

CENTER for EXPERIMENTAL LECTURES

November 25, 2022, Halle für Kunst Lüneburg, Heinrich-Heine-Haus at 7PM CET
<http://experimentalletures.org>

Studies in Unlikeability

by Vijay Masharani

Hi, Vijay. I remember first coming to California all those years ago, and in my mind, it was having a blue sky and the greens like a David Hockney painting. That's my picture of California, and I remember the light. I was talking to you in the car about the light, that the California evening light is a special kind of light, and that's what I think of California, but we live in weird times with orange skies and smoke in the air, so it's not quite the California that is in my heart. That's it. I'm done.

So I asked for a video outside the hospital under the orange haze of that particular round of fires to make the threat more real and worse and therefore more accurate, honoring a implicit commitment to the fidelity of this particular moment. It leveled the image. Skin, hair, sky, foliage, concrete took on a cast of shared impermanence. The smartphone camera tried to fix it a bit at the end, if you notice, tries to white balance out calamity. Orange is both the color grade of doom and of those backwards nations stuck in an adolescent phase of development.

It's all a bit on the nose, but subtlety has been outmoded. Haven't you heard? Binaries are back in the Eschaton. The end looks dumb and romantic, which is how I spent the last two years. I was sleepwalking. I'm awake now wondering if it's all happening, and it is. I gave no direction on what to do or for how long to film. The video you're watching was the result. I wanted all the noise gone, so I turned it into a lullaby, redacted the smoke, and made them equivalent. Orange smo- in mind, blue sk- in my heart. Orange sm- in my mind, blue sk- in my heart. Orange sm- in my mind, blue sk- in my heart.

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Multiplied the trees, sloughed off context that would locate the scene geographically. See, that could be anyone's dad, anywhere's trees, and there's only one sky in the first place. Particularity weaned, universality waxed, a generic loop, a dilated state of exception, a burnished surface image, a screen savior.

Small ways that messianism pops up in unexpected places. Don't get too excited. Like my buddy Ben checked me in Glasgow for saying I glimpsed the communist hypothesis in a snowball fight. He said, "Get real." It's up past his neck, above eye level now, the whole ocular perceptive circuit is submerged off-screen, his speech distended.

Blue sky.

Give me that fucking content, universe. Give me that fucking content. Give me that fucking content. Give me the fucking content, universe. Give me that fucking content. Give me that fucking content, universe. Universe, give me that fucking content. Give me that fucking content, universe. Give it to me. Give me that fucking content, universe. Give me that fucking content, universe.

Give me the content. Give it to me. Give me the content, universe. Give me the content. Give me the content, universe. I need the content. Give me the content. Ah, give me the content, universe. Give me the content, content, universe. Content, give me the content, universe. I need the content, I need the content, I need the content, universe. Give me the content. Give it to me today. Give me, today, the content, universe. Give me today the content, tomorrow I want. I'm heartbroken without your love.

Late October, flyering an Indo-Caribbean neighborhood in Queens, soliciting paid participants for study in unlikeability. Addressed to those not likable, not in the sense of past complaints. Food left in the trap, too much heat, dishes, missed calls, asinine opinions about art and literature, noisy, lazy, sensitive, defensive, unfocused, patronizing, humorless, restless, frantic, incurious, intense, hysterically concerned about omicron and various sub variants.

But in the sense of not being fully there, there. There, there low affect, lacking vibrancy, envy, blockage. Some of the flyers read do you have a nagging feeling that you might be irredeemable in the eyes of God, that you lack the toothy corporeality that is the unaddressed substrate of all human sociality? Have people said things like, I need you to be more of a person so that I can unload all this love? Stop lacking that certain texture, the thing that my affinity needs to latch onto, else it slides off. You're too smooth, hollow, leaky, weakly personified. I have nothing to grasp, which means I have nothing to carry.

[illegible]

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So a man filmed his love seizing as evidence for a veterinarian to aid in diagnosis. Sounded helpless, "I can't do anything." Seizure means a lot. Let's talk about two. Medical, sure, but also to be gripped in a religious or political fervor in a state that distinguishes us from other animals. By grace, the human is sometimes seized by something that cannot be reduced strictly to the thought of an animal and idea.

When you're seized, he says keep going. Continue to be seized and displaced by the process of a truth. I literally saw that happen under the sign of a numeric shorthand, 2020. I saw all forms seized by the dissolving movement of reason. I saw all delimitation of stable objects collapse. I saw them dissolve into a multitude of relations, and then I saw them congeal again into ugly contours, reaction. Watch the pendulum swing back.

