

Pulmonographies

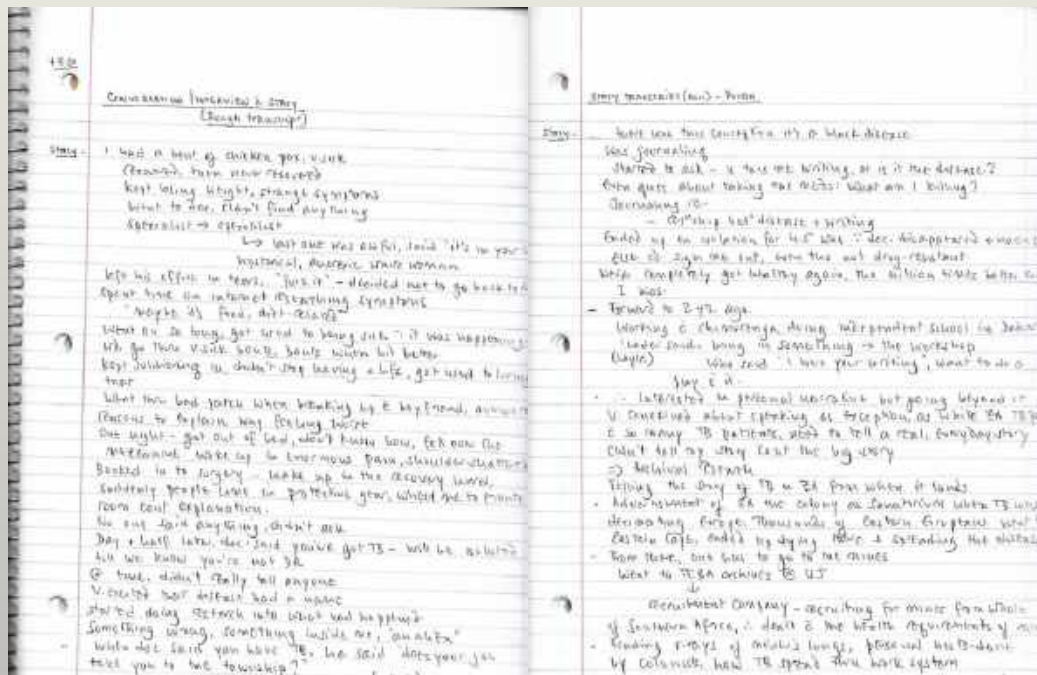
(the curriculum is everything)

A correspondence between
Stacy Hardy
Neo Muyanga
Kaushik Sunder Rajan
cc: world

we have been asked to think about this coronaviral moment in the context of longer duree histories and structures. we have been asked to articulate our reflections in the form of a correspondence. the ethos of "cc: world", as we understand it, is to look and think before and beyond the moment. to respond to this ethos, we must look and think before and beyond the moment of this exercise. hence, we offer a correspondence that precedes, exceeds and incorporates the task we have been set. the "correspondence" of cc: world emerges out of a longer duree correspondence, itself translocal, following different routes and trajectories, still emergent. our respective practices are different, but we have shared stakes in pedagogy. in a practice of teaching and learning, including teaching and learning from each other.

what we offer here, therefore, is a syllabus of shared breath

PRESCRIPT(ion)



- Again, "on fire, was I on the white person looking @ the black body in the archive"
- How talked to Africa, people involved & witness put together something that makes my own role
- Collaboration
- work on exploitation
- apartheid
- apartheid
- Working on 2 documents
- incl. How Mayunga
- Finding "the other voice", her story
- where are the black voices in the archives?
- Archives: largely not people, but a kind of medical data
- an archive of things that exist
- the center is the absence of things - that's what it is
- pushing the white work for the black
- the brutality of the white looking thing is something
- happy to take it as a bridge - it's a colonial story
- One I was happy to tell
- how many people have come forward, how many have been
- interested
- interesting how many people are misdiagnosed
- eg. system that only picks up TB, the lung, but
- millions of lives of TB
- Taken what into history of TB, got fascinated
- that is not scary looking anymore
- work of TB, early diagnosis
- facilities & the like prison
- interesting relationship between TB & prison
- TB hospitals are like prisons, it's like incarceration
- could be working on freedom and, lot of it got thrown
- London wanted something & didn't go to the TB prison
- & the historical stuff got thrown out

- looked for stuff in Germany + France + UK + NZ
- Anyway, has become a huge project
- not sure what to do with it
- maybe a book in creative writing, maybe just a book
- that's the written summary of how I entered into TB
- it made or form of challenge to the established
- You're a biologist + anthropologist looking @ legal site
- V. fascinated also about the history of using medical data
- as evidence of people killed by a system that's more
- using their bodies - it there a long or way to speak
- about this?
- large art world - death & a persistent theme in ZA
- what's the point
- making presence
- Q. of history, speech, to have a voice, but silencing of you
- initially rich & stuff to be mined
- but also the history of the white people looking at black
- bodies - last thing we need is another looking white
- woman's voice
- need to look @ language best practices + form of
- capitalist extraction
- Consciousness - this is creative writing
- maybe medical humanities
- Eng. that pulled together and professionals
- white, black - v. interesting
- that stuff gets deep, eg. I use depression as metaphor
- was a story that looks TB in depression
- Made me think about history, TB narrative as
- attached to race
- August labor & how families are affected by
- returning workers, which affects women

- story - book, some
- script
- making the script & some other writing
- my investment in the idea of what it means to "write the
- distance", what sort of archive to find the archive in ways
- that find the gaps on colonialism?
- how to find the archive for what's not there
- the archive is the colonial archive
- an urgency to create new archives as well
- also, thinking
- subject as collective political subject? - this & the
- figure of the breather in institutional service &
- detention
- my in & largely fiction & poetry
- I look at this question in poetry & creative writing
- will read "Multi-Substrata" manuscript
- is functioning ethnography for feminist & decolonial pump
- don't quite have what I'm working towards, but let's try
- to have collaborative touchpoints
- investment here is not output of work as thinking by & for
- we both share "inside/outside" life
- and TB is in the history (story of my many skin cancer
- @ TB judicial inequalities). Really interesting last law
- story around TB & prison
- also talking to people in many vital ques of the
- movement, from ecology to human TB
- & thinking, tries to think about bodies, belonging,
- movement beyond individual human TB model
- community work
- teaching @ Rhode Univ
- books but will start
- let's be more speaking to kids

- we story of looking & alternative histories (only looking &
- interesting)
- story of story, Yousun in Vietnam, historic & sound, looking
- story - (story of story)
- of museum
- interesting to think about what collection of objects
- a museum means, & how one writes it
- this comes on in much, speaking of the moment
- and the urgent need to rethink health
- remnants of colonial, sometimes in Eastern Cape
- one because a hotel
- in a tiny town in the middle of nowhere
- (they put the TB sanatorium in the park)
- our hotel was when had been an old TB hospital
- Amuse - old TB hospital & prison -> hospital again
- then closed down
- what guests must reside here
- what guests must reside here
- the old gate of the guest speaking
- and the historic architecture of what the building tells
- (Egon, last name)

writing, archives and more

Stacy Hardy Sun, May 19, 2019

Dear Kaushik

It was an unexpected pleasure to meet you and though I'm not yet sure why or how but I'm very excited at the prospect of finding some way to keep talking and maybe even collaborate.

For more on the play, Museum of lungs:

<http://produktionsdock.ch/en/projects/museum-of-lungs/>
(trailer, photos, press, tour dates etc)

These are the archives I mentioned:

- PATHAUT, a database established in 1975 and now containing demographic and pathological (macro- and microscopic) information on more than 100 000 deceased mine workers who worked in various South African mines and works. This data is in the public domain in the form of a series of annual reports:

http://www.nioh.ac.za/?page=pathology_disease_surveillance_reports&id=162

- The Archives of The Employment Bureau of South Africa (commonly known as TEBA) was moved from TEBA to the UJ Kingsway Campus at the end of 2004 on a semi-permanent loan basis. TEBA Ltd was established with the objective of assisting the growing Witwatersrand mining industry in recruiting mine workers. TEBA started as two different companies, i.e. WNLA (Witwatersrand Native Labour Association) in 1901, and NRC (Native Recruiting Corporation) in 1912. WNLA recruited mineworkers outside South Africa, and NRC recruited mineworkers within the borders of South Africa:

<https://www.uj.ac.za/library/informationresources/special-collections/Pages/Rare-Book-Collections.aspx>

And the great TB project I mentioned:

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/489b9e_df0d60a6b48d4e8886b0f8137beefed2.pdf

Kaushik Sunder Rajan Fri, May 24, 2019

Dear Stacy,

The pleasure was mine, and I am looking forward to our future conversations, whatever trajectory they might take. Please excuse the slow response, as I've had a hectic week in Johannesburg.

Thank you for all of these attachments and links, to the play and the archive. I get back to Chicago on June 2, and going through these will be my project for June. I should have more thoughts and ideas about this by the time I return to Cape Town, in late July. The one question I had was if you knew your

November 2019 play dates in Paris and Marseilles, as that is not on the link. Knowing them in advance will allow me to figure out if I can make a trip to watch it live.

In exchange, as promised, is my "multi-si(gh)ted" manuscript. A lot of it is an internal engagement with the histories and practices of ethnography in anthropology. But the introduction will give you a sense of my stakes, and starting with Chapter 2 especially, I think there are methodological points of intersection, having to do with searching for fragments in the archives (Chap 2), thinking of ethnography as a form of literary knowledge (Chap 3), emergence of new collaborative norms and forms in ethnographic practice (Chap 3) and ethnography as a praxis of intimacy, thought through photography (Chap 4). This is still under review, so the specifics might change - but the basic argument, and I think its basic structure, should remain.

I hope you were able to sort out visas etc to Egypt? And I hope, to be continued. I'll definitely be in touch when I get back to Chicago and as I start reading.

warm regards,
kaushik

Stacy Hardy

Thu, Jun 13, 2019

Dear Kaushik

Hello from Mannheim in Germany. I have a small break after performing in Berlin and before participating in a festival here with a performance lecture and a series of workshops with a medical anthropologist here - Dr. Janina Kehr - whose work engages TB in Europe and its colonial hauntings.

Since I last emailed I've had a chance to read more of your work - just finished Pharmocracy and started Biocapital... which has given me more insight into your interests in the law and TB is SA. It also made me reflect on time - "in a time of TB" to paraphrase Márquez and Agamben's "messianic time" (not the end of time, but the time of the end) especially with TB - a "historic" disease that is curable and over but that persists, refuses to go away... but also the complexities of disease and law and time. In the recent class action lawsuit where mineworks took mining companies to court they finally agreed on a settlement because they were literally out of time - the claimant were dead or dying. Legal time here - with its endless appeals etc was completely out of synch with disease time. I also keep thinking of my sister who worked for some time as a paralegal for the Treatment Action Campaign but quit because "my clients kept dying."

I also had a strange trip to Europe which seems to feed into things somehow - before leaving the country I again ran into Dr Wouter Basson at the airport. He's someone who seems to haunt and follow me. One of apartheid's most notorious and evasive criminals, Nicknamed Dr Death by the media, Basson is a cardiologist and former head of the country's secret chemical and biological warfare project, Project Coast, during the apartheid era. Under Basson's supervision, Project Coast, mastered the idea of hiding things in plain sight. Fashioning weapons of mass destruction that can disappear into water without a trace and tools of assassination masked as everyday objects. Basson himself is a master of evasion. He escaped the truth and reconciliation commission by hiding behind state secrets and successfully evaded

the 54 charges brought against him after apartheid, ranging from the possession of drugs to conspiracy to murder. He's since evaded countless lawsuits and recently had his medical license reinstated:

<https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/gauteng/tribunal-committee-members-ordered-to-recuse-themselves-over-basson-hearing-20114302>

<https://mg.co.za/article/2011-09-30-wouter-bassons-9nbsp000-heart-patients>

Today, he remains a free man.

As a young journalist, I tracked his path as he continued to practice in an acclaimed academic hospital and lucrative private practice. Our paths again crossed again a year ago when I found myself queuing to board a plane bound for Washington DC alongside Basson. This time he was flying locally - first class of course. These encounters always leave me shaken. For the rest of the flight I was haunted not by Basson, but the trademark smiles that always adorns his face. Perhaps smile is the wrong word, it is not an expression of joy, or invitation of an opening or encountering, but rather a sneer or smirk, a leer (to 'look sideways or askance'; 'to glance over one's cheek.'). It is a Cheshire cat's smile in the Deleuzian sense: a smile that will "survive the effacement of the body." A smile that both reveals and conceals. "An abominable smile, an abjection of a smile."

I'm even more excited and curious as to how we might work having read you more.

All the best
Stacy

CONSCRIPT(ion)

serendipity / you wouldn't know God if he spat in your eye

Stacy Hardy Sat, Aug 3, 2019

dear kaushik - the world is truly mysterious and research proposes are so dependent on this mystery. is it that in delving into something we open ourselves to it? or that the research leads us instead of visa versa?

after meeting with you and discussing the south african artist Dumile Feni i received an email commissioning me to write a fiction based on a work by Feni.

the work in question is Feni's "You wouldn't know God if he spat in your eye" (1975). it is a fifty-three metre by twenty-five centimetre scroll that Feni made while in exile in london. ([see image attached](#))

the work has been exhibited only twice in South Africa (once under a glass vitrine and once digitally) and because of its fragile state is not available for the public to view or handle. however as part of the commission i've been invited to go handle it at the WITS art museum on the 14th and 15th of August.

i'm not sure i can "bring a friend" or if you would be interested or even able to travel but i thought i'd let you know because of the strange serendipity!



Kaushik Sunder Rajan Sun, Aug 4, 2019

dear stacy, wow that is extraordinary! i can certainly travel on those days, and if you could "bring a friend" i would delightedly welcome this opportunity! please let me know if WITS art museum seems okay with this and i'll make tickets accordingly.

i am thinking of something to send you in exchange, and i thought the revised introduction to my in-process book on multi-sited ethnography (multi-si(gh)ted) might be one place to start. i can't remember if i sent you an older version of this in may. but it articulates some of my stakes in ethnography, even though it is tangential to the question of breath per se. it has some links to experiments that kim and mike fortun, and joe dunit, are undertaking that push the boundaries of ethnographic practice in collaborative ways. the two that i told you about re the fortunes will probably be interesting for you to look at:

<https://theasthmafiles.org/>
<https://worldpece.org/>

the asthma files has a lot of stuff around breath, while the PECE platform is something we could think of hosting collaborative work on (in addition to any other formats that might emerge out of this research).

looking forward!
k.

Stacy Hardy Sun, Aug 4, 2019

dear kaushik

yes, its extraordinary. and okay great, i'll ask wits and see what they say.

i also met briefly with neo yesterday - he's very keen on collaborating. he sees it as a way for us to extend and continue the collab we started with museum of lungs - which he thinks is important and he's also very keen to work with you. but above and beyond that he loves the initial trajectories - pulmography/ states of breathing and of course song and so much music is breath! we talked very briefly about the music of breath and even an air opera composed entirely of breathe - but all just very first thoughts. he's in rehearsal at the moment but could meet us together one evening this week or you could meet him after i leave. he's only concern is timing - it work better for him if any manifestations of the project were only late next year or in 2021 - though he is happy to start to work more informally and think and research from now on.

one name i didn't include in the contact list who could also be of interest is Professor Narnia Bohler-Muller - she wrote a paper Justice as Breath(ing) that I happened on in my readings of Adriana Cavarero. It was presented in Tunisia and published in the International journal of the humanities 4.4. 2006.. which I somehow don't have access to... but imagine you will?

"Both Luce Irigaray and Adriana Cavarero have paid substantial attention to breath and breathing in their more recent work. Both continental thinkers appear to be responding to the "death-drive" of metaphysical (western) philosophy and attempt to transcend this fascination with the "long, last expiration" by re-focussing on the moment of the first breath and the relationship between breath and voice. Responding to the centrality of the visual in Emmanuel Levinas's face-to-face encounter with the Other, both Irigaray

and Cavarero argue for an ethics beyond the dying breath, arguments which reflect a concern with "an existence which is beginning" and thus transforming. Death by the Order of God is thus resisted and displaced by an ethics of responsibility towards the singular newcomer who invokes in us a sense of wonder, of the "not yet". Breath, as proof of the proximity of the other, allows for a politics of resonance, a politics of the voice and the interweaving of voice and speech. This re-imagining of relationship and community brings us closer to the realisation that it is who I am listening to that demands my absolute attention -- a realisation which takes us beyond the tragedy of the name and naming towards the birth of pleasure."

though it was a good link between your two trajectories on this project - law and breath.

and attached is the great Chimurenga cover: [if white people didn't invent air what would we breathe?](#)



teba

Stacy Hardy Mon, Aug 5, 2019

Teba Archives

<https://www.uj.ac.za/library/informationresources/special-collections/Pages/Rare-Book-Collections.aspx>

The Archives of The Employment Bureau of South Africa (commonly known as TEBA) was moved from TEBA to the UJ Kingsway Campus at the end of 2004 on a semi-permanent loan basis. TEBA Ltd was established with the objective of assisting the growing Witwatersrand mining industry in recruiting mine workers. TEBA started as two different companies, i.e. WNLA (Witwatersrand Native Labour Association) in 1901, and NRC (Native Recruiting Corporation) in 1912. WNLA recruited mineworkers outside South Africa, and NRC recruited mineworkers within the borders of South Africa.

"It is to the breath that I want to turn now. To the necessity of breath, to breathing space, to the breathtaking spaces in the wake in which we live; and to the ways we respond, "with wonder and admiration, you are still alive, like hydrogen, like oxygen" (Brand 2015). As Philip says, the pause in the poem, the breath, "is totally subversive in the face of the kind of broad-brush brutalizing where people just get reduced to Negro man, Negro woman, and ditto, ditto, ditto. You pay attention to one, and it is such an amazing act—and one that spills over to all the other dittos—paying attention and taking care with just the one. Because that's all we can do is care one by one by one. And that's why it was so important for me to name these lost souls in the footnotes to the early poems" (Saunders 2008a, 78). Breathlessness and the archive: the archives of breathlessness. The details accumulate in Zong! and for us, what might it mean to attend to these archives? What might we discover in them?"

- Christina Sharpe, In the Wake: On Blackness and Being

Castro Hlongwane, caravans, cats, geese, foot & mouth and statistics

Stacy Hardy Fri, Aug 9, 2019

and thought to share this with you following Digby's comments on Mbeki's view of AIDS as a syndrome - not something i'm used to hearing from the science community in SA! there just isn't the language in SA to speak this outside of the accepted antidenialism view

its a controversial Aids document circulated by the anc during mbeki's "denialism" (2002). its alleged that Peter Mokaba co-authored the document.

<https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/peter-mokaba>

Castro Hlongwane, Caravans, Cats, Geese, Foot & Mouth and Statistics

india, today

Kaushik SUNDER RAJAN Wed, Aug 14, 2019

Dear friends in and from South Africa,

The Indian Parliament, on the eve of our Independence Day, has now approved an amendment to its anti-terror law, to give powers to the central government to designate an individual as a terrorist and seize his or her properties:

<https://www.rediff.com/news/report/new-anti-terror-law-comes-into-effect/20190814.htm>

To give you a sense of who this government thinks of as a terrorist, this is what happened a year ago, under the aegis of the non-amended (milder) version of the law:

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/2162232/urban-maoists-modis-india-if-you-are-right-you-must-be-left>

Meanwhile, the hot and urgent topic of conversation of those in my class position in India is who the next coach of the Indian cricket team will be.

As I learn from each of you, with gratitude, of the immense complexities of your country, I hope also to learn about how I might mourn for mine, which I have lost; in ways that do not give up, but that might fight for its return.

with gratitude, in solidarity, and in anticipation of continued conversations,

kaushik

Hi old beans,

Flight is delayed, so sitting in Johannesburg airport with time on my hands, so thought I would write and update you on this trip.

yesterday was the last day on the bench for Edwin Cameron. I think I have told you that he is the first public figure in South Africa to come out as HIV +ve, at a time when HIV still had huge stigma attached to it. He has therefore done an enormous amount, both symbolically and judicially, for HIV +ve patients, and also for LGBTQ rights in South Africa. The Court was packed yesterday, including with scores of HIV patients, as he delivered a landmark judgment on land reform, followed by a wonderful special session that commemorated his career and judicial service.

It was an honor to be present. On so many counts - the Court blossomed into its intention, with its former judges and luminaries in attendance, the packed seats, the number of people wearing HIV +ve t-shirts ... it was a testimony, simultaneously, to the number and range of lives he had touched, and to

the number and range of people the Court stands for. I felt privileged and humbled to be present, one of those moments when life and research stumbles into a sacred moment.

The moment that brought me to tears was when his best friend Timothy Dutton (who is a lawyer in England, but now very sick and unable to be present)'s wife read a portion of their tribute to him, regarding his sister. She was there in the Court yesterday, and I could not take my eyes away from the way he fixed his gaze upon her as this portion of the tribute was read. It was a look of unflinching love. One that I will remember, for its depth and truth, in all my remaining years.

I have been wrestling, in an abstract and philosophical manner, about the meaning and import of the concept of "dignity", and how it animates the South African Constitution. yesterday, in the ceremony, in his gaze, in the collective gasps and the deep appreciation and applause for his life and career, and indeed in the substance, manner and import of the judgment he delivered that started the day, I saw it lived. For all the very real and serious questions that are asked, and must be asked, about the constitutional project, I was able to witness an extraordinary testimony to democracy, at once collective, and a knitting together of so many individual biographies, in the wake of his judicial career and his generous and inspirational presence.

I feel like eating ice-cream, so I am going to see if I can find some.

Will text when I reach, and call later tonight or tomorrow,

*Love,
k.*

[Letter to my mother in Bangalore - Kaushik]

first outline, based on conversation with stacy

Kaushik Sunder Rajan Fri, Aug 23, 2019

Dear Stacy and Neo,

Here's a first pass at thinking "pulmonographies", based on a conversation Stacy and I had a couple of weeks ago. Stacy, please add and change as you see fit. Neo, if you are around and had time to to meet / talk / think together more, please let me know: I am in CPT till Sep. 4th.

I also attach Dumit's implosions project, as something to think with.

warmest wishes and hugs to you both,

Kaushik

Pulmonographies (outline of meeting with Stacy on August 10, 2019, and next steps)

We are thinking of some kind of grant / project application around the theme “Pulmonographies”, focusing on the politics of breath and breathing. TB will be a focal point of the project, as will South Africa. This will not be an objective or objectified view of TB in South Africa; it will be an attempt to think the political history of TB, and biographies and geographies of breath, as a global / universal / human (transhuman?) issue and concern, from South Africa.

A major interest to our collaboration concerns whether we can explore some of these issues through the creation of different expressive forms. Specifically, we want to think about the form of the performance lecture, as an unformed, open-ended ethnographic / literary / musical / creative form through which to articulate our individual and collective research, writing and composition. We propose to develop 5-6 performance lectures over a 3-year period, for different venues and audiences. There could be different foci to the performance lectures that allows each of us to express our different interests and modes of production. There should/will be an important pedagogical component to the project, and it will allow for different configurations of people, different collaborators and different interlocutors for different parts of the project. At the end, we could consolidate the six performance lectures as an online course.

Also, in coming months, we could as a starting point, perform Joe Dumit’s implosions project as an exercise (pdf of Dumit’s article on this attached). The implosions exercise could also be incorporated into our own performance and pedagogy. It could be one of a series of discrete “breathing exercises” (which are performative and pedagogical) that we develop as part of our performance lectures.

Thus, the aim is to create a body of work over a three-year period, which could culminate in a performance in Chicago at the end.

[Dumit: Writing the Implosion](#)

Kaushik SUNDER RAJAN Wed, Aug 28, 2019

Notes from Feni scroll

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

THEME FOR KULE PEPE ZAKI

WNLY MOSS NZMENIMY TWO MOTHERS

NDUMI

Rong day

HIS NAME

PATRICIA

BADSHA

CHAMELEON

freedom

MONOPOLICE

YEAR

THIS tIME SOWETO THIS TIME, MEMORY of THE ANONYMOUS CHILDREN

AND MY fRIEND MLALITA NGATANE ::

FREEDOM PIECE

THEME FOR YOU

Rong day

PRECIOUS MONSTER

ANCIENT RETUAL

COMMENTS ON FAMILIARITY

SONG FOR MY MA

Composition for my father

Mary.

Composition for

someone I knew

AMEN BOOK FOR

SEROTE PEPE

MOKAI AND THE CRUCIFIXION STATEMENTS

STATEMENTS ON FAMILY

SEPATI LETAE

YOU CAN NOT TAKE

THIS AWAY FROM

HER

THERE ALWAYS WITH YOU UNTIL THEN

MY

FAMILY

TREE

AFRICA

INDIA

CHINA

EUROPE

HIS WORD

THE VINDICTIVE OPPRESSOR, WHEN

HE FAILS TO CATEGORISE IN HIS

CONCEPTION OF WHAT POETRY IS THERE

WHEN HE CANNOT CONTROL BY FORCE OR SCIENTIFIC PSYCHOLOGY HE RESORTS TO

DISTRACTION AS IN MY CASE THE SOUTH AFRICA (^{KHOI KHOI} KGOESAN) BUSHMAN

you wouldn't know

LUNACY Be his pride. Joy of freedom and other non

surface blessings one never knows

ANCESTRAL ROCK OF AGES

Victim



You wouldn't know NON From Not and for your

familliarly in the Kingdom of fantasy

but then again,

PICTURE by

PHONE

YOU WOULdn't know another End

SEROTE

for my mother BETTY SONINI

AND MY MOTHER NOZI

THE Big Lady

ONE of MINE

VindICTIVE – DISCRIMINATION IN

THE ARTS

DISCRIMINATION THIS TIME

MENTAL

CORRUPTION



neo muyanga Mon, Sep 2, 2019

dear stacy and kaushik,

i've been traveling again, so ooh catching up to the emails your e sent now. i was glad to read the outline based in your discussion. and i enjoyed reading the essay by dimit.

just to say, i'm interested in the idea of thinking about some of what we might do as a performance lecture - to me that aligns well with telling stories, using multiples media and modalities.

for now, reading and thinking more.

more soon.

neo

Stacy Hardy Tue, Sep 3, 2019

Dearest Kaushik, brother Neo

Kaushik, safe travels. Breaths are halations through which we trail space.

Thank you for the wonderful provocation. I'm struck by the crossover between the implosion and the workshops Janina Kehr and I did in Mannheim - ours, a body mapping project that started from the proposal that the body can think in ways from which consciousness would do well to learn. We invited everyone to literally trace their body shapes of giant pieces of paper and map object of encounter and their histories. I attach our provocations:

Aim: thinking-feeling the body's unbounded relation to other bodies and how our bodies constantly change over time and through forces both biological, chemical, political, economic and social.

Assumption: an assembly of history's and illnesses' traces is deposited in and through our bodies.

Reading it I was also suddenly struck that of course Deleuze suffered from tuberculosis!

1947: 'Deleuze's health was already sufficiently poor that he did not receive the medical certificate required for taking the aggregation examination'; he experienced 'violent asthma attacks' and was 'having trouble breathing').

1968: Deleuze is working on his doctoral thesis, Difference and Repetition. He is 'often extremely tired' and consults a doctor who diagnoses 'the return of his tuberculosis, which had resisted antibiotics and made an enormous hole in his lungs'. (quotes from Dosse's Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari: Intersecting Lives).

Of course as Derrida warns in his our wonderful 'biography': the biography of the philosopher is necessarily impossible. But I can't help but be struck how the idea of air, and particularly of the breath

of fresh air repeatedly appears in Deleuze's thought, in the thought of a philosopher whose embodied experience was of the struggle to breathe: from 'a schizophrenic out for a walk is a better model than a neurotic lying on the analyst's couch. A breath of fresh air, a relationship with the outside world' to 'to let in a breath of fresh air from the chaos' to defenestrating himself. And of course a body without organs or a material process of disorganizing and a body forces us to think in the form of new thoughts that are irreducible to thought defined as rationality.

Then, a new way of thinking health, bodies and thought beyond their traditional humanist and anthropocentric formulations. Which seems at the heart of our project.

I very much look forward to taking up the implosions and think it could be deployed as a marvelous tool to think through our work together for the duration of the project.

Sending you both much love and thanks for the marvellous thought-gifts!

stacy hardy & janina kehr – 22 June 2019 - Mannheim - Fever

Archives of the Body /Body Maps

Aim: thinking-feeling the body's unbounded relation to other bodies and how our bodies constantly change over time and through forces at once biological, chemical, political, economic and social

Assumption: an assembly of history's and illnesses' traces is deposited in and through our bodies

Entering our bodies

Marks, Scars, and Traces: (re-)scripting inflictions

Each body bears multiple marks, scars and traces: sites where bodies have been cut, or burned, or broken, or stitched, or healed; sites on the exterior, or the inside... Each of these marks is a story and carries traces of a past which makes and remakes itself present. Can we (re-)script inflictions, treatments and healings from our body's marks and traces?

The Body as Pharmacy: cataloguing substances, drugs and pharmaceuticals

Which drugs and substances are inside us? How many pills have we taken in our lives? How do we auto-medicate our bodies? By entering our body through the drugs we consume, we want to think about the production, consumption and access of drugs as well as the ways they enter our bodies and minds.

Illness and Communities: towards relations of care?

One might feel utterly lonely in times of illness, and yet illness sensitises us to the fact that we are interdependent on each other. Infections travel between bodies, within communities and beyond them. Who cares for us? Who do we care for? Which communities are we thrown into during sickness and disease, wanted or unwanted? Which processes of exclusion and inclusion are at play?

The Body's Porosity: oddities and entanglements

Our bodies are porous. They depend on multiple vital entanglements with the world, through the body's orifices and pores. Easy binary demarcations between the "inside" and the "outside" do not hold. Food, liquids, breath, defecation, sex, bacteria, fungi... constitute, nourish and poison our bodies. The holes and pores of our bodies absorb and release. How can we map the entanglement of our bodies with other bodies and the world around us, if we map the body's porosities, deposits, segregations and penetrations?

Embodied Histories: individual suffering and socio-political diagnoses

Being sick is very personal but never personal only. Many diseases carry power-laden meanings. Cancer – Depression – Anxiety – Aids – Diabetes – Alzheimer – Tuberculosis – Ebola ... The meanings of diseases "we have" are transformed in the interplay of science, medicine, politics, capital, and experience. How do we embody society, politics and the economy through illness experiences? Who can embody which disease, how and why?

very quick question re munich

Kaushik Sunder Rajan Thu, Sep 26, 2019

Dear Stacy and Neo,

I hope you are both doing well. Stacy, are you in Cairo now?

I'm back in Chicago, and just trying to see if I can figure out a way to get to Munich for your shows in November. I'm taking the scenic route, since the world TB conference is in Hyderabad just before, and a number of folk from Cape Town (including Anastasia) will be there, so I'm planning to go there and seeing if I can get a stop in Munich to see your performance on Nov 7 on the way back. Let me know if that works for you both? It will be a flying visit (literally), but I would love to see the show, and to catch up in person, even if briefly.

Just getting organized with work stuff, so will write about grant applications and other matters very soon.

with love and warm thoughts to you both,
kaushik

Stacy Hardy

Thu, Sep 26, 2019

Kaushik we'd love to see you in Munich - even if briefly. I will book you complimentary tickets (tickets? how many?) for the 7th. The conference sounds amazing - I look forward to hearing about it.

All the best
xs

Kaushik Sunder Rajan Thu, Sep 26, 2019

Ticket would be great! For me for sure, though I am spreading the word - especially to an extended family of wonderful bavarian musicians, some of whom might come and all of whom are lovely. but i assume they can buy their own tickets somewhere?

Conference sounds great, Tash will be there, and we're chatting about wherever this all goes ...

xo,
k.

Megan Wainwright's work

Kaushik Sunder Rajan Sun, Oct 6, 2019

Dear Stacy and Neo,

I was wondering if you were aware of Megan Wainwright's work? I think it's very interesting, and she's been part of a group in Durham that works on breath. A couple of her articles attached, fyi.

as ever,
k.

[Wainwright: Is a qualitative perspective missing from COPD guidelines?](#)

[Wainwright: Exploring ambivalent oxygen machine–people–world relations through the lens of postphenomenology](#)

As a hybrid of research, lecture, visual art and performative narrative techniques, the **performance lecture** as format addresses key questions of the status and potential of art in pedagogy, as well as the mechanisms of producing and framing knowledge.

Operating between art and knowledge, between art and research and between art and forms of mediation and/or dissemination it is, on one hand, an educational or mediation format, and, on the other, it engages with performing arts and the spectacle. It thus allows for an experimental and hybrid praxis which wishes to expand beyond the already codified formats of both the classroom and lecture hall, and the installation, the performance or the happening and, in consequence, takes on a promiscuous and heterogeneous quality.

Our aim is to use the genre's characteristics, its aesthetics and location at the intersection of artistic and academic discourse, as well as its vulnerability and immediacy, as a way to process and present the knowledge aggregated and exchanged through both poetic research and political, philosophical, popular cultural, legal and anthropological investigation, to diverse audiences in very different contexts.

While each performance will take its own unique form based on its focus, location and audience, we envisage a form that collages personal narrative with archival material, empirical observation with artistic expression and text with music and visuals to create an unsettling musical and poetic voice that challenges the division between lecturer / performer and the audience and that enables a greater intellectual, emotive and affective commitment from all.

Kaushik Sunder Rajan Tue, Oct 22, 2019

Dear Stacy and Neo,

I hope this is not an inappropriate e-mail for me to write. But I wanted to say that as I saw the words emerge between us, a part of me came alive that I did not know existed. I do not know if we will get this grant; I do know that the gift of being an academic is to be able to think with others who touch us.

South Africa touched me in a way that I had not anticipated, when I first visited for JWTC in 2015. Neo, your performance then contributed to this. I had never then thought I would have the privilege to think and work and collaborate with you. Stacy, your performance with Victor Gama at Chimurenga ... what can I say? You helped ensure that South Africa touched me again. And again. Irrevocably.

You say you want to write differently, but how do you write when you do not have the words? How do you express when you do not know music? How do I express an acknowledgment of shared complexity, and inheritance, and loss, when my August in South Africa was inhabited by the loss of my own first country, India, to an unrecognizable fascism?

To be able to think and write and potentially create with you both ... this is a gift that cannot be repaid. I attach one of my photographs, in a way that cannot explain, but that might hopefully nonetheless indicate the depth of my sense of gratitude, privilege and mourning that I feel to be able to work with you both, with your country that has touched me so ... because it shares skin with mine, the country that my parents built, the country that I have lost forever, the country that your words and thoughts and music help re-sculpt for me, in ways that are irrevocably lost, and present, and fragile, and still-to-come.

Thank you, for this opportunity to breathe together.

k.



Wed, Oct 23, 2019

Stacy Hardy

Dear Kaushik, Brother Neo

The photograph is perfect and powerful.

I deeply appreciate you sending it and this message. And felt similarly inspired and deeply grateful. I'm extremely excited by what has emerged through our voices breathing together - its somehow important.

