint, corrosion protective spray, white spirit on canvas, wooden stretcher, butter / House paint, cellulose paint and transparent matte lacquer on spruce and Siberian larch, steel support, butter / Rustoleum Flat White enamel and butter on linen / Marble, whipped cream chargers, Yves Saint Laurent Touche Éclat, steel fixings, butter / Laser cut linen road case, butter / Pencil, silkscreen and Kumamoto oysters on paper, bamboo and butter / Mirror polished steel, coach bolts, screws, screw caps, butter / Silk shirt, dry eel skin, iron, butter / Stool, iron, newspaper, plastic bag, rice, apple, butter / Sand, stones, resin, plastic objects, butter / Digital print on Heavy Crepe De Chine; Machined, hand carved and polished marbles; Chrome bar; Cables, Butter / Plastic and faux ivory ear gauge, steel, rubber, butter / Steel, cigarettes, spit, chewing gum, butter / Rubber, modified gypsum, butter / Plastic, model paint, surveillance camera, tripod, Christmas decoration, butter / Polished quartzite (Brown Fantasy), butter / Iron on transfer on T-shirt and butter / Neon sign, transformer, plexiglass, salt water, sand, coconut aldehyde c-18, butter / Steel, hardware, plywood, paint, fiberglass, tinted epoxy, salt, resin, butter / Mercedes Benz backseat headrest, leather, aluminum, plastic, granite, butter / Washing machine drum on drum stand, cast of run over meat, sock, butter / Chewing gum and butter on canvas / Basketball backboard, metal, glass, butter / Safety Red Rustoleum primer on linen and butter / Steel wool rubbing, butter / Water cut Brita filter, butter / Modified gypsum, plastic buckets, butter / Acrylic glass, wood, aircraft cable, turnbuckles, eyescrews, compression sleeves, vertical blinds, canister lights, plungers, scanner, computer keyboard, speakers, power cord, keyboard cover, Apple iSight camera, tennis balls, iPod covers, aquarium ornaments, polarizing lens filters, plastic balls, hard drive, glass, decals, tripod, miniature pedestal, headphones, butter / Silicone coated nylon fabric, sodium azide, residue, wood, butter / Mirror-polished stainless steel, cast bronze, cast aluminum, accordion pleated hi-tech lamé, elastic, nail polish and butter / Microwave popcorn, paper, acrylic paint, butter / Iron oxide stain, butter / Steel bar and fittings, screenprinting ink, canvas, mylar, newspaper ink, butter / Quartzite, 18 Karat rose gold engraved Cartier ring with box certificate and butter / Tempered glass, microfiche, oil paint, inkjet on perforated vinyl, vertical cable management system, hardware and butter / Maple, Formica, stainless steel, saltwater soil, butter / Wine, cardboard, paint, butter / Polymer powder butter print / etcetera.

PIERRE, OR: THE AMBIGUITIES

Getting It – Getting Over It – And Getting Over – I love that he really gets me!

“The only sicko here is you. And under different circumstances – *what?* I’d be your *girlfriend*? Is *that* it? Did I make you *jealous*? You put me in this hellhole for no reason. Wake up \_\_\_\_\_. Girls like me; we don’t fuck ignorant, pretentious old men with weird lesbian obsessions. We go for tall, hot girls, and we fucking love it. So that leaves you *on the outside* living your sad, sad little life.

YOU DON’T GET ME.

EVER.”<sup>8</sup>

To *get*, as in, to gain possession of, to obtain by concession, to become affected by, to seek out and obtain, to cause to come or go, to cause to move, to cause to be in a certain position or condition, to make ready, to be subjected to, to receive by way of punishment, to receive by way of benefit or advantage, to seize, to overcome, to have an emotional effect on, to irritate, to prevail on, to have, to understand, to deliver, and to leave immediately, as in, “I told him to *get*.”

<sup>1</sup> Female contestant on *Baggage*, Dating game show hosted by Jerry Springer, The Game Show Network

<sup>2</sup> Sturtevant, questionnaire for *Frieze*, October 2004

<sup>3</sup> Maria Schneider, “I felt raped by Brando”, London Daily Mail, July 19, 2007

<sup>4</sup> Maria Schneider, *ibid*.

<sup>5</sup> The Village Voice on *Last Tango in Paris*, 1972, Directed by Bernardo Bertolucci

<sup>6</sup> Lise Soskolne, in email correspondence with Carissa Rodriguez, Anicka Yi, Jordan Lordan, July 29, 2013:

“Here is the intersection for hetero artist couples: is a woman that same (ideal) subject (of Capital) within her relationship to her artist-boyfriend, is she the nurture, the earnest, the shame of sincerity behind the Man-Child? Does he outsource the hope, the striving, the sincerity in love, to his girlfriend? Does she become the repository and then embodiment of all things potentially female for both of them, for the things he sublimates within himself in order to maintain the death-drive posture? If this is happening then how the fuck is a woman supposed to participate if Man-Child is the terms of engagement?”