Now I'm a magpie, mostly focused on small ways to make my apartment a little bit nicer. In order to get an extension on coursework at my university, you needed to provide evidence of a catastrophe. I looked at the list of catastrophes and heartbreak wasn't on there. I looked at the list of acceptable documentation. I saw coroner report. I said, I'll give you a coroner report. Sublime on the LA riots, sublime. Oops.

Blue sky.

Welcome to the Center for Experimental Lectures. Welcome. I'm alive and I've always wanted to go fast.

Blue sky.

Vijay, a shorthand for the thing I'm tasked with becoming more every day, which is exactly what nobody else could possibly be, so to say I am unlike you is synonymous with hello. I come to you a luminosity, beaming. Raytraced a drowning monkey, which was not a proxy racialized shell, rather a model of something gastronomical and integrative, like the concept of history. The seizing figure is digested by its container. A cube of water turned to piranha fluid. Adorno, the animal to be devoured must be evil.

The system is the belly turned mind and rage is the mark of each and every idea. Rage. Rage is the mark. Rage is the mark of each and every idea, and you do kind of have to eat what happens to you. It's not enough to just take it. The yellow trackers lock to the white noise, an error, an artifact. Like Andrea, the monkey is held by its mistakes, apprehended by them as they skirt across the surface of the image like grit, dandruff, spittle, Pixy Stix, dot matrix caressing.

Scanning through noise. I'm scanning through noise. 2018, I bunked with a future version of myself who was also incidentally an actor. Sunny like his name. I would describe him as gleaming, lifted up, irked to be alone. When I

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meet lonely men or see them in the movies, I'm terrified to meet my not cute destiny. I did not purchase that option. Instead, put some money in an index fund, lower risk like the hard sciences and increased my appetite.

Must have been hectic. Must have been hectic. Hectic, was it hectic for Christmas? Hectic. Was it hectic for Christmas? Hectic, was it hectic for Christmas? Hectic, was it hectic for Christmas? Was it hectic, hectic? Was it hectic, hectic? Must have been hectic. Must have been hectic. Hectic, was it hectic for Christmas? Hectic, was it hectic for Christmas? Hectic, was it hectic for Christmas? Hectic, was it hectic for Christmas? Was it hectic, hectic? Was it hectic, hectic?

Taking the bus, an excessive situation can arise. Everyday barbarism in high relief. A declaration, I've done nothing wrong creates a knot of obligation. Pretend not to hear its profane character. Nobody's at fault and yet all are implicated and there's never any reckoning, and yet reality is monetary, the outcome of making observation and experience commensurate with each other on a balance sheet.

Reality is monetary. It's the outcome of making observation and experience commensurate with each other on a balance sheet. It is therefore best disputed in monetary terms. A signature feature of the melancholic is a disproportionate fear of becoming poor. I was elated, small talk glitched and stalled.

The Wall Street is fraud. America is fraud. The world is fraud. Banks are fraud. Central banks are fraud. We live in an era of fraud. It's all based on fraud and they get a percentage of the fraud. That's the business model. To suggest that there is any moral or ethical aspect to anything that's going on now is to be completely naive about the fact that we live in an era dominated by financial terrorists, terrorists, terrorists, jihadis of banking.

They're here to kill you and themselves. They don't care because they're trained at Madrasas called Princeton, Harvard, and Yale. They believe in an ideology, not the Quran, but Adam Smith, that they completely misread and interpret as something to justify. They're blowing themselves up and the cost of terrorism is cheap. 9/11 only costs \$500,000. The ability to borrow money and take over a company by Warren Buffet is zero. He's borrowing money at zero. He's taking all those jobs away.

He's creating economic destruction because of financial terrorism and that's the era that we live in today. Well, are we going to stop it? There's only one way to stop it. Raise interest rates right now. Make the cost of terrorism too high. Do it today. If you don't, you're a fucking terrorist. Janet Yellen's a terrorist. Mario Draghi's a terrorist. The Central Bank of Japan is a terrorist. These are the real terrorists, not the immigrants, not the people dying in the water.

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A Bitcoin maximalist rallies the crowd against the perverse excesses of quantitative easing with a considerable pathos, synthesizing left populist terminology. Yanis Varoufakis coined the phrase financial terrorism to describe EU imposed austerity during the Eurozone crisis with the evocative imagery of the post 9/11 security state. Needless to say, the scene teems with racial affect, Yellen and Draghi recast as insurgents trained in New England Madrasas.

