

THEORIZING PALIMPSESTUOUSNESS THROUGH BODIES AND FORM

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BA, University of Lethbridge, 2015

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Date of Defence: December 7, 2018

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To my smart and tough and beautiful Grandmothers.

Abstract

All research is a story. If this particular research project strikes you as more storied than most you would not be remiss. Indeed, there are aspects of what follows that are figments of my imagination. But reader, I ask you this: what is research but the imagining of possibilities? If research is indeed the act of creating and shaping realities, as John Law suggests (p. 6-7), than surely the story told here must be scrutinized for what reality it supports as much as any other research endeavor that seeks to bring meaning to a world storied with physical laws and interacting molecular compounds. By crafting a tale in an attempt at theorizing the body as palimpsestuous, my aim was also to create a portal of possibility whereby the queer potential of non-linear palimpsestuous relationality could offer a new way of engaging with the multiplicity of current and future realities.

Preface

The layered paleographic objects known as palimpsests often carry stories and information that has survived a variety of technological advancements involving different mediums to carry the written word. There is something magical about the lower texts of a palimpsest. For me that magic in part lies in knowing that what is legible in the lower text was the result of chance and choices that placed the quality of the parchment/papyrus/vellum above what was previously written. I suppose you could say that some text was sacrificed to form. Some text written for this project has suffered a similar fate. Akin to changing mediums to carry the written word, bureaucratic requirements have required of me and this project a change in word processing platforms, and the result has been the introduction of a stutter to some of the magic woven into the project and, it pains me to say, a loss of text, and thus depth, in the marginalia comments between Cecelia Fae and Paloma Kwel. While this loss is painful to a degree, I willingly undergo the sacrifice to maintain a bit of semblance of the original form of the project, for the form does much in the way of contributing to my arguments. Furthermore, the loss of text while detracting from certain arguments, actually augments others, for much like engaging the lower text of an actual palimpsest I hope that as a reader you feel a sense of frustration to the abrupt and unexpected cut-off to the development of a story you were following intently. If however, you find it difficult to savour the rough edges that a change in platforms has gifted my project then you may find it worth your while to track down me, the author of said project. I will not confirm nor deny that there exists in several worlds a version of this project that preserves all text and all original formatting choices; unfortunately one of those worlds is not that of the polished and well-regulated

Academy. Nevertheless, this version of the project has managed to retain some magic and it is my hope that you find within it something that brings you joy.

- J. M. Saler

Acknowledgements

At some point during this journey of personal growth, commonly referred to as a Masters or Mistress of Arts Degree, I was humbled by having it kindly pointed out to me that no one is the sole author of any written work. As the importance of that insight settled into my bones I began a serious effort of actively acknowledging the people who have influenced and supported me in my efforts to create this project. I sincerely hope that everyone who should be acknowledged here, feels acknowledged through my past and continuing actions. That being said there are a number of people I wish to further recognize. I am crying as I write this now because when I think of what you have done for me I feel so loved and cared for. This is really special. Thank you so much.

First and foremost, thank you Jay. You have taught me how to be a creative scholar and a better human.

Suzanne and Michelle, thank you for your enthusiasm in my quirky ideas and your commitment to teaching me how to actively and thoughtfully engage power and to think critically of my privilege.

Danielle, thank you for pushing my thinking in the most generous of ways. And thank you Lindsay and Danielle for all the support and excitement around my first forays into critical dance and creation research.

Thank you V-Bot for being my big sister. Thank you Louy for being magic and for also helping me to stay grounded. And my youngest sister, Roxy, thanks for your constant companionship and thoughtful silence while I worked out ideas on our morning walks.

Dad, thank you for reminding me that work is just work and never the most important thing.

Mom, thank you for being the shoulder I could cry on when life and school overwhelmed me and I needed a safe place to rest.

Dearest Wyatt, thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Your love gives me courage.

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the actual title of Jasmine Saler's Mistress of Arts project

A Fictional-Non-Fictional ~~Study~~ Story of Palimpsestuous Bodies

Or

Sweaty Concepts in Process: An Engagement with Barnabie Dove's Transcription of the Palimpsestuous Bodies Palimpsest (PBP)

By:

Jasmine Saler

Or

Paloma Kwel and Cecelia Fae

Subject: Introducing Our Meandering Document to Readers

On [REDACTED], Paloma Kwel <paloma.kwel.83@gmail.com>

wrote:

Hi Cecelia,

I just got back J.L.'s thoughts and comments on what we asked him to look over for us in the Holding Pond document and there was one aspect he asked us to address right away: he felt like the document as it stands now was really inaccessible and he suggested we come up with some kind of introduction to the project so that it can be more easily engaged with. Other than that he offered some great insights and a couple thought provoking questions, which I've gone ahead and included in the Holding Pong already- just some things to think about!

To be honest, I'm a little bit stumped about the introduction bit though. It seems kinda weird to create an introduction to your DRAFT document right?