<sup>7</sup> Stuntman Mike played by Kurt Russell, *Death Proof*, 2007, Directed by Quentin Tarantino

<sup>8</sup> Piper Chapman played by Taylor Schilling in *Orange is The New Black*, 2013, Netflix series created by Jenji Kohan based on the memoir by Piper Kerman

Walter Smith and Jason Loeb





Dominic Jones

“Further Materials Toward a Theory of the Man-Child”:  
For White People, by White People

To save me time, and the reader confusion—I will refer to Mal Ahern and Moira Weigel’s “Further Materials Toward a Theory of the Man-Child” as the collective response of the White Woman. It should be noted that I have, at one point or another, fit the description of the Young-Girl, I’ve given my love and my body to the Man-Child, and I’ve told myself (and been told) that I actually *am* a White Woman. However, my Otherness pre-empts my White Woman/Young-Girl performance via the visual cues set forth by my aesthetic features (dark skin, non-white textured hair). I am constantly reminded, and being reminded, that I exist as the Other Woman first and foremost. And it is this Other Woman/White Woman relationship whose terms, which aren’t necessarily binary (but not always fluid) that I’ve had to delineate in order to understand the way in which I myself engage with whiteness.

In both Tiqqun’s *Preliminary Materials for a Theory of the Young-Girl* and in Ahern and Weigel’s “Further Materials Toward a Theory of the Man-Child”, it is assumed that the Man-Child and Young-Girl—both being products of white, privileged society—are themselves white and privileged. To distinguish the Man-Child and Young-Girl’s whiteness is unimportant and, thus, omitted because their racial profile doesn’t act as an obstacle/filter/signifier for their behavior later outlined. Whiteness isn’t pregnant with issues and stipulations; Otherness is.

As a reader of Ahern and Weigel’s text and an empathizer of the White Woman, I will say what I have to say in the hope that a discussion will present itself, and dominant parties can rise to the occasion of what to do when they’ve (unknowingly?) neglected an entire group of people. First, I will come out and say what we all know to be true in our society—that to be Other is to be determinate and, therefore, powerless. Both the Young-Girl and the Man-Child are indeterminate and have an unquantifiable/totalizing amount of power. They are vaguely defined at the very same time that they are reified. Essentially, they are both contradictions in terms. Even the White Woman is indeterminate, as she spreads her prerogatives and preoccupations. And Tiqqun presupposes a world of post-racism by keeping mum on the subject of race politics. Perhaps Tiqqun thought “It is there, but we’re just not going to talk about it and maybe it’ll implode on itself and save us all the responsibility of addressing it.”

Another uncomfortable truth: The Man-Child has the luxury of being indecisive. The Other cannot afford to be indecisive for fear of falling into the stereotype of lazy and/or stupid. Furthermore, the Other doesn’t have the allotted time to be indecisive. If the Other is to live as a commodity alongside his counterparts, he most certainly doesn’t have the leisure time equivalent to that of the Man-Child, Young-Girl, and White Woman. And the value placed on his head is much lower.

The Man-Child, Young-Girl, and White Woman do not want to experience the “issues/discrepancies” of people of color. And sure, the White Woman has the most empathy for the Other, but only because she too exists as a separate and not so equal Other who shares some of the same privileges of the Man-Child. However, she feels her oppression when she lags behind the Man-Child, cleaning up his messes and having to call out his transgressions.

BUT the Young-Girl’s image is attacked, dissected, and strung up on a tree—so where is this inordinate amount of privilege I speak of? The fact that the Young-Girl is even commented upon, flayed, fetishized, and whose proverbial murder is forever plotted affords the Young-Girl a certain amount of privilege. The Young-Girl is forever the subject and object that Tiqqun reinforces. The Young-Girl must be destroyed, but the Man-Child is too busy jacking off to her image taped on his bedroom wall to pull the trigger. And even if he were to pull the trigger, he would be killing his own manhood, as he would lack the very thing that brings about the creation and imposition of his virility. Who would there be to give him a hard-on???

The authors of the Man-Child text are right. It *is* left up to the Other to carve out a space for him/herself in this scenario. But the Other simply doesn’t exist in our commodified society. He/she has nothing the Young-Girl, Man-Child or White Woman could possibly want or, more importantly, *need*. The Other is told to go occupy him/herself while the White people take time sorting their issues out.

Ma  
Ma  
Ma

ild

Higher powers command: all of the cruelty of the world shall be compressed into a small black cube. This first geometric cell shall be found on the floor of an empty space. Under cover and without notice it will divide in two, producing the Young-Girl and the Man-Child. A subdivision of this genus will result in the proliferation of the Girl-Man, Young-Child, Young-Man, and Girl-Child in infinite variation. Reproducing under the sign of *art* and in the house of the *gallery space*, they are less a species than a condition of participation.

Looking back, this first single cell division was practically Paleolithic in its simplicity. Back then, cruelty was either embodied or externalized. The art gallery embodied the cruelty of capitalism which artists could position outside of themselves by performing their outrage at it, in opposition and as accusation: a call intended to provoke a response from the seat of power, the art gallery—whether Christopher D’Arcangelo vs. The Whitney Museum or Hans Haacke vs. The Guggenheim or Andrea Fraser vs. all.

