

from

culture beside itself
as a part of issue #11



Newsletter

Reading Room

#2
June 2019

Reading Rosa, pink and other colors
<http://terracritica.net/readingroom>

Koleka Putuma, selection from
Collective Amnesia (uHlanga 2017)
("Black Joy," "Hand-Me Downs,"
"Reincarnation" and "Aviophobia")

Anna Julia Cooper, "What are we
worth?" (1892) from Cooper's A Voice
from the South (Oxford UP 1988),
pages 228-286.

Denise Ferreira da Silva,
"Fractal thinking" (2016)
in aCCeSsions ([https://accessions.org/
article2/fractal-thinking/](https://accessions.org/article2/fractal-thinking/))

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. Simone Weil once said that attention is the purest and rarest form of generosity—and in that spirit, we have built something together that offers time, space and community for an attentive engagement with text and world, eluding the limited imagination of neoliberal institutions with their myopic fixation on quantifiable outcomes.

In its current, fifth season entitled *Reading Rosa, pink and other colors*, ReadingRoom grapples with the analysis of the complex, interweaving systems of what we call Capitalism-Patriarchy-Colonialism or simply "CPC," the oppressive logics defining both of our own time and of those fragments of history that lie within the spans of our ancestral memories. In exploring the tensions between projects of strategic politicization, radical resistance and collapse, we struggle to imagine something outside of the frameworks we've all internalized—a project that can't be conducted alone.

We ask ourselves: is there a way to discuss & collectively "produce" theory—within and without institutions and formal academic bodies—that does not rely on pre-existing patterns of production, labor, value? How can these limits be incorporated into the practice of criticism and theory, if at all? What is at stake by questioning or foregrounding these immanent conditions?

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The Reading Room is the scene
for conversation, for meeting,
for exchange, and negotiation.
it is the doing, being at the table
together, that is the valuing,
not the value.

FRACTAL?!?
Give me ethics anyway!

How to unpack the slippages of
logic/languages without slipping?
Or maybe, how to slip?

Ironically or not, I am left wondering what we put
into the world with our new ways of reading and
thinking and speaking and knowing, and what
it is worth. 'What do I give to the world, over and
above what I have cost?'

Is reading and thought an act of consumption or
production? I'm not sure of the answer, or if this is
entirely the wrong question, but I think it is
a question worth keeping in mind.

I still don't understand how exactly fractal
thinking is different from linear thinking.

I think comparing Zizek's position to some-
one who wants to gun down people on the
border is a gross mischaracterization, and
inherently works to tie fractal thinking to
some sort of empathetic, reparative think-
ing that I don't see as valid.

I think the connection of Cooper's text to
a late 19th century humanism that takes
value seriously as a concept is interest-
ing—I'd be curious if the discussion of
irony is more a recent addition.

Poetic–Poetical thinking.
CPC requires to keep in view
oppressions and privileges, histories
and futures. Maybe only the poets,
human and non-human can save..who?
Attracted to hearing out what has
happened and has yet to happen.
(da Silva)

Another proof that shows how leftist
thinkers of today misunderstand how the
colonial/racial has been integral to global
capital is their misunderstandings and mis-
readings of the political struggles in the
MENA region. e.g. Zizek in the same article
(and other articles) exposes his Assadist views.
This demonstrates how he dehumanizes Syrians
and refugees. We should talk more about the
failures of the leftist movement.

According to Da Silva, at any moment in time if you
extract an issue, a moment, an action, that extract
comes with all the history, present, and future that it
is linked to. It is necessary for us to attend to all of this.
Hand-me-downs does that—what is the history linked to
the need for hand-me-downs? Linked to the need for
newness? What are all the dimensions of this? What are
the truths that are not easily distilled into individual lines
of analysis?

What has happened and what has yet to happen?

These questions I consider crucial again after this RR session.
The historical writing of Copper on value in the strict economic capitalist sense has to be thought with today's events & such as da Silva and Putuma's poems. Value is a matter of life and death— who gets to value what value values most?

Holding a breath
Thinking in fractals
She learns their language
to speak poetically,
What am I worth?
Ask for justice

fractally composing ethically messing up
our use of words how we formulate power
to open up another dimension
in which another
way of being together is possible

A bit lost in the fractals.

Cooper: ironic? earnest?
each in turn? unreliably both?
Poetical?

Da Silva: neo-deleuzian mumbo jumbo?
who needs Leibniz anymore?
Does her critique amount to more than:
not historical enough, too Eurocentric?

I feel much more at home with the simple poetic.
Let's lose the H.

What are we worth? gave me more to think about in our own variations then ... Somewhat distinguishably I wonder about the voices that we spoke of when addressing the questions of value in this. How is everything based on value? Does value lead / link into the formulation but by lurching into it? (Cooper, 285) by with which was troubled to begin with? Then something changed?

Is poetical thinking the solution to the question of value? Is it the possibility to displace the idea of value in a non-economical field, beyond the logic of equal-exchange?