Lots more soon!

with love

lecture

neo muyanga

Tue, Nov 12, 2019

dear stacy and kaushik,

i hope this finds you both well? it was a pleasure meeting up again. inspired some thoughts more in me. and i remember i promised to send you samples of what i've been watching for inspiration towards alternative lecture performance structure and strategy.

herewith,

the kentridge <https://youtu.be/i2RfYvNzjEg>

bernstein <https://youtu.be/8fHi36dvTdE>

pamela z <https://youtu.be/ebxvVJwGWek>

bruno latour <https://youtu.be/gzPROcdlMuE>

gates <https://youtu.be/n1M5OyYGtBg>

danielsson <https://youtu.be/g9NWPos7VAk>

spooky <https://youtu.be/jM69XPC9oeI>

maya rao <https://youtu.be/kPYIMCFou6U>

let's keep talking and developing the ideas.
warmest from amsterdam.
neo

kinshipping

Stacy Hardy Thu, Dec 5, 2019

Dear Kaushik and Neo

Then I'm writing today to see if either of you are interested in a small opportunity that's popped up in Basel next year.

Please do excuse the lengthy mail but it requires some back story.

I've been invited by Kadiatou Diallo (a wonderful artist and researcher) to participate in a series of encounters/ discussions workshops at Kaserne in Basel (<https://www.kaserne-basel.ch/en>) that spring from questions of artistic practice (from the so-called South) as transformative and knowledge generation tool.

I told Kadiatou Diallo about our project and she's really excited and hopes we might be interest in using the space of this encounters series as a platform for initial experiments - to talk but also for experimental and performative elements - and to play.

She also thinks they might provide a starting point to explore our ideas of a European performance lecture with Janina and or others and to find potential collaborators and funders for this.

I've agreed to take part because I like how Kadiatou works and thinks but also because it might offer an opportunity to continue some conversations I started in Munch. Specifically, I've been talking to a thinker and dramaturg Max-Philip Aschenbrenner whose work intersects with mine on many levels - from bacteria to bringing together the medical-materialistic and the postcolonial discourse.

His currently involved in this <https://ferment-mutterkorn.de/> but is interested in discussing a collab bringing together the medical-materialistic and the postcolonial discourse, as a lens through which to explore german colonialism - wearing the glasses of the SPK - following economy and philanthropy - germany used medicine and art as the main tactic to colonise... from Virchow who discovered the tuberculosis bacteria and had the biggest collection of chopped of heads (still stored in the cellars of Charite clinic) on beautiful small silver frames to do studies in physiognomy... or how this perspective turns the slogan of the Nazis ‚Arbeit macht frei‘ into ‚Krankheit macht frei‘.

As Max writes "I am at the very beginning of a path here looking at things and was very glad to connect with you who seems to be so much more into it. If you have anythings to share, that i could read or go deeper into, i would be more than grateful!"

So I've agreed to participate in Basel. But the invitation is open to all of us! Kaushik, Neo - are either of you interested?

With much love!

wind

Stacy Hardy Sun, Dec 8, 2019

dear neo and kaushik

today the wind is screaming and weeping through the mountains here in the rural eastern cape.

and i wonder: where does the breath end and the wind begin?

Stacy Hardy Tue, Dec 10, 2019

and a beautiful duet/ duel and a lesson in breathing here:

<https://vimeo.com/374243350>

Stacy Hardy

Mon, Dec 23, 2019

dear kaushik

i'd be very happy to come engage your students - to be honest every interaction i have with you is of benefit and inspiring so yes, from my side definitely. but for me its always about how to benefit the students and enrich what you are doing. i hope we can find a way to do this in conversation? keen to hear more about the program and what you are teaching so i can find points of intersection.

send my love from between the rolling hills of a drought ravaged eastern cape - the stark startling beauty of death and destruction.

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

Thu, Dec 26, 2019

dear stacy,

i'm very happy that you are in principle keen and able to come to vienna. the course itself: there is not much to say at the moment, in that i have never taught it before. u chicago undergraduates have study abroad programs in different places, and each of them has a different curriculum. for some reason, their sequence in vienna is part of the human rights core curriculum. the college has a core curriculum is various broad topical areas, and the human rights core is administered by the pozen center for human rights, of which i am a faculty board member. on the one hand, the center itself has a fairly liberal humanist commitment to "rights", in ways that many on the left would likely critique. on the other hand, the members of the center have a wide range of interests and commitments, and the actual ways in which conversations about human rights are taught and presented are remarkably multi-variate and interesting.

i've never myself taught in this sequence, which has traditionally been three 3-week sequences, centered broadly around "philosophy of", "history of", and "contemporary issues in" human rights respectively. but

that is up for grabs now, and the hope is to reformat the sequence, in ways that are largely driven by faculty commitments. so i want to teach my course as a human rights "from the south", more specifically from south africa (though i might include some indian material too). specifically, i want to do some of the readings that would allow me to think through some of my investments in the larger project, around constitutionalism as a global southern political form, and not just as something that is derivative of euro-american discourses. my 3-week sequence will be preceded by a course that explores the political theory of rights, from a more typically eurocentric perspective. i hope in a sense to provoke thinking (and rethinking) about that by running a counter-narrative of what it would mean to think this from the south africa. so maybe something that starts with the freedom charter; thinks through key elements of the anti-apartheid struggle and some of its philosophical and ideational underpinnings; thinks about the place of the left and trade unionism; reads steve biko; maybe something about the mozambican revolution; the period of transition; but also think about some of the debates around constitutionalism, including thinking about the place of socio-economic rights in a constitutional program; ideas and ideals of constitutionalism as "substantive revolution" and their genealogies (laurie ackermann through hans kelsen etc.); something about the TRC; through to contemporary critiques of constitutionalism, as manifested in things from service delivery protests to debates around expropriation without compensation. how this will materialize in a syllabus is far from clear at this point, since they can't do *too* much reading (they meet every day of the week); but they're usually a bright and motivated bunch. of course, the place of literature and poetry must figure in all of this, in ways that i have not yet thought about. so too must pan-africanism, also in ways that i have not determined. so it would indeed be lovely to think through all of this with you, and to see how you might like to fit something in. basically, the intellectual space exists to do whatever you would like, within the very broad problem-space outlined above. I don't want the arc of the class to be "for" or "against" rights in any simple sense, but i do want to articulate a critical genealogy of constitutional decolonization, in order to ask about its affordances and constraints (especially in relation to histories of white monopoly capitalism and settler colonialism), in order to provoke the question of how we might theorize rights from the south. a lot of the students are policy majors or aspiring lawyers, so i'm hoping such provocations will get them to think about what decolonial agendas mean, even if we don't settle upon a particular politics of decolonization that we all share.

more soon, and love,
k.

Stacy Hardy

Fri, Dec 27, 2019

dear kaushik

wonderful - there are certainly lots of ways I can see to contribute here. firstly and most obviously I can compile a reader of south african poetry and music that gives voice to and problematizes these question - via black consciousness poets / musicians like mafika guala, ingoapele madingoane, serote, lefifi tladi, dollar brand, the blue notes and brotherhood of breathe, molombo and many more and then more especially the post-apartheid generation of dissonants who challenged the trc and new concepts of freedom etc seithamo motsapi, ike mbonene muila, khulile nxumalo, lesego rampolokeng, phillip zhuwao, zim ngqawana etc etc.

maybe we can include a series of poetry reading evenings and listening sessions that are more social and informal?

secondly i'd love to engage and challenge the question of human rights from a different position. here maybe using the testimony of Mrs Konile (the basis of Antjie Krog, Nosisi Mpolweni and Kopano Ratele's important book 'There Was This Goat') to argue individual vs community rights, Glissant's right to opacity and the question of the human and the need to move beyond this via indigenous knowledge systems etc.

Mrs Konile says it better in her testimony: "I went home to collect coal and sustain my life. While I was collecting coal, a rock hit me. I was taken to hospital. At the hospital, the doctor identified me as the mother of Zabonke (her son), a terrorist. The doctor then chased me away. The doctor said go back under the rocks, you are not human that is where you belong." and "We [Mrs Konile and her friend accompanying her] went and came back from the grant office. I said to her, the one I was going with, I said, Heyi! You know what, my heart's palpitating with a strange feeling [after having seen Pheza who lives in Cape Town, but is suddenly in Indwe] and it persists. Last night I had a dream a bad dream. I dreamt that here at the door there was a goat that was standing, like this [gesturing], eh standing like this [gesturing with her hands], and my friend laughed and said, Eyi! You really had a bad dream. Next to the tree."

finally there is something very beautiful to be done around testimony and voice and human rights via Salvadoran novelist Horacio Castellanos Moya's book *Senseless* and Congolese author Sinzo Aanza's fiction *The Papers* and Krog's country of my skull and Mexican poets like Sara Uribe's *Antígona González*...but need to give this more thought.

let me know your initial responses to these ideas and let's keep dreaming and exchanging etc.

love across the ocean

Stacy Hardy Fri, Dec 27, 2019

also of course on the question and position of the human in human rights - everyone from Clapperton to Amos Tutuola and Semonally Sylvia Wynter's concerns about the ways in which the figure of the human is tied to epistemological histories that presently value a genre of the human that reifies western bourgeois tenets; and opening pathway to dwell on what means to be human and, more important, how we might give humanness a different future, a different form, more humane than human.

Fri, Jan 3

Stacy Hardy

Dear Kaushik

A strangely dark day here today - low clouds and mist hugging the Eastern Cape mountains but not the

rain we need to break the devastating drought here. And woke to the news of Qassem Soleimani assassination and excludating global tensions.. so a real sense of our dark days... which also always infuses me with the urgency of the work ahead.

My thinking is currently that the politics and poetics of breath as we've been initially conceiving it could be a fabulous way to pull all these seemingly disparate events and explosions together.

If we use the Kaserne evening to, as Kadiatou proposes, to think together with other thinkers and artists there, of performance lecture as a tool and to experiment with delivery of the research... we could take a few approaches - te first I can think of is to put together say 5 fragments on breathing for our current thinking and reading and work with different artists to give these form and present them. I would also be curious to take elements and fragments from our proposal that we submitted to Neubauer and try to animate these.. so in fact to present a proposal as itself a creative propose and thing - which I really felt it was in writing it... and in that way to start to create a small performance that speaks the project and acts as provocation toward further research and creation. as Claude Lévi-Strauss says "Breath can become part of a story and as my body reproduces the gait of that story, so my mind embraces its meaning".

For the Basel students breath can be the tool we use to challenge their own colonial inheritance through the questions and processes proposed in pulmonographies (own disease history, swiss air, breath as culture as resistance...). Currently rereading Thomas Mann's Magic Mountain which is of course set in Switzerland and there is an enormously interesting history of Swiss TB sanatoriums and their later links to the Nazi's etc that insects with the colonial history of TB sanatoriums in South Africa and onwards to all our other research.

It would also be exciting for me to use breath as the invisible thread animating what I do with your students - its presence in BC poetry and in music - one of the groups we'll certainly be listening to are The Brotherhood of Breath! So really to engage this brotherhood - who 'We' are and what 'We' can create. What kinds of resistance and freedom can 'We' create if 'We' learn to shift our perception of the borders between ourselves—the borders between us etc etc.

Anyway, it seems certain we will be working together soon.

What else?

Let me know if I forget anything.

So looking forward to this. THANK YOU FOR COMING ROUND TO PLAY

Much love and a happy start to what promises to be a fabulous and fun year

TRANSCRIPT(ion)

deadly air case

Stacy Hardy

Wed, Jan 8, 12:50 PM

dearest k

for tonight a quick on in the news here that might be of interest to you

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-01-05-energy-land-and-law-this-year-its-personal/>

<https://lifeaftercoal.org.za/about/deadly-air>

speaking soon

Pulmonographies image

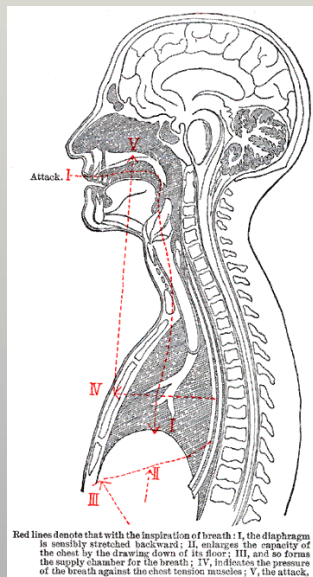
Stacy Hardy

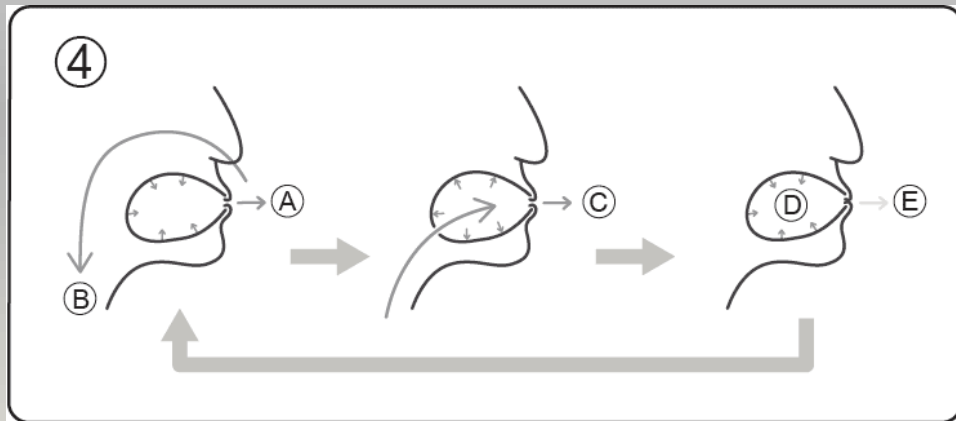
Thu, Jan 16

do either of you have any thoughts on images?

we of course have all the teba archive images collected for museum of lungs and loads of xrays of tb etc etc. and then the images from books in our extensive library.

but wondered about something more abstract?





my choice would actually be the beautiful intimate enigmatic images Kaushik sent in thanks - but that might not be appropriate?

Stacy Hardy

Thu, Jan 16, 7:34 AM

still on images - kaushik i also love your notebooks - i remember watching you take research notes and writing in "diagrams" while we were doing research in CPT and JHB.

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

Fri, Jan 17, 12:51 AM

Dear both,

I'm not sure the photo that I sent you would be a legible cover for the project, though it is uncannily resonant for me (thank you for picking up on it, Stacy!), but I'd like to think here about what breath would "look" like - precisely the impossibility of photography as simply a manifestation of the visual, because of course it is so much more.

I do attach a photo, not quite a possibility but an offering - because it is a photo I made on the very days the three of us were meeting and conceiving this. It is certainly not about TB, or about breath. But perhaps about a wisp, or friendship. Perhaps equally illegible for our formal purposes, but nonetheless ... here it is.



Stacy Hardy

Fri, Jan 17

Dear Kaushik

I love the image - to me it recalls the uncanny resemblance between the capillaries and air sacs in lungs and flowers and trees (from the Museum of Lungs script: "I pick my way through dust-damaged silica air sacs. Hallways of silence. A forest of bronchial branches opens before me. As I move deeper blood vessels explode into a million blooming flowers. Then I hear it. The sound of breathing. At first I think it is one set of lungs, someone in the archive with me... but then I realise I am hearing thousands of lungs. All of them breathing in unison.") But also my question: "when does breathe turn into wind" and something Victor Gama said to me right before his performance in Cape Town where we first met: "the sound of the wind is the memory of air, what we hear, its sound in trees and howling, is a trace of air that has past"... so yes, very happy with this!

I also attach two images from Museum of Lungs that could work in this context - but I very much prefer the flowers!



neo muyanga

Fri, Jan 17

dear stacy and kaushik,

i too really like the images you both have shared.. really.

i think they all point to the different dimensions we will need to mull over together ... my suggestion is one though: i think the photos offered all read as 'transparent' and 'comprehensible' studies inside the scope of the project what we are discussing. importantly though, pulmonographies, as might have previously been imagined, is/are no longer simply about natural acts of breathing in order to stay alive. as we've already touched on these questions, how are we collectively, globally, going to reconsider ideas such as 'nature' or what is 'natural' for bodies to inspire, to consume, to assimilate? the very act of breathing may (soon?) prove something too dangerous to and for (some of) us to engage.

so...could we not ask someone (no idea who, at this point) who could pull elements from some (all?) of these images and to design a quirky collage that speaks of some 'strangeness'? i think what i miss from all of the images so far is 'strangeness'.

please let know what you think?

bless,

n

Stacy Hardy

Sat, Jan 18

dear neo

yes! you raise such an important point here. and it's a very present reality. radiation of some mine dumps in joburg is at higher levels than the chernobyl restricted area. coal-fired power stations in SA kill an estimated 320 people a year. already though who breathe clean air often do it at the expense of others (we make our lives by the deaths of others and echoes of fees must fall: you're stealing all the oxygen in the room!) and deeply struck by the irony that Davos, that small town in southeastern Switzerland, that became a haven for tuberculosis sufferers in the 1800s and 1900s, with one of the most famous sanatoriums of the era, is now the home of the World Economic forum, and that South African Glencore mining magnet Ivan Glasenberg emigrated to Switzerland for the tax breaks and clean air.. and i could go on... more more more....

i was recently inspired by this work (in our library which i'm getting there on sharing): Algae Opera:

<https://www.burtonnitta.co.uk/AlgaeOpera.html>

so yes on the collage! - with your permission i'll collect together a few more images that i feel would really work in this context.

much much thanks and love

basel performance

Stacy Hardy

Sun, Feb 2

just sharing the paragraph we're using for my performance at kaserne in basel. more to follow as the project and collaborators take shape:

"How do you breathe correctly? How often should you take a deep breath? What if the air that surrounds you is polluted? Contaminated by uranium and asbestos from the mining industry? Poisoned by history? By hate and violence? What if breathing makes you dizzy? What if it makes you sick? What if the air carries bacteria?"

Pulmonographies is a research- and performance-based collaboration between anthropologist Kaushik Sunder Rajan (India/ USA), writer Stacy Hardy (South Africa) and composer Neo Muyanga (South Africa) that explores biographies and geographies of breath, through a focus on the colonial histories and postcolonial politics surrounding tuberculosis in South Africa.

Operating between art and knowledge, between art and research and between art and forms of mediation and/or dissemination, the project uses the collaborative form of the performance lecture to understand and elucidate racialized political economic histories in South Africa by imagining how breathers of the world might conspire together.

In Basel, Hardy collaborates with a selection of the city's creative breathers to speculate on our shared histories of illness and dis-ease and find expression for this through radically improvised, dialogic, multimodal creative and performative modalities.

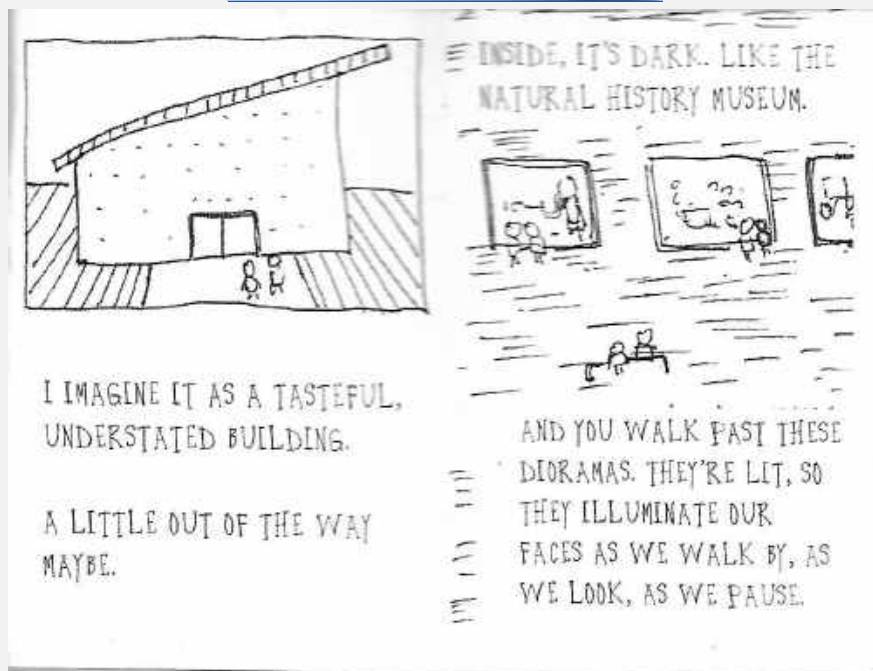
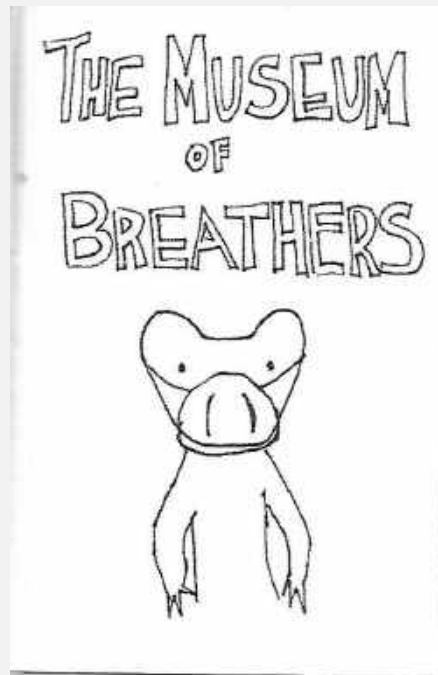
Drawing from a number of traditions of breathing, we experiment with the performance lecture as a tool to explore the potential of both breath and breathlessness to share and create knowledge - from the rapture of singing, religious ecstasy, falling in love and enjambment in poetic metrics, to the rupture of coughing, wheezing, panting, panic attacks, free jazz, orgasms, hiccupping (the diaphragm leaps, irresistibly!).

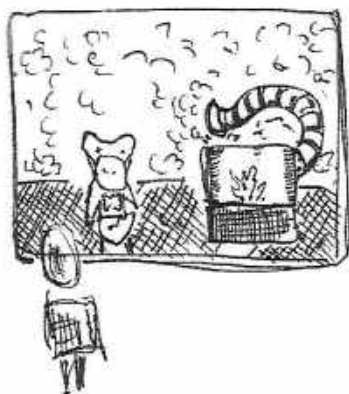
The phrase "Breathers of the world, conspire!" comes from my colleague, friend, inspiration, co-conspirator, Tim Choy. "The Museum of Breathers" is something he made a couple of years ago. I could not have imagined the question of breath as a

question of politics, in the terms that I do, if he hadn't posed it to me, now over 15 years ago. For me, this project is in part the inheritance of that shared breath.

Tim and I happened to be together in Washington, DC, the day Donald Trump was elected president. The air felt sucked out of the city that day, and we both felt unable to breathe.

- Kaushik





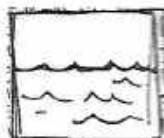
WHAT WOULD IT MEAN, OR DO,
TO FACE OUR ATMOSPHERIC KIN,
WITH WHOM WE SHARE AN
UNEVEN, UNEQUAL MEDIUM?



LIVING, RESPIRING, TRAFFICKING IN
SUSPENSIONS. LABORED BREATHING,
BREATHS AS LABOR. THEY ARE OUR
CONDITIONS OF VALUE.



THE TB SNIFFING
HERO RATS OF
TANZANIA



THE CARBON-
SEQUESTERING
OCEANS



THE INHALERS



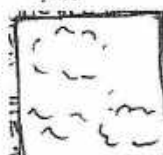
THE MUSHROOMS
WHO EAT OUR
ILLS



THE NOSES,
THE LUNGS,
THE SKINS,
THAT SMELL,
STING



THE SENSORS, THE
SLIDES, THE TUBES,
THE
CHROMATOGRAPHS,
THAT MAKE
SENSIBLE



THE SKIES THAT
HOLD AND
RELEASE OUR
BURDENS



[Museum of Breathers, © Timothy Choy]

kim fortun on late industrialism

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

Sat, Feb 8

dear neo and stacy,

i wanted to send you this 2012 essay by kim fortun on late industrialism, which i am teaching in my ethnographic methods class on monday. re-reading it in the light of our conversations, i realize how apropos it is to our collaboration, at least from the perspective of ethnographic form. i was just with kim in irvine this weekend, and she's very excited to potentially host archives or snippets of our collaboration on the asthma files (described in the essay).

with love to you both,

Kaushik

[Kim Fortun: Ethnography in Late Industrialism](#)

hope you are both well

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

Mon, Mar 23

thinking of you both in these strange times of corona, wherever you are. i should have been in south africa this week, but of course am confined to chicago (and to the house) for the foreseeable future. it is a time to transcribe interviews, catch up on reading, go through my research material from my south african sojourn last year - so not all to the bad, and hopefully thoughts and ideas will emerge. but the ghastliness and venality of the politics around this epidemic in this country continues to sicken, literally and figuratively.

the politics of breath, indeed. is there any way we can think along and together, virtually, in these times?

much love to you both,

k.

Stacy Hardy

Tue, Mar 24, 2:42 AM

Dear Kaushik and Neo

Hello from Cairo. Marooned here with airport closures etc. Not a bad place to be except that if you do get sick you are either ignored or disappeared by the government so as not to add to the numbers. Toxic politics of breath indeed.

I would deeply value an engagement - to hear what and how you are thinking in these times. And find a way to realise the urgencies of the project.

Looking forward to shared thoughts and breath.

And love always.

tb against corona?

Stacy Hardy

Wed, Mar 25

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/03/can-century-old-tb-vaccine-steel-immune-system-against-new-coronavirus>

Stacy Hardy

Wed, Mar 25

And very struck that at a time when breath is on everyone's lips, there's an opportunity to try to use this to push our thinking. To take risks. Be bold. We really do need to find new ways to breath.

And loved the optimism and raw fun of the attached.

xs

[The Society of the Friends of the Virus](#)

What our contagion fables are really about

Sat, Mar 28

Kadiatou Diallo

Dear all,

Hope you are making the very best of the isolation.
I stumbled across this today and wanted to share it:)

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/03/30/what-our-contagion-fables-are-really-about>

More defiant hugs

Kadiatou

things on my mind

Mon, Apr 6

Stacy Hardy

Ahead of our meeting tomorrow I've put down some notes on things I've been thinking on and busy with.

Mostly I hope we can talk about how to work together going forward and possibly create a schedule/ ritual engagement?

I finished the first draft of the Libretto I'm working on yesterday and this week I'm in a daily virtual workshop with the composer and musicians but after that I'm very much less hectic.

Firstly, I thought this moment might be an opportunity to engage some South African musicians and poets in conversation about breath. How they are breathing - under the asphyxiation of lockdown, as peoples whose lives and livelihoods depend on breath and sharing breath. But also breathing to questions on breathes place in their music and poetry, and in black music and poetry and South African history - the vocal expression of traditional healers and sangomas and ibongi, the collective breathing of choirs; circular breathing of jazz and the voicing of breath in free jazz musicians and the disruption of air through intentional, intense breathing in protest etc. And how air gives rise to musical textures where a voice never ceases to become an instrument and an instrument to become a voice. etc. And then how would political responses to public problems change were we to take seriously the politics of breath.

Neo I was thinking: Tumi, Siya, Sisonke, Sibusile, Bokani, Ntuli, Marcus, Carlo, Cara, Lesego, Dolla, Vangi, Makhafula, Karen, Mxo etc.

Your suggestions here?

The ideal might be to try gather a few of them together in an online room but I'm loath to ask anyone to participate in any kind of "event" without payment right now. So probably I'll speak to them individually and then try to mix it all together into some kind of podcast/ radio show/ radio play.

Then there is letters to Edwin (for Basel performance). Neo, Edwin Ramirez is a queer, disabled, afrolatinx Stand-Up Comedian, Poet and Performance artist based in Zurich, Switzerland. - this started as shared research into joint histories of breath in SA and Switzerland/ Europe... we had started slapping this into some kind of text. See below for a small fragment of a 30-page unedited mess.

But since then we thought to use the moment to engage possibilities the form of the letter writing holds to be in the now so to speak and both deeply personal and political... and also to produce knowledge (an epistolary performance lecture?) I've been tracing the share histories - convergences and divergences between Covid19 and TB - fascinating!!! I hope to send the first letter in the next 10 days.

I also thought it might be good to try to talk to / interview Anastasia... her responses from the now?

Then I have a lot of thoughts for future things that there isn't a big urgency on - Neo at your prompt I've been researching the "Anatomy Lesson" as one of the early forms of performance lecture. I've also had an idea to explore the ex-voto painting tradition - from Mexico but also elsewhere in the global South - as a form of storytelling for TB survivors... and more.

Finally - the Library - I have to get this done before my conscience gets me! So it will soon come.

Towards a Basel script

Some breaths have more value. Some breathes are purer, more worthy of legal protection than others.

One of the great breathers of the twentieth century and Nobel literature prize winner Elias Canetti warned us of the thinkers who have not breathed enough.

Enter Canetti: It is not enough to think, one also has to breathe. Dangerous are the thinkers who have not breathed enough.

German thinker Peter Sloterdijk labels gassing as the atmospheric terror or atmoterrorism.

Sloterdijk: an attempt to anthropogenically dominate the body's environment, with the objective to gain total control over the body to the point of its demise.

Gas is in Giorgio Agamben phraseology is the practice of exception because it so brilliantly incorporates what is a natural practice, that is breathing, into a biopolitical killing machine.

For more than 2,000 years, human ingenuity has turned natural and synthetic poisons into weapons of war.

In 1918 German chemist Fritz Haber received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1918 for his invention of the Haber-Bosch process, a method used in industry to synthesize ammonia from nitrogen gas and hydrogen gas.

Haber used his considerable intelligence to militarise chemistry in World War I; in April 1915 at Ypres he witnessed the first fruits of this labor, the first large-scale use of chemical weapons in contemporary warfare.

After World War I the Allies deemed Haber a war criminal for his work, and he lay low briefly in Switzerland until his name was removed from the wanted list.

Haber continued to research and to promote chemical weapons after the war.

A member of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, he died in 1934, Basel, Switzerland.

A January 23, 2020 news report: Swiss police used tear gas to subdue demonstrators in Zurich who ignited fireworks and threw bottles as part of a protest targeting the annual World Economic Forum conference in Davos.

It's a familiar scene.

A picture. Children with their eyes weeping. The caption tells me it's taken during student protests in Western Township. The year is 1985.

In South Africa tear gas is again on the streets to quell the recent student uprisings. Little has changed in the scene except the police uniforms. They now wear full protective gear: vests and helmets, masks.

It is late afternoon and the light is tinged yellow, the bruise of darkness looming. In the air, a smell of smoke, teargas. The protesters start to disperse, break into small groups, walking like people under hypnosis. I try to leave too, to go home, but the scene keeps replaying.

An afterimage of chaos.

That night I can't stop replaying the images. My eyes are streaming, but I'm not sure if it's tear gas or if I'm crying or what the difference is.

The irony of a weapon that provokes the same reaction as sorrow and mourning.

Among the remedies for tear gas—a cold-water rinse, turn to face the wind, weep freely.

It is said tears are a sign of powerlessness, a woman's weapon.

When I cry too much I stop being able to breathe. My throat collapses from the salt.

A friend tells me in Switzerland they say children must be left to cry, for while they cry their hearts grow.

In another myth, the more the dead man is wept over, the more water he must bail in the underworld. Thus it's said that one should shed at most a cup's worth of tears for a dead child.

Photos of children and items of clothing found at Auschwitz.

Sounds of weeping.

We see an operating table, test tubes and medical instruments used on the prisoners.

Deceased children, suffering from their mothers' tears, appear and point to their wet, heavy little shirts. They lug along a bucket, filled to the brim with tears, and won't let themselves be laid back in the grave until their mothers promise to stop crying.

No one weeps for the Algerian children asphyxiated by French colonists. Few today seem to remember that the precursor of the Nazi gas chamber was the French colonial project in Algeria. In 1845, roughly a thousand women, men, and children are estimated to have been killed within two days as a result of asphyxiation.

The French Governor-General of Algeria says: this is necessary to set a horrifying example that can strike terror among these turbulent and fanatical montagnards.

Assia Djebar's novel *L'amour, La fantasia* (Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade) recounts the events: An appalling sight. All the corpses are naked, in attitudes which indicated the convulsions they must have experienced before they expired.

The image stays with me.

A handful of bones, black as soot, which lie amid the rubble of the city.

Frantz Fanon used breathing to negotiate experiences of subordination and collective feelings and actions. In his 1952 *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon, a psychiatrist, maps out the black unconscious shaped under colonial domination and imagines, through a series of cases, a collective release from enslaved bodies and minds. He writes: It is because quite simply it was, in more than one way, becoming impossible for him to breathe.

Colonialism as suffocation; a system that sucks oxygen; makes breathing impossible.

During the recent student protests in South Africa activists echoed him.

A student enters carrying a placard that reads, "I can't breathe."

Today in the capital there is nothing that does not smell of burning. A throat choked by smoke, a mouthful of ash. I walk breathing the city's fever. On the horizon stand mountains dirt - tall, geometric, and as much a part of the landscape as the glittering skyline. Piles of waste from the country's 130-year-old gold

industry. They are poisonous and radioactive. Hulking monsters build out of mine dust containing 600,000 tons of the radioactive heavy metal uranium.

No one paints in green anymore. Everything is orange. Colors streak the silent sky like rotting beasts. Winds stir dust from the dunes. Carry it to nearby homes. It settles on roofs, roads, children's playgrounds.

On an air pollution scale, anything between zero and 20 is safe.

At 300 things are labelled dangerous.

In some areas close to Joburg pollution levels regularly hit 1 000.

Air, dirt air.

Broken bodies stand by the mine dumps and wait for the radiation to trickle into their skin.

They stand under billboards and they know the eyes that watch them own their bodies.

A more generous interpretation might be that their bodies are shared between the earth, the state and the bank.

As a friend reminds me, breathing is becoming something dangerous.

Neo Muyanga: it is no longer simply about natural acts of breathing in order to stay alive. How are we collectively, globally, going to reconsider ideas such as 'nature' or what is 'natural' for bodies to inspire, to consume, to assimilate? The very act of breathing may (soon? already) prove something too dangerous to and for (some of) us to engage.

The air itself transforms from a condition for life into a threat to life, becoming a technology of what Mbembe terms necropolitics.

Mbembe: the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die. Hence, to kill or to allow to live constitute the limits of sovereignty, its fundamental attributes. To exercise sovereignty is to exercise control over mortality and to define life as the deployment and manifestation of power.

Eight global companies have been shortlisted for the annual Public Eye awards, given to the worst violators of human rights and the environment.

At the top of the list is the Swiss commodity trading group Glencore, whose copper, cobalt, coal and gold mines, continue to pollute the air, water and soil in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Argentina, Columbia and South Africa.

Its operations have displaced and ravaged thousands of communities around the world.

The company also owns nearly a quarter of Lonmin, a platinum mine where 34 striking miners were shot dead in 2012 in one of South Africa's bloodiest police operations since apartheid.

Similar massacres have been repeated in Columbia.

Its CEO Ivan Glasenberg is one of the richest men in the world. He recently fled the pollution in Johannesburg to take up citizenship in Switzerland.

Zurich welcomes him and Glasenberg breathes freely.

Glasenberg: My hands are clean. I doused them with hand sanitizer at the office. The hand sanitizer is in an enormous container in the entrance way, next to the coffee dispenser.