Today, and after Tiquun knocked up the Young-Girl, making her a pert embodiment of cruelty, acting out (embodying) and acting against (externalizing) are now established conventions of participation—of critique. The difference today is that these conventions are no longer the exclusive domain of artists. Today anyone can engage in critique and in fact everyone must, even and especially by deploying both conventions at once: artists and directors, gallerists and curators ironically embody their assigned roles while appearing to contest the seat of power, whether from within or without, from above or below because these are the job descriptions of the Girl-Man, Young-Child, Young-Man, and Girl-Child. Today though, there is nothing in particular at risk in doing so, since such contestation is precisely what is expected.

Within the current art gallery operating system, power is aggregated in the figure of the self-critiquing patriarch, unimpeachable by the artists whose work he supports or by the patrons whose support he trades in. Both eyes winking simultaneously and in different directions—I mean, that should start to hurt after a while. But it doesn’t, because only those so understanding of what it takes to maintain power and so accepting of its irreconcilability with the supposed function of contemporary art could find a way to make that kind of pain palatable.

It is precisely in this self-critiquing patriarch that the Young-Girl and Man-Child merge. Being simultaneously the embodiment of power and the subject of the critique he levels at himself, he becomes a kind of dizzy swirling yin-yang, set into spinning motion by the privilege of having it both ways. It is the question of how this disposition is handed down to others and passed around and made common currency, perpetuating itself as a system of exclusion, that is of interest and which is the challenge that Weigel and Ahern’s Man-Child text poses to anyone concerned with the machinations of the contemporary art world.

The Young-Girl may not be, but the art world *is* a gendered concept. To the extent that it continues to clone its leaders, replicating, at bottom, its seats of power while appearing to become ever more progressive, women will continue to be silently shut out and shut down so very expertly by the fused and divided selves of today’s Young-Girl and Man-Child.

At the front desk any one of them might welcome you to the exhibition, and any one of them could be running the organization, or the studio because let’s be frank, art is an anti-service industry—a no-service industry, an inversion of the principle of pleasing, servicing, greasing, or of lubricant. The art gallery is no Olive Garden.

It delivers its services as sharp silent welcomed slaps to the faces of its clientele. Whatever reason a patron of art may have to enter a gallery is likely to be refuted: painting may deliver anemic inscrutable messages, unfinished thought is likely to be scattered on the floor, and the only certainty that can really be had is in the knowledge that nobody seems to be in charge of their own mind here.

The private joy art’s patrons take in paying for this service is surely connected to how the art gallery speaks to them, how the curator speaks through the artist, and the artist speaks through the director and the director speaks through the press release and how this becomes a mode of address, another anonymous “we”.

The “we” isn’t an embodiment of Man-Child or Young-Girl or any of its progeny in particular, nor is it a composite voice—there are as many shades of “we” as there are art galleries. The concern here is with what happens behind the “we”, and how its anonymity provides cover for something more sinister and very basic: for power to perpetuate itself.

Efforts to finely distinguish between the Young-Girl and the Man-Child, and arguments about whether embodying the system within which we function is a superior critical strategy to pretending to function outside of it are to miss the point: we are each capable of cruelty under any circumstances. Until that very basic fact is acknowledged we will all continue to be butter under capitalism.

Lisi Raskin

Preliminary Materials for a Program of Post-Post-Feminism: A Non-Anonymous Text

A couple of years ago, I received an e-mail from a leisure-class, mid-career, white, female painter, art star, and intellectual:

“Hey Lisi, a *pretty great, white artist of middle-class origin in her late forties who is just now getting her due* and I were having a dispute the other day about the use of the term ‘post-feminist,’ which I maintain is a completely terrible terminology and that when you hear it you know you’re talking to a non-feminist. My contention was that the only people who would use this term were those who believed that feminism already happened, that we were past it, and that its goals have been accomplished. She disagreed and contends that it was a term that at a certain point was used to indicate someone who has moved past original feminism. My belief is that any real feminist would not have said ‘post-feminist’ but more like ‘third-wave feminist’ or something like that, to indicate that the struggle continues. Anyway in the midst of this argument she said she thought you used post-feminist to describe yourself and meant it in the ‘good’ way—I’m just curious to settle this dispute: what do you think about post-feminist? Was there a time, or is it still going on, that you would use that term and mean a genuine form of feminism?”

Over the years, in various forms, I have reworked my response to this e-mail, never getting it quite right, never fully able to acknowledge my own culpability—but that is my goal: to acknowledge the ways in which I have been programmed to reproduce behaviors that I want to resist, to take conscious steps toward stopping these behaviors, and to move forward with a plan for the classroom and for the world; to stop the subjugation of this abstracted and infinitely projectable Feminine Other whose biological sex no longer matters, who has become a piñata that both girls and boys willingly beat with a stick, a piñata that intellectuals and entertainers abuse with their shtick...

Having taken this e-mail as a prompt, I feel that I must attempt to answer the question: what is post-feminism? Semantically and symbolically, the term

“post” does tend to bring to mind the idea that something is over, or no longer relevant. This is obviously not the case with the feminist agenda, which I take to be equality for women and transgendered people and the necessary dismantling of a system that subjugates along both biological sex and gender performance lines while simultaneously holding in place certain normative orders of behavior that serve no human. Perhaps it would be beneficial to consider our new agenda within a post-post-feminist landscape.

