

Newsletter

from

# Reading Room

#3  
October 2019

*It is Time...*

<http://terracritica.net/readingroom>

Eva Hayward, “Time of In/Difference. Extinction, Sexuality and Coral Science” (unpublished talk)

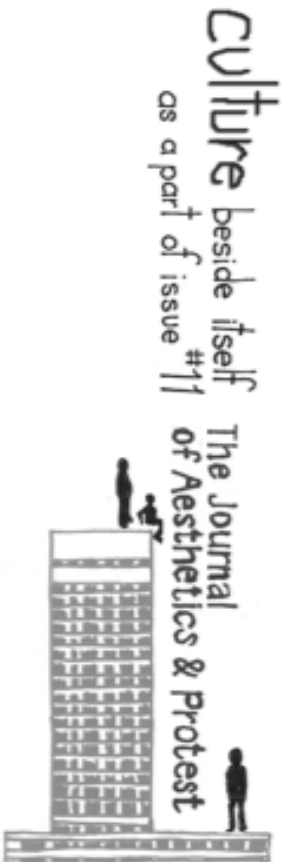
Eva Hayward, “FingeryEyes: Impressions of Cup Corals” *Cultural Anthropology* 25/4 (2010):577-99.

Fred Moten, “Erotics of Fugitivity” in *Stolen Life*, Duke UP 2018, 241-267.

Koleka Putuma, “Water” <https://pensouthafrica.co.za/water-by-koleka-putuma/>

ReadingRoom is a semi-autonomous project at the margins of the academic humanities and art institutions, a collaboration between *Terra Critica* and *Casco Art Institute*. The group might be defined as a porous affective collective, dependent for its continued existence on the generosity of its attendants. Engaging with texts from various disciplines and the arts, each series of the ReadingRoom weaves itself around a theme that it acknowledges as urgent with regard to our living and thinking practices in times when critical engagement and close reading are shadowed by the neoliberal mode of quantifiable productivity and gain. Each session brings together people from different backgrounds to re-imagine the idea of community and practice it by attentively listening, reading, and thinking together.

This session of the ReadingRoom marks the first of the new series titled *It is Time...* Series six stays connected to the previous series *Reading Rosa, pink and other colors*, in which we grappled with the systemic weave of capitalism-patriarchy-colonialism (CPC). *It is Time...* looks more deeply into the question of temporality and its relation to the current ecological crisis that necessitates a re-thinking of human exceptionalism in our understanding of the “future.” We read with the concern for the complex threads between CPC and environmental destruction, and we think collectively about the co-habitation of humans and non-humans in these troubled and troubling times. We had Eva Hayward from the University of Arizona—and Terra Critica researcher in residence 2019—as our guest for this session, thinking and talking about extinction, fugitivity and sex/erotics.



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The sensuous as the sexual...  
the undergridding desire towards  
a future that can never be mastered..  
But improvised, sensed...  
A future that is imagined and foreclosed  
refused but consented  
that will never be but  
somehow / somewhere become.

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Happy / joyful to be in a space where I can  
feel irritated without the need for confrontation.  
Especially when people desire dialectics  
/ old white folk's thinking so much, they  
overlook the generative force of thinking  
without them.

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How might we sense the moment(s)  
when fugitivity veers toward the  
non-erotic, toward the reordering  
of the world, toward what is (or  
might become) captured?

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Space is what is left for feeling  
out "life" when Death, which  
otherwise serves to capture  
and hold it as individuated,  
contractual lives, is  
"revealed" as simply a ne-  
gation. Sometimes this  
"reveal" happens through  
humor, ridicule Death so  
all those deaths (in/as  
life) can run loose.

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Do we need to re-invent nonperformance always  
anew if there is no model, no contract, for it? How  
can it be nonperformed as a conceited action, in  
concert with more than myself? Who is Betty in  
concert with, perhaps even unwillingly?

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I have never experienced such  
an interesting, intimate microcosm  
of a meeting inspirational people.  
Very welcoming.

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Is it impossible to think about/as  
speaking about fugitivity +  
non-performance in a space  
that aims for conversations?  
A sense(!) of disorientation–im-  
portant?–doesn't leave me to-  
day.. What to do with it I'm not  
sure in the conversation of  
Moten with Hayward.