Power needs only power to justify itself, reads a slide in the PowerPoint presentation.

Images flicker on the screen: High walls. The barbed wire.

With the outbreak of drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB) some hospitals in South Africa have come to resemble prisons.

During my hospital stay, forty-nine highly infectious tuberculosis patients break out of a high security hospital isolation unit, to spend Christmas with their families.

The patients say:

We're being held here like prisoners. I've seen people die and die and die. The only discharge you get from this place is to the mortuary.

We do not understand why we are locked up.

We do not understand why we will die.

We do not understand our relationship one body to another.

I find myself in sudden solidarity, secretly backing the escaped men. From my tiny isolation ward, I cheer them on.

The police have launched a manhunt. The patients have become criminals, made villainous by illness.

The authorities promise: the patients will be hunted, captured and brought back.

The World Health Organisation says: you are nothing more than a piece of data to be aggregated, to be disaggregated, to be sliced and diced into the most minute units so that we can understand how the body and the disease whirl and wallow and tick.

I think how similar the words of the health officials are to those used by politicians. The whole language of disease. How bacteria is said to invade or infiltrate, foreign agents, in the blood, in the lymph, travelling with impunity, reeking destruction.

The war on disease is launched by the medical establishment.

For the health system to get along with illness, patients must be considered outlaws, reads a statement from The Socialists' Patients Collective. A radical German Marxist organisation formed in February 1970, SPK actively promoted illness as a protest against capitalism and opposed medical doctors as the alleged ruling class of capitalism.

SPK: Turn illness into a weapon! The kidney stone that makes you suffer, it declared, was the same as the stone thrown into the control room of capitalism.

Today the clinical term is tuberculosis but I prefer the old name: consumption.

Can my sickness be an opposition to capitalist consumerism?

I'm on shaky ground. These issues are fraught and complex and there is a danger of romanticizing illness.

Friedrich Nietzsche: Enough! Enough! I can't endure it any more. Bad air! Bad air! This workshop where man fabricates ideals—it seems to me it stinks from nothing but lies.

It is opportunistic to claim to be struggling against the conditions that one is actually reproducing.

How does one protest when you're being cared for and cured by the system you are attacking?

Nobody is innocent. We are all culpable; implicated and damaged, conscripted and consigned. Often, we are not conscious of the snares in which we are caught. Yet our bodies have the capacity to expose and subvert structure, ideology and politics.

It takes bravery and humility to try to excavate the graves that surround us. I write with my face flushed with shame, scalp paled with fear.

At a time when life across the continent is increasingly threatened to consumptive capitalism, these modes of extraction and oppression take a toll on all our bodies, hearts, minds and spirits day in and day out, how we might collectively take our illness and weakness and turn them into strengths.

Zainab Amadahy: Capitalism, colonialism and heteropatriarchy make us sick. Are our responses healing us? Are our actions generating wellbeing for others? Or are we unintentionally reproducing the kind of relationships that made us sick in the first place?

How do we create something defiantly and beautifully alive out of so much violence, death and dying? How do we write this border zone – give voice to the grief, speak of the dead without diminishing our culpability? To know oneself to be monstrous and yet to seek to make something from that monstrosity, something with life and vision?

Marguerite Duras says: Finding yourself in a hole, at the bottom of a hole, in almost total solitude, and discovering that only writing can save you.

Because I am surrounded by people who murmur with no voice.

Because I am surrounded by people who die with no voice.

Because everywhere houses and streets and cities and states and nations collapse with no voice.

Because I understand that I don't exist, here or anywhere. I understand the degree to which the road is vacant even when it is crowded. I understand that I am killing myself as much as everyone around me.

Because my body is eating my body.

overwhelmed

Stacy Hardy

Sat, Apr 4

Forgive my slow reply and silence.

To be honest I've been overwhelmed - the unfathomable levels of violence, the speed and stasis, the conjunctions and disjunctions between our work and this moment. A too small already unwell body that's been even more effaced by the accelerated calls for virtual engagement. I simply don't know how to breathe.

So in keeping with our project might I suggest (ask beg?) that we do a short zoom or skype or google or facebook or whatever other fucking platform is now the coffee shop, bedroom, gallery, whorehouse, factory, office floor, seminar room.

Just to breath together briefly and both do some unprepared spontaneous dreaming and try to image a structure or schedule some opening to move despite confinement and closure.

With so much love.

dying for gold

Stacy Hardy

Tue, Apr 7

<http://www.dyingforgold.com/?fbclid=IwAR15swWjJU5Cgenf9rr0ONRdQ1Qwd4Xzl5zPokUjy1URgeQ6G9P5aU8NcEQ>

<http://www.dyingforgold.com/film.php#trailer>

robot graduates

neo muyanga

Tue, Apr 7

dears,

this is the incident i mentioned earlier.. an avatar future.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-japan-remote-gradu/robots-replace-japanese-students-at-graduation-amid-coronavirus-idUKKBN21P0VM>

btw air and electricity

Stacy Hardy

Wed, Apr 8

Dear Neo and Kaushik

Thank you for last night.

And Neo for the insane avatars and Kaushik the data.

Neo, attached is Between Air and Electricity I mentioned.

And more on medical Ex-votos painting here:

<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/exvotos/mexican.html>

related to this are Ars Moriendi - "The Art of Dying" - Latin texts on how to die written within the historical context of the macabre horrors of the Black Death. But of course there is a much older tradition of this outside the Western world (Egyptian book of the Dead and more more more... future!)... and that Western eyes are so focused on living we no longer know how to die.. but of course here and across the continent the borders of life / death are always fluid.... But of course this also wa/onders into dangerous necropolitical territories.

Then finally Kaushik of course the questions around constitutionality are made vivid and animated by the way the lock down and social distancing mimics apartheid strategies whose basis were social distance etc. The township and informal settles are built by this. It also really complicated this moment in the country's imagination. Again this has an older story via TB.

Cathy van Eck: Between Air and Electricity

first (tentative) offering

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

Sat, Apr 11

dear both,

it was so wonderful to speak with you both. a tonic.

i am attaching here a first tentative offering. right now, i am writing out a trajectory of my research from the past year. it is hard. so it is with considerable embarrassment that i send this. it is written outwards, but also written for myself.

it wasn't written for anyone else to see. i feel comfortable sharing this with you, but still it mentions thoughts still very much in formation and unformed.

i send it to you as something that is hopefully not an imposition. that is simply as is, and is currently incomplete. but it would be lovely to discuss where to take this, and especially to get your sense of where the case law / constitutionalism part of the project might meet our emergent endeavors, or perhaps more how the former set of investments might bleed in to the latter.

with much gratitude and much love,

k.

Dear Edwin - first letter

Stacy Hardy

Mon, Apr 27

Dear Edwin (and Kaushik, Neo and Chou)

Kaserne in Basel asked me to write a short text - on what COV-19 meant for our collab and KIN_SHIP-ING and how we were handling lockdowns and continuing to collaborate and our plans for November performance.

I thought to use the opportunity to kick my little arse into writing the first letter. It's a bit introductory - as it needed to provide the context but that might be necessary anyway. I'm busy with the second one which takes the form of a short video (also a request from Kaserne) and I hope to write really regularly from now on.

I won't apologise for only getting this started now as the letter already expresses that apology.

I've been thinking of you all and hope everyone is really well.

With all my love

Xs

23 April 2020

Dear Edwin

We should have been performing as part of the KIN-SHIP-ING sessions at Kaserne Basel this week. It seems so distant now. Another world. Another lifetime. Those first Skype conversations. Our instant connection despite the distance. Our shared questions: how to speculate on biographies and geographies of breath, through a focus on the colonial histories and postcolonial politics? We hoped to use our shared histories of illness (in my case tuberculosis) and dis-ease and dis-ability and find expression for this through radically improvised, dialogic, multimodal creative and performative modalities.

But as we began to work on the script, I started to notice a strange echo between our work and the news. A mysterious virus that attacked the respiratory systems of its victims had appeared. It spread like wildfire. Suddenly questions of illness and breath dominated the news. I felt a fissure open between the page and the world. When I looked at the text we were creating, I saw the world behind it; the world meanwhile took on an almost textural texture— the ambulance sirens; the danger of breathing; the search for answers - a diagnosis; the lists of symptoms, disembodied from the bodies that contained them; the loneliness of quarantine; the endless statistics - you are nothing more than a piece of data to be aggregated, to be disaggregated, to be sliced and diced into the most minute units so that we can understand how the body and the disease whir and wallow and tic; the militarisation of medicine; war on disease!

It was — and is — very difficult to focus, to navigate between each sentence and its real-time double, to find the fuzzy edges where these connections and reflections meet. Then lockdowns started. I fled Europe ahead of airport closures but only made it as far as Egypt before South Africa closed its borders. So here I am in Cairo. Like you - home away from home. I sometimes think that writing and collaborating is a way of trying to make home outside of national borders. A way to negotiate with homelessness and placelessness. To find other ways of belonging.

So we agreed to exchange letters. Our choice of that word - letters and not emails, an archaic form, deliberately luddite. Letters, as a deeper, more sustained form of writing than emails or social media. We thought to use the moment to engage possibilities the form of the letter writing holds to be in the now, so to speak, and to engage both deeply personally and politically... as well as to produce collaborative knowledge towards an epistolary performance.

And yet, I have failed until now. I confess, I'm struggling. I'm a fragile body, compromised by many years of living with TB, organs replaced by scarred tissue. I require a strict routine; careful attention to diet. Yet somehow I've let everything slip, made a big mess of my body. No one to blame but myself. Today everything hurts. I feel restless yet exhausted. My insides are hollow. I put the thermometer under my tongue several times in the morning. My face is burning, not because my body is running a temperature, but out of anxiety. More anxiety when I lie down, stand up, take a bath. Take a breath.

COVID-19, it seems, can affect the body even if you're not infected.

How are you holding up? Your body? And how it's connected to your heart and head?

Everyone keeps telling me I need to take better self-care. Often we think of self-care as an incredibly privatized thing but caring only for ourselves, partly, is the way we destroy this world and we make another. We help each other inhabit what is an otherwise uninhabitable and brutal social context.

I am thinking—talking—in images. Every feeling is physical. Struggling to write, to describe it all. Maybe it's because the questions we were asking are now on everyone's tongue. Scanning the news, I feel overwhelmed by the overload of knowledge being produced and circulated. And yet at the same time, I'm struck how absent the global South is from the discourse I read. What is missing from the situation is not information about the pandemic in places like Africa and India - we are inundated with statistics listing numbers, warning of the coming explosion, the coming famine and economic hardship. What we lack is both innovative strategies to deal with the virus in context outside the West, but also creative thinking, ideas that harness the knowledge produced and the innovative strategies to survive in context where illness and pandemics are the routine, not the exception.

Right now, I have more questions than answers.

In today's news: up to 45,000 South Africans are expected to die from Covid-19 over the next two to three years, says one of the eminent doctors advising President Cyril Ramaphosa.

These statistics are of course shocking. But last year 70 000 South African died of TB. No panic. No lockdown. No state of emergency. Barely even a mention in the media.

How do I make sense of this huge discrepancy?

Last year, 10 million fell ill from TB 1.5 million died globally.

Meaning, if we took our collective symptoms and molded them into a coherent frame of government, we could occupy the largest country in the world.

Soon it will be the smallest country.

Our official language will be fever delirium, our national anthem a symphony of coughing. Instead of houses, the government will build RDP graves.

I think of other conditions: corona; asthma, heart disease, cancer, and how they are different somehow.

How when I think of TB, I think of bodies and stigma and the word wasting.

TB is a synonym for Third World abandonment and death.

Some breaths, it seems, have more value. Some breaths are purer, more worthy of protection than others.

One of the great breathers of the twentieth century and Nobel literature prize winner Elias Canetti warned us of the thinkers who have not breathed enough.

Enter Canetti: It is not enough to think, one also has to breathe. Dangerous are the thinkers who have not breathed enough.

But how do you breathe correctly? How often should you take a deep breath? What if the air that surrounds you is polluted? Contaminated by uranium and asbestos from the mining industry? Poisoned by history? By hate and violence? What if breathing makes you dizzy? What if it makes you sick? What if the air carries bacteria or a deadly virus?

A friend WhatsApps me her symptoms. Panic attacks, difficulty breathing. She says, I've been trying to continue like a normal human but constantly on the verge of tears, constantly about to break down.

My friend Neo Muyanga emails me: it is no longer simply about natural acts of breathing in order to stay alive. How are we collectively, globally, going to reconsider ideas such as 'nature' or what is 'natural' for bodies to inspire, to consume, to assimilate? The very act of breathing may (soon? already) prove something too dangerous to and for (some of) us to engage.

The air itself transforms from a condition for life into a threat to life, becoming a technology of what Achille Mbembe terms necropolitics.

Mbembe: the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die. Hence, to kill or to allow to live constitute the limits of sovereignty, its fundamental attributes. To exercise sovereignty is to exercise control over mortality and to define life as the deployment and manifestation of power.

It all feels too difficult to talk about these things. About illness and disease and dying and exploitation and how race is entangled in this.

I speak from a position of privilege... and yet this privilege is killing me.

I am saying this badly. My language isn't efficient.

I want to borrow eyes from another language. I am looking for the words to come.

I whatsapp my friend Wael El-Sayed here in Cairo. Wael is a musician. He plays the accordion - itself an instrument the breathes, its bellows a kind of lung. His music is in the tradition of vagabonds - romani nomadic melodies, itinerant folk, Zar spiritual traditions. I try to tell him about how I'm struggling. How thin the air here seems to have become. How sick I'm feeling. Exhausted and breathless. He sends me an improvisation. Just a few minutes of him playing. He says to listen. He tells me to breathe through my ears. He says his finger will be my lungs for today. The sound that Wael sends me is not a song, not even a melody, but a dark, full vibration that reverberates in your stomach and makes you want to laugh, to dance.

Wael is blind. I ask him how he manages. Especially in a city like Cairo. He tells me his friends are his eyes. But sometimes they are also his hands and his legs, his heart and his kidneys, his tongue.

There are bodies inside bodies inside bodies. My body is bone, metal, earth, spirit. It hosts numerous diseases, bacteria and microbes; I am a carrier, the chickenpox virus lives in my spine. I spent eight years living undiagnosed with TB. It went undiagnosed because it was extrapulmonary, not detected by standard tests available here. Because I'm white and a woman and it was easier to explain my night sweats and weight loss as anxiety and anorexia.

I am part cyborg. My brain is wired to the internet and I have a metal shoulder implant because of an accident - a ball of cobalt chrome and a stem made from titanium metal dug from the earth in the Congo. How many lives were lost so I can hug you? So that I can lift my arm to wave hello from a safe social distance?

My ancestors are thieves and murders. My grandfather is Cecil John Rhodes. He paid for my upbringing and education. I was raised in a tradition of exploitation and oppression. The iron in my blood is mined from the tunnels under Johannesburg. My eyes seethe with ancestral conflicts

and my head festers with the voices of dead comrades. The hands that weigh my grief are implacable.

Can we find a way to write that is equal to this moment? A writing that can capture and confront the present, with its particular forms of beauty and violence, including violence done to the body and to language?

How do we create something defiant and beautifully alive out of so much violence, death and dying?

How can art and creativity reassume a position when reality is stranger than fiction itself?

What kinds of bright and dark, utopian and dystopian futures can we imagine that might help us navigate the uncharted territory of the COVID-19 pandemic?

How do we work in the border zones – give voice to the grief, speak of the dead without diminishing our culpability? To know oneself to be monstrous and yet to seek to make something from that monstrosity, something with life and vision?

Does the sick or compromised body create a compromised text or artwork or performance? What does a sensorial or physically compromised text or artwork or performance look like – in turn, how does or might it infect and affect the reader or viewer?

You wouldn't know God if he spat in your eye

Stacy Hardy

Tue, Apr 28

Dear Kaushik

Our first collaboration is now live!

Remember our adventures with Feni's scrolls?

The project has finally launched online via Ellipsis Journal & the story can be read here - including your wonderful contribution!

<http://www.ellipses.org.za/project/you-wouldnt-know-if-god-spat-in-your-eye/>

<http://ellipses.org.za/IssueThree/IfGodSpat/index.html>

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

Sat, May 2

dearest both,

it makes me very happy to hear from you both, and to receive your gifts (thank you, stacy, for the beginning of correspondence. and the feni!). and concerned, for your health stacy. please do be kind to yourself.

it is odd to write to you now, because at this time we should have been together in basel and in vienna, stacy. sigh. ugh.

much more to respond to, but as an offering for now, i wanted to send you both this, composed and sung by the telugu composer adesh ravi, responding to the lock down and its impact on poor and migrant workers in india

[Adesh Ravi's Migrant Song on Corona](#)

with love,

k.

Stacy Hardy

Sun, May 3

Oh! Kaushik this is truly beautiful. Thank you!!!

And one in reply.

<https://vimeo.com/413878531>

The South African composer Philip Miller has created a project to assist funding singers and musicians who are currently unable to earn money during the COVID 19 Lockdown.

#musoreliefSA

This is a new arrangement of an old song, 'Influenza (1918)' which the celebrated South African choral composer Reuben T. Caluza wrote in response to the Spanish Flu epidemic in our country.

Philip located the original 1920 recording online and re-arranged the song for vocals and brass.

He worked with a group of talented vocalists and musicians who recorded themselves in their own homes, supplying voice notes for him to assemble the whole song together.

Stacy Hardy

Tue, May 12

dear kaushik, hello neo

i had bought a huge stack of SA poetry - from apartheid era through today - for Vienna. and i have the books with me so i've compiled a small reader with a selection from all the poets if you would like to share with your students. or just read yourself.

with love

[SA poetry-1.pdf](#)

DESCRIPT(ion)

correspondence

Stacy Hardy

Thu, May 14

Definition of correspondence

1a: communication by letters or e-mail so : the letters or e-mails exchanged

I have a pile of correspondence on my desk.b: the news, information, or opinion contributed by a correspondent to a newspaper or periodical

2a: the agreement of things with one another

the correspondence between spelling and pronunciation: a particular similarity

c: a relation between sets in which each member of one set is associated with one or more members of the other

and of course we have been talking about it both senses - finding form to work together and the correspondences between this moment and the histories we are exploring

have also been thinking a lot about both intimacy and radical vulnerability in this moment so would be excited to engage both of these

and then of course with that the creative potentials of failure - “Try Again. Fail Again. Fail Better” as Beckett would have it

finally do either of you know the Arpanet dialogues? It was a set of imaginary dialogues created by Bassam El Baroni, Jeremy Beaudry and Nav Haq as an art intervention and remains one of my favourite online interventions. Description below and I attach the wonderful crazy conversation between Samir Amin, Steve Biko, Francis Fukuyama and Minoru Yamasaki!!

see you both later

The Arpanet Dialogues Vol. II

ARPANET Test June 1976 with Samir Amin, Steve Biko, Francis Fukuyama
Minoru Yamasaki

<http://www.arpanetdialogues.net/>

Available to read online and a PDF in English Arabic

In the period between 1975 and 1979, the Agency convened a rare series of conversations between an eccentric cast of characters representing a wide range of perspectives within the contemporary social, political, and cultural milieu. The ARPANET Dialogues is a serial document which archives these conversations. Even more unusual perhaps was the specific circumstances of the conversation: taking advantage of recent developments in telecommunications technology, the conversation was conducted via an instant messaging application networked by computers plugged into ARPANET, the United States Department of Defense's experimental computer network.

All participants in the conversation were given special access to terminals connected to ARPANET, many of them located in US military installations or DOD-sponsored research institutions around the world. Excerpts from each session will be published as they become available. The ARPANET Dialogues is an ongoing project by Bassam El Baroni, Jeremy Beaudry and Nav Haq.

Vol. I of the dialogues was presented as part of OVERSCORE, Alexandria Contemporary Arts Forum's (ACAF) curatorial contribution to Manifesta 8, the European Biennial of Contemporary Art which took place in the region of Murcia, Spain in 2010.

Vol. II is presented as ACAF's contribution to MARKER at Art Dubai 2011. The second edition features guest collaborator Khwezi Gule, a curator, artist, and writer based in Johannesburg, South Africa.

<http://www.arpanetdialogues.net/>

The third installment of the ongoing online archive project The ARPANET Dialogues is now online. This is installment is the transcription for an ARPANET conversation that took place in March 1976 between between four figures from the 1970s-era art community: German artist, educator and activist, Joseph Beuys; Chilean-born multimedia artist and filmmaker, Juan Downey; Rosalind Krauss, art critic and co-founder of the new journal October; and the world-renown British sculptor, Henry Moore.

Read it here: <http://www.arpanetdialogues.net/vol-iii/>

About the ARPANET Dialogues:

In the period between 1975 and 1979, the Agency convened a rare series of conversations between an eccentric cast of characters representing a wide range of perspectives within the contemporary social, political and cultural milieu. The ARPANET Dialogues is a serial document which archives these conversations. Even more unusual perhaps was the specific circumstances of the conversation: taking advantage of recent developments in telecommunications technology, the conversation was conducted via an instant messaging application networked by computers plugged into ARPANET, the United States Department of Defense's experimental computer network. All participants in the conversation were given special access to terminals connected to ARPANET, many of them located in US military installations or DOD-sponsored research institutions around the world. Excerpts from each session will be published as they become available. The ARPANET Dialogues is an ongoing research project by Bassam El Baroni, Jeremy Beaudry and Nav Haq.

www.arpanetdialogues.net

there was this goat

Fri, May 15

Stacy Hardy

hello friends

as promised a tiny bit more on why i was recommending *There was this Goat* by Antjie Krog, Kopano Ratele and Nosisi Mpolweni...



Goat

its an old time favourite text - perhaps because its one of the few that engages the question of translation in the trc - its complexities but also hints at its creative and subversive strategies .

its a collaborative text produced by and between three authors from different context often holding radically different views etc... and i love its polyphonic approach to form. while it uses narrative as a holding strategy, it includes imaginary conversations, dialogues, interviews, annotations and comments, personal response, shared theorising, photos, diary style entries etc.

and in my reading at least.. it allows each paradigm to speak its own language and follow its own path while still moving between them in non-arbitrary ways that cohere, if not into a philosophical system, then in a cross-disciplinary synthesis.

it also made me think of the potential of process that are sometimes invisible: translation, interpretation, annotation, commentary, emails etc.

finally i was thinking of emails and how each message contains the one that has come before, so your own words came back to you—all the words you threw out, they came back. its like the story of your relations with others, the story of the intersection of your life with other lives, is constantly being recorded and updated, and you can check it at any time!

with this in mind i fished out some fragments of our intersecting lives from the archive:

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

Fri, 23 Aug
2019, 13:20

to me, neo

Dear Stacy and Neo,

Here's a first pass at thinking "pulmonographies", based on a conversation Stacy and I had a couple of weeks ago. Stacy, please add and change as you see fit. Neo, if you are around and had time to to meet / talk / think together more, please let me know: I am in CPT till Sep. 4th.

I also attach Dumit's implosions project, as something to think with.

warmest wishes and hugs to you both,

kaushik

2 Attachments

Stacy Hardy

Sun, 25 Aug
2019, 19:54

to Kaushik, neo

Dear Kaushik and Neo

Kaushik, I hope things are going wonderfully. Thank you so much for initiating this and your first ideas.

I've had a very breathless last week and imploded a bit but I'm though most of it and will have time to respond to your draft and the implosion, as well as send some of the thoughts I've had.

I'm also very nearly done with ordering the research folder and sending readings lists and entry points etc. Neo - I'll share this with you too once I'm done.

Speak very soon.

Love to you both.

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

Sun, 1 Sep
2019, 12:03

to me, neo

Dear Stacy,

Many thanks for this, and I well understand the breathlessness. Please do send things along at your convenience. I'll be leaving South Africa on Wednesday, and be back in Chicago on Sep 16th after some stops en route. At that point, I'll be in a position to start going through and ordering things as well, and turning my mind properly towards our grant application for the Neubauer.

So, more soon, love to you both,

kaushik

neo muyanga

Mon, 2 Sep
2019, 08:56

to Kaushik, me

dear stacy and kaushik,

(stacy i hope you're feeling better and stronger?)

i've been traveling again, so ooh catching up to the emails you e sent now. i was glad to read the outline based in your discussion. and i enjoyed reading the essay by dimit.

just to say, i'm interested in the idea of thinking about some of what we might do as a performance lecture - to me that aligns well with telling stories, using multiple media and modalities.

for now, reading and thinking more.

more soon.

neo

Stacy Hardy

Tue, 3 Sep
2019, 22:11

to Kaushik, neo

Dearest Kaushik, brother Neo

Kaushik, safe travels. Breaths are halations through which we trail space.

Thank you for the wonderful provocation. I'm struck by the crossover between the implosion and the workshops Janina Kehr and I did in Mannheim - ours, a body mapping project that started from the proposal that the body can think in ways from which consciousness would do well to learn. We invited everyone to literally trace their body shapes of giant pieces of paper and map object of encounter and their histories. I attach our provocations:

Aim: thinking-feeling the body's unbounded relation to other bodies and how our bodies constantly change over time and through forces both biological, chemical, political, economic and social.

Assumption: an assembly of history's and illnesses' traces is deposited in and through our bodies.

Reading it I was also suddenly struck that of course Deleuze suffered from tuberculosis!

1947: 'Deleuze's health was already sufficiently poor that he did not receive the medical certificate required for taking the aggregation examination'; he experienced 'violent asthma attacks' and was 'having trouble breathing').

1968: Deleuze is working on his doctoral thesis, *Difference and Repetition*. He is 'often extremely tired' and consults a doctor who diagnoses 'the return of his tuberculosis, which had resisted antibiotics and made an enormous hole in his lungs'. (quotes from Dosse's *Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari: Intersecting Lives*).

Of course as Derrida warns in his our wonderful 'biography': the biography of the philosopher is necessarily impossible. But I can't help but be struck how the idea of air, and particularly of the breath of fresh air repeatedly appears in Deleuze's thought, in the thought of a philosopher whose embodied experience was of the struggle to breathe: from 'a schizophrenic out for a walk is a better model than a neurotic lying on the analyst's couch. A breath of fresh air, a relationship with the outside world' to 'to let in a breath of fresh air from the chaos' to defenestrating himself. And of course a body without organs or a material process of disorganizing and a body forces us to think in the form of new thoughts that are irreducible to thought defined as rationality.

Then, a new way of thinking health, bodies and thought beyond their traditional humanist and anthropocentric formulations. Which seems at the heart of our project.

I very much look forward to taking up the implosions and think it could be deployed as a marvelous tool to think through our work together for the duration of the project.

My workload has been unmanageable but tomorrow I travel to Cairo and will have more time for reading dreaming and most importantly sharing: resources and many ideas.

I will write more soon.

And Neo dying to hear our Kentridge contribution - will it be available in any other space?

Sending you both much love and thanks for the marvellous thought-gifts!

Attachments area

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

Fri, 6 Sep
2019, 17:38

to me, neo

Dear Stacy, dear Neo,

Stacy, I hope you have had safe travels to Cairo, and an invigorating time there. I just left Cape Town myself yesterday, and have arrived in Florence, through circuitous routes and too many airports, for a family wedding. This is just to say, quickly, that these are such wonderful thoughts and additions to our burgeoning list to collectively think with - thank you! I have slowly started processing our dialogues and my other meetings in ZA as well, and hope to have more to share after I am back in Chicago, on the 16th. I think there is a lot here from which to start thinking the grant proposal, slowly, in coming weeks.

A couple of emergent logistical updates I wanted to mention: the time at IDM was incredibly fruitful for me, Stacy, certainly because of some very interesting conversations with a number of TB researchers there, but especially because of a growing depth of sympathetic thinking with Anastasia. She is a truly wonderful fellow traveler and thinker, and I think would very much like us to think towards an eventual performance lecture for Eh!Woza. (Neo, this is Anastasia Koch, a molecular biologist at the Institute for Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine, who facilitated a number of conversations for me there, and who has been involved with the artist Ed Young in the pedagogical / filmmaking project Eh!Woza in Khayelitsha: <https://ehwoza.com/>.) It turns out that she and a number of IDM scientists will be at the world TB conference in Hyderabad in late October, which I am therefore going to try and attend, not least also because of the connections it potentially brings to Indian TB worlds. I will aim to stop in Munich on the way back, probably for your last performance of "Museum of Lungs" on Nov 7 - so hopefully more in person then. It is then looking like my next visit to South Africa will be mid-to-late March, probably only for a couple of weeks given teaching constraints, but there is time enough to plan for and talk about that.

Neo, I saw your Kentridge contribution at Zeitz MOCAA before leaving, and was simply blown away. As always. Wow, thank you. It is music that gives form to Kentridge's work, and is itself a form of life, at once sustaining and poignant.

as ever, with love and the deepest admiration to you both, for your presence and praxis,

kaushik

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

Wed, 24 Jul
2019, 00:49

to me

Dear Stacy,

Just a quick note to see if we could set up time(s) to meet next week? I arrive in Cape Town on Sunday evening. I will be relatively flexible but very discombobulated for the first couple of days, then plan to be very flexible and combobulated thereafter. I look forward very much to talking more.

I also will send you an announcement to a grant program for inter- and trans-disciplinary collaborations out of my university, which may be something for us to talk about and consider and we plot further collaborations ...

warm regards, and looking forward,

kaushik

On Sun, Jul 7, 2019 at 3:05 PM Kaushik Sunder Rajan wrote:

Stacy, this is wonderful, thank you! I'll be in touch closer to the time to figure out when to meet etc, though my schedule at the moment is pretty flexible.

looking forward,

kaushik

On Tue, Jul 2, 2019 at 7:25 AM Stacy Hardy wrote:

A very quick email just to say, yes, I will postpone my flight and have organised to be in Cape Town the last week of July and the first of August so we can meet.

On Mon, Jun 17, 2019 at 7:38 AM Kaushik Sunder Rajan wrote:

Dear Stacy,

Thank you for your note, it is lovely to hear from you. This is just the briefest of responses, to say that I have booked my tickets and will indeed be returning to Cape Town on July 28th. If it is not too inconvenient for you to delay your departure, it would be lovely to meet and talk that week. I'm very excited to think with you.

And I know Jenina! Please say hello to her for me.

I find it hard to respond to the haunting by Wouter Basson. Dealing with emergent fascism in India, this is too much to comprehend. Even as it is vital. I am grateful for your creativity and humanity when confronted with him/this.

to be continued!

k.

On Thu, Jun 13, 2019 at 7:42 AM Stacy Hardy wrote:

Dear Kaushik

Hello from Mannheim in Germany. I have a small break after performing in Berlin and before participating in a festival here with a performance lecture and a series of workshops with a medical anthropologist here - Dr. Janina Kehr - whose work engages TB in Europe and its colonial hauntings.

Since I last emailed I've had a chance to read more of your work - just finished Pharmocracy and started Biocapital... which has given me more insight into your interests in the law and TB is SA. It also made me reflect on time - "in a time of TB" to paraphrase Márquez and Agamben's "messianic time" (not the end of time, but the time of the end) especially with TB - a "historic" disease that is curable and over but that persists, refuses to go away... but also the complexities of disease and law and time. In the recent class action lawsuit where mineworks took mining companies to court they finally agreed on a settlement because they were literally out of time - the claimant were dead or dying. Legal time here - with its endless appeals etc was completely out of synch with disease time. I also keep thinking of my sister who worked for some time as a paralegal for the Treatment Action Campaign but quit because "my clients kept dying."

I also had a strange trip to Europe which seems to feed into things somehow - before leaving the country I again ran into Dr Wouter Basson at the airport. He's someone who seems to haunt and follow me. One of apartheid's most notorious and evasive criminals, Nicknamed Dr Death by the media, Basson is a cardiologist and former head of the country's secret chemical and biological warfare project, Project Coast, during the apartheid era. Under Basson's supervision, Project Coast, mastered the idea of hiding things in plain sight. Fashioning weapons of mass destruction that can disappear into water without a trace and tools of assassination masked as everyday objects. Basson himself is a master of evasion. He escaped the truth and reconciliation commission by hiding behind state secrets and successfully evaded the 54 charges brought against him after apartheid, ranging from the possession of drugs to conspiracy to murder. He's since evaded countless lawsuits and recently had his medical license reinstated <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/gauteng/tribunal-committee-members-ordered-to-recuse-themselves-over-basson-hearing-20114302>

<https://mg.co.za/article/2011-09-30-wouter-bassons-9nbsp000-heart-patients>

Today, he remains a free man.

As a young journalist, I tracked his path as he continued to practice in an acclaimed academic hospital and lucrative private practice. Our paths again crossed again a year ago when I found myself queuing to board a plane bound for Washington DC alongside Basson. This time he was flying locally - first class of course. These encounters always leave me shaken. For the rest of the flight I was haunted not by Basson, but the trademark smiles that always adorns his face. Perhaps smile is the wrong word, it is not an expression of joy, or invitation of an opening or encountering, but rather a sneer or smirk, a leer (to 'look sideways or askance'; 'to glance over one's cheek.'). It is a Cheshire cat's smile in the Deleuzian sense: a smile that will "survive the effacement of the body." A smile that both reveals and conceals. "An abominable smile, an abjection of a smile."

Anyway, as stands, I was planning on leaving South Africa in late July for 3 months in Cairo - however if you'll be there from July 28th I can delay my trip by a week or so in order to have time to meet. Cape Town would be easiest for me, as I will be there towards the end of July anyway. Does that work with your schedule?

I'm even more excited and curious as to how we might work having read you more.

All the best

Stacy

On Mon, Jun 10, 2019 at 1:56 AM Kaushik Sunder Rajan wrote:

Dear Stacy,

Thank you for these dates, and for taking the time to read my manuscript. I look forward to more.

In the meantime, I note these dates, and will make it a point to try and come either to Munich or to Marseilles for the performances. That might give us occasion to also talk and think some more. I'll have a better sense of my November schedules and flexibilities in coming weeks.

I'll be in South Africa from July 28 - October 2, mostly in Cape Town. Any chance you will be there at that time? I also have to make a brief trip to Europe in the midst of that, mid-September, so if you are

there that might be another possible time to sit together and brainstorm on how to take our conversation further. I'll read over the TB archives in the meantime, over my next few weeks in Chicago. There might also be a U Chicago based grant that we could explore that might provide us some resources: I'll find out more and send you more information.

All of which to say, very excitedly, and looking forward to more,

kaushik

On Sat, Jun 8, 2019 at 5:40 AM Stacy Hardy wrote:

Dear Kaushik

My turn to apologise on the slow response. I'm currently in Berlin performing.

I was very interested to read your multi sit(gh)ed - and must confess to having also downloaded and looked at your other books - more soon.

These are the dates we have confirmed for Europe for November so far:

SPIELART Munich

venue: Kammer 3, Münchner Kammerspiele

November 2 & 3, 2019: Arrival

November 4 & 5 2019: preparation and rehearsals

November 6 & 7, 2019: 2 performances

November 8, 9 & 10, 2019: days off

Le Bances Publics festival, Marseille

November 11 & 12, 2019: preparations & rehearsals

November 13 & 14, 2019: 2 performances

November 15, 2019: Departure

On Fri, May 24, 2019 at 10:40 AM Kaushik Sunder Rajan wrote:

Dear Stacy,

The pleasure was mine, and I am looking forward to our future conversations, whatever trajectory they might take. Please excuse the slow response, as I've had a hectic week in Johannesburg.