In a post-post-feminist landscape, perhaps we, all of us, women and men, both biological and transgendered, can assimilate and internalize the teachings of second- and third-wave feminism. But what might this mean? For the sake of this conversation, I am interested in opening up this line of questioning, so here is the beginning of a list of behaviors that I think would be very helpful in achieving this goal: (List on opposite page)

1. Admit/acknowledge our own internalized misogyny and sexism.

When I was growing up, there weren’t many female role models I was interested in emulating. I wanted to be James Bond, not a Bond Girl, M, or Miss Moneypenny. I wanted to have adventures and did not want to be the anonymous Feminine Other with whom Bond flirted on his occasional visits to the office. This statement is very specific to how my own gender was developed. I had a little brother; I was a tomboy; I was physically engaged in sports; I was thoroughly ensconced in normative domains of interest usually prescribed to boys and men, and very aware of my own disinterest in things like dolls, jumping rope, playing house, or other normative domains of interest usually prescribed to girls and women. And for the most part, the men and women in my life seemed permissive of my burgeoning gender performance. Through the constellation of coincidences that form my subjectivity—a recipe of whiteness, upper-middle-classness, and elite education—I remained blissfully unaware, until fairly recently, that the development of my gender had everything to do with my perception of power. As a young person I

enacted (and still enact today) a butch or male gender performance. Could this be because I perceive power to be something I only have access to if I affiliate with this normative domain of masculinity? Most of my close friends, except for my lovers, have been straight men—and I thought I was entitled to all of the trappings that swirled through their lives as educated white men, like success, respect, abundant opportunity, and a handsome paycheck. When I started teaching, I realized that regardless of what I believed, I was being observed by my students. And because I had power in the classroom, I had to be critically conscious of how I perceived and performed my relationship to power, gender, race, and class. For obvious reasons, the classroom can be a platform on which to model higher-self behavior as much as a place where one can ignorantly reproduce subjugating behaviors.

When I first started teaching, I recognized a disturbing behavior in myself: it was actually easier for me to remember the names of my male students than my female students. Actually, it wasn’t just the female students whose names I had trouble with, but any name that wasn’t western—if I couldn’t pronounce it immediately, if I hadn’t heard it a million times already, I failed to recall it. And I thought, shit! I have to remedy this immediately. So I did. I made an effort to correct an internalized, learned sexist/racist behavior. As I began teaching more seminar style classes, it also occurred to me that the boys would talk more, take up more space. So I began to put other dynamics in place—like mandating that everyone come to seminar prepared with five questions and five comments about the reading that they are prepared to discuss, and then simply going around in a circle to make sure that everyone had an equal amount of time to speak.

2. Acknowledge the role that class privilege plays in the experience and perception of sexist behavior.

Moving through my college years, it became clear to me that I actually believed I was not subject to the same sexism as my more conventionally gendered female contemporaries. In fact, the first

- [1] Admit, acknowledge, and stop our own internalized misogyny and sexism.
- [2] Acknowledge the role that class privilege plays in the experience and perception of sexist behavior.
- [3] Acknowledge that the pervasive idiom of “universality” does not always resonate for or include the experience of non-white people and/or non-middle-class people.
- [4] Challenge sexist or essentialist rhetoric that comes out of anyone’s mouth.
- [5] Insist that men are not the enemy.

time I actually experienced sexism—that is, realized that it was happening as it was happening—was when I moved to New York for grad school. I was super excited by these amazing female and queer artists I was being exposed to—and they were more interested in talking to, helping, and encouraging the boys. So I called my mom and told her that I was shocked to see how much the social dynamics of the group had to do with sexual gamesmanship and normative power dynamics. She said “Lisi, what did you think the world was like? What did you think was going to happen?” “Mom,” I asked, “is this how it was for you in the workplace?” She said, “Of course, men have the power. I always had a sexual dynamic with any man I worked with—it was the women who were horrible to me... who attacked me.” So here I pose the question: is it possible that some of us identify that the Feminine Other is a quagmire and as a result skate through life as though we are dudes and then not only fail to understand when sexism is happening to us, but worse, possibly even propagate sexist/misogynist behavior?

It is possible that my class background functioned as a shield and/or cloaking device that largely prevented me from experiencing what it is really like out there in the big, bad world? I’m glad the grad school exclusion/queer-phobic/sexist experience happened to me; it freaked me out and woke me up.

The term “post-feminism” became popular in common parlance because a generation coming of age in the nineties was uncomfortable with certain ideas put forward by second-wave feminism—mainly that second wave’s essentialist definitions actually assumed a universal female identity that only described and emphasized the experiences of upper-middle-class white women.

In hopes of avoiding this trap, I want

to clearly state that I understand that the feminist project has afforded me and certain members of my generation benefits that women only twenty years our senior did not experience. For example, no one has ever insisted that I describe myself as a “woman” or “queer” artist, nor have these prefixes been used to describe me professionally in a way that makes me feel uncomfortable. I make no assumptions that this is directly transferable to my non-white, non-middle class counterparts, as “identity omission” is usually a privilege of whiteness.

I also need to be completely clear about yet another point: the type of artwork I make doesn’t need to be qualified in order to fit into contemporary art discourse. In fact, abstraction, since it garnered Greenberg’s blessing in the fifties, has been aligned with power. So, while it is true that my experiences have everything to do with my own and a larger feminist indoctrination starting in the seventies, perhaps it is more important to state clearly that my privilege is a result of a combination of feminist indoctrination, gender performance, class background, whiteness, and education—and that these factors have afforded me the opportunity to make certain choices.