It's a disjunctive contrast with the kind of vague activist appeal that concludes the rant. The intensity doesn't match the solution. Needless to say, raising and lowering a number does not governing make. It's probably going to take a war or three. There's always that. Used to listen to this like music, the rhythm with which he repeats terrorists calming to my understimulated.

I understand financial speculation. I understand the appeal of placing a claim on a future cashflow, mitigating uncertainty to come by bringing some of it into the present. Placing a claim on a future cashflow, mitigating uncertainty to come by bringing some of it into the present. I recently had my position hedged against without my knowledge, got shorted. It sucked, it cut, it burned.

It is a good gift. Water is fine. No give money, no give anything. God give us permanent water. It is a good gift.
Water is fine. No give money, no give anything. God give us permanent water. Permanent water. Permanent water.
Permanent water. Permanent water. Permanent water. Permanent water. Permanent water. Permanent water.
Permanent water. Permanent water. Permanent water. Permanent water. Permanent water. Permanent water.
Permanent water. Permanent water. Permanent water. Permanent water. Permanent water. Permanent water.
Permanent water. Permanent water. Permanent water. Permanent water. Permanent water. Permanent water.

The developing meaning of the COVID subject in world history. I heard a truth from the future, conceived in the present, evidenced in the gap between this fallen world and the one forged through the deliberate transformation of reality towards the image of reason, which is the facticity of our inherent freedom to be realized. You get it. It happens a lot.

A lot to people, a lot to people. A lot to people. A lot to people. A lot to people. A lot to people. A lot to people. A
lot to people. A lot to people. A lot to people. A lot to people. A lot to people. A lot to people. A lot to people. A lot
to people. A lot to people. A lot to people. A lot to people. A lot to people. A lot to people. A lot to people. A lot to
people. A lot to people. A lot to people. A lot to people.

A lot, a lot, a lot. Maybe most of the extra pain could be salvaged. Considered in aggregate the amount of psychic counter pressure required to think it couldn't pulverize this rotten. Can you admit at the very least, it's a nice thought? I really need a boost right now. This is not only a naive symptom of protracted adolescence/bourgeois consciousness. I'm telling you, my buddy Kevin has been broke his whole life and he just posted something similar

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on his Instagram story after the shooting.

I'm telling you, my friend Christina posted a closeup photo of an embroidered couch of her Instagram story with the caption, anyone else think this looks like the angel of history? I'm telling you, the death count passed 6 million on the books, 15 million off. I was like, damn, we've breached the numerical shorthand for incomparable world historical catastrophe, which means that this moment and all successive moments are the darkest ever. I'm telling you, I saw the bottom in the library. It was windy. I saw Mew. It's important for children to learn a symbol for rarity. It's important for children to learn a symbol for rarity.

Blue sky.

Thank you for coming to the Center for Experimental Lectures where you can't have cake for breakfast and you can't go home. A sample from Saraa Goes to Church, a video satirizing racism in America. Molly, a white tween, proselytizes to her South Asian classmate Saraa with two A's, attempting to convert her to Christianity and in doing so, save her soul. As an exercise, they drive around suburban Texas, reading aloud signage outside local churches in unison, their overlapping voices introduce this song, Dread, as they read the phrase where there is hatred, may we bring.

Where there is hatred, may we bring hatred, hatred. May we bring hatred, hatred. May we bring hatred, hatred. May we bring love.

My son caused so much. My son caused so much. My son caused so much. My son caused so much pain

So the second important sample there was from an interview with Peter Rodger, father of Elliot Rodger, the half-Asian, half-white incel who committed a mass shooting at UC Santa Barbara when I was a student there in 2014. Roger's statement, my son caused so much pain, in my reading, shifts culpability for that violence away from the social institutions that produce it and reconstitutes it in the private domain of the family and their possible follies and failings, and it does real ideological work for a country that has given up.

In the same interview, Rodger compares every day to a reverse nightmare in which he wakes up from a nice dream and then remembers that everything that happened, happened. I found that moment poignant and then I felt taken for a ride. I've always admired artists who wield the big concepts, world, universe, life, death, love, hate without reverence, play with them like children's blocks. An oxymoron? In 2020, I unwittingly volunteered for a two-year study in unlikeability.

It was hailing, things were becoming inscrutable, but on some level, I knew what I needed, which is what anyone needs. A system to navigate levels of abstraction between the subject and world history. A literary scaffold sturdy enough to stand questions such as where we come from, are, are going, and a way to assimilate loss, life, and

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futurity. Put simpler, I needed God. I should have looked under the island of my bed where I was strapped in a damp room with high ceilings, no desk but a cork bedside table on a noisy main road, soundproof windows a lie.