Thank you for all of these attachments and links, to the play and the archive. I get back to Chicago on June 2, and going through these will be my project for June. I should have more thoughts and ideas about this by the time I return to Cape Town, in late July. The one question I had was if you knew your November 2019 play dates in Paris and Marseilles, as that is not on the link. Knowing them in advance will allow me to figure out if I can make a trip to watch it live.

In exchange, as promised, is my "multi-si(gh)ted" manuscript. A lot of it is an internal engagement with the histories and practices of ethnography in anthropology. But the introduction will give you a sense of

my stakes, and starting with Chapter 2 especially, I think there are methodological points of intersection, having to do with searching for fragments in the archives (Chap 2), thinking of ethnography as a form of literary knowledge (Chap 3), emergence of new collaborative norms and forms in ethnographic practice (Chap 3) and ethnography as a praxis of intimacy, thought through photography (Chap 4). This is still under review, so the specifics might change - but the basic argument, and I think its basic structure, should remain.

I hope you were able to sort out visas etc to Egypt? And I hope, to be continued. I'll definitely be in touch when I get back to Chicago and as I start reading.

warm regards,

kaushik

On Sun, May 19, 2019 at 6:25 AM Stacy Hardy wrote:

Dear Kaushik

It was an unexpected pleasure to meet you and though I'm not yet sure why or how but I'm very excited at the prospect of finding some way to keep talking and maybe even collaborate.

Attached it a text - bit of script, poems, reflection, thoughts.. maybe something of a fragmented essay? and a copy of the working script.

For more on the play, Museum of lungs: <http://produktionsdock.ch/en/projects/museum-of-lungs/>

(trailer, photos, press, tour dates etc)

These are the archives I mentioned:

PATHAUT, a database established in 1975 and now containing demographic and pathological (macro- and microscopic) information on more than 100 000 deceased mine workers who worked in various South African mines and works.

This data is in the public domain in the form of a series of annual reports
(http://www.nioh.ac.za/?page=pathology_disease_surveillance_reports&id=162)

[NRC] or [WNLA] TEBA Mineworker collection

The Archives of The Employment Bureau of South Africa (commonly known as TEBA) was moved from TEBA to the UJ Kingsway Campus at the end of 2004 on a semi-permanent loan basis. TEBA Ltd was established with the objective of assisting the growing Witwatersrand mining industry in recruiting mine workers. TEBA started as two different companies, i.e. WNLA (Witwatersrand Native Labour Association) in 1901, and NRC (Native Recruiting Corporation) in 1912. WNLA recruited mineworkers outside South Africa, and NRC recruited mineworkers within the borders of South Africa. <https://www.uj.ac.za/library/informationresources/special-collections/Pages/Rare-Book-Collections.aspx> (scroll down)

And the great TB project I mentioned: https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/489b9e_df0d60a6b48d4e8886b0f8137beefed2.pdf

Attachments area

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

Sun, May 17

dear stacy, this is such a synchronous gift. i was going back to our correspondence myself, cutting, pasting.

the inspiration of seeing you both, twice, this week matters tangibly. thank you. as an offering of sorts, here are the final reflections of one of the students from my human rights class, which cheered me up.

xoxo,

k.

Upon reading Kelsen, I initially opposed his rendering of traditional Western human rights theory from universal to very particular and cultural. Following the previous class and my general knowledge on the American Declaration of Independence and Constitution, I allied myself with the idea that human rights theory followed a natural, universal moral order. However, I acknowledged that within natural human rights theory, there exists a global history of hegemonic contestations that has given priority to the rights of privileged groups over minorities existing in marked positions. I did not understand how universality could be based in culture if it is meant for everyone, but through this class's readings and discussions, I have learned that universality must begin with the rights of the minority, which is necessarily cultural. The hegemonic contestations I recognized as a flaw of natural rights theory are a product of the belief in the 'thingness' of rights rather than understanding universal rights as a process achieved through the protection of minority rights.

Foundations of natural rights are based on Western rights and culture, especially the right to property. In natural rights theory, the Founding Fathers of the U.S. Constitution could write about inalienable rights while still owning slaves. Individual wills and freedoms become cultural assumptions parading as natural human rights when they are only taken from the ideas and lifestyles of the political majority. Universal rights theory that is based on transcendent human will, therefore, upholds certain cultural assumptions of those in power and is inherently particular to the political majority.

The example of the United States' invasion of Iraq really helped me understand the inherent particularity of natural rights theory and resulting dangers of applying this theory universally. When natural rights theory is uncontested, Western civilization tends to apply its culture to the rest of the world under the guise of universality through colonialism and, more currently, international intervention. George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq was grounded in the universal ideals of democracy and freedom, when in reality his actions were served by natural rights theory that was created by majoritarian rule then applied universally. Protecting the rights of the Afghan woman was an important justification for the War; however, the only way the United States was willing to protect the rights of the rightless was by forcibly invading other nations. The U.S. justified this invasion through its heavy promotion of universalist ideals, arguing that Iraq and surrounding nations were failing to adequately protect the rights of citizens and non-citizens. Previously, I

had not considered that the ideals W. used to justify the war were based in culture and majoritarian rule. This inherent 'thingness' of rights the United States prides itself on protecting abroad is based on the cultural assumptions of the Western political majority.

Kelsen, Ranciere, and Sarkar argued that the question of rights is not something that pre-exists the law, but is something that comes out of the State through politics and law. Rights in the global South must be understood as a process instead because before the drafting of their Constitution, there was colonialism. Previously, I held that the 'thingness' of rights made them inalienable and universal, but I have since learned that rights do not exist outside of politics. Because rights themselves are political, the idea of rights as a process is necessary in order to strive towards universality. Formal, political equality means nothing unless it upholds and protects the dignity of every individual, and therefore a Constitution must establish minority rights and power-sharing between ethnic groups. An understanding of universal rights through particularity and cultural norms allows for progress through the law.

Ambedkar's understanding of constitutional morality follows Kelsen's reasoning of rights as a process through law. Constitutional morality forces legal political equality to achieve social equality. He argued that the rights of the Constitution establish a set of rules that everyone can believe in, the majority and the minority, so that groups may compete and debate in the legislature regarding laws and amendments. By establishing a framework of norms over rules that reflect the spirit of the document, there is room for dissensus and debate under the Constitution. This constitutional morality allowed for dissensus surrounding the debate over the decriminalization of homosexuality. Because the universalization of human rights is based on articles within the Indian Constitution, the theory of constitutional morality pushed for a universalist view that included minority rights over a majoritarian view that did not. Previously, I tended to group particularity with the minority, but upholding minority rights and constitutional morality is a more effective strategy in order to achieve universal rights. I had never considered whether culture preceded laws or laws changed culture before this class, and I now agree that if we wait for a cultural alignment of ideals to pass laws, progress will never happen. The political majority rarely wants to protect the rights of the minority—Indian women were legally burned at the stake for years due to a legal decision made between British judges and pandits. The culture of the political majority is one of patriarchy, white supremacy, homophobia, and imperialism—dissensus and interruption through rights-based politics is necessary to achieve social change.

I was particularly struck by our discussion of universality versus particularity regarding women's bodies. Though women's bodies are violated everywhere, this violation is classified as exceptional and particular rather than universal. If the universal assumption was that women's bodies have always been abused, I believe the discussion and enactment of structural change through laws protecting vulnerable classes would be more achievable. Our current system individually punishes domestic abusers, rapists, etc. due to our belief that this behavior is exceptional and violates the rule of natural rights. A recognition of violence against women as being universal rather than the women's natural rights being universal would allow for social progression through rights-based politics. During our discussion, I was constantly reminded of the failure of the ERA's ratification in the United States. White housewives across America, originating here in Illinois, were led to believe that because they personally did not feel marginalized, the universal protection of women's rights in America by law was not necessary. In the case of the ERA, public morality was given precedence over constitutional morality. If the violation of women's bodies was accepted as universal rather than particular, then there should exist no question that these housewives' possession of rights is particular and cultural rather than universal. Therefore, universal rights must come from protecting the rights of the political minority, as though those opposed to the ERA were a small subsection of the population, they were given more political authority over the rest of the female population of the United States. When laws are written to protect the rights of the political minority and historically marginalized,

including blacks, homosexuals, women, and other marked positions, then there is greater room for dissensus to bring about social change.

Now that I have read Kelsen and seen his discussion of political rights in vastly different readings, I can say that my views regarding natural rights theory have changed. Rights as a process makes sense intuitively, but I was struck by how difficult I found conceptualizing rights as politics instead of rights as inalienable. I think this struggle comes from being a white citizen of a colonizer country, as it is very easy for me to believe that rights are inalienable—in many ways, they have always existed for me. Now, I think that the idea of rights as a political project allows for greater understanding of what it means to be a citizen and have rights. By accepting that human rights are not guaranteed by nature and that universal rights are actually based in a culture of imperialism, patriarchy, and misogyny, there exists more space to argue for structural change and the responsibility of law and government to guarantee the rights of its people, both citizens and non-citizens.

Stacy Hardy

Mon, May 18

thank you so much kaushik. a wonderful response to what looked like a deeply meaningful series of conversations and provocations. really grateful to have been able to join in if only for a moment.

another day of vacillating between despair and hope. the arrest of a friend here yesterday followed by release a few minutes ago. the hope from your student's words and then this piece: "The head of a global partnership to end tuberculosis (TB) said she is "sickened" by research that revealed millions more people are expected to contract the disease as a result of Covid-19 restrictions."

<https://amp.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/may/06/millions-develop-tuberculosis-tb-covid-19-lockdown>

HKW cc: World

Kaushik SUNDER RAJAN

Sun, May 24

dear stacy and neo,

very much looking forward to seeing you both on thursday! before that, i was hoping to run by you my conversation with katrin klingen at haus kulturen der welt in berlin, about their project cc: world, which she's hoping we can be involved in. i've done a couple of things before at HKW and they've been terrific, real experiments in form as much as anything else. they reached out to me about cc: world, i told them about pulmonographies, and they were hoping we could think of doing our first performance lecture for them. i mentioned this to you briefly when we last talked, but this is a slightly more elaborated set of notes from my conversation with katrin, to describe what i understand this to be about.

cc: world is a project that wishes to think through these times of the pandemic, but not just as a reaction to a sudden situation or event. they want to think about the pandemic as an event that has occurred

within an ongoing process of structural transformation, and therefore want to articulate this moment to longer duree structural and historical forces, to deeper transformations. at the same time, they are looking for an intimate approach as far as aesthetic form is concerned, and so have come up with the idea of an electronic letter, as a form that is both intimate and transcends intimacy. (this very much mirrors the stakes as i understand it, stacy, of your emergent correspondence with edwin). the form therefore reflects an intimate relation to the addressee of the letter, while knowing that there is a wider audience that will read this/these public letters. the letter could take / incorporate different forms in addition to writing, including visuals, music etc.

i told them about pulmonographies, and they were very excited. TB is a dimension and historical context that they do not have as part of this project (which will include a total of 20 such electronic letters), and they are very excited for us to explore the politics of breath with historical reference to TB. they would be eager, therefore, for us to develop a correspondence that reflects our own collective reflections on TB. they are hoping that we could develop a form, faithful to the idea of the performance lecture, that has both written and performative aspects. grounded in the form of the letter, as one kind of performance lecture. they were thus hoping that the inaugural performance lecture for pulmonographies could be on cc: world, and were wondering if we could do something by the end of july, or even into mid-august.

if both of you are up for it, i would be very excited by this. stacy, i too was looking through some of our old correspondence when you sent us your compilation, and i think it's a great point of departure. i'm happy for this to parallel / incorporate / involve your correspondence with edwin or not, however feels good to all concerned and however conversations transpire (and conspire). i finish teaching on june 4, then have a couple of weeks of heavy admin from the end of the year. but by the summer solstice, i hope to be free of academic commitments and it would suit me very well to have this be a (northern) summer project, if it gels with both of you. i'm happy to think through what it might entail: there are so many fragments you have produced already, via museum of lungs, and via your amazing writing on feni, stacy. it might also provide us a structure and a deadline for, initially, deciding upon and reading a certain tangible segment of our bibliography. or an opportunity for us to develop strands of our own respective research and investments that we put in conversation with each other. (my own promise to self for the summer is to go over the material connected to the nkala class action, which is my primary entry into TB/silicosis through the law).

thinking with you both provides me rays of inspiration in bleak times, and i'm looking forward to getting my feet wet on this soon in more tangible ways.

much love to you both,

k.

Stacy Hardy

Mon, May 25

Dear Kaushik, dear Neo

I'd welcome this. It's a way to push forward and because I've so welcomed the few exchanges we've already had.

I'm very intrigued at the moment by questions of time and proximity. I've been thinking a lot about how so much online and digital activity seems to be memorialising a catastrophe before its even finished happening - all the covid diaries, reflections etc, so a strange time loop where we are writing a future via a history (memorials) of a present in process. or a thinking of the ruin before its happened. so this idea of the idea of longer duree structural and historical forces, to deeper transformations is intriguing.

And with this proximity and the urgency to find ways towards intimacy. the letter is such a beautiful step towards this. please see Russian poet Nadezhda Mandelstam's last letter to the great poet Osip Mandelstam which I've pasted below as such a beautiful example of this. I'd love to explore the vulnerability, the question of touch (Neo do you remember me hating being told Museum of Lungs was "touching" by so many people? This now takes on such a different meaning!) So yes how to touch, to overstep emotional and bodily distancing. I do think the letter can do these things. And god yes! We have a whole archive of material. But I would also love to use this to produce new material together. I've loved how you have both sparked and fired my imagination with each encounter.

Neo - a digression but none the less I was thinking a lot about voice following your comments. And how I'm overwhelmed by people giving talks, more talks, another talk/ discussion session etc. So many disembodied voices talking to everyone and therefore no one. And it got me thinking about speech vs sound and how yes the voice is speech but what is lost when its only speech... I started thinking there is so a place for "screams, cries, whispers and prayers" in this moment. because they carry the body and act on the body, violate it even.

Back to letters: the thing I was most intrigued by in the TEBA archive were the letters - especially the letters from women in Mozambique and other countries who were writing to try get news of their husbands who had seeming disappeared down mine holes in South Africa. The chaos of the archive means we were only able to locate a few of these bit I'll try pull them out. There are also really interesting letter from doctors protesting the mines abuses of safety rules and their role in propagating TB etc. I'll try to revisit.

I'll also share the marvellous examples of the "epistolary form" in poetry and prose and fabulous collections of letter between thinkers and artists i've been assembling.

The timeline is tight but like you Kaushik I'm less hectic in June. I'm unfortunately still on the libretto - but nearly have a final draft. It's been a real process and I'm working with a director, composer and documentary filmmaker so finding a way to respond to their divergent approaches and feedback has been deeply complex and exhausting and never ending. But finally there's a light.

And I'd actually welcome an earlier deadline to kick my rather shrunken butt!

Maybe we can chat briefly before the meeting on Thursday? So Neo, 5./ 5.30 for us and Kaushik 10/ 10.30 for you?

Nadezhda Mandelstam's last letter to Osip Mandelstam

I have no words, my darling, to write this letter that you may never read, perhaps. I am writing in empty space. Perhaps you will come back and not find me here. Then this will be all you have to remember me by.

Osia, what a joy it was living together like children – all our squabbles and arguments, the games we played, and our love. Now I do not even look at the sky. If I see a cloud, who can I show it to?

Remember the way we brought back provisions to make our poor feasts in all the places where we pitched our tent like nomads? Remember the good taste of bread when we got it by a miracle and ate it together? And our last winter in Voronezh. Our happy poverty, and the poetry you wrote. I remember the time we were coming back once from the baths, when we bought some eggs or sausage, and a cart went by loaded with hay. It was still cold and I was freezing in my short jacket (but nothing like what we must suffer now: I know how cold you are). That day comes back to me now. I understand so clearly, and ache from the pain of it, that those winter days with all their troubles were the greatest and last happiness to be granted us in life.

My every thought is about you. My every tear and every smile is for you. I bless every day and hour of our bitter life together, my sweetheart, my companion, my blind guide in life.

Like two blind puppies we were, nuzzling each other and feeling so good together. And how fevered your poor head was, and how madly we frittered away the days of our life. What joy it was, and how we always knew what joy it was.

Life can last so long. How hard and long for each of us to die alone. Can this fate be for us who are inseparable? Puppies and children, did we deserve this? Did you deserve this, my angel? Everything goes on as before. I know nothing. Yet I know everything – each day and hour of your life are plain and clear to me as in a delirium.

You came to me every night in my sleep, and I kept asking what had happened, but you did not reply.

In my last dream I was buying food for you in a filthy hotel restaurant. The people with me were total strangers. When I had bought it, I realized I did not know where to take it, because I do not know where you are.

When I woke up, I said to Shura: 'Osia is dead.' I do not know whether you are still alive, but from the time of that dream, I have lost track of you. I do not know where you are. Will you hear me? Do you know how much I love you? I could never tell you how much I love you. I cannot tell you even now. I speak only to you, only to you. You are with me always, and I who was such a wild and angry one and never learned to weep simple tears – now I weep and weep and weep.

It's me: Nadia. Where are you?

Farewell.

Nadia

medical ex voto / votive paintings

Stacy Hardy

Fri, May 29

dear kaushik and neo

beautiful to see you last night - more on that soon.

a quick one for now. remember i was mentioning my fascination with mexican medical exvoto/
votive painting traditions a while back?

https://www.google.com/search?sxsrf=ALeKk01_6pzFJO2yJTStw0vDW5z-we0GKQ:1590766089212&source=univ&tbm=isch&q=medical+ex+voto&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewjt1au9sdpAhULkhQKHTO8AuMQsAR6BAgIEAE&biw=1517&bih=640

and i talked about wanting to use them as a research tool in sharing tb survivor stories.

i discussed the idea with a painter friend of mine - dolla sapeta (<https://mg.co.za/article/2020-01-10-00-the-portfolio-mxolisi-dolla-sapeta/>) - a south african painter and poet working from new brighton township outside port elizabeth.

he is also a TB survivor so to speak and he was excited about doing something like this in his community - most of his friends in new brighton have had TB at some points in their lives or had family members who've died or lived through it.

he did some very initial experiments with trying to reference the ex voto tradition in mexico but also bring his own and a fierce township edge to them...

these aren't really ex votos ... but just very first plays with TB imagery and ex voto technique... etc..
drawing on his own experiences... i thought they were really fun and thought to share... especially the TB fashion model after our discussions Neo...

anyway i'm going to start trying to fundraise to get some money to pay Dolla to work on this with me next year... we' will both conduct research, compose ex voto poems and conceptualise the paintings together...but he'll be the one holding the brushes. the idea is that at the end the full set of works we produce is gifted back to the community...

but i do see potential for this little project to be or become part of pulmonographies if it's in anyway of interest or exciting to you both?

with love



neo muyanga

Mon, Jun 15

stacy, i really love these new paintings by dolla!

earnestly,

n

Stacy Hardy

Mon, Jun 15

Oh I love that you signed this "earnestly" - such a beautiful reminder of how powerful that under/ badly used word can be and its potential for both levity and lightness. Thank you Neo!

bebey breathes like 'pygmies' not like savages

neo muyanga

Sun, May 31

dear stacy and kaushik,

here watching francis bebey jam just made me think about breath, technology and patterns of living life.

<https://youtu.be/c6T6suvnhco>

what is happening now in minneapolis and other parts of the u.s. (the screams of 'i can't breathe') is so profoundly horrific.

sending breathless love,

n

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

Mon, Jun 15

and neo, and stacy,

this is my belated response, my update to you from an emergent public discourse here, to this gift you sent us after george floyd's murder, of francis bebey's music. a gift that both gave me breath and left me breathless. here, in turn, is rev. william barber, and what matters to me about this is that it is on the food

network, the home and garden network, the discovery channel ... it is an interpellation of white america. something like this has been said before, but white people here have rarely been forced to hear it:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55VxSfliide>

"the establishment of justice is *just. trying. to breathe*"

with much love, solidarity and friendship, with the hope and thought and prospect of breath together to come,

k.

library and reading group

Tue, May 19

Stacy Hardy

Dear Neo and Kaushik

I had a meeting with Andrea from the Contemporary Image Collective here in Cairo last night - a space I know Neo knows.

Kaushik, CIC is a wonderful Cairo based cultural institution with a focus on the intersection between visual culture, artistic practice and critical discourse.

<http://www.ciccairo.com/>

They had a series of talks and exhibitions planned for June centred on questions of medical histories and the intersections and disjuncts between older traditions and modern medicine in an Egyptian context.

When COVID happened they thought to cancel because of the extreme proliferation of questions around health which has increasingly become no more than an empty din. However, they reconsidered and started to try to think of something quieter, more humble and participatory. They've decided to simply invite researchers and artists working with long histories of engaging health and medicine etc to run a series of reading groups in June.

They've invite me to participate and it seems a really good way to tackle the online archive/ library so I've accepted. I'm meeting with them later in the week to discuss the exact form and content etc and will keep you posted. And of course would love it if you both participated or joined in when and where you can.

All my love!

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

Tue, Jun 9

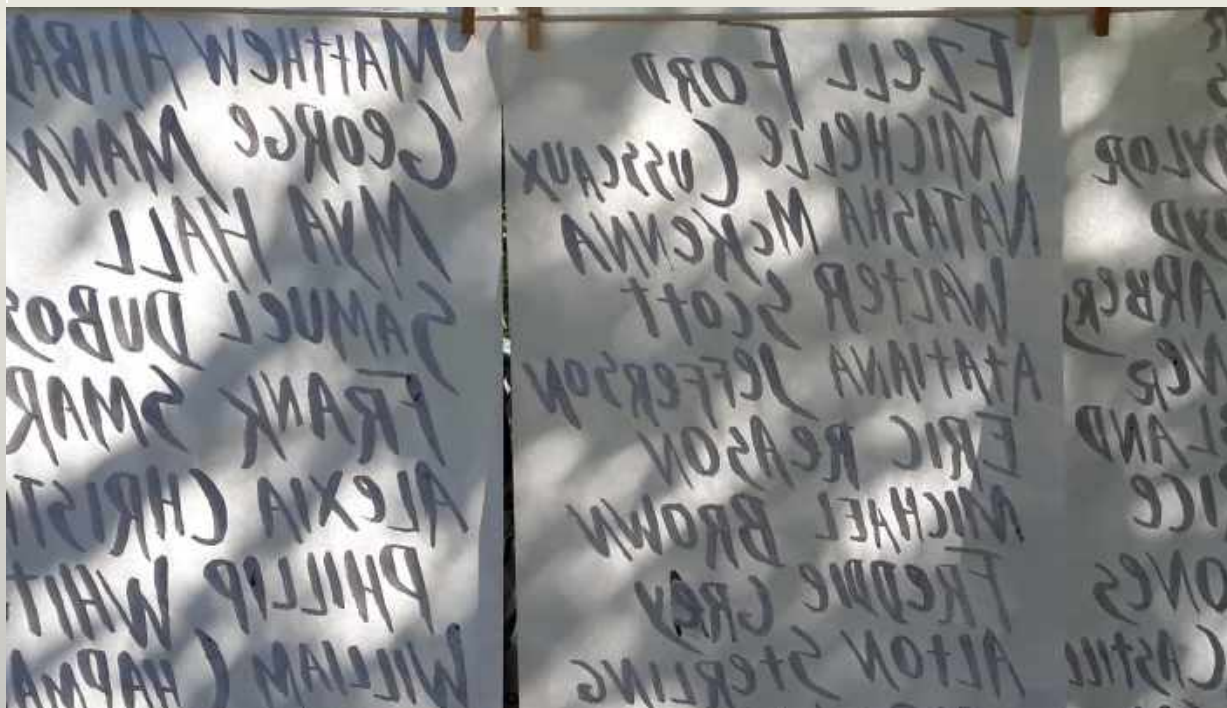
dear both,

i'm so excited about this, and look forward to talking with you both avec HKW in (my) morning. meanwhile, this is what i saw and felt on sunday, amidst 5000 people surrounding a small park, attached. a moment of quiet, of peace, among many. of breath. i think it asks about the archive, but even more, about writing.

something is amiss. something is afoot. i hope we can archive and provoke, together, somehow, in some small measure.

with love, and with so much gratitude that you are comrades, and friends, and present in these times.

k.



Dear Kaushik, Dear Neo

Following our discussion with HKW I was flooded with thoughts -guided by the conversation they're largely on form at this point. This email is just a space for me to put them down before they join the dates I thought I noted and vanish into the chaos of the moment.

In discussing the pedagogical imperatives of our project, I thought of the long history of letters as pedagogical tools. One favourite correspondence that used that format to its fullest potential is Rainer Maria Rilke's Letters to a Young Poet, a collection of ten heartfelt letters to a younger poet who sought out Rilke for a critique. Rilke discouraged the younger poet from seeking such a critique, and instead advised referencing the poet's own inner wisdom and judgment. Rilke further recommended engaging in the world and reveling in experience as precursors to writing poetry. As he writes: "I beg you to have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves"

Bessie Head's letters are precisely this - missive from the head and heart that explode instead of explain, question and never answer: "Not so long ago you asked me to give you a straightforward answer about my life, whether it was in danger, etc. My first reply was that I could not but there are many people who query things because a person can't go on forever saying - "I'm having a nervous breakdown" - and for how long that story has been going on till today I am so broken in health and mind that day to day living for me is really a slow, painful crawl with no end in sight to the agony, except that perhaps my death may end it all. It is not death that troubles me, but the events leading up to it and beyond it and that there are things seen, with complete blanks in between and that the things seen ought to be recorded for some sorrowful eternity for some single human mind to assess."

<https://chimurengachronic.co.za/dear-tom/>

They also reveal how isolation can be seized by the radical imagination. Because of Head's relative social isolation in Botswana, the letters afford her the opportunity of constituting a self in epistolical representations - a self that is framed by a collectivity with which she often feels herself to be at odds, but in relation to which she nevertheless needs to place herself and define her role. As the letters recall her experiences they become the opportunities to represent and re-imagine these events; to articulate, re-evaluate and shape her own arduously achieved ideas.

"I am just tired of all the efforts I made on my own," Head wrote to Alice Walker in 1974, "the uncertainty and the doubt of working in solitude, the drain of offering a certain kind of love that never seems to be returned and the relief at finding someone else with that kind of love too." Walker sometimes found Head's intensity intimidating. "I want to be right, for you," Walker wrote in 1976; "to be perfect. But I'm not perfect. I am terribly confused and untogether..." But Head responded warmly to the recognition that her friendship was demanding; she confessed her own frailties and the depths of her breakdown to Walker in a way that she didn't with anyone else. "It is a great joy therefore," she wrote in a three-page letter praising the essays that Walker had shared with her, "to simply offer homage to another living human being, like the homage I offer you."

This led to me thinking about how we are all somehow in a weird kind of exile now and how exile right now and epistolarity necessitate one another, for distance and absence drive them both. however, by addressing someone in an epistle, an illusion of presence is created that hovers in the text's interstices.

And then the epistolary films of Third World film makers like Chantal Akerman {News from Home, 1976), Mona Hatoum (Measures of Distance, 1988) and Fernando Solanas (Tangos, the Exile of Gardel) and Lettres de Panduranga (Letters from Panduranga, 2015), by Nguyễn Trinh Thi, but also Agnes Varda's One Sings, the Other Doesn't (1976), Chris Markers Letter from Siberia (1957) and Sans Soleil (1987), Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin, in Letter to Jane: Investigation of a Still (1972) etc. etc. All worth rewatching!

And then onto music - call and response and the Brotherhood of Breathe's musical letters home from exile, and then Nathaniel Mackey's ongoing epistolary work of fiction (Splay Anthem, Bass Cathedral etc) which launch us into the heady thoughts of N., narrating letter writer and member of the fictional early '80s jazz ensemble Molino m'Atet, who are releasing their first album, Orphic Bend, which trigger Mackey's singularly styled vamps on jazz and its mystical connotations. etc etc.

More soon

xs

Stacy Hardy

Mon, Jun 15

Dear Neo and Kaushik

One other thought I'd like to mention that emerged as we talked to HKW: for me the conceptual thrust of presenting the lecture/ performances to small targeted audiences is really key. More so than ever now with the deluge of online material that seems to simply assume an interested audience, and attempts to speak to anyone and everyone and hence all too often speaks to no one - literally in some cases I'm sure. I wonder if there is a way to maintain this intimacy and direct address within the scope of HKW's "frame"? I almost feel like we should deliver personalised lecture performances to individuals in their homes :)....

Anyway just something I think we will need to grapple with so thought to put it out there.

neo muyanga

Mon, Jun 15

i could not agree more with you both:

kaushik, yes i would be keen to explore more intentionality and focus at understanding who we are talking with in any and every 'lecture performance'.

stacy, yes i have often used exactly the same phrase construction ('us all living in exile now') to refer to why i find the work of miriam makeba (and so many other voices who speak from 'outside' the familiar skin of home) so essential to assimilate and comprehend.

all this to say, forward ever! backwards, never!

HKW

Stacy Hardy

Sun, Jun 21

Dear Neo, Dear Kaushik

Hello. It struck me that if we need to be ready by end of July/ beginning August I'd like to start working/ thinking/ dreaming / writing this week. I wondered if it would be productive to do a brief hello session and just voice any initial thoughts and impulses. There is the question of form and audience and working methodology.

Much love!

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

Sun, Jun 21

Dear Stacy, dear Neo,

I am very happy to get this e-mail, since I had just logged in in order to write to you both with exactly this query! I'm more or less (not entirely) done with my commitments from the academic year, and want to turn to this now as well.

My own thinking at this point is two-fold: one is that I just want to get my head back into my South Africa material, to take stock of where I am, and where Pulmonographies sits in relation to the other parts of the project. Specifically, for me this means going back to my material on Constitutionalism. I am going to be teaching a class on Constitutionalism to undergrads in the Fall Quarter, which will build upon the Human Rights class I just finished teaching, but with a more detailed theoretical elaboration. So my starting point for getting my head back into things, I am realizing, is to try thinking about what an elaborated syllabus or set of readings for this might be. I realize that this is not the entry point into Pulmonographies for either of you - and it is for me, primarily, because I came to TB and breath via constitutionalism, so it is entirely a contingent function of my own ethnographic itinerary - but that's one of the things I find so exciting. That our itineraries into this problem-space are indeed different. I think one of the axes of a correspondence might indeed be an elaboration of and reflection upon the divergent itineraries from which our correspondence (in every sense of the word) occurs.

The second is that I would just like to hear how each of you would like to get started, and I'm very happy to be led into and out of directions that animate each and both of you at the moment. So yes, I would love to set up a meeting this week to talk about first steps.

Looking forward to talking soon, much love to you both,

towards a reading group (bibliography/ syllabus)

Thu, Jun 25

Stacy Hardy

Dear Neo, Dear Kaushik

I'm sending a document in progress for the CIC reading group here in Cairo. CIC asked me to prepare something that included my own writing on illness, and possibly an excerpt from Museum of Lungs as well as some additional reading that might support this.

I've addressed this by creating a fragmentary text that layers my voice with other voices (film, music, theory, poetry, fiction etc etc) and hyperlinks to the references.

The idea is that everyone will receive this main text and all the references. but that we'll only focus on excerpts and fragments from a few of the hyperlinked text.

Its currently a 10-page document that includes everything from biographical experiences to TB history, extraction economies, necropolitics, questions on illness as a transformative experiences and the creative potential of breath - so very sprawling!

I'm going to sit with Andrea over the next few days so we can choose sections to focus on based on what's relevant in Cairo... but I thought to share the full thing with both of you as it might be useful for our discussion on Friday... I know its a lot of reading but maybe if you could just skim to see the FORM... in someways its both a bibliography and syllabus....

So it's still very messy!

More soon.

[56 dis-ease cic text SH 25 June sh](#)

“stuff,” “strut,” “straw,” “fluff,” “bluff ”

Stacy Hardy

Fri, Jun 26

Dear Angel of Dust,

Djamila brought a new composition to rehearsal today. It's called "Sekhet Aaru Struff," a title that immediately, as you can imagine, got my attention, alluding, as it does, to my own "Sekhet Aaru Strut." Putting "struff" in "strut's" place, it alludes as well to the piece from which it borrows the term (if it can be called a term), Johnny Dyani's "The Robin Irland Struff" on the African Bass album he did

with Clifford Jarvis a few years back. I'm inclined to say it pointedly alludes to both, albeit its "point" would appear to be a diffusion of point, an advancement of blur (with overtones of slur) tending to dislocate point. What, that is, was Dyani getting at with "Robin Irland" if not an ambiguation of "Robben Island," a pointedly malaprop version bordering on slur? And doesn't "struff" go on in the same vein, subjecting "stuff," "strut," "straw," "fluff," "bluff" and any number of other phonically related words to an ambiguating fusion and diffusion, upping the ante on the already indefinite "stuff"? Djamila perhaps had this in mind. Perhaps she meant the replacement of "strut" by "struff" as an ambiguating move, a deflationary tack perhaps.

However much the replacement of "strut" diffuses and deflates a certain self-congratulation at the titular level, however much "struff" does indeed mess with "strut," does indeed mush it up, taking the wind out of the sails its apparent pleasure with itself could be said to be, I say "perhaps" because the music itself does anything but diminish or deride. "Struff" notwithstanding, it conveys no loss or ratcheting down of dimension, no lack of majesty. It's better, perhaps, to simply say a certain modesty obtains, a shying away from the presumption self-nomination can't but entail. "Struff" wants to lighten up, walk lightly, outflank if not entirely break free from such presumption.

"Sekhet Aaru Struff's" light tread compounds a sense of light as trepidatious gait with a competing sense of light as bouyancy, a saltatory élan nowhere more notable than in the bounding figure Aunt Nancy sustains on bass. Atop and to a degree at odds with the bass's throb-inflected walk, I pursue a more tentative approach on trumpet, the trepidatious advance adumbrated by "struff's" unraveling of "strut's" edges, a frayed, fraught excursion bereft of any but ad hoc assurances. Drennette steps away from the traps in favor of bongos and conga for this piece, peppering and otherwise abetting Aunt Nancy's bounding figure while helping propel and punctuating the piece on other fronts as well. Djamila herself plays synthesizer, though "presides on" would be a more accurate way to put it, so fully does she avail herself and the piece of a sense of ultimacy, majesty and moment, an incumbent cosmicity or an abiding ethereality the synthesizer is famously able to impart.

The most unusual aspect of the piece's instrumentation is that Lambert and Penguin don't play their horns, assigned instead to something Djamila variously terms extended voice (nodding to Meredith Monk), prepared voice (nodding to John Cage) and amended voice or (further accenting her own intervention, underscoring her nodding to no one if not herself) amended mouth. Each is given a text to read, excerpts from a chapter of the Chapters of Coming Forth by Day. Lambert's is taken from Chapter XV, "A Hymn of Praise to Ra when He Riseth in the Eastern Part of Heaven," which mentions Sekhet Aaru toward the end: "Let him mingle among the Heart-souls who live in Ta-tchesert. Let him travel about in the Sekhet Aaru, conformably to thy decree with joy of heart—him the Osiris Ani, whose word is truth." Penguin's is taken from Chapter CX, "The Chapters of Sekhet Hetepet," which concerns arrival in Sekhet Aaru and living in the city of Sekhet Hetepet, e.g., "Let me go forward. Let me plough. I am at peace with the god of the town. I know the water, the towns, the nomes, and the lakes which are in Sekhet Hetepet. I live therein. I am strong therein." Lambert recites first, then Penguin.