3. Acknowledge that the pervasive idiom of “universality” does not always resonate for or include the experience of non-white people and/or non-middle-class people.

I taught a winter session class up at the Rhode Island School of Design this year, and as an exercise I had the class read Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space*—but I was upfront about the way I was going to regard the text. I told them that I hoped that Bachelard’s text would excite them in some way, that it was possibly going to be problematic for some, and that I was super interested

in getting at the heart of it on whatever level they were able and willing. I made it clear that I was not going to “teach” the text and that there was no right way to read it.

For those of you familiar with the text, you may recall that Bachelard takes us through the house as a metaphor and discusses “phenomenological” responses to things like the attic, the basement, miniatures, shells, and corners. Everything is written in essentialist language. One of my Korean students brought up the fact that the traditional Korean house is organized according to the logic of horizontality, not verticality—that she was perfectly able to identify with what Bachelard describes because of the pervasive nature of western imagery and narratives on television and in movies, but if she was going back to her own experience of childhood space, it was in her grandmother’s house, a traditional Korean home.

4. Challenge sexism or essentialist rhetoric that comes out of anyone’s mouth—whether they are a biological male or heteronormative female, transgendered or otherwise queer or trans-identified.

No one gets a pass. Everyone is capable of being a sexist pig, just as everyone is equally capable of using essentialist language as a default setting. Perhaps the most endemic problem is that people are unaware of their behavior. Our society has taught us how to reproduce sexist and essentialist behaviors, the entertainment industry uncritically reproduces these same stereotypes, and still our culture as a whole provides little or no space for reflection about it—and worst of all, there are few models for how to productively challenge it. We barely legislate it, but as we begin to legislate and enforce it more, I think that we will notice some changes. In the meantime, peer pressure is a powerful



tool that we can utilize to this end. There is nothing wrong with telling someone that you cannot accept the terms of their argument, there is nothing wrong with explaining your point, and there is nothing wrong with walking away or pushing a colleague, contemporary, classmate, or fellow scholar to read an article or book that will explain feminism and gender theory.

**5. Insist that men are not the enemy. (But these days, anyone can be a man!)**

In the nineties, there was a feeling among some in my generation that second-wave feminism cast men as the enemy. I remember feeling very strongly in my late teens and early twenties that I wanted to affiliate as a feminist but was afraid that my male friends would think that I was attacking them. So here begins the funny paradox of the present moment.

For the sake of a continued feminist movement, it needs to be noted that men born from, let’s say, 1969 forward were in fact raised by feminists or at least in closer proximity to feminist discourse than their predecessors. Obviously, this is not true across the board, but we can see evidence that feminist thinking and language is a larger part of mainstream and national debates (one need only look at President Obama’s inauguration speech, not an academic journal, to see this).

For this reason and many others, the discourse of feminism needs to be updated to include the experience of these men, many of whom also self-identify as feminists, as they witness the ways in which sexism impacts their sisters, mothers, and lovers. If we do not do this, but instead backlash by continuing to reproduce, or worse—consume as entertainment (*Mad Men*) sexist behaviors with an ironic twist—we have failed in yet another way, by assuming that the register of the ironic is universal as well. This is elitist once again.

For the sake of our movement forward, we also need to acknowledge and workshop internalized sexism and misogyny as enacted by women and transgendered individuals in relationship to one another. In cultural studies and discourse, we have established that multiple subject positions can be performed in liberatory ways, but it is also true that subjugating behaviors previ-

ously believed to exist solely within the domain of biologically male/male gendered humans can and are performed by all humans across biological sex and gender categories. When you give sexist behavior a pass, you are being sexist. If you are a woman and you say something sexist, you are being sexist and misogynistic. Enacting these behaviors does nothing to liberate the oppressed group, but rather creates a cycle in which the oppressed become the oppressors.<sup>1</sup> Movement forward in a post-post-feminist landscape must take into consideration how the power structure legislates those who identify as women or transgendered and how all humans are implicated by the ways in which they use their power in relationship to one another.