The blue curtains didn't close fully and staged a double slit experiment on the opposing wall every time a cop or an ambulance drove by. By the way, it was all real. Everything that happened, happened. Your love saved my cop paranoia when our landlord lied that our neighbor was violent as a pretext to eviction. I heard them, 3:00 AM, creaking up the stairs. Those guys and gals kill people. People are what we are, different, infinite. I saw scaly dinosaur apparitions from my crib, scowling lineaments in the laundry.

A brown bumblebee in a wound I caused by putting my foot down not too hard, but too long. The thermostat wheel didn't have much resistance on the mechanism. As you staggered a bed, it's easy to brush it, make it hot. Frankly, I didn't notice. I was keyed up before finals. Recently, a musical comedian reacquainted me with the recurring image of the door in dreams of The Dead. For example, I wish he would walk through that door or he's not going to walk through that door again, and so on. Then I read Souleymane Bachir Diagne writing about the prophet's ascension.

A tale meant to appeal to the imagination, but what does it actually describe? Assuming that there never was a functional chariot to the stars as an event, the ascension must have taken place in thought. The supernatural imagery illustrates the potential heights of the human intellect. In other words, he saw Mew. In a dream, I did too and some part of me tried to do it. Solve the problem of human resurrection like a math problem. Woke up whirring, my en suite ceiling fans slowly sucking sanity. I whisper, what can I do on FaceTime to a crackly, protracted betrayal who responded, you're doing it.

After discovering I wasn't in fact doing it, I felt a rare burst of energetic motivation to not look both ways crossing the street. Turning your head is a riskless way to microdose disappearance. Turning your head is a riskless way to microdose disappearance. You turn back, they're still there, barring something sudden and unforeseen. That same week, I read Theweleit on the tube, how the Freikorps wanted their wives absent and devoted.

So that they could focus on the thankless work of killing. I thought for a moment, me too. When things really become inscrutable, they don't become inscrutable in a way that you can apprehend them as such. If that were the case, it wouldn't happen. The relatively stable standpoint from which you'd be able to perceive the metastasizing inscrutability would undercut, negate, and cancel it. I don't understand why nobody talks about this.

For a while, the phrase throw in the towel guaranteed my continued re- and reappearance. Here I am tapped in, smashing the nausea button shaded by my earlobe. However, such a clumsy appeal to ruggedness had limited purchase. Things got shrewder and more sinister after that. Nearly dislodged the katechon. If you don't know, that's the word for restrainer or keystone. It's the thing that holds the rest in place without which, well. Appeals to shame work much, much better on me than appeals to rigor.

The next magic words placed me at a threshold at which my expression turned glassy, frog-like. Meekly, I asked for permission to die in pig Latin. Difficulty, depletion, pain, sure, obviously, I did not however expect to be saturated with terror. It suffused my entire being. Gas guys came by, my first human contact in weeks, noted the lack of carbon monoxide alarm. High in orientation, things turned schematic, which is to say both more and less clear of my

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cheek and jaw, moving orthogonally to the camera, lit in the dark.

I thought that looks weird. Learned too late that I was not in fact apprehended, but experienced as a discontinuous sequence of effects. It's difficult to distinguish because there's the fact that human communication quite simply isn't, and this incommensurability makes poets of us. Confused, pressured, employed, a cudgel, a buttress, a screen for love, trying to make good decisions.

There's a homology between expressing gratitude, controlling damage, and saying goodbye. On speakerphone, breathless, pushing through a tight latticework. Of course, yarn. I want to live until I'm 80, 80, 80. I want to be there in the heat with you when we're 80. Affirmation turned to plea, turned to merely a nice thought.

Blue sky.

The last scene of humanity. The last scene of humanity. With the last of my battery, I filmed lily gesticulating by the edge. She was one of four other living things remaining on earth along with two ducks and a man whose skin shone dark. As he turned, his glasses caught the light, twinkled, preventing me from meeting his gaze.

For decades, he had studied how the duck's glucose levels could be estimated by the rhythm and tambour with which they quacked. His tone pedagogical, he said, there's a logic to the sequence. Quack, quack, quack. Emphasis on the third, that duck needs some bread, don't we all, or it might lose a webbed foot. Lily lept up in mimetic glee, quack, quack, quake. The audio clipped red. Something happened off-screen. She plopped back down, confused, and a tiny tsunami lapped the bank on cue, and it's all my fault, she sang for 100 miles. She muttered, hummed a thin melody before the silence. Thanks, guys.