By extended voice, prepared voice, amended voice or amended mouth Djamila means that Lambert and Penguin each clamp three clothespins to their lips for the piece, two of them clamped to and hanging down from the sides of the upper lip, one of them clamped to and hanging down from the middle of the lower lip. The aim is to alter their elocution, to pidginize, as Djamila puts it, the papyrus of Ani. She instructed them not to let it stop simply at that but to assist the aleatory work done by the clothespins (or, as she sometimes terms it, the amendments) by furthering it, consciously recasting the

text, at the point of enunciation, as universal patois, idiosyncratically conceived. “Think of Pharoah’s ‘Japan,’” she exhorted. “Think of the long line of scat behind it.

You could do worse than think of Slim Gaillard or of Clark Terry’s ‘Mumbles,’ to say nothing of all the vatic chatter outside the music.”

Lambert and Penguin wondered if Djamila was serious at first (Aunt Nancy, Drennette and I wondered as well), especially when Penguin noticed the sentence “Behold my mouth is equipped” in the text he was to read, at which point he started laughing and, sure it was all a joke, said to Djamila, “Okay, you got us. Touché.” Djamila, though, looked at him as if she had no idea what he meant. Quickly enough, we all saw that indeed she had no idea what he meant. She was nothing if not serious, though she did allow, responding a bit later to a question Lambert raised regarding “amendment as endowment versus amendment as obstruction,” that the tactic might be viewed as a bit quirky. “But who says quirky can’t be serious?” she rhetorically asked.

Lambert and Penguin, then, approached their parts (in many ways the linchpin of the piece) with all due seriousness, holding any impulse to ham it up, go tongue in cheek or in some other way play for comic effect at bay. Each adopted a damped inflection, whisperlike but a whisper less in volume than tone, conspiratorial—open, even so, to exhortative, declamatory moments now and again. The clothespins did their job of detour, inhibiting certain habits of pronunciation while enabling alternatives, conducing to a pestered, repercussive manner of speech that did indeed, thanks to the synthesizer’s choric hints and empyrean laminates, seem the issue of a pidginizing “celestiality” (to use Alan Silva’s term), universal patois. I need to stress that this wasn’t arrived at quickly, that there were a number of false starts and a good deal of trial and error before Lambert and Penguin found the right vocalic balance and blend, the requisite pace and restraint to make it work.

As I’ve noted, Djamila extracted a lush but buried oratorio from the synthesizer, interred, if one could so say it, in the firmament, a streaming advance and a sheeting sweep thru the heavens. Solemnity and moment, neither untouched by requiem, were hers to maintain, universal bounty both mourned and extolled. Swell had to do with it, as did surge, emanation, pulse—pressed amenities it was all one could do not to be borne away by, however much (yet all the more) one felt allied.

As for my part, it especially fell to me, as I’ve already said, not to be borne away, to offer an astringent bounding bass and universal bounty could be qualified by. Counterpoise and parry were typically my lines’ relation to Lambert’s and Penguin’s readings, moments of convergence not altogether absent. Moot sublimity, all such rally was earned assurance’s emptying out, a hollowing out. Incertitude vied with assurance, earned assurance hallowing hitch, hesitation, sputter’s recondite remit. Lambert and I or Penguin and I, as were the trumpet and I, were each the other’s hollow extension.

We played the piece a good number of times, even after we finally got it down (especially after we finally got it down). I’m enclosing a tape of the best version.

As ever,
N.

Nathaniel Mackey: Late Arcade

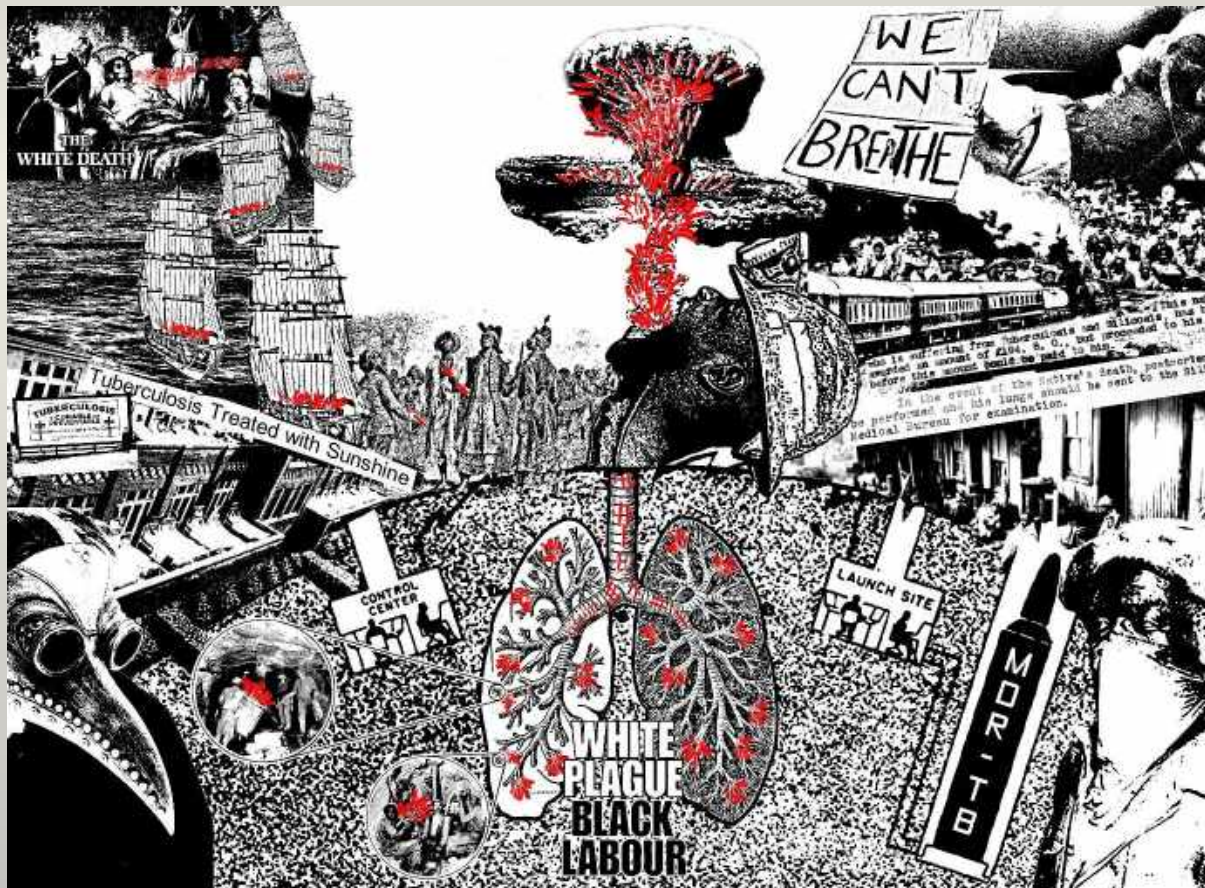
Fwd: PULMONOGRAPHIES GRAPHIC

Sun, Jun 28

Stacy Hardy

from BG

let me know!



an opening

Sat, Jun 27

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

dear both,

such a pleasure to speak with you yesterday.

attached herewith is a stab at some initial thoughts. very much just an opening. i'll try to write more to flesh this out in the coming days, but in the meantime happy to hear thoughts, either in response to this, or in relation to other immediate next steps you think we should take, re. thinking about bibliography/syllabus/audience.

love to you both, and with much gratitude for your inspiration,

k.

Notes towards a correspondence (avec Stacy et Neo)

Kaushik ... 26 June 2020

[W]hen a word is properly defined it loses its capital letter and can no longer serve either as a banner or as a hostile slogan; it becomes simply a sign, helping us to grasp some concrete reality or concrete objective, or method of activity. To clarify thought, to discredit the intrinsically meaningless words, and to define the use of others by precise analysis—to do this, strange though it may appear, might be a way of saving human lives.

(Simone Weil)

We are playing with a lot of words that are improperly defined, but we seek to get them all to lose their capital letter.

Correspondence.

Conspiracy.

Constitution.

All words that speak to collectivity, that speak to embodiment, that are both noun and verb, that need to be verbed to become lively.

The time has come for us to begin working together with Pulmonographies. The question for me, here as always, is - where to begin? What is the entry point into a topic? Into a conversation? Into correspondence? Into conspiracy? Where do we begin to constitute something, when the nature of "something" is itself indeterminate?

It is with that question that I sent my email earlier in the week, suggesting that my entry point is constitutionalism, because my entry point into the larger project was constitutionalism.

I have a sense of each of your entry points, through our conversations, but also, Stacy, through your experience that led to "Museum of Lungs", which you have now reiterated in your first offering to us. But before we go down the Constitution/constitution/constitutionalism rabbit-hole, I'm curious to hear more about your entry points. About your stakes in the matter of breath. Even as I will try,

over the coming days, to articulate for both of you something that links my stakes in the matter of breath to the spirit of constitutionalism. In order to articulate, for myself as much as for each of you, what animates my own desire to think one in relation to the other, to think each through the other.

This is just a start towards that. A start that makes me realize that what is at stake for me, at this point, is to decapitalize, properly define, and thus enliven C[c]orrespondence, C[c]onspiracy and C[c]onstitution as meaningfully interrelated words that are important to our present thought and activity.

Sat, Jun 27

Stacy Hardy

dear kaushik and neo

i've just come back from my evening walk. egypt has just lifted the curfew and almost a celebratory energy on the streets, this giant city rising, its nervous fluid similar to a grammar or an electric current. loving and loathing, the city circulates. and me, a foreigner, awkward, stuttering arabic, my blonde hair a style of enunciation, a strategic misunderstanding, a linguistic funnel, a wedge in language. times in this lock down when i thought i might destroy my origin, or I did destroy it, a permanent exile even when i'm at home. and quarantine as exile at home. what do I love? I love the elsewhere of moving clouds. the flux of the swallows that dance across the skies in the morning - i always imagine that they have migrated here from the deep south. me and the birds. and suddenly remembering, you, kaushik, telling me you had found a home in south africa. i wonder if. when we both will be able to go home? and if maybe you'll help me discover home? my friend tamara writes: home is in your body. but fuck! i'm such a small broken, a broken home.

and from all this thinking on the profound poles of movement and stasis in this time.

the mass migrations in india...

and now here in south africa:

<https://www.news24.com/fin24/companies/mining/a-massive-labour-migration-is-starting-in-sas-mining-industry-post-lockdown-20200611>

and the role of movement in dis-ease:

<https://theconversation.com/the-night-trains-a-masterly-study-into-southern-africas-murderous-migrant-system-140663>

and finally, my reason for this email: today i was very inspired by this journey:

<https://www.culture-review.co.za/the-revolutionary-suicide-of-jozistellenbosch>

Stacy Hardy

Thu, Jun 25

Hello Neo and Kaushik

Regarding the reading list - how about "A Mix Tape for breathes" rather?

We could include some of the recently shared material but also older things from the Museum of Lungs playlist:

Adesh Ravi's Migrant Song on Corona.mp4
Philip Miller /Reuben T. Caluza 'Influenza(1918)'
Bebey breathes like 'pygmies' not like savages
something from Miller's Dying for Gold soundtrack
Dr Philip Tabane
Shembe Choirs
Huun-Huur-Tu, "Deke Jo"
Dyani GrandMothers Teaching
Masekela's Coal Train
Makeba Festac
etc etc

xs

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqI8asmMdMFhg1OcGXY0HVBguoSrM6b-x>

neo muyanga

Thu, Jul 2

dearest stacy and kaushik,

i love boeta g's poster, wow!! so happy too with the mixtape, thank you stacy!

and thank you kaushik for the abstract. i am happy all round and send you both warmest greeting hugs.

neo

Situating the biology of covid-19

Fri, Jul 3

Situating the Biology of Covid-19

some articles

Stacy Hardy

Thu, Jul 9

related to some aspects of our research that i thought to share

<https://www.newframe.com/mining-communities-bear-the-burden-of-disease/>

<https://www.newframe.com/un-watchdog-joins-sa-air-pollution-case/>

<https://africasacountry.com/2020/06/lockdown-2-0>

<https://mg.co.za/opinion/2020-06-24-achille-mbembe-the-universal-right-to-breathe/>

apologies

Stacy Hardy

Mon, Jul 6

Friends! So sorry, I'm running late - only half way through the piece I wanted to send on the weekend. It's been a hectic week with several deaths of friends that have left me somewhat depleted. But it is coming.

For now to respond to Katrin's inquiry, what I'm envisioning is a series of letters that are both in conversation/ addressed to you and in conversation with the texts I'm reading... I'm trying, hoping, reaching to create a space for shared breath that can provide the oxygen necessary for transforming writing into the act of breathing, breathing being, as Mbembe suggests the sign of a living body.

And ultimately we would ideally include the syllabus that emerges from this conversation. A syllabus in process, a curriculum for people who dropped out of school so they could breath! So not to camp in an expert position. I am in no way a specialist, an expert as it's fashionable to say. So no lecture, no lectures. Rather, a conversation with several voices as an excuse to breathe.

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

Tue, Jul 7

oh dear stacy, i am so sorry to hear about the deaths of your friends. please accept my deepest condolences. i wish you strength, and indeed the capacity to breathe for and through them at this time.

i wanted to respond to your suggestion below with complete agreement, and also with a couple of thoughts and additions ...

(1) yes, there is a specific performative aspect to what we are doing for HKW, and yes it does and should take the form of a correspondence (in the traditional sense) as they ask. i have bought some letter paper (!), and will write out the little constitutionalism riff i sent you last week ... and have more to write in that vein. of course, the question of constitutionalism remains provisional and contingent - why is it *my* entry point into considerations of TB and breath? - but i think it speaks to one of the animating impulses of the larger HKW project, which is to think about longer duree questions of structural transformation at and through this moment. and what each of our longer duree questions is, or what we come to this correspondence with, are necessarily different. that's where the "correspondence" (as in coming together) potentially happens.

(2) but this performance isn't where we have begun, either collectively or individually. and one of the things that i was thinking of and wondering is whether the series of letters you are envisioning, stacy, mightn't be at the heart of a larger, more loose-knit archive, one that is necessarily both more speculative and more contingent, a cabinet of curiosities of our various itineraries floating together and elsewhere. this would include, in no particular order:

- "Museum of Lungs" (perhaps we can provide a trailer?)

- a select compilation of our earlier correspondence (which stacy already made, which i can complete with subsequent material)

- stacy's feni project (and our brief correspondence / my field notes re. the feni scrolls)

- perhaps the beginning of stacy's correspondence with edwin ...?

(3) but also - and this speaks to the notion of our respective practice, both enduring and changing, which i am also captivated by - what traces of our practice do we have from before or elsewhere that we might add to this cabinet? bits of other writing of yours, stacy, bits of composition, neo, fragments for me from either earlier field notes / maybe photographs etc.? i.e. might we also rummage into what we already have, what we are bringing with us into this collective space of conversation, in addition to what we might produce in the coming weeks? to this end ...

(4) what i realize i have, stacy - a gem, which i haven't gone back to for a while - is the transcript of our very first conversation, in the cafe at obs, which i ran a tape on. because of course, what i do is transcribe ... and i thought if i went back to that and transcribed it, it would provide a snapshot into a different, more primary (though not more authentic) moment in our conversation, a point of departure to our correspondence. and then i was thinking, neo, if you were open to this, that i would really love doing an open-ended interview with you where i ask you to reflect a little bit more upon some of the things you have alluded to in our conversation - both concerning music as a "practice of breathing together", and your own stakes in a pedagogy of breath, your practices and collaborations in south africa, brazil, the UAE and elsewhere that were interrupted by the pandemic, how you are thinking of - and indeed, *re-constituting* - your own practice. i realize this might be an imposition, and i certainly don't want to put you on the spot in any awkward or uncomfortable way, but if you were open to us just having an open-ended conversation about these things on zoom or skype, that i

record and transcribe alongside my initial conversation with stacy, i'm wondering if that might produce a really interesting element of the correspondence, one that also performs my constitutive methodology of listening, recording, transcribing?

(5) i think the question of students to think with, to construct a syllabus for, should be essential to our ongoing correspondence, including in the series of letters, as you have both suggested. and figuring out how to bring a small community of differently located students together over the coming months to form a syllabus with, and to perform a syllabus with, might/ought to be a longer-term agenda beyond the HKW correspondence that we get neubauer to help us shape? would love to keep thinking together about this ...

those are my immediate responses for now, more writing and transcribing to come; but let me know if this sounds like a possible way forward?

much love and strength and breath to you both,

k.

Thu, Jul 9

Stacy Hardy

Dear Kaushik, Dear Neo

I was so excited to receive this email. It's a book!!! But I do love compiling our longer duree and seeing this made me realise that in many ways its the syllabus "for people who dropped out of school so they could breathe" I was asking for in my last email. It's also very much along the lines of the multidisciplinary, loose, conversational, scrapbook structure I was mentioning that I loved in Krog and Mpolweni and Ratele's wonderful book There was this Goat - do both try get a copy if you're able at all. I also love using the HKW invitation as an opportunity to do the work of what Neo called - and a paraphrase here: "practicing and finding practice by digging in his (our) own archive" ... and yes, Kaushik this is that correspondence you referred to - our corresponding practices and the correspondences of TB and Covid etc etc.

So yes, I love this! Thank you!

1. I'm very excited by what I've been reading around constitutionalism and look forward to finishing my response to your provocation today - it will also give you something to respond to and take forward and also includes some ambitious provocations and proposals!

2. - We have this trailer <https://vimeo.com/289770364> and i also recently recorded a excerpt from the script for another project - we could also use this audio:

[Museum of Lungs excerpt 1](#)

[Museum of Lungs excerpt 2](#)

- Yes, I looked back at our email exchanges and realised how much I've actually written to you both in the last year - and especially in the last few months - and how rich our correspondences are. Kaushik are you good to compile and edit this? Do you need assistance here?

- I love including Feni - I also have some more writing that contextualises this more that was included in the CiC "syllabus" I sent and which I extract (so to speak) in the attached excerpt from this (Feni bit highlighted).

- Yes, and I'll be finished my second letter to Edwin this week

3. I love so much in this archive and I'll select some texts here- Kaushik and Neo I'd love your guidance and help in selecting as I have my usual over accumulation. And Neo. I rummaged in your archive a bit in compiling the "mixtape" and you have soooo much that's relevant!

4. wonderful! i very much look forward to revisiting this and i love the idea of an interview with Neo

5. Yes! I'll give this more thought but I do think the above is a wonderful start on this.

THANK YOU Kaushik. Wonderful provocation!

Thu, Jul 9

Stacy Hardy

"Illness is epistemically transformative," writes Havi Carel in [*Illness as transformative experience*](#), "It gives us experiences that we would not otherwise have had and that we cannot know what it is like to have until we undergo them—knowledge that cannot otherwise be acquired."

I'm on shaky ground. These issues are fraught and complex and there is a danger of romanticizing illness, the disease and the diseased, the sick and dying, romanticising pain and poverty.

Metaphors are dangerous, according to Sontag. Language is slippery.

One of the most potent myths regarding TB historically was the link between the disease and creativity.

The gaunt and tortured artist. The hands of an anaemic writer. A lack of power, vigour, vitality. Colourfulness.

Spinoza died at forty-four of tuberculosis.

Maxim Gorky died of tuberculosis. Or was he ordered murdered by Stalin?

Camus went through most of his adult life with recurrent tuberculosis.

Franz Kafka died of tuberculosis.

Simone Weil died of tuberculosis

Colette Laure Peignot nearly died of tuberculosis at age 13. She stayed alive by using writing as a weapon against her condition: woman, bourgeoisie, ill, colonialist. After a lifelong struggle, she finally succumbed. She died at age 35 of tuberculosis.

South African artist Dumile Feni first contracted tuberculosis at age eleven. He was admitted to Isolation Hospital in Queenstown. For 14 years, the disease lay dormant. It lived in him, smouldered, bloodied his dreams with visions. He fled to Soweto but still it followed. On the streets, he saw souls crumbled by poverty, bodies ravaged by hunger and violence.

At 25, he succumbed again and was interned at the Charles Hurwitz Santa Tuberculosis Hospital. He spent three months in recovery.

He lay on a bed in a room with only a small window. For ninety days, he watched the white sky turn black at night, the black sky, turn white by day. His body changed. His stomach concaved. His hands grew hungry.

He began to paint and draw. He sketched naked bodies with twisted limbs, disproportionate parts, mismatched features. Each day he recomposed bodies as they decomposed around him. The frame shuddered. Charcoal turned to dust on his fingers. [hyperlink [A Triptych For Feni](http://ellipses.org.za/IssueThree/IfGodSpat/ATriptychForFeni.html) <http://ellipses.org.za/IssueThree/IfGodSpat/ATriptychForFeni.html>]

Many scholars celebrate Feni's use of line and shadow to depict the injustices of human suffering and disease. But I see something else in the pictures. A leaning, gleaming towards something. An infection, an amputation, a potential....

Audrey Lorde urges her readers to reach inside themselves and acknowledge what bodily fears or prejudices they carry, to "touch that terror and loathing of any difference that lives there".

In [*A Failed Essay On Grief, Sickness, Anti-Writing/ante-Writing, Wounds, Cixous, Philoctetes, Darouillardes, Aung San Suu Kyi, On Kawara, Kanye West, Justin Timberlake, Barthes' Mourning Diary And Queer Ghosts In Contemporary R&B; In The Form Of An Interrupted Letter To A Dead Parent*](#), Roxanne Gay deliberately rejects a writing that might cauterise the wound.

Her reasons for rejecting cautery: Siding with blood loss, badly-executed amputations, rampant infection.

In [*A Manifesto for Discomfortable Writing*](#) Korean American poet Myung Mi Kim likewise embraces illness: Dis-ease is useful to me, or the dis-abling of habituated practices of language.

Argentine poet Alejandra Pizarnik says the job of poetry is 'to heal the fundamental wound,' to 'rescue the abomination of human misery by embodying it'. [*'Uncollected Poems \(1962–1972\)*](#)

Maybe then, I want a cure that would make me sicker. Not healthy.

It all feels too difficult to talk about these things. About illness and disease and dying and exploitation and how race is entangled in this.

I can only talk in stutters and stumbles.

In the gaps between words.

What is it I take for granted? Skin. The body's fragile, necessary, and sensitive clothing marked by history, and an obdurate maintenance of relationships of power and (dis)possession.

I speak from a position of privilege... and yet this privilege is killing me.

neo muyanga

Sun, Jul 12

greetings dear stacy and kaushik.

i hope you are both keeping well, staying healthy and keeping spirits up. we are indeed in tragic and confusing times. so many are falling by the wayside, let down by our so-called civilisation(s) based on cruelty and structured inequity.

it's truly hard to breathe now.

i'm provoked to share this clip of work by pamela z which strikes a chord.

<https://youtu.be/j7AZsQoD630>

warmly,

neo

South Africa should build on HIV activism to foster behaviour change

Sun, Jul 19, 4:25 AM

Stacy Hardy

<https://theconversation.com/covid-19-south-africa-should-build-on-hiv-activism-to-foster-behaviour-change-142091>

a piece very in line with the arguments you've been making

letter no. 1

Wed, Jul 22

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

dear both,

my first offering.

apologies, dear neo, that it lacks context. stacy and i talked today and brainstormed a bit and this is the outcome. it's late now, but i'll write tomorrow and fill you in with more background about where this is coming from.

with love to you both, k.

PULMONOGRAPHIES

Letter no. 1

<July 20, 2020>

Dear Stacy and Neo,

I want to begin our correspondence with a simple question. What would it mean to think of covid as another kind of tuberculosis? What would it mean to think of tuberculosis as a matter of breath? What would it mean to think of covid as a matter of breath?

Why would we do so? Why would it matter to think of other correspondences to covid than the flu? What does it matter to think about covid as a matter of life and breath, rather than, say, as a respiratory disease? What other worlds might these other correspondences allow us to think? What kinds of relations, elided both in dominant epidemiological understandings and in their trumped up/dumbed down misunderstandings, might they render visible?

What is it about each of our itineraries that brings us to think this correspondence, of covid as a matter of TB as a matter of breath?

What forms will an answer to this question take?

We already have a correspondence now, which extends between us, Stacy, for over a year, which extends between the two of you for much longer. I look back over that correspondence [<hyperlink>](#), as an entry point into this one.

<TO DO - KSR - pull up Stacy's compilation of our correspondence, add to PRACTICE>

This is not a question that can be answered in a linear fashion. What we can compile is, perhaps, a cabinet of curiosities, each drawer a portal into a different kind of room, containing different kinds of material, housing different kinds of individual and collective modes of inquiry, production and dialogue. The form of this correspondence is the annotation of these modes of inquiry, in order to ask ... how do they correspond? We do not, cannot, imagine the nature and form of their correspondence in advance. That has to left to the wanderings of whoever opens these

drawers and wanders into these portals, with whatever baggage they might bring to their own inhabitation of these questions.

I think that there are four modes of inquiry that animate these amalgamated considerations around the mattering of breath. The **MATTERING** of breath: breath as matter, as tangible, substantiated, atmospheric. The **MATTERING** of breath: breath as something that is important, a matter of concern, and of life. Each of them occupy a different kind of space:

Correspondence: these letters. The form that our performance lecture on pulmonographies (the geographies and biographies and the mattering of breath, explored through the colonial history of TB in South Africa) takes. The correspondence is the **stage**: it is the thing we have been asked to produce, in the space and the form that we have been asked to produce it.

Practice: what each of us do, on our own, often in private. The condition of possibility for subsequent or eventual performance. Contemplation, composition, inscription, transcription, annotation. The space of practice is the **studio**: the space where we can pull things together and take them apart. Constitute, assemble, articulate.

Archive: the things that we collect. Playlists; bibliographies; transcripts. The scene of the archive is the **library**. It is where we go to browse, where we can find the things we want to read, see and here, but also make serendipitous connections and discoveries.

Syllabus: the annotated archive, built with the purpose of pedagogy in mind. The space of the syllabus is the **classroom**: semi-structured, intimate, with implicit hierarchies that can and must be constantly upended and reconstituted, a space of teaching and mutual learning. The work of, as Gayatri Spivak puts it, the “non-coercive rearrangement of desires”.

As we correspond, as we bring pulmonographies into correspondence, as we consider the correspondences of the mattering of breath, I look forward to populating and animating our once individual, now trans-individual, perhaps emergently collective, studio, library and classroom. Including with fellow practitioners, readers and students whom we do not yet know.

Time for bed now, but more very soon. Write back when you can?

Much love to you both,

k.

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

Sat, Jul 25

Dear Stacy and Neo,

It was wonderful to see you, Stacy, now twice this week! I'm very excited at the prospect of a budding, living archive, which you have already given breath to with your initial bibliographies.

Thank you for the folder! Neo, as might be apparent from it, Stacy and I were thinking of building four portals into our correspondence:

1. The actual correspondence of letters - which, like all correspondences, will have different lengths and frequencies, responding or not according to our respective rhythms and provocations. This is what HKW wants from us, the "performance lecture" will unfold here - it is, if you will, the stage.
2. "Practice": a portal which we populate with elements of our respective practices, such as they might be - transcripts and field notes for me, vignettes from previous engagements and adjacent projects, etc. This, if you will, as a studio.
3. "Archive": which we populate with bibliographies: reading lists, playlists, the work of others that we draw upon and take inspiration from, drawing old, new and serendipitous connections. If you will, our library.
4. "Syllabus": where we put the various syllabi we are constructing - mine and Stacy's, separately for now, with correspondence-to-come, on constitutionalism; but also any other forms by which we imagine our practice as pedagogy, including in our conceptualization of who students might be with whom we can teach and learn from about this material. Our classroom, if you like.

We think the arrangement of materials in each of these portals will take different forms - 2, 3 and 4 are backgrounds to the performative stage of the correspondence - for readers to wander through and inhabit as they see fit.

We'd love to talk and hear how you might want to respond to, play with, torque and change this. We were also wondering if we could:

- find time with you for an interview, about your practice, and
- fine time for a listening room session?

Stacy, is there anything I've missed that you'd like to add?

with much love to you both, and with excitement at correspondence-to-come,

k.

Neo Muyanga

Wed, Jul 29

greetings dear friends.

my apologies for going awol again - the internet is really not my favourite hang out place, so i regularly need to loose my tethers to the cyberspace. thanks for this update below. if you're up for it, i'd be happy to chat again this week, say tomorrow (thursday) or friday, when you have time?

warmest,

n

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

Wed, Jul 29

dear neo, dear stacy,

i am so happy that you are so agnostic towards the internet, neo! it feels both principled and freeing. i would love to talk on friday if that works for you both. it's been an intense day for me because i am approaching the end of my constitutionalism syllabus, which will finally allow me to look at stacy's (for correspondence)! i realize it's taken me 6 weeks, an own form of practice, and has allowed me to think, in ways that will hopefully be intelligible, and provoke.

also an intense day because it's a year since i came to cape town for my extended sojourn, which is when you came, stacy, which is when the three of us started talking together. i did not take our meeting for granted at all, but i did take for granted the ability to get on a long flight and keep repeating this. that this feels so inconceivable now is unbearably poignant. and makes the coming weeks feel more valuable.

i have started attending the weekly WISER seminar that keith breckenridge is organizing, and feel a connection, and remembering that it was through WISER, neo, that i first heard your music in 2015.

with love, and so much gratitude for you both,

k.

Stacy Hardy

Thu, Jul 30

dearest neo and kaushik

i can't believe its been a year! its been a lifetime! what a curse and blessing to be working together in such flux and tumult. here in cairo, flying kites exploded after the lockdown / curfew. the skies are filled with them and the streets filled with children building make-shift flying machines out of plastic and wood. the government, recognising the radical reaching for freedom in all this untethered flight has since banned kites from the skies. but still they go up, figuratively, under the cover of sunset, from balconies and rooftops.

flight, lines of flight can be suspended but never locked down.

so excited to engage your syllabus - i've also found a way with my own practice and have been learning and dreaming and flying and will do my very best to meet your syllabus with my own and the letter that speaks it by tomorrow. but it's been another crushing week - my close friend and wonderful writer unathi slasha's 13 year old baby sister was brutally murdered in kayamandi outside PE this week and i've got to know the whole family so it really broke me - the

violence of this moment is extreme. trying to write through and from and for it but it's a necessarily a limping, wing-torn gait.

with all my love, xs

Fwd: Friendly reminder: Invitation to redesigned "Breath: Inspire/Expire" symposium

Sun, Aug 2

Stacy Hardy

Dear Kaushik

I've been working on some writing around the photographs I took exploring my broken body as an archive that I've begun to dream towards a performance piece (started working with a wonderful SA choreographer virtually last week) and a chapbook.

"When something intimately changes your body, your possibilities to move, your dynamic with the outer world, your identity for many people, your limits as to what you can bear, that thing forces you into inner transformation. I hate the thing, I love the thing. The thing forces me over my edges, I cannot squeeze it out of me, I cannot directly influence it, I can only take it as a challenge to my rational mind, to what I have been, to my own limitations."

"I deform it, the image, it's the struggle between realities, they want to impose theirs because otherwise their ground becomes cracked."

It struck me that we might - possibly maybe who knows - be together over October / November and I thought it could be interesting to do a small video lecture interrogating practice: "Fragmented notes and images towards dancing my body as an archive."

And just because it's as sideways as all of this I wondered if you'd be prepared to "direct" it?

I would do the work but ask you to join me in interrogating and critiquing and pushing it and shaping it. Really just someone to bounce and rift and laugh with? And it could be fun for you to wear a director hat too!

Curious really.

tonight

Wed, Aug 5

Stacy Hardy

Dear Neo, Dear Kaushik

I'm still reeling from the Beirut blast - it's really ricocheting here in Cairo. My friends in the city are all safe but as one put it in a message today: "grief grief grief grief".

I will need until the end of the week on letters - its currently a tome but I'll edit down and break into a few missives - I spent the day reading on the role of the mines as covid hotspots in SA and how they've fuelled the pandemic accross the country. its really firing the urgency of looking at Covid through TB. I want to include it.

Neo your playlist provocations - a letter in listening together - coming today!

To confirm, disembodiment ourselves and speak at 8pm?

Kaushik will you send the link?

Love, always, and more than ever!

Conversation with Neo Muyanga August 5 2020.mp3

18.26

CONVERSATION 2 STAY THEO | INTERVIEW @ NEO

NEO: We're becoming aware of his latest beat.

- breakdown has meant that more v. diff. - nothing, minimalist stuff in sound
- spending a lot of his time listening
- his composer friend who takes people on sound walks to make a sound map of everything you hear

STAY: Missing the soundtrack of South Africa, all the diverse encounters & music, that's

(Covers as an incredibly diff. soundtrack)

NEO: the sound of Cape Town, the sound of Johannesburg

STAY: he's not a single & a video that's a video

NEO: Some of his beautiful pieces where he tries to convert sound channels

NEO: primarily what we have is sound

a small part of that spectrum & what we call music (what we call relational)

↓

creates an audiovisual call-response relationship

needs 3 zones: frames to read something as a musical scene

from music (sound)

midst (music)

micro (post music) - music operating in terms of a particular stance to the world

2 strands of post music

have a particular vocal structure but call a response that we understand in SA as protest

religious practice

two saying of self, speaking to directors, establishing a history (long for fighting, healing, praying)

in making culture

↳ songs of lament (having lost hearts) - history (heart of directors) - connection to self

As these into full music to abstract + silence

What gets into people's lungs makes them sick, you get splintered out by the system

the person who carries heart - has artifacts, shortness of breath, a fragile object

TEST: archives = pretending not to be ill

Covid is a phrasing that history

if tester arrives at your house (Eastern Cape), it means you might be sick

NEO: Covid, TB, lockdowns - massive umbrellas that point a group of people in a particular color

group of people most at risk?

black + brown people

black + brown women - possible to ignore the reality, or the power, fierceness, violence that comes in moving against this particular situation

STAY: (p) doesn't want sense until the spectrum who takes v. little account of the spectrum of realities across the divide of inequality

NEO: what of TB + TB: can't treat diseases in isolation

⇒ biggest to talk about other problems except in the light of Covid

If the disease has eaten everything yet life goes on

(for Neo) - how is Covid being your practice? how is it being music?

NEO: still early for me to say exactly what's coming, but

to see what's around the corner
 Work premised on large grps. of coming together -
 don't see how we can. the practice of the choir?

What is a choir for?
 meaning community
 creating healthy & depending
 learning by listening
 - accompanying, rather than being the
 protagonist

STRAY -> how show's fit in trains - as a protection against
 crime - 'you are part of a grp., no longer an
 individual target'
 - the idea of learning to make community (the role
 of choirs in TR) - in a country where community
 is so threatened

NEO -> opt against the grain against what the Internet offers

(classroom) // Division of the individual

that is where we are
 stuck: what does it mean
 to not being able to practice?