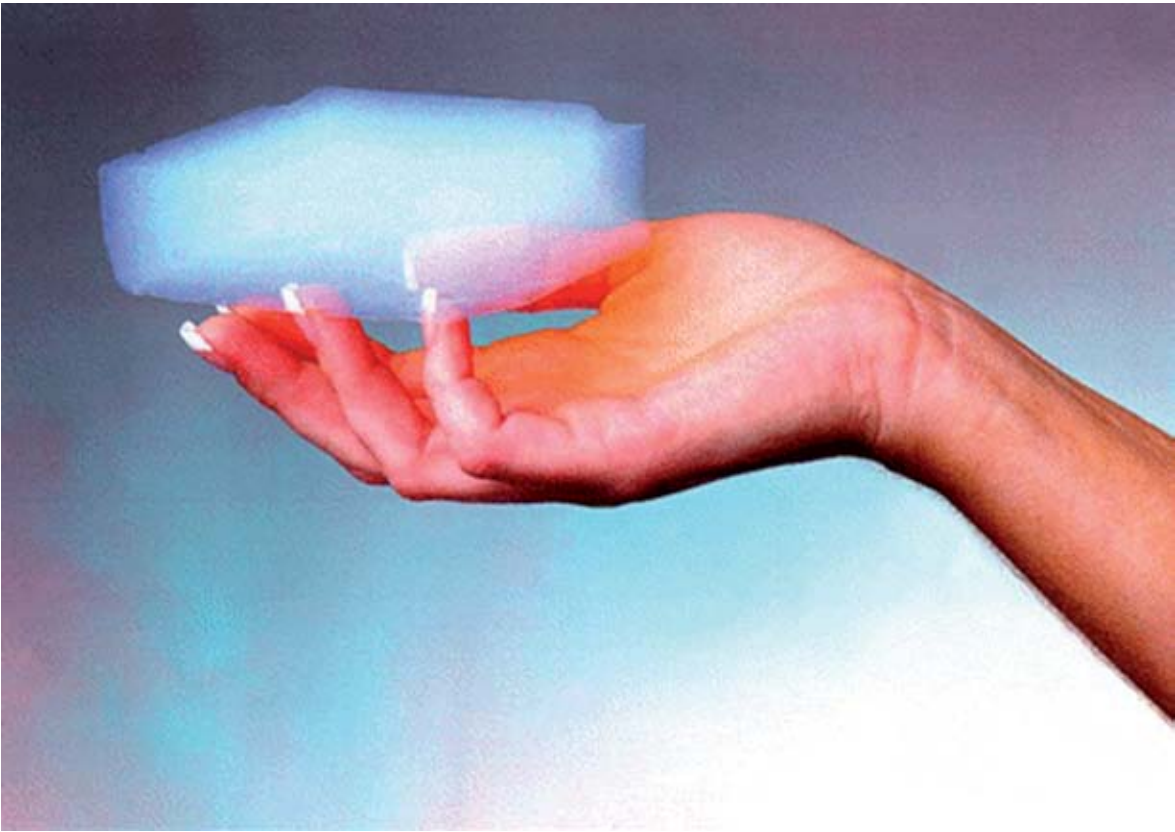
My own position is that all humans are subjugated by this patriarchal/sexist orientation in the world—but I have a specific eye on the ways that pack mentality and representation have a vulgar stranglehold on the desires of men in particular. Men are typecast and have a very difficult time breaking free from established norms to express themselves because of a very real threat of violence from other men.

Men subjugate other men just as women subjugate other women, and there is a long-standing, well-established code of conduct that guides these practices. Spend one day as a man walking along the street in New York just to see how very real and constant the threat of violence from other men actually is.

So let’s make a more concerted effort to include men in our discussions of feminism. Subjugation in general, across and within categories of biological sex and gender orientation, is a pressing topic. We need a paradigm shift that would emancipate all individuals from patriarchal/homosocial hierarchies that enforce “normative” behaviors.

---

<sup>1</sup> For an elaborate and helpful explanation of this dynamic, please see Paolo Freire, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970; repr., New York: Penguin Books Ltd., 1996), 25-51.