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Necessity of (re)turning  
(to) erotics. The anticipa-  
tory uncertainty of  
reaching for your lover  
in bed. In the tempo-  
rality of pleasure I'm  
a fugitive. My sensory  
access puts me out of  
time — time of  
CPC. Resist the urge  
to pin down the  
unbearable.

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If silence, (no)thing,  
non-performance,  
a pause or being  
forgetful is a way to  
break the contract,  
are they also third  
concept in a triangle  
against dialectical  
thinking? Or stand  
for the thing that is  
always slipping out?  
Is forgetting /slip-  
ping out a method to  
bring something into  
the future without  
even knowing, in be-  
ing a trace to mess  
up temporality.

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How to map  
(not the word)  
sense(?), be sent,  
arrive, feel or intuit  
these beings and  
relations in non-  
static space time?

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How we can become  
beings/onto being a  
lot more from our per-  
ception of the world  
and other (what was  
mentioned as “im-  
pressions”) rather than  
through the contracts  
we make. Is this so and  
when is it the case?

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I really want to like  
Moten but I find it  
alienating. If I think  
of it as poetry, or as  
some sort of  
Finnegan’s wake  
I can relax and  
almost enjoy it, but  
if his writing wants  
to have political  
value wouldn’t it  
make sense to  
make it more ac-  
cessible? Where  
can I buy the key,  
the annotated ver-  
sion, the transla-  
tion?

There’s a whole  
new angle to  
silence that  
I hadn’t thought  
of before.  
Now with nonper-  
formance, there  
is always still  
something, “the  
table is prepared  
without ameni-  
ties.” Eva’s way  
of thinking also  
adds a whole di-  
mension, textu-  
ality to thought.  
The sexuality  
of life, not as its  
reproduction but  
the desire of  
the unknowable,  
unarrivable, death  
drive to keep  
going.

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So much hope in  
the non-terms!  
Each author  
causing words  
to slide until they  
reveal(?)othersides  
of their meaning.  
Words as objects.  
Able to walk around.

I don't understand.  
There were two freedoms  
at the table, but only  
one discussed as such:

Freedom as the life drive,  
as an organizing force of  
murderous normativity.  
What about that idealic  
idea of unbinded sexual-  
ity? Isn't that just the other  
side of the coin? A totaliz-  
ing wish for totalizing sexu-  
ality?

What is before and after of  
individuation? How do we,  
by refusing individuation, find  
an "other side" that is neither  
the freedom to be or the  
freedom not be? What might  
de-individuated encounters be?  
(Encounters that do not refuse or  
constitute individuation?)

"World as Man" // "Man as World"  
The distinction between life and  
death as saying/naming life and  
lives made me think about the  
multiplicity of deaths occurring within  
a (singular) life (thereby, paradoxically,  
becoming lives) that Alok Vaid-Menon  
talks about.

Is writing also a performance? Words?

There are things far worse than  
our fear of death; and extinction of desire,  
of sexuality ought to be one of them.

Bringing sense,  
sensoriality, sensual-  
ity, sexuality into our  
engagement with  
texts, knowledge,  
theory, our bodies,  
other's bodies, oth-  
er bodies ought to  
be done. An imagi-  
nation of the not yet,  
not quite, has to be  
non individual, non  
individualized, non in-  
dividualistic. "Has to,"  
"ought to"... not to be  
normative, but to be  
passionate, desiring,  
urgent...

Queer temporalities  
comprises that we re-  
arrange our bodies as  
rhythmical encounters that  
deconstruct the essential-  
ist CPP clockwise tempo to  
be able to dive into and see  
through the membranes of  
things around us our ability to  
control our habiting into an en-  
vironment.

Are we allowed to bring up  
Agamben? I can't help but feel  
that non-performativity resonates with  
potentiality as the possibility of something  
not occurring—especially in relation to  
preferring not to (Bartleby). But at the same time  
I worry that that would be a deflection, an escape  
and domestication of the text, a way of telling about  
something familiar in order not to have to reckon  
with fugitivity.

But what made the discussion so difficult today?  
The attempt to grasp at straws, anything to hang  
on to, feels like a cop-out. But it's also possible to  
speak (even if silence is also a performance) about  
things of which one cannot speak.