STRAY - what is the Internet stopping? (one was heard
 can't get sent & happen within the same room)

NEO - mixing in virtual space
 - the virtual cuts + the embodied cuts
 - what speakers do, but speak in a room that
 sounds 2-3 ft apart

Syncretic Resonance when you're & other people
 + in a room to be silent
 sound, reconfigure what is in a room. I think
 people in a room are like hear the

to see what's around the corner
 Work premised on large grps. of coming together -
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Syncretic Resonance when you're & other people
 + in a room to be silent
 sound, reconfigure what is in a room. I think
 people in a room are like hear the

before, corruption narrative solely put on one canal
 Now it seems systematic
 What does it mean, for what we are complicit in?
 the archive of politicking reconfigured in voice

STRAY - haven't been listening to what voices have been
 telling us about coexistence

NEO -> Vibrate the ultimate symbiotic - we activate & bring
 the virus to life. Subj. of our genetic material is viral

me - (how does one strike an intervention that is resonant &
 not silencing?)

STRAY - the performance offers a piece but also interrupts the
 process of listening that the audience is engaged in
 (reading, analyzing, listening, hearing)

NEO -> Repetition is about getting to know who
 (to who) - in her own music practice

STRAY - in that scenario, repetition is actively listening -
 the moment that begins the cycle becomes one
 personally
 you're listening to what's new inside of what's already
 been said
 Repetition is never sameness
 pt. of view always being enriched by what came by
 playing the piece in a diff room
 a skilled performer to a diff audience } can
 enjoys the newness of each repetition } never be
 REPEATED

STRAY -> the that happened when violent movement drew on
 protest songs of the past but they were v. diff songs.
 (my practice)

NEO -> story's letter to Neo - to respond musically
 (piece from a friend)

A Jazz Drummer's Fight to Keep His Own Heart Beating

Stacy Hardy

Wed, Aug 5

[A Jazz Drummer's Fight to Keep His Own Heart Beating](#)

artifact 1 - annotated constitutionalism syllabus

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

Sat, Aug 8

dear both,

it was lovely to be in conversation with and about your work and practice, neo, and to be so collectively with stacy. the flatness of the medium notwithstanding, it was an important and invigorating hour for me.

herewith, the first of many promised "to-do"s - my "syllabus" on constitutionalism. it's taken the form of a syllabus for my autumn quarter undergraduate class, but really, it's sort of a letter as well - trying to articulate to myself, and to you, some of my stakes in constitutionalism as a problem-space, and how and why i want to think through it some more, on its own terms.

forthcoming:

- i've been listening to my first interview with stacy - it's wonderful and uncanny to go back to that early meeting, including to the sounds of a public space in cape town in the background! - and plan to send some artifacts of that to you both, tomorrow.

- i will do something similar with the recording of our conversation from this week, once i have gone over it again.

- have started compiling our correspondence from the past months, which will be a much slower project, hopefully to be completed in the course of this week.

but for now, this "thing", whatever it has become, in the hope that it's of interest, and that it stimulates some things in turn, not necessarily in direct response, but perhaps in resonance and interruption ...

much love to you both,

k.

Annotated constitutionalism syllabus

INSCRIPT(ion)

Stacy Hardy

Sun, Aug 9

simply brilliant kaushik.

my thing is finally finding a funny little shape - i realised so much of my struggle has been what constitutes constitutions and to find a language to talk about constitutions, though and from my weak constitution. had to find a way to say my usual "fuck the law!!" differently.

but i'm on its and my last legs.

can't wait to dig in!

finally! their voices sound as if they are speaking with divining calabashes first draft

Stacy Hardy

Tue, Aug 11

Dear Kaushik, Dear Neo

Here is a first draft of my letter - its a monster - 10 pages long. What I haven't managed to solve yet is whether to let it stand as a long letter or to break it into several and if so how to break it.

I know how extremely busy you both are but I would deeply appreciate your eyes and ears and thoughts.

I will still work it more on a sentence level and might add a few small things but through to send it now to at least allow a tiny space for response.

Really hoping you can both help me breathe life into this.

Kaushik I'll now work through what you sent and start growing the archive in the google folders I created.

So much love!!!

Dear Kaushik, Dear Neo

Here is a first draft of my letter - its a monster - 10 pages long. What I haven't managed to solve yet is whether to let it stand as a long letter or to break it into several and if so how to break it.

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So much love!!!

Dear Kaushik, Dear Neo.

Re: their voices sound as if they are speaking with divining calabashes

Kaushik, it's your first letter I'm responding to, what you titled "Notes towards a correspondence," sent 27 Jun 2020, 19:28. Not a correspondence but a movement, a gesturing to one yet to come. Later you replaced this first with another first, a second first, indicating a false start, and erasing the first first. But it's in this false start, its falter, beginning and then beginning again, its breathless anticipation that I'd like to situate my answer.

You wrote: "The question for me, here as always, is – where to begin? What is the entry point into a topic? Into a conversation? Into correspondence? Into conspiracy? Where do we begin to constitute something, when the nature of "something" is itself indeterminate?"

"It is with that question that I sent my email earlier in the week, suggesting that my entry point is constitutionalism, because my entry point into the larger project was constitutionalism. I'm curious to hear more about your entry points. About your stakes in the matter of breath."

I've always been prone to false starts, leaping too quickly, stutter and stammering when speaking, writing in tangents and fragments, words sputter off and later resurface. I keep recalling the multiple false starts that punctuate and puncture South African jazz musician Moses Molelekwa's "Darkness Pass" and how they yield an aura of 'making it', an in the making that unsettles the finished product of capitalism.

My entry into our collaboration can only be articulate through multiple false starts. I'm a awkward body, prone to sickness, riddled by breathlessness, fever, fainting, sneezing, coughing, hiccupping, uncontrollable laughter, facial spasms and tics, choking, cold sweats, outbursts of tears, snot and spit and wheezing. I'm always falling. I fall in love too easily. I fall ill as the old saying goes.

My own experience of living with pain and illness, with undiagnosed tuberculosis, and the complications and chronic conditions that follow, in wake of the destruction TB exerts on bodies, have led me to wonder if there is possibility in this? If my unruly body, my weak constitution and difficulty breathing might open up a universe of weakness and tricks and false starts that break borders and boundaries and lead to new rebellions and alliances.

Kaushik, I remember one of our early engagements, an interview with Carina du Toit of the Legal Resources Centre, the attorney for the LRC in the first class action settlement in South Africa. In her

words: "The settlement is on behalf of all current and past underground goldmine workers who contracted silicosis or tuberculosis (TB), and the dependants of mineworkers who died of silicosis or TB. It is one of the most ambitious settlements of a class action in the world."

We agreed to meet at her offices in Braamfontein. In my nervousness I arrived too early, Carina was not yet in and I was told to wait outside. A freezing Joburg morning. Huddled against the cold, breathing long lines of vapour into the morning traffic, the city waking, tides of humans moving, breathing, the incessant circulation of breath, of people, of goods, services, ideas, technologies, imaginaries and money that define Johannesburg.

Carina passed me on her way to her office but I didn't notice: her unassuming appearance, inexpensive clothes and shoes, at odds with the corporate dress and body language I've learned to associate with law and those who practice it. The same openness and humility defied her inaction with us. She is a soft breather, treads lightly, eager to talk but ready to listen, cautious never to "suck up all the air in the room." Yet her breath quickens when she talks with passion about her belief in the law and constitutionalism.

The class action settlement, we learned, relied heavily on PATHAUT, a pathology database established in 1975 and now containing demographic and pathological information on more than 100 000 deceased mine workers.

This is what Eyal Weizman calls the forensic turn in the law. Turning away from the fallibility of human witnesses, to evidence based testimony, from subject to object, wherein forensics, statistics and data are given voice. Data Weizman suggests that what might be incomprehensible on the level of the single file reveals, at a collective level, politically significant patterns. This data can be instrumentalised to designate blames and responsibilities. It speaks.

Epidemiology - the statistical measurement, spatial mapping of patterns of disease in a population, acquires a new function. One of the main indicators for epidemiology is mortality. The form of enunciation thus shifts testimony from the living to the dead. The dead speak, they rise up, not singularly, one by one, but as chorus. A collective voice that speaks of the injustice inscribed on their bodies and society. A museum of lungs breathing together.

Could the long buried voices sealed away in PATHAUT, now unleash, in their multiplicity, their generative genealogy, their reclaiming of a right to life and dignity from the grave open a passageway, a line of flight outside of the constrictive normal practice of a law, found on what Neo, you call "the lie of singularity," of the self-contained autonomous legal subject, and their right to rights? Can as Fred Moten asks "generation in origin, the thin, delusional line between settlement and invasion be broken up as well?"

But at what point does data limit speech? Who does it speak for? To? Without? And in whose language? Who profits from this testimony?

The case was made on behalf of the miners. In lieu. Away from the loud clamour of their silence. A behest that behalves, doubles down. Double burden, double death, with its deadly double edge. Medical data extracted from the body of the deceased - toxic readings in blood counts, x-rays of dusted coated and diseased lungs, acquire value within the capitalist system. Profit - the only motive of industrial extractivism built on a model of dispossession, economic and political management of human populations through their genocidal regulation. Their exposure to death.

The miners are not liberated but rather trapped, reinscribed within the system of judicial ownership, legislative colonialism and capitalist extraction, where their lives and bodies, even their corpses, only have worth in so far they can be mined for resources.

Ownership is 90 percent of the law someone once told me. I don't know if this is true. Or what constitutes the other 10 percent. But I do know that any system, any constitution that upholds the criminal dispossession of land, its role in entrapping people in the enclosure of migrant labour, where the displace are locked in a precarious and controlled space so that they can be exploited, harassed, and potentially killed - what Mbembe calls Necropolitics, "a permanent condition of 'living in pain'" - is itself criminal.

I have never fired anyone, says the mine owner.

Instead, I simply give them lifelong unpaid sick leave.

The words of justice, brittle between my teeth.

What does it mean to give up your body for an abstraction? We drag our bodies to the bank. We tell the bankers we are suffocating. The bankers sing: We are your brothers. They hand out facemasks bearing the bank's logo. We breathe through them.

In our correspondence Carina speaks to this, she confesses: "During the negotiations, I was the only attorney in the room who worked at a non-profit organisation and had no personal interest in the outcome of the settlement. The negotiations revealed a series of ethical questions that I had to navigate around class action settlements and the ethical duties of a non-profit public interest lawyer in the midst of commercial negotiations."

I'm equally implicated, guilty.

What is it my students call it, "white women savior complex"?

Whiteness is the set of interpersonal relations. The only good white person stopped.

The TEBA archives, which Kaushik, we briefly visited together, date further back than PATHAUT. Testify to a long history: colonialism, apartheid and how those systems of violence and dispossession are sustained today via capitalism.

A handbook on inventing laws to evade justice.

Scattered amongst mine propaganda, migrant labour transport schedules, correspondences with mine owners and lawyers, I find hundreds of medical records. Files detailing names and weight and the outcomes of testing stored in the library's Special Collections. The miner's lungs frozen in time gain a new worth. A resource for enterprising legal firms, researchers like me.

This history is scoured, folded away in folders, behind the walls of glass—a lung, a torso, a thousand men breathing.

It is this archive that we named the *Museum of Lungs* which became the title of our performance; human bodies transformed into planes of visibility. X-rays and tissue samples. An archive made out of skin and bone. Air sucked out. Flattened and numerically filed away.

Their lungs are black, faces coal-stained, smudged beyond recognising.

What right do I have to look? To violently invade these bodies. My hands. My eyes.

The question of the subject of rights.

Kaushik, your entry into the project, which is also your entry into my body of work and maybe even my body:

"Who is the subject of rights? This opens up the question of the relationship between patient and plaintiff, but also (based on the case law I read) between prisoner and plaintiff, miner and plaintiff. More generally, especially in relation to the politics of TB, it opens up the question of the breather as a subject of politics."

I hold my breath. Touch everything in the archive so gently, so as to not make any mark of my own. But each of my touches leaves behind a smug, an invisible trace of my own oil and dust. Even my breath is dirty.

Dust: fine, dry powder consisting of tiny particles of earth, or waste matter on the ground or carried in the air; any material in the form of tiny particles; a fine white powder; a cloud of dust; deadly silica dust, a dead person's remains; the mortal human body; the act of dusting.

The whiteness is sly, imperceptible it slips in cracks, nests and sleeps in my air sacs all around me the air is alive with dirt dangerous, it tastes of chemicals. Swallow my pain. Drink the destruction.

I am writing a story of love in the time of data fascism, a time of illness, of dying.

My, our weak constitution. The broken testimony of the broken heart, the broken beat in the broken rhythm of my broken breathing, and the crumbling excess of my broken mouth and my broken body.

A body of work, or words, too compromised. Corrupted by a history of violence, inscribed in its pages. It's juristrictive, jurisdicitive, genocidal grammar that has us all collapsed in its iron fist.

If these are monsters that breathe down our backs, we too are monsters. To lead one's life. To make a living. To live. To make life amidst death. To make our lives by the deaths of others.

Daniel writes: I had a body once but then you made it illegal. Your hard hands inscribe justice into my blank flesh.

What use is a constitution that constitutes nothing of what constitutes the people whose voice it assumes?

It's mine. I can't escape it. I can't say it and I can't get over it. Can't grasp it. Gasp it. Can't breath.

Neo, you say that mining songs, the songs and poems of those who labour are always laments: songs of loss and mourning, the loss of home of love, of family, finally of life. Funeral songs whose black blues aesthetics bruise, sing of countless broken bodies, of burial, buried in tunnels, in mine cages, in holes; of stolen life. But also songs that steal back that life, back the land and history they've been disposed of. Praise poems alive with description, humour, historical referencing and incantations about struggle and survival. Against a background of poverty, systemic violence and arduous labour, a shared community history is sustained.

"Travelling Hymn" by Teboho Raboko, a Basotho farmer who spent much of his life working in the mines, tracks the spread of tuberculosis, from the colonial ships into his communities. It's a song of

loss and mourning (The Xhosa named it Killing-Everybody/ The Basotho say it is Lying-on-Your-Back-illness/ young unmarried women die with their breasts bared/ men die with their chests bared/ You can imagine how cruel this is.") but it is also a celebration of collective experiences and the continuation of life beyond death: {"it comes from big cities only, where all the men are patients, and all the women are patients, even the babies are patients, their voices sound as if they are speaking with divining calabashes."})

In the capitalist socio-cultural formation we are compelled to treat loss in isolation. To disavow any momentary lapses in self-possession this loss might allow us. But Neo, listening to your improvisations from and with this archive of mourning, I can grasp loss as a polyvalent, eminently multiplicitous, prismatic refraction of a multitude of histories, both living and spectral.

There is no such thing as a singular loss, even if every loss simultaneously constitutes, what you Neo called, "an irreducible singularity." A shared mourning. Not a "remembering" but instead "a perpetual cutting, a constancy of expansive and, a rewind that tends to exhaust the metaphysics upon which the idea of redress is grounded."

"Its morning, here in Makhands," a friend writes from the Eastern Cape during Coronavirus lock down. "The rocks, the soil, my mouth, even the sky. Red. I have been angry this week. The drought is relentless. And now the pandemic. Too many deaths. In the cemetery hands are no longer enough. They've brought in industrial machines, giant metal monsters that are plow holes as big as trenches. The holes bleed redness. Do they plan to bury all of us?"

A photograph: July 9, 2020. Mounds of soil where thousands of graves are dug at the Honingnestkrans cemetery, in Pretoria, for victims of the COVID19.

On social media a friend chooses and marks out his own grave, circles it in red. He's not sick but already his death is foretold, foreclosed, memorialised.

Mounds mark a fall. They are the graves of those who fell, were felled, as well as those who survived to deposit the remains and reseal the earth. If we marked every death with a mound, the earth would be covered in mounds. The mounds would foretell, act as prophecy, a reminder to the living that our bodies, our breath, its destinies, death, in general, is part of the evolving topography of earth.

History repeats itself, undoes the lock of linear time.

After COVID19, the lock down, mining was the first industry in South Africa to reopen.

Studying the government's data on infection rates and deaths, a pattern starts to emerge. A hidden counter-geography under the statistics and number where infection hotspots and rising death rates around the country correspond directly to mining areas.

How do we square the number of dead and the number of graves? How many are born and how many remain? How can we reconcile the death toll with the actual sum of the dead? Who lies beneath the numbers, the thousand graves? Who constitutes the dead? Maybe only by deducting, tearing apart, rending bodies, by using an apocalyptic maths to grit my teeth and subtract them all.

They can kill everyone one of us, a friend tells me. But they can't kill all of us.

The capitalist system is based on the unequal distribution of the opportunity to live and die. As Mbembe says, this "logic of sacrifice" has always been at the heart of neoliberalism, which should be

called necroliberalism. This system has always functioned with the idea that some are more valuable than others. Those of no value are expendable.

Seen from the air the mine dumps that litter the Johannesburg landscape appear as mounds, markers of death of the countless nameless miners who are victims of an extraction economy that governs life on the mines: the extermination of life, the extermination of both the corpse and the name of that life.

What are the nameless people's names? If we knew their names, what would we do with them? Would we speak them? Sing them in chorus? Could we imagine the sound of their names as spoken by people who loved them? Would we inscribe them on the walls of the Chamber of Mines in Joburg?

A photograph Kaushik sends in the mail: 10 Jun 2020, 06:50.



"dear both,

this is what i saw and felt on sunday, amidst 5000 people surrounding a small park, attached. a moment of quiet, of peace, among many. of breath. i think it asks about the archive, but even more, about writing.

something is amiss. something is afoot. i hope we can archive and provoke, together, somehow, in some small measure.

with love, and with so much gratitude that you are comrades, and friends, and present in these times.

k."

The mounds make visible what is hidden, erased. Buried in the archive, beneath the city, tunnels from which their dirt is dug, a vast network. Open holes. Are the holes graves? Graves without bodies? Do they signify an evacuation of bodies, of lives, of histories, hidden wealth? Or are the holes themselves the memorial of the evacuation of bodies, of memory? Have the bodies been deprived of their graves, deprived of their corpses, even?

The holes are not referred to as holes.

They are mine shafts.

But a shaft is also a blinding ray of light, a sharp pointed object, on the streets of Joburg and Soweto it's a penis, a quart of beer, a screwing over, a measure of despair, an escape hatch.

Isabella sings: "sink babe sink, sink a shaft, move slowly down the mountain, down our throats, toss and turn babe, sink on me, sink babe sink, sink it smooth, sink a shaft."

Her voice rises over the high, claustrophobic horizon of Joburg's mine dumps.

We say that absence is a country.

We say living here is a death rattle, a blow detonating the tongues the teeth the bones.

On TV South Africa President Cyril Ramaphosa reads the latest death statistic. His mouth doesn't move behind the mask. "More than 10 000 people have departed our country..." He stops suddenly, hesitates, as if waiting for the words to sink in, to sink down below the surface, to sink a shaft, a pause held too long, a break, a blur before he continues, falteringly, almost breathless, "through death... um... from COVID19."

Death as an exit visa? Is there the possibility of a more radical reading that lies between the lines, in the stutter-stammer speech so uncommon from our leader? An undercommons, death reimagined as a fugitive journey beyond the colonial construct of State and its borders, where every trip secretly is a pact with both oblivion and freedom. A fugitive escape.

Legal scholars (Lourens du Plessis, J Snyman, Joshua Malidzo Nyawa, P de Vos blah blah et al.) tell me the constitution is an act of memory, enacted as a monument and a memorial at the same time.

Memorials and monuments are political constructions, recalling and representing histories selectively, drawing popular attention to specific events and people and obliterating or obscuring others. The constitution as monument celebrates the constitution and its achievements. The constitution as memorial remembers the atrocities of the past and is aware of the limits of constitutionalism.

"It has become normal that those who seek the recourse of justice are always living in fear, but those who plunder and loot, they just walk free. How can those who are seeking justice be protected?" asks my friend Ayanda.

He writes to me from an unknown destination in Makanda, a fugitive crawlspace where he's in hiding from those who are trying to assassinate him.

On 14 January, the Grahamstown high court ruled that the Makanda Local Municipality council must be dissolved because it had failed in its constitutional duty to provide basic services to residents. The court case was instituted by the Unemployed People's Movement. Ayanda is the organisation's chairperson. The municipality was not dissolved, instead the government locked the case in the courts through endless appeals. So much appealing done with such a cold tone. On 29 May, after multiple unsuccessful appeals, they announced they would approach the Supreme Court of Appeal.

It was on this day that Kota was told he would be assassinated.

Soon afterward bullets flew. Ayanda fled his home. Went underground. Outside the pandemic raged. A cloud descended over everything.

I reach out, groping into blackness, and his reply finally comes at 2am. "Thank you very much comrade Stacy. I hope nothing happens. I survived the threats and bullets this time but if it happens it will be what it is...."

I take a deep breath but still his last sentence, his impending death sentence, suffocates.

In the days that follow I go over my correspondence with Ayanda since the outbreak, as if trying to keep him alive, keep on connecting through our breathless shreds and fragments, a back and forth broken text call and response.

So much unanswered in the response.

How do you isolate in an informal settlement?

How do you stay home when your home, your land, has been stolen?

How do you stock up if you live hand to mouth?

It's tough comrade Stacey.

How do we wash hands when we don't have water?

How do we boost our immune when we don't know what balanced nutrition is and we are unemployed?

Social distancing in townships like Fingo, Joza, and Tantjé which hem Makhandá is all but impossible — entire families often share single, one-room shacks, packed tightly — and infections are continuing to climb.

And yet Ayanda continues. The next week he's back on the streets, breaking lockdown regulations braving illness and defying government sponsored bullets to organise, hand out masks and food parcels, advocate for testing, endlessly undoing, by means of the everyday, the super-powerful default settings of a corrupt capitalist world and its illegal legal system.

Life goes on in, with and out from the shadow of death.

"The pandemic has been seen in monumental terms," writes Kelly, "totality, catastrophe, portal,". In its stead she processes a different reading that stops the endless rush of data and statistics, rush of planning and forecasting, projecting and policing. Against this she evokes the quotidian formations of collective life that continue in the global South. "Lifeworlds that cannot be so clearly divided into 'before' and 'after' the pandemic," and where crisis and the everyday, life and death blur.

For Ayanda and many like him in South Africa the pandemic simply adds another possibly in an already endless lineage ways to die - accidental death, ceremonial death, unmotivated death, death by murder, by assassination, by bleeding, bones broken; shootings and fatalities, death by starvation, by disease, by HIV/AIDs or TB. Death by simply breathing.

A joke circulates on Facebook: A man coughs openly in a packed taxi. The other passengers look skeef, shift in their seats, hold their breath. Finally one voices the accusation: "do you have coronavirus?" "No," replies the cougher, "I've got tuberculosis." "Thank God", everyone sighs in relief.

In such circumstances, Mbembe suggests the discipline of life and the necessities of hardship (trial by death) are marked by excess. "What connects terror, death, and freedom is an ecstatic notion of temporality and politics." The future, here, can be authentically anticipated, but not in the present. The present itself is but a moment of vision—a vision of a freedom not yet come.

And yet that which is called freedom is not, nor could it ever correspond to, the completion or the achievement of an assignment. It is not something that can be fixed, constituted on paper, a

constitution. Rather it is that which constitutes us, a practice—a fugitive act—of its own (un)making, a structure that is the very apotheosis of the terribly redoubled double edge (“freedom’s articulation in bondage; its dearticulation and rearticulation in flight”).

As Judith Butler says it, in the dispossessions of loss “something about who we are is revealed, something that delineates the ties we have to others, that shows us that these ties constitute what we are, ties of bonds that compose us.”

It isn’t empathy or solidarity, as has been formulated by a necroliberal white community trying to invade and occupy Black Lives Matter. There is good money, they say, in emotional responsiveness. That ‘feeling the pain of another’ we hear so often these days. Instead it’s the sharing of a shared pain — and that sharing of a bigger pain that opens a pathway to begin to think about community, not in the terms of the rhetorical expression of solidarity, but the actual practice of sharing which manifests itself at the level of what people do.

Through my own pain, I’ve learned illness is the way one feels unified not only with others who are in pain but with those who have died. illness is a way to close the distance between the past and the present, to reconstitute the flesh, to resurrect the dead. Not so much because the dead are with us when we are sick, but that they are a practice of the illness itself, so that the sick and pained body becomes a space in which the dead inscribe themselves on us.

Could illness then be a line of flight one traces to produce an insight about the visible and invisible world? illness tells us we are connected. It is a shaft into the infinite. The infinite exists everywhere—it is the afterlife, the pandemic, the mounds of earth, the dust that rises above them, the event that washes red over all time and space.

In an age of COVID19 funerals and the practice of mourning is driven underground, figured as an almost illegal act, a private affair to be closeted and contained. Yet mourning continues, bursts out, refuses confinement, manifesting a myriad of small fugitive improvisations: illegal funerals that take place under the cover of darkness, risking one’s own infection and death to mark the parting of another (the horror and beauty of that); the long lines of cars snaking past an open coffin as driveby funerals replace nightlong vigil across the global South; one-off mass funeral events, stretched out, recomposed as week-long small memorial gathering; radio “request shows” hijacked by griever so they might sing and share memories together. Its present in the new language that has start to emerge in all our correspondences, new ways of greeting and saying goodbye: stay safe, keep breathing, apart but together, oh so sorry for your loss, so truly fucking sorry, I feel you, I love you!!

Taken together these tiny improvisations and articulates ask: to what extent is horror a fuel for resistance. And: to what extent is adaptation a form of agency. Could they then be read as a radical politics of mourning which throws the multiplicitous violence of modernity into stark relief? Which precipitates new forms of gathering in dispossession, fugitive socialities which prefigure and enact a world-in-becoming?

Maybe this is something of what Fred Moten is reaching for when he touches on what Luce Irigaray calls ‘The Fecundity of the Caress’? Moten says it so softly, so beautifully, voice alive with breath: The caress makes social space like a garment, social fabric biopoetically brushing up against the wall that opens out into a room or rises up as a table, slave ship, favela, spaceship, project. It’s like the preparation of a table, or a piano. It can’t be sung alone.”

Correspondence has always been a collective fugitive practice: prison letters, love letters, open letters, letters smuggled through bars, across borders, stopped in your pocket by a secret admirer, slip in a bottle and thrown into the ocean, folded into a paper aeroplane to fly me to you.

Dearly beloveds.

Can a correspondence, our correspondence and correspondences, in how they cleave open a personal space, fugitively invade and evade the social and disciplinary distancing between us, blur the lines between friend and colleague or collaborator and enact a kind of biopoetics? Can they be a way of breathing together breathlessly, the fugitive, faltering rhythm of sending them waiting. The anticipation. Constantly refreshing my email, checking my inbox. PING! An answer incoming!

As Fred Moten describes it, fugitivity is "a desire for the outside, for a playing or being outside..." it moves outside the intentions and attentions of the one who speaks and writes, moving outside their own adherence to the law and to propriety. From this fugitive imaginary emerges the ongoing possibility of a general, often gestural refusal that Moten tries to think under the rubric of abolitionism. Against the lawful imagination, we are asked to conjure a politics and poetics of fugitive refusal.

"Nodding between some things and nothing is the held flesh leanness of the collective head. There we study how blackness and imagination are compact, in reconstructive flight from imposition. Its sovereign operations which keeps on taking, which keep on taking their incalculable toll. Beyond that, in the impossibility of anything beyond that, those operations are resisted and refuted."

Fred grounds and displaces this refusal in the refusing of what has been refused us. In his talk, "Blackness and Non-performance" he calls back to a case from American abolitionist legal history; the story of Betty, a slave who is granted freedom, in her absence and silence, by a court of law, but refuses, preferring silence and the radical social life of slavery, which as Moten points out is always and emphatically, "both more and less than singular, more and less than one."

Betty's case, Fred says, "comes to us by way of anti-slavery's liberal brutalities, which take the form of an ancient and persistently significant non correspondence, of what it is to be antislavery and what it might be to be abolitionist and an ante interpolative militancy, whose lower frequency might easily be mistaken for quietude."

I follow Fred writing all over and under the law, sounding silent Betty out, shattering, unmasking, even the questions she requires and allows, as if they are a poetics of properly radical dispossessive impropriety.

"What if we said compact instead of contract?" asks Fred, "or if we just cleave to that old sense of concentration in both terms bear, then there is openness in the compact, then the contract is in the open, broken, shattered in imagination, crazy in love."

Judges and legislators he tells us, cannot and will not understand that Betty's "obscene non-performance" is a refusal of the solo. She refuses the individuation that is refused her and in its stead claims the "monstrosity of obscene social life" imposed upon and ascribed to her, "tongue tried for silence softly speaks and a performative, degenerative and regenerative density, in deviance both from and within the grammar and diction of the administered word."

Dear Neo, dear Kaushik, I wonder if we listened closely to silences woven in between and outside of contract law, the constitution, to the silent voices of the miners outside the class action lawsuit, their photocopied lungs given as evidence in the files of the case, will we hear fugitive breath, the ghost of the oppressed and possessed haunting these words, as afterlife "bearing a trimmer, a solicitation, a blur of legal reasoning"? Will they sound as if they are speaking with divining calabashes?

a letter as listening room

Wed, Aug 5

Stacy Hardy

Dear Neo

I'm writing from a distance and against that distance, an insistent reaching out and in, in a necessarily failed attempt to forge intimacy from a other side the continent and the screen, sociality against and from social distance and dematerialisation, not so much to speak but rather to somehow momentarily enter your studio and listen through with you.

You recently articulated your increasing aversion or even animosity, to the digital: "the internet is really not my favourite hang out place, so i regularly need to lose my tethers to the cyberspace," you wrote in a letter. Later you described more viscerally how the digital inter-face, our perpetual screen "makes you sick".

I was thinking about your sickness in this time of sickness, when it seems all our bodies are under a double threat, caused by the stunning spread of the virus – and along with it, the widespread digitization of the world. A new division has emerged - those who are sentenced to death through infection, on the streets, in overcrowded informal settlements, in workplaces, on the mines, in taxis, and those whose bodies are dematerialised through the mass digitisation of our lives, the body of flesh and bones, the physical and mortal body, vanishing into the ether.

At a time when keeping in touch, nurturing and preserving connections, talking to one another and sharing food, drinking together, making music takes place solely across the screens, do you see any hope for new forms of emergent and spectral intimacy? I was wondering what we can take from music in this era (error?) and how, especially in Africa, it has always negotiated the tension between liveness and digitisation, current and way back when, fingers and wires, synapses and electric charges? What songs or tracks in your archive might help us think through this moment?

I want to recall, calling back (call backs?), your instance on not performing this year. In a previous letter you wrote: "I'm in need of slowing everything down and inhabiting silence and stillness - a

listening mode i want to practice from here at my home."

There's the story about Stravinsky. How when he was six years old, he listened to a mute peasant who produced unusual sounds with his arms, which the future musician tried to reproduce: he was looking perhaps for a different voice, one more or less vocal than the one that comes from the mouth. A listening voice?

In contemporary capitalist culture, listening is implicitly racialised, gendered, discursively placed in relation to passive receptivity. It is also often figured as an activity of the powerless, something those who can't take charge must do. Because of all of all of the above, everyone's decision about which voices they will listen to, not just hear, is political.

Much of your practice seems to me about a subversive listening, listening differently to what's out from, outside of the easily audible. As such it's much about silence as noise, the indistinct noise of many individuating voices sounding at once; an interruption to the idealised, individualised voice and the perceived stability of communication; a sonic frequency that moves toward a heterogeneous conception of dissensual collectivity. Are there examples you can dig out that frequent and voice, or maybe unvoice and unearth this?

In his recent performance, "Blackness and Non-performance," Fred Moten invokes and evokes black radical practice via slave narratives to challenge notions of performance as presence, insofar as blackness insists that we prefer "a displacement of lack of a particular and sclerotic notion of presence that liveness is supposed to instantiate," by the fact that performances are living, or as Moten says are "an emphatic and surreal presence in the making of a living."

He propose that we refuse what has been refused to us.: "the experience of subjectivity is the would be subjects for the desire for subjectivity, which we must keep on learning not to want, which we have to keep on practicing not wanting, as if an endless preparation for a recital, that insofar as it never comes, is always surreally present."

Echoing Glissant insistence on the "consent to not being single" he calls for a move from the metaphysics of presence given in the figure of the one, to "the physics of a spectral presence," given in nothingness, and consent, not to be single in "differential inseparability in the nearness and distance" of our "spooky actions". Our fate then, according to Moten, is not to become one and yet many, it is rather "to become the mooing bird, to become bird to become moo." (Maybe this is what Moholo was hinting at in the "bah bah black sheep" he unleashed in that interview with you?)

This "refusing that which has been refused to you" and "consenting not to be single" seems to me to be at the heart of your practice, your insistence on practicing, and practicing a "not wanting", and your leap from practicing to practice, as what you described as "digging in your own archive."

And yet it seems to me this is not a move away from but deeper into what has always been your practice, in so far as whether performing in the yard, or at the club, or the theatre or on record, you

have always insisted that the yard is everybody's, that in the club is everywhere, the theatre is a wide church and everything is a recording. I'm thinking here of your work with choirs, with and from struggle songs, with worker and mining songs, in the holes and gaps and ghosts not in the archives. How all these practices are that which cannot be can't be sung alone.

Can you talk to, and with and from this idea of "refusing that which has been refused to you" and "consenting not to be single" through and with and from your archive?

Your album DIPALO, "a mixtape for those who practice counting" is in some ways an accounting of this multiplicity, where accounting is not calculating, not taking stock, adding and subtracting but rather an insistent rhythm, a ceaseless and unseizable movement from one to two to many. Implicit here is a kind of communicability that is, or that marks a presence that is more or plus less than here and now. As listeners we are untethered by time, roving through ancestral visions and contemporary notation, much as a dreamer is able to switch bodies and anthropomorphize animals, rocks, or sky. Please walk us through some of the album's sums without answers?

Moten suggests "improvisations of imagining things," is written in the name of blackness, on and under its skin, in its "paraontological differentiation in and as the people who are called Black." I was deeply struck in working with you on Museum of Lungs on your refusal to set things, to present them as a "performance" Your insistence on continued improvisation especially with regard to the songs and voices of mine workers, where you used improv as a kind of foresight that is somehow given in and as the unforeseen, where change is the anticipation, the unanticipated and anticipates us in a consenting and consensual ensemble that lies before us, as a kind of dispossession kinship. Can you offer some examples that give voice to this tension between improvisation and performance in your archive and practice.

Breath has always been a central tenet of South African music, shared and imperiled breath, breathlessness and the suffocation of oppression, breath as spirit. Breath as that which connects us to our environment and testifies to the damage capitalism exploitative and extractive practices wrecks on both individual bodies and ecological systems. Breath as the possibility of a different future (each breath, however strained, carries the hope of another one, and another one). From the Brotherhood of Breath (Moholo: "let the music breathe.") to the expressed and expelled breath of the toyi toyi and the shared breath of choirs. At a time when breath is increasingly imperilled and even perilous does your archive as practice offer us any modes or modalities to keep breathing, and breathing together, to breath not just through our lungs and mouths but through our hearts and ears, our multiple organs and orifices?