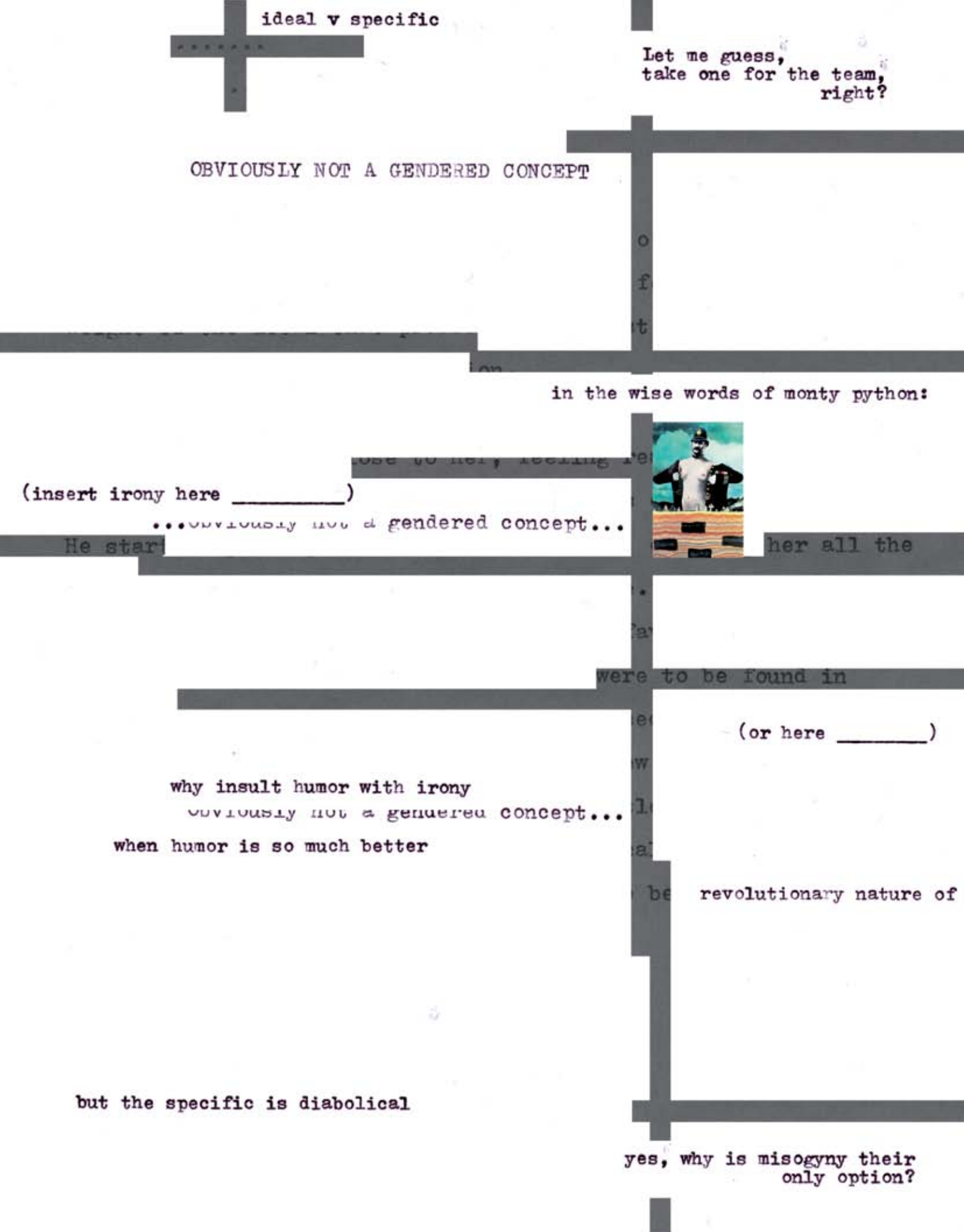


NO  
MEANS  
NO

Arias A. Davis [pg #]

Diagnosis

Are you okay?  
What's the matter?  
What's wrong?  
...  
You're not okay.  
...  
Is someone hurting you?  
Is someone fucking you?  
Is someone fucking you over?  
...  
Is it him?  
Is it just him?  
...  
Is it them?  
...  
Who are they?  
Who are you?  
...  
Are you okay?  
...  
Are you sure?  
Are you sure you're sure?  
Are you sure you're not lying?  
...  
Are you sure you're not being lied to?  
...  
Do you think that they're right?  
Do you think this is it?  
Do you think this is all of it?  
...  
Do you think it will change?  
...  
Really?  
...  
Do you want it to?  
...  
Really?  
...  
Don't you like it a little?  
Don't you like feeling powerless?  
....  
Like it's out of your hands?  
...  
Like you don't have a choice?



## Nicole Demby

### *A Response to ‘Responses’*

The snarky takedown of the easy target (MFA students, man-children,...) is an inexcusable position in our present time of crisis. So is dreaming wantonly of collapse, or compulsively pointing to what’s “emancipatory” in terms useful to the emancipation of practically no one. Likewise, there is little sustaining in dialectical gestures toward some immanent, specular horizon of which even the gesturer doesn’t seem convinced. We must move beyond even incisive analyses of how capitalist relations are reproduced in everyday life or that make prescriptions without considering the conditions that render these practically impossible. I write the following dutifully somehow because women and queers must often carry the imaginaries for those whose hands are tied up in impasse.

A recent smattering of articles and blog posts, while saying things that are mostly true and that I generally agree with, have done so in tones that ultimately smack of the depressive negationism they allege to criticize and that, in their address of the same old elite audiences, propagate the hermeticism they seem to militate against. This kind of critique may feel really good to write, and may offer a fleeting moment of gratification to comradely readers, yet as Danny Marcus recently pointed out in relation to art (and as others, such as Adorno and Jameson, have said in their own ways)—but which I will extend here to criticism, at a certain historical moment—all negation with no revelation just won’t cut it anymore.

I don’t want to settle for a cleverer or more radical or more feminist analysis. I want to suggest that there are better and more urgently necessary avenues to be sought than those alluded to above. My way of knowing and doing this is to point to what feels like a real salve rather than just itching the wound, to what helps me continue to exist in a world so deeply fucked and fraught with contradiction that on most days I can’t imagine a palatable future for myself in it in good faith. These spirit aids are not blog posts but usually specific people whose sheer existence—irreducible to any one activity or another—seems to incline toward the really good, toward what is healing in a revolutionary way, and to what makes life “okay” (...and not the kind of “okay” that enables people to stick it out with the status quo, as in, “I work all the time...but it’s okay, because I have great friends!”).

I’ve decided the revolutionary nature of this okayness has something to do with confronting violence—interpersonal violence, historical violence, traumatic violence—gendered, raced, and classed. I’ve been thinking about Maya Andrea Gonzales’s intervention into communization discourse to point out the centrality of the gender relation and the public/private distinction that inheres to it. I’ve been thinking about P. Valentine’s critical query in *Lies v. I*, “wither sexual violence?”—the real disciplinary mechanism of gender’s enforcement. And I’ve been thinking about my own desire after reading these essays to go beyond an argument for why gender must be abolished, beyond pointing to the structural ubiquity of physical and emotional violence that imposes gender, toward an understanding of the nuanced economics of affective labor and violence bound up in these things. I have come to desire an analysis that, building on Marxist Feminist stances on domestic labor and certain Afro-pessimist understandings of slavery, is capable of expanding Marxist notions such as “accumulation” and

“surplus value” to explain how we valorize ourselves over and against each other, an analysis that treats violence and appropriation in relation to primitive accumulation not only as a historical category but as the very stuff of our daily interactions in the world. I’ve come to feel that one of the primary problems of the so-called radical left is that, while pointing to difference as the medium through which capital valorizes itself, it lacks the desire or the willingness to theorize how pain and trauma function in relation to difference—perhaps a fatal flaw, as it is these that act as a ballast for the status quo, making people hedge against better futures while continually reconstituting destructive relations.

