

from

culture beside itself
as a part of issue #11



Newsletter

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 Extinction, Sexuality and Coral Science” (unpublished talk)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.

Newsletter from

Reading Room

#3 October 2019

The sensuous as the sexual...
the undergirding 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.

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.

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?

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.

Newsletter
—
from

Reading
Room

#3 October 2019

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?

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

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.

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.

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.

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

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?

Newsletter
—
from

Reading
Room

#3 October 2019

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.

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.