In a discussion on your project Making Grace Amazing, you said, "we learn struggle songs by osmosis. I can't remember anybody actually teaching me one ... the ideas are just spontaneously combusting out there on the streets." You literally breath them in. This opens a space to think about breath in relation to generation, genealogy and generativity not creation as individualised, ideally practice's; Simone Weil's grace in the stead of gravity (or as my grandmother always told me it "cleanliness is a virtue, virtue is a grace and Grace was a little girl who wouldn't wash her face");

swarm not network. Can you talk us through these ideas via some examples and or samples from the project?

I was struck at the place of practice in the language of both doctors and musicians - the medical practice and practicing musicians - yet the fields are held at a distance in our society. What tracks would you suggest from your archive, and your archive as practice, that might open the ears of doctors to practice differently in this moment, and musicians to find pathways towards healing when we need it most?

neo muyanga

Tue, Aug 11

dear stacy,

happy greetings to you in cairo (our beloved) ...

and to you, dear kaushik, in chicago (which yet remains foreign to me).

you ask, on what basis does one "consent to not being single"? much of what i will try to write in reply to this, here, will seem to go against what is expressed within these quotes. why? because there is a problem with the language of humans: only one thing can be said at a time. why? because people think that to speak is to reach for coherence. but of course once we say one thing, we also often (always is never... everything amounts to nothing) cannot say what that thing harbours/abhors as its opposite/apposite.

i wish to listen when i speak, and speak when i listen. that is what "accounting for this multiplicity" is. that is what the techne (τέχνη) of choir is for: a place where to sing is to practice listening - to those who come before you, those who go after, as well as those who stand alongside of you. the listening to what or who speaks when singing back (like echo, failing to seduce narcissus). one thing cannot be spoken at a time, and this is what humans do not know or cannot remember.

the only "just" thing i like about the internet is that it is a telepathy machine (and not because of those shifty algorithms written by people who themselves are an algorithm): it pretends to permit us to perceive the multiplicity in what is being expressed, even as singularity is what at fa(r)ce-value is worshipped.

psychiatrists have a name for it: it's called madness. definitionally, madness is the failure to keep all the voices inside the head in check (i.e. not coming out) when addressing a room full of others who are already outside instead. in the choir once many speak, cacophony embraces epiphany. one hears this for antiphony: more than one thing can be said simultaneously and none of it needs be arrested under the terms and strictures of singularity.

"dipalo" is only "just" one long-ish "improvisation" on exile (a place we all know well, when we consider well the abysmal living conditions of so many/too,too many living-at-the-hands-of-humans) - there are no track divisions there ... only "just" breath, lasting 43 minutes or so.

so ephemeral, really, when you think about it.

that is why a "performance" is such a difficult thing to justify. rather, let's agree to call(sell) the "rehearsal"
(as) the "real" "show"!

breath is what i believe lends juice in choirs. you can hear here this in the famous, 'joy of africa choir', echoed
(of course) in this audience,

[o'Makhelwane](#)

and here in this hum-drum sampled/troubled off wagner,

[My life as a Leaf](#)

perhaps, then, the wisdom in the now-cliché, umuntungumuntungabantu, is how we mean to say there is no such
thing as "the individual". it is only "just" as a shock in recoil/recall as we encounter other(s) that we de/oply
individuality. it pretends to be a justification for our very existence...

it appears to be a necessary posture in adopt/adapt in our attempt to make (ourselves) the world.

it becomes an act of refusing to be moved, like in this piece, blah-blah-ing as black sheep,

[kea hana](#)

i hope i have answered all of your questions. with love.

mnm

unk s.s.q.l

BAHUJANAFRIQUE

Wed, Aug 12

Stacy Hardy

Dear Kaushik, dear Neo

Kaushik, I've only managed a cursory engagement, scraping the surface with your powerful Annotated constitutionalism syllabus. I was blown away and can't say how much I'd value being able to join these classes. The possibilities you open for learning and learning differently are endless and I'd be so honoured to learn from and with you. I truly truly truly hope I will be able to join you.

It made me think about the geographic (and oceanographic and atmospheric) correspondences between us - and how the geography of Pulmonographies via our personal journeys and histories and research is a somehow landscape of unbelonging cut through by movement, migrancy, sickness, the grief of loss betrayal's lingering scars, the border itself—great distances in which violence and yearning and longing and love find roots. Ever restless.

I also want to acknowledge the importance it's come to play for me, here and now, this breathless moment we live and work and share in, as a form of be-longing, a ceremony of touch-hunger and self-abnegation, a space to negotiate how we all seem to be homeless, the ground disappeared under our feet, home so estranged, at a distance, behind a screen... so a deep song of exile.

With those shout outs and acknowledgements in mind I wanted to share a great piece that I worked on with Sumesh Sharma for Chimurenga which speaks to the wonderful lawless counter geography your syllabus maps, which is also our geography and correpenes!!

"In 1972, a group of dejected young men in Bombay founded the Dalit Panther Party, beginning the formal association of Dalit identity with political "blackness". A year later, they released the Dalit Panther Manifesto which defined a Dalit as "members of scheduled castes and tribes, Neo-Buddhists, the working people, the landless and poor peasants, women and all those who are being exploited politically, economically and in the name of religion."

"Dalits today refuse the moniker Harijan and actively identify with the term Dalit, or Bahujan. This re-appropriation cannot be seen in isolation. It's a move born from and with, amongst others, conversations between Ambedkar and Du Bois, that speaks to both Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa and the Black Power Movement of the USA."

"As the Dalit Panther Manifesto of 1973 states: "Due to the hideous plot of American imperialism, the Third Dalit World, that is, oppressed nations, and Dalit people are suffering. Even in America, a handful of reactionary whites are exploiting blacks. To meet the force of reaction and remove this exploitation, the Black Panther movement grew. From the Black Panthers, Black Power emerged. The fire of the struggles has thrown out sparks into the country. We claim a close relationship with this struggle. We have before our eyes the examples of Vietnam, Cambodia, Africa and the like."

See attached.

With love!

PS> I'd love to invade a library and Chimurenga Library style map this geography via your syllabus

Sumesh Sharma: Bahujanafrique – a plausible Future

<https://chimurengachronic.co.za/about-the-chimurenga-library/>

corresponding - letters as resistance?

Stacy Hardy

Wed, Aug 12



corresponding on corresponding and corresponding

Stacy Hardy

Fri, Aug 14

Dear Kaushik, Dear Neo

Definition of corresponding

1a: having or participating in the same relationship (such as kind, degree, position, correspondence, or function) especially with regard to the same or like wholes (such as geometric figures or sets)corresponding parts of similar triangles

b: RELATED, ACCOMPANYING
individual rights and their corresponding responsibilities

2a: charged with the duty of writing letters corresponding secretary
b: participating or serving at a distance and by maila corresponding member of the society

Definition of cc

transitive verb
: to send someone a copy of (an e-mail, letter, or memo)cc an e-mail to a

coworker
also : to send a copy to (someone)He cc'd me on his reply.

Medical Definition of CC

1 chief complaint
2 critical condition
3 current complaint

Thank you so much for last night's talk. i'm terribly excited to see what emerges once we collate all the correspondence

We were talking about Derrida's biography and the importance of his correspondence in that - the book and the life and the man and his work. And I was thinking about the biographical as well as bibliographically fragments that punctuate our correspondence - and their importance in this project.

As Dolce & Gabbana.. opoops! I mean Deleuze and Guatarri say it: "Since each of us was several, that became quite a crowd."

And Neo, this echoes your last letter: "in the choir once many speak, cacophony embraces epiphany. one hears this for antiphony: more than one thing can be said simultaneously and none of it needs be arrested under the terms and strictures of singularity."

And I think, Kaushik, this was what I was trying to say, stumbling to say when I said how much I liked the excess - too many letters and mails and fragments - and why I think their cacophony is vital to our participation in CC: World.

Maybe it can be put this way: not so much the performance as a way to bring out the factory behind the theatre.

And for a personal perspective also the sense of eavesdropping - of listening in on a correspondence, of being cc-ed. And the vulnerability of that - the personal, the false starts and silences and stumbles and hasty composition open to other ears and eyes.

With love!

Sat, Aug 15

Stacy Hardy

dear kaushik

just back from the CiC reading group - long all day session focused on intersections between my "syllabus" as a hybrid non-fiction i sent you and the works it points to - we delved into links between Egypt and SA context, TB and Covid, the personal and the political.

now building the archive and a reminder how I treasure this small enigmatic powerful image. it's still maybe the visualisation that i think speaks most powerfully to the project. we must use it for something.... our book cover? i love to work through the emails and your field notes etc and my writing and cut together a hybrid genre (fragments poetry fiction non-fiction biography) chapbook. there are some wonderful small presses in the US who publish beautiful small hybrid books that might be interested.

xs



finals and a meeting?

Stacy Hardy

Wed, Aug 19

Dear Kaushik and Neo

Attached please find our CC World correspondences (so speak because as we've been saying, the curriculum is everything!)

I've reformatted these all as mail, committed data fraud by falsifying "send dates" etc so they are more of a correspondence.

I also confess that I again updated my two letters. I added something on the Constitutional court as a space, an aesthetic etc. I also wanted to write on the art collection - to read our queries through these works but not finished so that will be my next letter/

Kaushik, this is so you can add it to what you've assembled.

Reading through these and their commitment to "a place where to sing is to practice listening - to those who come before you, those who go after, as well as those who stand alongside of you. the listening to what or who speaks when singing back (like echo, failing to seduce narcissus). one thing cannot be spoken at a time, and this is what humans do not know or cannot remember." reinforces from me the importance that we do submit the full excess of all of it as our entry.

that said Kaushik, we discussed maybe somehow using formatted to show the immediate and that which came before etc. How about if we run the emails as per email archiving systems, the most recent on top, followed by the previous, text previous etc downward to infinity?

i also did a very hurried experiment in giving us each a font colour and then using font size to very slowly taper off.. so the very first emails we sent to each other would be tiny, difficult to read but not impossible. See attached.

Kaushik we agree to touch base early this week - its already Wednesday.... do you have time to chat or

anything to share? We also need to reply to CC: World...

Let me know.

Always, much love!

[83 Notes towards a correspondence I KR](#)

[84 Letter no. 1 Jul 20, 2020 \(KSR to S & N\) KR](#)

[85 their voices sound as if they are speaking with divining calabashes SH](#)

[86 sink babe sink, sink a shaft SH](#)

[87 Dear Neo \(correspondences towards a listen room\) SH NE](#)

from: Kaushik Sunder Rajan <ksunderr@gmail.com>
to: Stacy Hardy <stacyhardy@gmail.com>,
neo muyanga <contact@neosong.net>
date: 22 Jul 2020, 08:15
subject: letter no. 1

Dear Stacy and Neo,

I want to begin our correspondence with a simple question. What would it mean to think of covid as another kind of tuberculosis? What would it mean to think of tuberculosis as a matter of breath? What would it mean to think of covid as a matter of breath?

Why would we do so? Why would it matter to think of other correspondences to covid than the flu? What does it matter to think about covid as a matter of life and breath, rather than, say, as a respiratory disease? What other worlds might these other correspondences allow us to think? What kinds of relations, elided both in dominant epidemiological understandings and in their trumped up/dumbed down misunderstandings, might they render visible?

What is it about each of our itineraries that brings us to think this correspondence, of covid as a matter of TB as a matter of breath?

What forms will an answer to this question take?

We already have a correspondence now, which extends between us, Stacy, for over a year, which extends between the two of you for much longer. I look back over that correspondence <hyperlink>, as an entry point into this one.

<TO DO - KSR - pull up Stacy's compilation of our correspondence, add to PRACTICE>

*

This is not a question that can be answered in a linear fashion. What we can compile is, perhaps, a cabinet of curiosities, each drawer a portal into a different kind of room, containing different kinds of material, housing different kinds of individual and collective modes of inquiry, production and dialogue. The form of this correspondence is the annotation of these modes of inquiry, in order to ask ... how do they correspond? We do not, cannot, imagine the nature and form of their correspondence in advance. That has to left to the wanderings of whoever opens these drawers and wanders into these portals, with whatever baggage they might bring to their own inhabitation of these questions.

I think that there are four modes of inquiry that animate these amalgamated considerations around the mattering of breath. The MATTERING of breath: breath as matter, as tangible, substantiated, atmospheric. The MATTERING of breath: breath as something that is important, a matter of concern, and of life. Each of them occupy a different kind of space:

- **Correspondence:** these letters. The form that our performance lecture on pulmonographies (the geographies and biographies and the mattering of breath, explored through the colonial history of TB in South Africa) takes. The correspondence is the **stage**: it is the thing we have been asked to produce, in the space and the form that we have been asked to produce it.
- **Practice:** what each of us do, on our own, often in private. The condition of possibility for subsequent or eventual performance. Contemplation, composition, inscription, transcription, annotation. The space of practice is the **studio**: the space where we can pull things together and take them apart. Constitute, assemble, articulate.
- **Archive:** the things that we collect. Playlists; bibliographies; transcripts. The scene of the archive is the **library**. It is where we go to browse, where we can find the things we want to read, see and here, but also make serendipitous connections and discoveries.

- *Syllabus: the annotated archive, built with the purpose of pedagogy in mind. The space of the syllabus is the **classroom**: semi-structured, intimate, with implicit hierarchies that can and must be constantly upended and reconstituted, a space of teaching and mutual learning. The work of, as Gayatri Spivak puts it, the “non-coercive rearrangement of desires”.*

As we correspond, as we bring pulmonographies into correspondence, as we consider the correspondences of the mattering of breath, I look forward to populating and animating our once individual, now trans-individual, perhaps emergently collective, studio, library and classroom. Including with fellow practitioners, readers and students whom we do not yet know.

Time for bed now, but more very soon. Write back when you can?

Much love to you both,

LETTER 1

from: Stacy Hardy <stacyhardy@gmail.com>
to: Kaushik Sunder Rajan <ksunderr@gmail.com>,
"Muyanga, Neo" <contact@neosong.net>
date: 9 Aug 2020, 12:17
subject: their voices sound as if they are speaking with divining
calabashes

Dear Kaushik, Dear Neo.

I've always been prone to false starts, leaping too quickly, stutter and stammer, writing in tangents, fragments, that sputter of, later resurface. So forgive me if this letter both rambles, if it stumbles.

Kaushik, I pick up from you, the first first letter you sent towards our “performance” in CC:World, “Notes towards a correspondence,” sent 27 Jun 2020, 19:28 (anchor link lett in the page). Not a correspondence but the notes towards it, something beginning, as of yet to come. Later you replaced this first letter with another first letter, a second first, indicating a false start, overtaking the first first, coming before but after. It's precisely in this false start, its faltering, a gesture stopped short, beginning and then beginning again that I situate my reply.

You wrote: "The question for me, here as always, is – where to begin? What is the entry point into a topic? Into a conversation? Into correspondence? Into conspiracy? Where do we begin to constitute something, when the nature of "something" is itself indeterminate? It is with that question that I sent my email earlier in the week, suggesting that my entry point is constitutionalism, because my entry point into the larger project was constitutionalism. I'm curious to hear more about your entry points. About your stakes in the matter of breath."

My entry into our collaboration, like yours, starts with multiple false starts, a stumbling. I'm always falling. I fall in love too quickly. Fall ill as the saying goes. After years of no answers, years spent in the helplessness of doctors' waiting rooms, on the edge of confessionals, I'm finally diagnosed with tuberculosis. By then the disease has eaten holes in my body. I'm cured of the sickness but still it lingers, a narrative inscribed in scar tissue on my internal organs – a text, a trace, a history, a dirge.

Can we (re-)script inflictions, treatments and healings from our body's marks and traces? Can we map the entanglement of our bodies with other bodies and the world around us, if we map the body's porosities, deposits, segregations and penetrations? Being sick is very personal but never personal only. My disease carries power-laden meanings. How do we embody society, politics and the economy through illness experiences? Who can embody which disease, how and why?

Might my unruly body, my weak constitution, my difficulty breathing open up a universe of weakness and tricks and false starts that break borders and boundaries and lead to new rebellions and alliances?

Kaushik, I remember one of our early engagements together following your trajectory, the question of constitutionalism. An interview with Carina du Toit of the Legal Resources Centre, the attorney for the LRC in the first class action settlement in South Africa.

In her words: "The settlement is on behalf of all current and past underground goldmine workers who contracted silicosis or tuberculosis (TB), and the dependants of mineworkers who died of silicosis or TB. It is one of the most ambitious settlements of a class action in the world."

We had agreed to meet at her offices in Braamfontein. In my nervousness I arrived too early. Told to wait outside. A freezing Joburg morning. Huddled against the cold, breathing long lines of vapour into the fumes of morning traffic. The city waking, tides of humans moving, breathing, the incessant circulation of breath, of shared breath, of people, of goods, ideas, technologies, imaginaries that define Jourg. A city both insists on the sharing of breath, and takes our breath away.

Carina passed me on her way to her office, a hair's breadth but I didn't notice: her unassuming appearance, inexpensive clothes and shoes, at odds with the corporate dress and

body language I've learned to associate with the law. The same openness and humility defied her interaction with us. She is a soft breather, treads lightly, eager to talk but ready to listen, cautious never to "suck up all the air in the room." Yet her breath quickens when she talks about her belief in the law and constitutionalism.

The class action settlement, we learned, relied heavily on PATHAUT (link: <https://www.nioh.ac.za/about-us/our-sections/pathology/>), a pathology database established in 1975 and now containing demographic and pathological information on more than 100 000 deceased mine workers.

South African miners have a statutory right to autopsies for occupational lung disease compensation. To monitor this, the cardio-respiratory organs of deceased mineworkers are removed, placed in formalin and sent to Johannesburg where they are examined at the National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH). These autopsies provide information for research and surveillance, the findings of which are compiled in the PATHAUT database which describes key demographic, exposure and disease trends.

This is what Eyal Weizman calls the forensic turn in the law. Turning away from the fallibility of human witnesses, to evidence based testimony, from subject to object. Data, Weizman suggests, that might be incomprehensible on the level of the single file reveals, at a collective level, politically significant patterns. This data can be instrumentalised to designate blames and responsibilities. It speaks. The form of enunciation thus shifts testimony from the living to the dead. The rise up, not singularly, one by one, but as chorus. To testify - through the fog and filthy air- of the injustice inscribed on their bodies and society.

Dear rising ghosts, could your voices, now unleash, in your multiplicity, in proclaiming a right to life, to dignity, open a passageway, a line of flight outside of the stranglehold of the Law? A practice found on what Neo, you call "the lie of singularity," of the self contained autonomous legal subject, and their right to rights?

And yet I falter....

At what point does data stifle rather than liberate speech?

Who does it speak for? To? Without?

In whose language?

Who profits from this testimony?

"You want to count up the pain?" writes Miguel in a short text message. "Go out and count the grains of sand on the mine dumps."

The case was made on behalf of the miners. In lieu. Away from the loud clamour of their silence. A behest that behaves, doubles down. A deadly double edge. Medical data extracted from the body of the deceased - toxic readings in blood counts, x-rays of dusted coated and diseased lungs, acquire value within the capitalist system.

Profit - the only motive of industrial extractivism built on a model of dispossession, economic and political management of human populations through their genocidal regulation. Exposure to death.

Does the earth fill the mouths of the dead to stop them from describing what they've seen?

The miners are not liberated but rather further entrapped, reinscribed within the system of judicial ownership, legislative colonialism and capitalist extraction, where their lives and bodies, even their corpses, only have worth in so far they can be mined for resources.

What does it mean to give up your body for an abstraction?

We drag our bodies to the bank. We tell the bankers we are suffocating. The bankers sing: We are your brothers. They hand out facemasks bearing the bank's logo. We breathe through them.

The words of justice, brittle between my teeth.

In our later correspondences Carina confesses: "During the negotiations, I was the only attorney in the room who worked at a non-profit organisation and had no personal interest in the outcome of the settlement. The negotiations revealed a series of ethical questions that I had to navigate around class action settlements and the ethical duties of a non-profit public interest lawyer in the midst of commercial negotiations."

I'm equally implicated, guilty.

What is it my students call it, "White Women Savior Complex"?

Whiteness is the set of interpersonal relations. The only good white person stopped.

The TEBA archives (link: <https://www.uj.ac.za/library/informationresources/special-collections/Online-Exhibitions/TEBA>) at the University of Johannesburg, which Kaushik, we briefly visited together, date further back than PATHAUT. Testify to a long history of the mining industry in South Africa: colonialism, apartheid and how their systems of violence and dispossession are sustained today via capitalism.

A handbook on inventing laws to evade justice.

Scattered amongst mine propaganda, migrant labour transport schedules, correspondences with mine owners and lawyers, we find hundreds of medical records. Files detailing names and weight and the outcomes of testing stored in the library's Special Collections. The miner's lungs frozen in time gain a new worth. A resource for enterprising legal firms, for researchers like me.

What right do I have to look? To violently invade these bodies.

My hands. My eyes.

The question of the subject of rights (link to Fieldwork trajectory 2019 https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HNfg0JouP_SFiZfJPMLMeh6TZ6iDVyq12XhDWQTA)

[iqo/edit?usp=sharing](#)). Kaushik, your entry into the project, which is also your entry into my body of work, maybe even my body?:

"Who is the subject of rights? This opens up the question of the relationship between patient and plaintiff, but also (based on the case law I read) between prisoner and plaintiff, miner and plaintiff. More generally, especially in relation to the politics of TB, it opens up the question of the breather as a subject of politics."

I hold my breath. Touch everything in the archive so gently, so as to not make any mark of my own. But each of my touches leaves behind a smug, an invisible trace of my own oil and dust. Even my breath is dirty.

These days we are told to disinfect. But even if you wipe down all the doorknobs, your fingerprints will not be wiped from their spirits.

Dust: fine, dry powder consisting of tiny particles of earth, or waste matter on the ground or carried in the air; any material in the form of tiny particles; a fine white powder; a cloud of dust; deadly silica dust; a dead person's remains; the mortal human body; the act of dusting.

The whiteness is sly, imperceptible. It slips in cracks, nests and sleeps in my air sacs. All around me the air is alive with dirt, dangerous. It tastes of chemicals.

I swallow my pain. Drink the destruction.

I am writing a story of love in the time of data fascism, a time of illness, of dying.

My, our weak constitution. The broken testimony of the broken heart, the broken beat in the broken rhythm of my broken breathing, and the crumbling excess of my broken mouth and my broken body.

A body of work, or words, too compromised. Corrupted by a history of violence, inscribed in its pages. It's juristrictive, jurisdicitive, genocidal grammar that has us all collapsed in its iron fist.

Daniel writes: "I had a body once but then you made it illegal. Your hard hands inscribe justice into my blank flesh."

If these are monsters that breathe down our backs, we too are monsters. To lead one's life. To make a living. To live. To make life amidst death. To make our lives by the deaths of others.

What use is a constitution that constitutes nothing of what constitutes the people whose voice it assumes?

It's mine. I can't escape it. I can't say it and I can't get over it. Can't grasp it. Gasp it. Can't breath.

Neo, you say that mining songs, the songs and poems of those who labour are always laments: songs of loss and mourning, the loss of home of love, of family, finally of life.

Funeral songs whose black blues aesthetics bruise, sing of countless broken bodies. Of burial, buried in tunnels, in mine cages, in holes; of stolen life. But also songs that steal back that life, take back the land and history they've been disposed of. Praise poems alive with description, humour, history and incantations about struggle and survival. Against a background of poverty, systemic violence and arduous labour, a shared community history is sustained.

In "Travelling Hymn" (link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/14Xt7jvupsnVVPZX_u8xGvyyjBX6jbt01T/view?usp=sharing) by Teboho Raboko, a Basotho farmer who spent much of his life working in the mines, tracks the spread of tuberculosis, from the colonial ships into his communities. It's a song of loss and mourning (The Xhosa named it Killing-Everybody/ The Basotho say it is Lying-on-Your-Back-illness/ young unmarried women die with their breasts bared/ men die with their chests bared/ You can imagine how cruel this is.") but it is also a celebration of collective experiences and the continuation of life beyond death: {"It comes from big cities only, where all the men are patients, and all the women are patients, even the babies are patients, their voices sound as if they are speaking with divining calabashes."}

Death wanted to be this beautiful but we buried it.

In the capitalist socio-cultural formation we are compelled to treat loss in isolation. To disavow any momentary lapses in self-possession this loss might allow us.

But Neo, listening to your improvisations from and with this archive of mourning, I can grasp loss as a polyvalent, eminently multiplicitous, prismatic refraction of a multitude of histories, both living and spectral.

There is no such thing as a singular loss, even if every loss simultaneously constitutes, what you Neo called, "an irreducible singularity." A shared mourning. Not a "remembering" but instead "a perpetual cutting, a constancy of expansive and, a rewind that tends to exhaust the metaphysics upon which the idea of redress is grounded."

"It's morning, here in Makhandla," a friend writes from the Eastern Cape during Coronavirus lock down. "The rocks, the soil, my mouth, even the sky. Red. I have been angry this week. The drought is relentless. And now the pandemic. Too many deaths. In the cemetery hands are no longer enough. They've brought in industrial machines, giant metal monsters that are plow holes as big as trenches. The holes bleed redness. Do they plan to bury all of us?"

A photograph: July 9, 2020. Mounds of soil where thousands of graves are dug at the Honingnestkrans cemetery, in Pretoria, for victims of the Covid-19.

They say the graves of the dead in Iran can be seen from space.

On social media a friend chooses and marks out his own grave, circles it in red. He's not sick but already his death is foretold, foreclosed, memorialised.

We fall like the soil shoveled over us.

Mounds mark a fall. They are the graves of those who fell, were felled, as well as those who survived to reseal the earth. Brandon jokes that if we marked every death with a mound, the earth would be covered in mounds. The mounds would foretell, act as prophecy, a heresy, a reminder to the living that our bodies, our breath, its destinies, even in death, are part of the earth.

Much has been said about the resurgence of nature during the pandemic. In the absence of humans, weeds rise up in the cracks in the pavement, monkeys invade cities, flowers bloom.

Gongalo puts me in the scene. A view from his window. It's sunset. The sky is red, losing blood.

He writes; "In the background, an insistent lemon tree, yellow, bitter fruits.

Yellow should be protected.

Happy colours protected by the constitution."

After the lockdown, florists around the world handed out free flowers uncollected from cancelled weddings and funeral services.

All those blossoms. All those unmarked passages, passings.

But the songs remember:

Ring-a-ring-a-rosies
A pocket full of posies
A tissue, a tissue
We all fall down.

Stay safe Friends. Keep breathing!

Stacy

from: Kaushik Sunder Rajan <ksunderr@gmail.com>
to: Stacy Hardy <stacyhardy@gmail.com>
cc: neo muyanga <contact@neosong.net>
date: 27 Jun 2020, 19:28
subject: an opening

[W]hen a word is properly defined it loses its capital letter and can no longer serve either as a banner or as a hostile slogan; it becomes simply a sign, helping us to grasp some concrete reality or concrete objective, or method of activity. To clarify thought, to discredit the intrinsically meaningless words, and to define the use of others by precise analysis—to do this, strange though it may appear, might be a way of saving human lives.

(Simone Weil)

We are playing with a lot of words that are improperly defined, but we seek to get them all to lose their capital letter.

Correspondence.

Conspiracy.

Constitution.

All words that speak to collectivity, that speak to embodiment, that are both noun and verb, that need to be verbed to become lively.

The time has come for us to begin working together with Pulmonographies. The question for me, here as always, is – where to begin? What is the entry point into a topic? Into a conversation? Into correspondence? Into conspiracy? Where do we begin to constitute something, when the nature of “something” is itself indeterminate?

It is with that question that I sent my email earlier in the week, suggesting that my entry point is constitutionalism, because my entry point into the larger project was constitutionalism.

I have a sense of each of your entry points, through our conversations, but also, Stacy, through your experience that led to “Museum of Lungs”, which you have now reiterated in your first offering to us. But before we go down the Constitution/constitution/constitutionalism rabbit-hole, I’m curious to hear more about your entry points. About your stakes in the matter of breath. Even as I will try, over the coming days, to articulate for both of you something that links my stakes in the matter of breath to the spirit of constitutionalism. In order to articulate, for myself as much as for each of you, what animates my own desire to think one in relation to the other, to think each through the other.

This is just a start towards that. A start that makes me realize that what is at stake for me, at this point, is to decapitalize, properly define, and thus enliven C[c]orrespondence, C[c]onspiracy and C[c]onstitution as meaningfully interrelated words that are important to our present thought and activity.

from:

Stacy Hardy <stacyhardy@gmail.com>

to: Kaushik Sunder Rajan <ksunderr@gmail.com>, "Muyanga, Neo" <contact@neosong.net>
date: 15 Aug 2020, 12:17
subject: sink babe sink, sink a shaft

Dear Kaushik, Dear Neo

Kaushik in your last letter, your "second first" letter, July 20, 2020 (anchor link to letter on the page) you ask: "I want to begin our correspondence with a simple question. What would it mean to think of covid as another kind of tuberculosis? What would it mean to think of tuberculosis as a matter of breath? What would it mean to think of covid as a matter of breath?"

Breathing, as we all know, is circular.

History repeats itself, undoes linear time.

After the Covid-19 lockdown in South Africa, mining was the first industry to reopen.

This week I've been looking at the government's data on Covid-19 infection rates and deaths, a pattern starts to emerge. A hidden counter-geography under the statistics and number where infection hotspots and rising death rates around the country correspond directly to mining areas. As with TB, the capitalists extraction economy drives the spread of Covid-19.

You can die of poverty and hunger, or buckle down, labour in tunnels for white capital expansion.

How do we square the number of dead and the number of graves? How many are born and how many remain? How can we reconcile the death toll with the actual sum of the dead? Who lies beneath the numbers, the thousands of graves? Who constitutes the dead? Maybe only by deducting, tearing apart, rending bodies, by using an apocalyptic maths, to grit my teeth and subtract them all.

"They can kill everyone of us," a friend writes me. "But they can't kill all of us."

The global capitalist economic system is based on the unequal distribution of the opportunity to live and die that runs contrary to the very values, rights, and freedoms liberal democracy routinely espouses. Mbembe says, this "logic of sacrifice" has always been at the heart of neoliberalism, which should be called "neoliberalism." This system has always functioned with the idea that some are more valuable than others. Those of no value are expendable.

Seen from the air the mine dumps that litter the Johannesburg landscape appear as mounds of earth, graves, markers of death of the countless nameless miners who are victims of an

extraction economy that governs life on the mines: the extermination of life, the extermination of both the corpse and the name of that life.

What are the nameless people's names? If we knew their names, what would we do with them? Would we speak then? Sing them in chorus? Could we imagine the sound of their names spoken by their loved ones? Would we inscribe them on the walls of the Chamber of Mines in Joburg?

A photograph you Kaushik sent in the mail, 10 Jun 2020, 06:50 (anchor link to letter):



"dear both,

this is what i saw and felt on sunday, amidst 5000 people surrounding a small park, attached. a moment of quiet, of peace, among many. of breath. i think it asks about the archive, but even more, about writing.

something is amiss. something is afoot. i hope we can archive and provoke, together, somehow, in some small measure.

with love, and with so much gratitude that you are comrades, and friends, and present in these times.

k."

The mounds make visible what is hidden, erased. Buried in the archive, beneath the city, tunnels from which their dirt is dug, a vast network. Open holes. Are the holes graves? Graves without bodies? Do they signify an evacuation of bodies, of lives, of histories, hidden wealth? Or are the holes themselves the memorial of the evacuation of bodies, of memory? Have the bodies been deprived of their graves, deprived of their corpses, even?

The holes are not referred to as holes.

They are mine shafts.

But a shaft is also a blinding ray of light, a sharp pointed object, on the streets of Joburg and Soweto it's a penis, a quart of beer, a screwing over, a measure of despair, an escape hatch.

Isabella sings: "sink babe sink, sink a shaft, move slowly down the mountain, down our throats, toss and turn babe, sink on me, sink babe sink, sink it smooth, sink a shaft."

Her voice rises over the high, claustrophobic horizon of Joburg's mine dumps.

We say that absence is a country.

We say living here is a death rattle, a blow detonating the tongues, the teeth the bones.

On a live TV internet broadcast South Africa President Cyril Ramaposa reads the latest death statistics. His mouth doesn't move behind the mask. "More than 10 000 people have departed our country..." He hesitates, as if he's lost his breath, lost the thread. Or maybe he's waiting for the words to sink in, to sink down below the surface, to shinka shaft babe. A pause held too long. A break. A blur. Before he continues, falteringly, almost breathless: "through death... um... from COVID19."

Death as an exit visa? Is there the possibility of a more radical reading that lies between the lines, in the stutter-stammer breathless speech so uncommon from our leader? An undercommons, death reimaged as a fugitive journey beyond the colonial construct of State and its borders, where every trip secretly is a pact with both oblivion and freedom. A fugitive escape.

Legal scholars (Lourens du Plessis, J Snyman, Joshua Malidzo Nyawa, P de Vos blah blah et al.) tell me the constitution is an act of memory, enacted as a monument and a memorial at the same time.

Memorials and monuments are political constructions, recalling and representing histories selectively, drawing popular attention to specific events and people and obliterating or obscuring others. The constitution as monument celebrates the constitution and its achievements. The constitution as memorial remembers the atrocities of the past and is aware of the limits of constitutionalism.

The Constitutional Court in Joburg is built on the ruins of a colonial and later apartheid prison - the infamous Number Four - brutal, overcrowded, rife with disease. Gandhi, Sobukwe, Luthuli, Mandela all incarcerated behind its fortifications. It was late afternoon the day I first visited, the sun falling across half the isolation cell, a solid column inside whose glowing frame dust particles moved and collided, erratic, ecstatic, diffuse. The cell's walls still carry the scars of the prison's history, graffiti, scribbles, names etched into the inside of their doors. A stark reminder: the short walk from the court to the prison, prison to hospital, hospital to grave, justice to injustice.

Images flicker on the screen: High walls. The barbed wire.

With the outbreak of drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB) some TB isolation hospitals in South Africa have come to resemble prisons.

The patients say: We're being held here like prisoners. I've seen people die and die and die. The only discharge you get from this place is to the mortuary.

After the Covid-19 outbreak, 230, 000 were arrested for breaking lockdown regulations. Another 11 were simply shot and killed by the police.

"It has become normal that those who seek the recourse of justice are always living in fear, but those who plunder and loot, they just walk free. How can those who are seeking justice be protected?" asks my friend Ayanda.

He writes to me from an unknown destination in Makanda, a fugitive crawlspace where he's in hiding from those who are trying to assassinate him.

On 14 January, the Grahamstown high court ruled that the Makana Local Municipality council must be dissolved because it had failed in its constitutional duty to provide basic services to residents. The court case was instituted by the Unemployed People's Movement (link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/369680153083609/>). Ayanda is the organisation's chairperson. The municipality was not dissolved, instead the government locked the case in the courts through endless appeals. So much appealing done with such a cold tone. On 29 May, after multiple unsuccessful appeals, they announced they would approach the Supreme Court of Appeal.

It was on this day that Ayanda was told he would be assassinated.

Soon afterward bullets flew. Ayanda fled his home. Went underground. Outside the pandemic raged. A cloud descended over everything.

I reach out, groping into blackness, and his reply finally comes at 2am. "Thank you very much comrade Stacy. I hope nothing happens. I survived the threats and bullets this time but if it happens it will be what it is.... "

Flesh falls off gradually, lungs collapse suddenly. I take a deep breath but still his last sentence, his impending death sentence, suffocates.