Through activist work, poetry, forms of spiritual guidance, and attentiveness to physical and psychic healing, the aforementioned people exude a kind of spiritual magnanimity that enables me to envision new forms of extreme healing and care. They compel me to fantasize about what it might mean to begin to forge communities that, in their very existence, actively deconstruct capitalist social relations. These require ways of redistributing privilege and collectivizing healing—privilege here being not just the external and externalizable trappings of race, class, gender, and education, but also emotional—related to certain dispositions, and relationships to love, friendship, and health. What’s redistributed can be immediately material, but it is more importantly things like time, knowledge, and happiness, transferred in complex transactions that are contingent and specific, and which will happen frequently in unexpected directions. This process is one of acceptance of and reckoning with subject positions in all their materiality, and of decapitalizing our relationships to our lives and our stuff and finding out how to help others to do the same. This process may or may not have to do with art, but it certainly entails a revelatory approach to materials and a creative approach to the social.

Fundamental to these activities is an avowal of feminine labor and affect that—rather than locating this labor or affect in any particular body or gender—seeks to find ways to distribute it with the aim of collectivizing social reproduction not just in its materiality as its narrowly conceived, but in its totality—so that we can all make things okay for each other. Calls for collectivization that treat only this narrow sense of reproduction underestimate the determinative nature of the violence that enforces difference and the way it accrues in bodies and psyches. They imply that these effects can be undone in the process of sharing bank accounts or raising children more collectively, rather than grasping that pain and trauma must be addressed rigorously in their own right and in their own deep materiality in order for all other anti-capitalist processes we might embark upon to have any chance of working.

These things will require an intense creativity, as well as a powerful capacity to affirm others and confirm ourselves. This isn’t to say we don’t have many enemies who must be negated; it is only to suggest that the more time we waste pointing out what’s wrong in other peoples’ pointing out of what’s wrong, the more we squander necessary energies that might be used in ways that transcend the binary of analysis and praxis, to point concretely to anti-capitalist modes of being without looking or feeling like “discourse”.



When reading Marxists-Feminists, I never understood their insistence that the real oppression of women was that women were the unpaid birthers of the labour force. To think of women—just because they got pregnant and gave birth and took care of the babies—as the reproducers of the labour force always felt kind of fantastical to me. Women have children who grow into adults so that capitalists can have more workers on their floors? It felt too obvious, too reductive to be true. It seemed like the Marxist-Feminists were leaving out the potential benefits of mothering in their irritated and insistent pronouncement of what Marx missed.

But now I do get it. Everything altogether pierced through my reluctance to admit that we get fat and shoot milk so that jobs will be filled. It's not that far-fetched. It is the first oppression—this sci-fi female nurturing of the labour force, done for free and over generations. This first oppression has created us: the Young-Girl, the Grown-Woman and the Man-Child.

There was a class at McGill University in the early 1990s called “Feminist Moral Philosophy.” I attended this class once with a friend who thought I would like it. It featured the work of Carole Gilligan and it outlined the differences between the male and female mode of making ethical decisions. What I understood from that one class—which was way too easy to understand—was that women were sharers. Women were relational, thinking of the other. Men were morally one-pointed in their ethical decisions while women were multi-pointed/diffuse and thus it was easier for them to see the other as equal to the self.

Women do know where the clean sheets are. And as Weigel and Ahern point out, the Man-Child cries for “a dutiful interpreter to come and tidy up” after him both in the home and out. Yet even Shulamith Firestone wanted a secretary.

I'll contribute to the Preliminary Materials for a Theory on Motherhood but I am not always hopeful, even though I act it: I think that the dick, the Grown-Man's dick, must not be discarded, it must always be acknowledged, even and especially after it has unloaded its worth inside you.

Anicka Yi Jordan Lord Lise Soskolne Carissa Rodriguez

# The Politics

# of Friendship

Mal Ahern  
Tamara Faith Berger  
Rita Sobral Campos  
Daniel Chew and Kerstin Brätsch  
Arias Abbruzzi Davis  
Nicole Demby  
Lisa Jo  
Dominic Jones  
Jacob King  
Margaret Lee  
Walter Smith and Jason Loeb  
Arto Lindsay  
Charles Mayton  
Park McArthur  
Lisi Raskin  
Cameron Rowland  
Shelly Silver  
Justin Hunt Sloane  
Matt Sheridan Smith  
Marina Vishmidt  
Lara Weibgen + comrades  
Maira Weigel  
Jacob Wren  
Amy Yao  
Viola Yesiltac

1 Sept — 10 Nov, 2013

STUDIOLO