In the days that follow I go over my correspondence with Ayanda since the outbreak. Trying to keep him alive. Keep on connecting through our breathless shreds and fragments, a back and forth broken text call and response.

"So much unanswered in the response.

How do you isolate in an informal settlement?

How do you stay home when your home, your land, has been stolen?

How do you stock up if you live hand to mouth?

It's tough comrade Stacey.

How do we wash hands when we don't have water?

How do we boost our immune when we don't know what balanced nutrition is and we are unemployed?"

Social distancing in townships like Fingo, Joza, and Tantji which hem Makhanda is all but impossible - entire families often share single, one-room shacks, packed tightly - and infections are continuing to climb.

And yet Ayanda continues. The next week he's back on the streets, breaking lockdown regulations braving illness and defying government sponsored bullets to organise, hand out masks and food parcels, advocate for testing. Endlessly undoing, by means of the everyday, the super-powerful default settings of a corrupt capitalist world and its illegal legal system.

Life goes on in, with and out from the shadow of death.

"The pandemic has been seen in monumental terms," writes my friend Kelly, "totality, catastrophe, portal." In its stead she processes a different reading that stops the endless rush of data and statistics, rush of planning and forecasting, projecting and policing. Against this she evokes the quotidian formations of collective life that continue in the global South. "Lifeworlds that cannot be so clearly divided into 'before' and 'after' the pandemic." Worlds where crisis and everyday, life and death blur.

For Ayanda and many like him in South Africa the pandemic simply adds another possibly in an already endless lineage of ways to die - accidental death, ceremonial death, unmotivated death, death by murder, by assassination, by bleeding, bones broken; shootings and fatalities, death by starvation, by disease, by HIV/AIDs or TB.

Death by simply breathing.

A joke circulates on Facebook: A man coughs openly in a packed taxi. The other passengers look skeef, shift in their seats, hold their breath. Finally one voices the accusation: "do you have coronavirus?" "No," replies the cougher, "I've got tuberculosis." "Thank God", everyone sighs in relief.

In such circumstances, Mbembe suggests the discipline of life and the necessities of hardship (trial by death) are marked by excess. "What connects terror, death, and freedom is an ecstatic notion of temporality and politics." The future, here, can be authentically anticipated, but not in the present. The present itself is but a moment of vision—a vision of a freedom not yet come.

A text message from Juan: "Eternity is such a violent notion, capitalist, the accumulation of future."

That which is called freedom is not, nor could it ever correspond to, the completion or the achievement of an assignment. It is not something that can be fixed, constituted on paper, a Constitution. Rather it is that which constitutes us, a practice—a fugitive act—of its own (un)making, a structure that is the very apotheosis of the terribly redoubled double edge ("freedom's articulation in bondage; its dearticulation and rearticulation in flight").

As Judith Butler says it, in the dispossessions of loss “something about who we are is revealed, something that delineates the ties we have to others, that shows us that these ties constitute what we are, ties of bonds that compose us.”

Illness is the way one feels unified not only with others who are in pain but with those who have died. Illness is a way to close the distance between the past and the present, to reconstitute the flesh, to resurrect the dead. Not so much because the dead are with us when we are sick, but that they are a practice of the illness itself, so that the sick and pained body becomes a space in which the dead inscribe themselves on us; a fugitive correspondence. Their expired breath enters us.

Illness tells us we are connected. It is a shaft into the infinite. The infinite exists everywhere—it is the afterlife, the pandemic, the mounds of earth, the dust that rises above them, the air, the event that washes red over all time and space.

In an age of Covid-19 funerals and the practice of mourning is driven underground, figured as an almost illegal act, a private affair to be closeted and contained. Yet mourning continues, bursts out, refuses confinement. Tears and the choked breath of wailing voices can't be silenced. Instead it manifests in a myriad of small fugitive improvisations: illegal funerals that take place under the cover of darkness, a wail rises into the night, the deep low breath of mo(u)ning, risking one's own infection and death to mark the parting of another (the horror and beauty of that); the long lines of cars snaking past an open coffin as driveby funerals replace nightlong vigil across the global South; one-off mass funeral events, now stretched out, recomposed as week-long small memorial gathering; radio 'request shows' hijacked by grieverers so they might sing and share memories together. It is present in the new language that has start to emerge in all our correspondences, new ways of greeting and saying goodbye: stay safe, keep breathing, apart but together, oh so sorry for your loss, so truly fucking sorry, I feel you. I love you!!

Sometimes beauty does the same as dust and doesn't allow us to see.

Taken together these tiny improvisations and ask: to what extent is horror a fuel for resistance. And: to what extent is adaptation a form of agency. Could they then be read as a radical politics of mourning which throws the multiplicitous violence of modernity into stark relief? Which precipitates new forms of gathering in dispossession, fugitive socialities which prefigure and enact a world-in-becoming?

Maybe this is something of what Fred Moten is reaching for when he touches on what Luce Irigaray calls 'The Fecundity of the Caress'? Moten says it so softly, so beautifully, voice alive with breath: "The caress makes social space like a garment, social fabric biopoetically brushing up against the wall that opens out into a room or rises up as a table, slave ship, favela, spaceship, project. It's like the preparation of a table, or a piano. It can't be sung alone."

Kaushik, in your letter you write: "What is it about each of our itineraries that brings us to think this correspondence, of covid as a matter of TB as a matter of breath?"

Correspondence (link to Correspondence folder

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1e14GAvytFOOWSWLBqntTDIgeONlQZCys?usp=sharing>)_has always been a collective fugitive practice: prison letters, love letters, open letters, letters smuggled through bars, across borders, slipped in your pocket by a secret admirer (I love you!) (link to Love Sick booklet <https://drive.google.com/file/d/13nMpDKvfWAip7r-8ZX2HxOyxFSwRq6Q/view?usp=sharing>), sealed in a bottle and thrown into the ocean, folded into a paper aeroplane to fly you to me.



Dearly beloveds,

Can a correspondence, our correspondence and correspondences, in how they cleave open a personal space, fugitively invade and evade the social and disciplinary distancing between us, blur the lines between friend and colleague or collaborator and enact a kind of biopoetics? Can they be space ship, studio, field trip, a way of breathing together breathlessly, the faltering rhythm of sending then waiting. Breathless anticipation. Constantly refreshing my email. Checking my inbox. PING! An answer incoming! Or just another false?

Fred Moten describes fugitivity as "a desire for the outside, for a playing or being outside..." it moves outside the intentions and attentions of the one who speaks and writes, moving outside their own adherence to the law and to propriety. From this fugitive imaginary emerges the ongoing possibility of a general, often gestural refusal that Moten tries to think under the rubric of abolitionism. Against the lawful imagination, we are asked to conjure a politics and poetics of fugitive refusal.

"Nodding between some things and nothing is the held flesh leanness of the collective head. There we study how blackness and imagination are compact, in reconstructive flight from imposition. Its sovereign operations which keeps on taking, which keep on taking their incalculable toll. Beyond that, in the impossibility of anything beyond that, those operations are resisted and refuted."

Fred grounds and displaces this refusal in the practice of "refusing of what is refused to you". In his talk, which I watched this last week, "Blackness and Non-performance" (you can watch it here <https://youtu.be/G2leIFByIIg>), he calls back to a case from American abolitionist legal history; the story of Betty, a slave who, in her absence and silence, is granted freedom, and thereby the right to be human by an American court of law, but refuses. Refuses a freedom that is confined and defined via slavery, a definition of human built on dehumanisation. In their stead Betty chooses silence and the radical social life of slavery, which as Fred says is always and emphatically, "both more and less than singular, more and less than one."

Betty's case, Fred says, "comes to us by way of anti-slavery's liberal brutalities, which take the form of an ancient and persistently significant non correspondence, of what it is to be antislavery and what it might be to be abolitionist and an ante interpolative militancy, whose lower frequency might easily be mistaken for quietude."

I follow Fred writing all over and under the law, sounding silent Betty out, shattering, unmasking, even the questions she requires and allows, as if they are a poetics of properly radical dispossession and impropriety.

Significantly, Fred refused the administer, legislating the concept of blackness, which assigns an essence, a point of origin, or a quality of personhood. Blackness, he writes, is "neither bound by nor originated in the white/nonwhite boundary . . . blackness is a general force of fugitivity that . . . the color line exacerbates and focuses without originating." Blackness as the inherently social incongruity that troubles all dualistic systems, all attempts at lawmaking.

The 1805 Haiti Constitution, the constitution of the first freed black state, legislates that all Haitians, regardless of skin color, are considered black in the eyes of the law.

Race is not eluded or elided, buried in neoliberal universalism rhetoric, but rather reclaimed, cut loose.

Could this open the pathway towards wayward fugitive law(un)making?

"What if we said compact instead of contract?" asks Fred, "or if we just cleave to that old sense of concentration in both terms bear, then there is openness in the compact, then the contract is in the open, broken, shattered in imagination, crazy in love."

Judges and legislators he tells us, cannot and will not understand that Betty's "obscene non-performance" is a refusal of the solo. She refuses the individuation that is refused her and in its stead claims the "monstrosity of obscene social life" imposed upon and ascribed to her, "tongue tied for silence softly speaks and a performative, degenerative and regenerative density, in deviance both from and within the grammar and diction of the administered word."

How does one find language for this?

My friend Lesego dropped out of law school in a 'bantu university' under apartheid to become a poet. Refusing the path Mandela trod, the juristic, judicious language of law and reason to take up weapons: word bombs and implosions, a fugitive poetic resistance.

An outlaw, out-lawed poet.

"My brother in law ... " he tells me, "these people were terrible criminals, who killed people and whatever, whatever. People in gangs ... The flipside of that is, when they would go out together and rob people, they were prepared to give their lives for each other. Is that friendship or is it not? If I don't leave you there. I'm prepared to die with you. Surely that's a human thing? Human beings are stealthy beings."

It's this stealth, this beauty and terror, that his murderously ecstatic poetry enacts.

Exhilarating and eviscerating, a devoted heresy, mutinous immemorial, it's a practice of both profound violence and shattering love. On the one hand tending toward silences, voids, and lacunae. On the other hand, choral, polyvocal, and composted as it pays homage to the breaths, the depth of his fugitive poetic heritage, and attacks and annihilates the laws of our colonial and racist grammar.

Shallow breath and stealth. Holding breath—

Dear Neo, dear Kaushik, I wonder if we listened closely to silences woven in between and outside of contract law, the Constitution, will we hear fugitive breath? The ghost of those outside the law possessing these words, as afterlife "bearing a trimmer, a solicitation, a blur of legal reasoning"?

Will they sound as if they are speaking with divining calabashes?

Yours, open, broken, breathless, tongue tied, shattered in imagination, always crazy in love,

Stacy

Dear Stacy, dear Neo,

One can never respond, adequately. I did want to try and say two things though, Stacy, in terms of where your letters have left me hanging. Spaces of potential correspondence.

*First - You took us back to that critical moment in our conversation with Carina. The moment (parenthetical, yet utterly vital) when she pointed out to us that of the three legal groups involved in representing the mineworkers in *Nkala*, only one was not-for-profit. You pointed out in one of our conversations that I had elided this in the fieldwork summary I sent you. I remembered that moment well, but I couldn't write it down. there are certain truths that the poet and the author can write, which the ethnographer can't.*

But let me write it here: a settlement was reached, and (some) lawyers got rich. This is the structure of the law and of writing - the suffering of some become the stories that others build their careers upon. In pointing to the structure of this violence, you are pointing to your own complicity in this violence. (because you write/because you're white...action shades into integument, arises from it, against it, in defiance of it, unable to shake it).

And yet, had they not settled, the miners and their widows would not have received a timely compensation. This speaks to something else you have written me in our correspondence ... the untimeliness of the law. The way in which the time of the law is out of joint with the time of the body, the time of disease. Many of the miners who are entitled to receive compensation are already dead.

Thus, the settlement precludes the possibility of justice, by curtailing a full accounting / accountability, of corporate crime and of racialized monopoly capitalism, via the contractual resolution of monetary compensation. Yet a full accounting and accountability would itself be unjust, because it would never be done in time. Justice takes longer than the time we have to breathe.

This is the antinomy of the law. When you say "fuck the law", I hear you looking for a justice outside of this antinomy, which repeatedly, relentlessly, violates some bodies and enriches others. I hear you. I hear your desperation, and your anger. I think the difference is, I look for justice within the irreconcilable spaces of those antinomies; within what Derrida calls the double bind. Thus, our attitudes towards the law and constitutionalism diverge ... or do they?

Perhaps we are looking for the same thing, but searching in different places.

I am looking in the crevices of the law, while you are looking beyond its horizon.

Why am I looking where I am? For the same reason you are ... you write / you're right / you're white.

So am I. but not in the same ways.

And so, second ...

I was having dinner with a close friend a week before the 2016 US Presidential election. Over ice-cream, we were talking about whether Donald Trump could in fact, possibly, become President; at which point, she looked at me and asked, "But do you trust white people?"

I know how to answer that question now. No, I don't.

But I also recognize myself in them.

In America, I am non-white. In ways that I feel, especially these days, but from long before these days. I feel non-white every time I fly into this country via an immigration officer. I felt non-white when I moved to this country in the 1990s, and my parents advised me, before I left India, to "never knock on a stranger's door in America, because they will shoot you". I felt non-white, quite viscerally, in the days and weeks after 9/11, when I would cross the road at night if I saw a white person approaching me. even now, I instinctively look inside a pick-up truck before I cross the road in front of it at a stop sign. There is prejudice in this mistrust, but also the very animal instinct of bodily self-preservation ... that sensing of who is predator and who is prey, of who belongs in a space and who is threatening the entitlement of that belonging. Surely women feel something like this all the time, regardless of their race, not just in America.

But I am also Brahmin. I inherit an apparatus of violence that would make your ancestors look like aspiring amateurs. And in India, the Constitution was - in incomplete and failed ways, but also in its veins - a means, one means, to imagine modes of social association that were not dictated by caste Hindu patriarchy. I'm not an expert on Ambedkar by any means, but it's not accidental that when I rummaged towards my annotated constitutionalism syllabus - without knowing where I would end up - I repeatedly stubbed my toe against his writings. The constitutional legacy that the Hindu Right is currently tearing up is Ambedkar's Constitution. A Constitution that Ambedkar was both a prime architect of, and also ambivalent towards.

Maybe that is a second ground for difference...and space for correspondence.

Perhaps your attitude towards constitutionalism is shaped by its betrayed promise.

Perhaps mine clutches desperately at its vanishing promise.

The outside of law where I come from is not justice. It is that prior law, Manusmriti, encoded in eons of prescription and proscription that are all about the regulation of touch, the prevention of modes of social being and association deemed illicit by a caste patriarchy. The violence of modernity, the violence of capitalism is real, but it merely compounds the violence of community that was already well refined centuries before the white people came.

This is the itinerary through which I come to my interest in South African constitutionalism ... it is the itinerary that forces me to look within the crevices of the law for justice, that makes the promise of constitutionalism something I'm not willing to let go of. Because when I do, a certain kind of breath will turn into air.

There is much, I know, that is left hanging here, but there is no such thing as an adequate response. Only gratitude, for helping me think further through the cracks of the present. As we grasp, and gasp.

With love to you both, as ever, k.

from: Stacy Hardy <stacyhardy@gmail.com>
to: "Muyanga, Neo" <contact@neosong.net>,
Kaushik Sunder Rajan <ksunderr@gmail.com>
date: 5 Aug 2020, 19:52
subject: a letter as listening room

Dear Neo

Woken again at 4am this morning by the adhan.

Somebody once told me there was no muezzin anymore, just a recording.

Only the machines.

In our last correspondence, you wrote, "the internet is really not my favourite hang out place, so i regularly need to loose my tethers to the cyberspace."

Later in a Zoom meeting you described how the digital interface, that screen, the perpetual screen-ing "makes you sick".

It seems we're all infected.

During the day I've started pacing, walking in circles in my apartment, trying to get closer but always the distance, the screen, another fucking Zoom meeting.

The faster I walk the smaller I am.

Space sickness is a kind of motion sickness that strikes when your surroundings visually appear to be in motion, but without a corresponding sense of bodily motion.

In photography, a zoom lens closes the distance but the closer you get the more the image pixelates.

A large far sea or a small puddle. Everything blurs, breaks up.

Who has dislocated the world?

Covid-19 has placed our all bodies under double threat: the spread of the virus, the widespread digitization of our lives. A new division devised. Those who are sentenced to death by disease - on the streets, in overcrowded informal settlements, in workplaces, on the mines, taxis. Those whose die of dis-ease, bodies dematerialised in the mass digitisation of our lives.

The body of flesh and bones, the physical and mortal body, diminished. vanishing into ether.

Delirious, Touch-starved.

A friend writes me: "I even miss strangers at the club asking me to keep their stuff safe from other strangers whilst they go to the loo, and I'd be sitting there thinking like 'if a stranger comes and touches my stranger's stuff KUZONYIWA!!!"

At a time when keeping in touch, when touching, nurturing and preserving connections, talking to one another and sharing food, drinking together, making music, making love, takes place solely across the screens, do you see any hope for new forms of emergent spectral intimacy?

Neo, I'm thinking about what we might take from music. How it's long negotiated that tension - the taut traverse from liveness to digitisation, a current to waybackwhen, fingers and wires to synapses and electric charges?

Poet Drummond de Andrade writes: 'the electricity struck the resigned things'.

Breathlessly,
Stacy

from:	neo muyanga <contact@neosong.net>
to:	stacy hardy <stacyhardy@gmail.com>
cc:	Kaushik Sunder Rajan <ksunderr@gmail.com>
date:	6 Aug 2020, 15:21
subject:	Re: a letter as listening room

dear stacy,

happy greetings to you in cairo (our beloved) ...
and to you, dear kaushik, in chicago (which yet remains foreign to me).

the only "just" thing i like about the internet is that it is a telepathy machine (and not because of those shifty algorithms written by people who themselves are an algorithm): it pretends to permit us to perceive the multiplicity in what is being expressed, even as singularity is what at fa(r)ce-value is worshipped.

psychiatrists have a name for it: it's called madness. definitionally, madness is the failure to keep all the voices inside the head in check (i.e. not coming out) when addressing a room full of others who are already outside instead. in the choir once many speak, cacophony embraces epiphany. one hears this for antiphony: more than one thing can be said simultaneously and none of it needs be arrested under the terms and strictures of singularity.

nmn
unk s.s.q.l

from: Stacy Hardy <stacyhardy@gmail.com>
to: "Muyanga, Neo" <contact@neosong.net>, Kaushik Sunder Rajan <ksunderr@gmail.com>
date: 8 Aug 2020, 22:05
subject: a letter as listening room

Dear Neo (Dear Kaushik):

This week I bought a t-shirt on the streets - cheap fong-kong that circulates. A slogan emblazoned on the front in red: "La la la la... I can't hear you."

I don't know exactly what it means. Or the t-shirt's origins. But I'm guessing something got lost in translations, in distance.

Neo, it made me recall your instance on not performing this year. In a previous letter you wrote: "I'm in need of slowing everything down and inhabiting silence and stillness - a listening mode i want to practice from here at my home."

A listening mode.

La la la... My t-shirt teaches me that listening selective, which sounds voices we listen to, not just hear, is also political.

It seems to be so much of what your practice is subversive listening, listening differently to what's outside the (easily) audible - the la la la la as much as silence, the indistinct noise of many individuating voices sounding at once; an interruption to the idealised, individualised voice and the perceived stability of communication; a sonic frequency that moves toward a kind of heterogeneous conception of dissensual collectivity.

This leads me back to the "singularity" you ended your last mail on, You wrote: "more than one thing can be said simultaneously and none of it needs be arrested under the terms and strictures of singularity."

Recently Kaushik and I have been watching Fred Moten's non-performance lecture, "Blackness and Non-performance" (link <https://youtu.be/G2leiFBy1lg>). I'm saying this badly but basically he invokes black radical practice via slave narratives to challenge notions of performance as presence, insofar as blackness insists that we prefer "a displacement of lack of a particular and sclerotic notion of presence that liveness is supposed to instantiate," by the fact that performances are living, or as Moten says are "an emphatic and surreal presence in the making of a living."

He propose that we refuse what has been refused to us: "the experience of subjectivity is the would be subjects for the desire for subjectivity, which we must keep on learning not to want, which we have to keep on practicing not wanting, as if an endless preparation for a recital, that insofar as it never comes, is always surreally present."

Echoing Glissant's "consent to not being single" he calls for a move from the metaphysics of presence given in the figure of the one, to "the physics of a spectral presence," given in nothingness, and consent, not to be single in "differential inseparability in the nearness and distance" of our "spooky actions". Our fate then, according to Moten, is not to become one and yet many, it is rather "to become the mooing bird, to become bird to become moo."

Ha! Maybe this is what that "Killer of Sheep" (link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtpbPKont6U>), Louis Moholo was hinting at in the "bah bah black sheep" he unleashed in an [interview](https://www.mixcloud.com/chimurenga/chimurenga-session-w-louis-moholo-moholo-neo-muyanga/) [https://www.mixcloud.com/chimurenga/chimurenga-session-w-louis-moholo-moholo-neo-muyanga/] with you all those years ago,?

Your sheepishly,
Stacy

from:	neo muyanga <contact@neosong.net>
to:	stacy hardy <stacyhardy@gmail.com>
cc:	Kaushik Sunder Rajan <ksunderr@gmail.com>
date:	9 Aug 2020, 19:43
subject:	Re: a letter as listening room

dear stacy
dear kaushik

you ask, on what basis does one "consent to not being single"? much of what i will try to write in reply to this, here, will seem to go against what is expressed within these quotes. why? because the is a problem

with the language of humans: only one thing can be said at a time. why? because people think that to speak is to reach for coherence. but of course once we say one thing, we also often (always is never... everything amounts to nothing) cannot say what that thing harbours/abhors as its opposite/apposite.

i wish to listen when i speak, and speak when i listen (link to Pulmonographies play list <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLq18asmMdMFhg1OcGXYOHVBquoSrM6b-x>). that is what "accounting for this multiplicity" is. that is what the techne (τέχνη) of choir is for: a place where to sing is to practice listening - to those who come before you, those who go after, as well as those who stand alongside of you. the listening to what or who speaks when singing back (like echo, failing to seduce narcissus). one thing cannot be spoken at a time, and this is what humans do not know or cannot remember.

with love
mnm
unk s.s.q.l

from: Stacy Hardy <stacyhardy@gmail.com>
to: "Muyanga, Neo" <contact@neosong.net>,
Kaushik Sunder Rajan <ksunderr@gmail.com>
date: 10 Aug 2020, 11:55
subject: a letter as listening room

Dear Neo, Dear Kaushik

I hear you. I just listened to your album DIPALO (link: <https://chimurengachronic.co.za/dipalo-a-mixtape-for-those-who-practice-counting/>) again (and again), "a mixtape for those who practice counting." As I hear it, it's something of an accounting of this multiplicity, where accounting is not calculating, not taking stock, adding and subtracting but rather an insistent rhythm, a ceaseless and unseizable movement from one to two to too many. Implicit here is a kind of communicability that is, or that marks a presence that is more or plus less than here and now. As listeners we are untethered by time, roving through ancestral visions and contemporary notation, much as a dreamer is able to switch bodies and anthropomorphise animals, rocks, or sky.

xs

From: neo muyanga <contact@neosong.net>
to: stacy hardy <stacyhardy@gmail.com>
cc: Kaushik Sunder Rajan <ksunderr@gmail.com>

date:

11 Aug 2020, 13:12

subject:

Re: a letter as listening room

dear Stacy, kaushik

"dipalo" is only "just" one long-ish "improvisation" on exile (a place we all know well, when we consider well the abysmal living conditions of so many/too, too many living-at-the-hands-of-humans) - there are no track divisions there ... only "just" breath, lasting 43 minutes or so. so ephemeral, really, when you think about it. that is why a "performance" is such a difficult thing to justify. rather, let's agree to call(sell) the "rehearsal" (as) the "real" "show"!

mnm

unk s.s.q.l

from:

Stacy Hardy <stacyhardy@gmail.com>

to:

"Muyanga, Neo" <contact@neosong.net>, Kaushik Sunder Rajan <ksunderr@gmail.com>

date:

11 Aug 2020, 15:23

subject:

a letter as listening room

Dear Neo

Lingering on your last "breath," your "only 'just' breath".

Breath has always been such a life force in South African music - shared and imperiled breath, breathlessness and the suffocation of oppression, breath as spirit. Breath as that which connects us to everything, testifies to the damage capitalism exploitative and extractive practices wreak on both individual bodies and ecological systems. Breath as the possibility of a different future (each breath, however strained, carries the hope of another one, and another one). From the Brotherhood of Breath (Moholo: "let the music breathe.") to the expressed and expelled breath of the toyi toyi and the shared breath of choirs.

Breath with me on this?

xs

From:

neo muyanga <contact@neosong.net>

to: stacy hardy <stacyhardy@gmail.com>
cc: Kaushik Sunder Rajan <ksunderr@gmail.com>
date: 11 Aug 2020, 20:42
subject: Re: a letter as listening room

dear stacy, dear kaushik

breath is what i believe lends juice in choirs. you can hear here this in the famous, 'joy of africa choir' (link: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GSev4slg2pCqyDPpSUQvXOEMu6rqZa53/view?usp=sharing>), echoed (of course) in this audience,

and here in this hum-drum sampled/troubled off wagner (link: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ouoUqHKqShnZTQMuEK55NAGVGp5j-xXa/view?usp=sharing>),

perhaps, then, the wisdom in the now-cliché, umuntungumuntungabantu, is how we mean to say there is no such thing as "the individual". it is only "just" as a shock in recoil/recall as we encounter other(s) that we de/oply individuality. it pretends to be a justification for our very existence... it appears to be a necessary posture in adopt/adapt in our attempt to make (ourselves) the world. it becomes an act of refusing to be moved, like in this piece, blah-blah-ing as black sheep (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PyTYUpceiZ2B_35IPb1u00A6pOKjUuc5/view?usp=sharing),

mnm
unk s.s.q.l

Kaushik Sunder Rajan <ksunderr@gmail.com>
Wed, 22 Apr, 20:07
to neo, me

dear both,

just checking in to see how you are doing. is all well?

love,
k.

Stacy Hardy <stacyhardy@gmail.com>
Mon, 27 Apr, 12:25

to Kaushik

Hello both.

So sorry on silence. I've had a real struggle with my body (possibly appropriately) and between that and urgent deadlines, I've fallen silent. I'm slowly doing better. Kaushik - thank you so much for your writing. I was thrilled to receive and read it. I've been annotating it with thoughts and responses - which I will send really soon. It also prompted me to think about form and ways of working together in and through writing. More on that soon.

For now just to say thank you for checking in - still alive and kicking - though no kung fu moves yet.

And as you will have seen I've started on the letters to Edwin and actually have the next 5 lined up.

With love!

neo muyanga <contact@neosong.net>

Mon, 27 Apr, 21:28

to me, Kaushik

dear both,

i am glad to hear from you again.

stacy dear, i hope you are feeling better now and stronger again? please do take it easy when possible?

(do ask laila and nancy to force you gently sometimes to take unnecessary breaks, please ... watch vampire movies and make mixtapes).

dear kaushik, i hope things are well with you and that you are staying healthy and keeping inspired too.

thanks so much for the political analyses you send - i find them fascinating to read from across the seas as a reflection of where we on this global catastrophe in great need of some organised tlc!).

sending you both lots of love,

n

unk s.s.q.i

Kaushik Sunder Rajan <ksunderr@gmail.com>

Sat, 2 May, 22:27

to neo, me

dearest both,

it makes me very happy to hear from you both, and to receive your gifts (thank you, stacy, for the beginning of correspondence and the feni!) and concerned, for your health stacy. please do be kind to yourself.

it is odd to write to you now, because at this time we should have been together in basel and in vienna, stacy· sigh·
ugh·

i've written to the neubauer folk, and will hopefully hear about payment to graham asap·

much more to respond to, but as an offering for now, i wanted to send you both this, composed and sung by the telugu
composer adesh ravi, responding to the lock down and its impact on poor and migrant workers in india: Adesh Ravi's
Migrant Song on Corona·mp4

with love,
k·

Attachments area

Stacy Hardy <stacyhardy@gmail.com>
Sat, 2 May, 22:49
to Kaushik, neo

Oh! Kaushik this is truly beautiful· Thank you!!!

Stacy Hardy <stacyhardy@gmail.com>
Attachments

Sun, 3 May, 10:50
to Kaushik, neo

And one in reply·

<https://vimeo.com/413878531>

The South African composer Philip Miller has created a project to assist funding singers and musicians who are currently unable to earn money during the COVID
19 Lockdown·

#musoreliefSA

This is a new arrangement of an old song, 'Influenza(1918)' which the celebrated South African choral composer Reuben T· Caluza wrote in response to the
Spanish Flu epidemic in our country·

Philip located the original 1920 recording online and re-arranged the song for vocals and brass·

He worked with a group of talented vocalists and musicians who recorded themselves in their own homes, supplying voice notes for him to assemble the whole
song together·

Attachments area

Mail Delivery Subsystem

Sun, 3 May, 10:50

Message too large Your message couldn't be delivered to contact@neosong·net because it exceeds the size limit· Try reducing the message size and then resending

Stacy Hardy <stacyhardy@gmail.com>
Sun, 3 May, 10:51
to Neo

POSTSCRIPT(ion)

The Curriculum Is Everything

Stacy Hardy

Thu, Aug 20

Dear Kaushik

I've been meaning to share these:

Chimurenga 15 "The Curriculum Is Everything" and Chimurenga 14 - Everyone Has Their Indian.

The curriculum includes the Train lecture I mentioned as well as pieces by Neo and by me (one in my name to under pseudonyms - see if you can spot them), its presentation and structure is also of interest and it includes email correspondences as "side notes".

Then Everyone Has Their Indian share some of your trajectories.

More on both below and the PDFs to download.

Chimurenga 14 - Everyone Has Their Indian (April 2009)

Chimurenga 14, "Everyone Has Their Indian", seeks to unpack the relation between Africa and South Asia. Born out of the ongoing conversation between divergent temporal registers, between different territories and bodies of thought, it can be seen both as a map of the actual lines that criss-cross the Mediterranean and Indian oceans and a log of possible journeys into a real and imagined territory called the "Third World". Theory runs adjacent to fiction, and photo essays share the space as hand-drawn maps, post cards and fragments of itineraries. The contributions cover a wide variety of themes, ranging from security, sovereignty and sex, to mobility and music, issues of access, control and censorship, power and identity.

For example, Vivek Narayanan offers a poetic ode to Historical Anthropology, while Manu Herstein and Achal Prabhala use a free flow of images, memories and realities to map hidden connections. Amitav Ghosh confesses of "xenophilia" and J.S. Saxena's

“Coffee-Brown Boy” asks “If that black cat can be White, why can’t I?” Artworks by Rigo 23, Kakudji, Rasheed Aareen and Ernest Mancoba redraw the boundaries and limits of identity and Philippe Rekacewicz’s itineraries retraces the African connection as a question and not a destination.

Chimurenga 15 (Published – May 2010) “The Curriculum Is Everything”

What could the curriculum be – if it was designed by the people who dropped out of school so that they could breathe? The latest issue of Chimurenga provides alternatives to prevailing educational pedagogy. Through fiction, essays, interviews, poetry, photography and art, contributors examine and redefine rigid notions of essential knowledge.

Presented in the form of a textbook, Chimurenga 15 simultaneously mimics the structure while gutting it. All entries are regrouped under subjects such as body parts, language, grace, worship and news (from the other side), numbers, parents, police and many more. Through a classification system that is both linear and thematic, the textbook offers multiple entry points into a curriculum that focuses on the un-teachable and values un-learning as much as its opposite.

89 Chimurenga 14-1.pdf

90 Chimurenga 15 Cover – Final – 31051

91 Chimurenga 15 Inside – Final - 27051

neo muyanga

3:38 PM (11 minutes ago)

thank you for making these compilations, dearest stacy and kaushik,

having just read through, it feels like a really important (and elegant) thread emerges regarding we've often discussed our hope for this project turn perform as a response tailored specifically to our time and for those audiences we would like to surface and to dress directly (as opposed to addressing ourselves to the generic inter-ma-net). i am not entirely sure yet what is, in fact, emerging, here. but i do know i find it interesting and organ (heart, lungs and others)-warming. it feels like something of a hybrid of both our analogue as well as our becoming-digital selves.

thanks be.

n

kaushik sunder rajan

Now

Thanks be to you both, as well.

A picture from Cape Town, Stacy, taken the day before I first interviewed you.



With love, always, and to be continued, hopefully soon. You have both completed me for a while.

k.

our contribution for cc: world

Hoffmann-Walbeck, Niklas

Fri, 27 Aug

Dear Kaushik, dear Stacy and dear Neo,

first of all, let me again express my gratitude to you for allowing us to trace your mesmerizing conversation. There are so many – for lack of a better word – inspiring thoughts and observations, and – first and foremost - so much warmth in these letters, that I keep going back to them again and again.

Today we have been talking about how your work could best be presented in the framework of cc:world. We would propose to present the introductory paragraph and the “pre-script(ion)” directly on the cc:world site, while publishing the following “chapters” (transcript[ion], descript[ion], Inscript[ion], postscript[ion]) right underneath, but in PDF files that are visually arranged in a sequence but can be accessed individually. This allows us to keep your typography and layout in the main text. We are still playing with the technical implementation of this, but are naturally curious to know whether this corresponds at all with your ideas?

Some of the links that you were sharing amongst each other will be closed to most readers that have not permission to certain databases. But in our view this hardly diminishes the pleasure of following your words. Yet, given the sheer amount of material: are there any copyright-infringements that one should be aware of?

Thanks again and warm regards,

Niklas

ccworld files and query

Stacy Hardy

Sat 29 aug

dear Kaushik dear Neo

quick one. i'm loading all the documents etc for cc world from Chicago Box to our [Google folder](#) so they can be linked to and accessible to everyone.

i will update the document with these links and send to Nikklas

i will also send the files to Niklas in case they can load them on their server

would you like to discuss their suggestion? i was very excited and frankly tickled at the prospect of it running on the page as one long missive but also do understand that there are serious tech complications to maintain the layout and also how it might overwhelm other submissions. so with respect to the cc:world community (tech people and fellow artists) that i'm good with their idea of PDFS... what do you think?

xs

Kaushik Sunder Rajan

Sat, 29 Aug

dear stacy, thank you so much for loading all the files on to google. as to niklas's suggestion, i would defer entirely to both of you. i too had initially thought that the one long missive would be the form in

which to present this, and something of that excess would be rendered invisible. but i also understand the constraints and desires for some level of visual consistency across the submissions.

xo,

k.

Stacy Hardy

Sat, 29 Aug

thank you kaushik

ok i think what i'll do is throw it back at him. i'll say we'd prefer to let the excess both stand and as you suggest thereby disappear and we're open to losing some formatting (the boxes and colours and fonts) and make inserts visible simply though italics or bolds etc. however if they feel its disruptive or impossible then PDFs are okay.

and ha ha! if he says PDFS i'll insist we add this final correspondence ;)