Let me know what you think about it!

Best,

Paloma

On [REDACTED], Cecelia Fae <ceceliafae@gmail.com>

wrote:

Hi Paloma,

ARGH! This request for additional articulation of our ideas has left me a bit miffed. Our process was just to dump all our ideas into a holding place...like the holding ponds in Jeff Vandermeer's *Borne*. I like the idea of just dropping people into the middle of our thinking. I think there is value in disorientation.

Also- BOOM!- why not just tell any potential readers of our project: Access the Outline sidebar by clicking the View tab and then selecting "Show document outline"? That gives them a complete view of the document and a place from which they can easily jump around to the various sections of the Holding Pond.

Feeling ruffled,

Cece

On [REDACTED], Paloma Kwel

<paloma.kwel.83@gmail.com> wrote:

Cece,

=> There was more vinegar in your response than I expected! You have made your opinion clear but I want to push back a little and suggest that the navigation enabled by the Outline sidebar might be insufficient. We really do have a messy document and, you know, we are asking people to help up out by being first readers for some of our ideas...for me it's coming down to questions of accessibility and consent actually. I mean there are times where we have to spend ten minutes just looking for something we know we wrote!

I think it is reasonable to brainstorm possible introductions for our project. We don't have to settle on anything concrete just yet and we don't have to make it overdetermined either. It doesn't have to be some sort of treasure map that will take people from Point A to B to C.

Paloma

On [REDACTED], Cecelia Fae

<ceceliafae@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Paloma,

I bet you knew you could at least persuade me to brainstorm possible introductions with the accessibility argument. Well played! haha!

I was pretty ruffled in my last note, but looking back I wasn't so much annoyed at the suggestion that we should create some sort of introduction, I was just frustrated with bureaucracy. Ha! Who isn't? I've just been trying to submit some paperwork for an application I've been working on and of all things for the Graduate Studies office to get hung up on, it's my title. My title is apparently breaking the parameters of acceptability. It's causing the gears of bureaucracy to seize!! THE HORROR. Anyways, clearly I am not over the title fiasco...it was a damn cool title and now they've forced it to be boring.

Anyways! Where was I? => Right, so here's what I think we could do as a starting point for this introduction thingy: We could each come up with how we think the project should be introduced and share our ideas and then go from there?

On [REDACTED], Paloma Kwel
<paloma.kwel.83@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi,

Cool beans. => Once we've figured something out let's just send it to each other and then when it comes to it, we can decide what we will ultimately do.

Warmest wishes,

Paloma

On [REDACTED], Cecelia Fae
<ceceliafae@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Paloma,

So it's been a while but I finally figured out how I want to introduce our project: by fairy tale! =D

I've included the tale I've penned below. Let me know what you think =>

Cece

Lessons of Disorientation

Once upon a time in a land not so very far away, there was a young woman who decided, like many of the most privileged before her, to take on the challenge of growing a pathway. Not to be confused with clearing a path through brambles and thickets, growing a pathway involved planning, perspective and patience. She had chosen this task of growing a pathway for she enjoyed puzzles and wished to test herself to see if she could craft a pathway that was also a puzzle, a sort of puzzling pathway for her and others to enjoy.

So she packed a large rucksack and filled it with pillows and blankets, food and tea and went off with a chest swelling full of excitement at the new challenge that lay before her. As you already know, the first task in growing a pathway is to find a fertile field. And so our young woman, who fancied herself a sort of questing knight-who brandished a tea cup instead of a sword- set off in search of a field. She saw fields that were large, and some that were small. She saw fields that were edged with thick strong fencing and some that had no fence at all. Eventually she wandered into a field that appeared as though it intersected many different fields and she found she liked it best. It was there that she plopped down her rucksack. Using the pillows and blankets she had packed and some of the branches and sticks he had picked up she began making her pillow fort. Her pillow fort would be the place she came to seek comfort, and rest and to think big thoughts and, of course, to play while she worked to grow her pathway.

Once she had finished building her pillow fort she walked about the field she had chosen to look for guides who would be able to help her with her task. She happened

upon a frog and she asked if they just might happen to be interested in helping her grow a path. The frog croaked one, then twice, and informed the young woman in the most polite way that there was no way they would ever be interested in growing a path in such an intersectional field as the one she had chosen. The young woman shrugged and continued on. She stopped and spoke with many animals and several trees about their willingness help her, and in the end she had four beings, an owl, a dog, a little wise lady who lived down the hill, and a firefly, agree to help her with the task of growing a pathway.

The young woman having a pillow fort to call her own, and four guides to help her with her task was filled with much zeal. She began the business of growing her path. She made a myriad of meaning making decisions about the soil, what fungi to cultivate, how to encourage appropriate decomposition and growing, and, of course, which plants, and shrubs and trees to cultivate for certain types of smells and light quality. The owl, dog, little wise woman and firefly offered advice when they came to visit with the young woman. They offered advice about which trees would do best in which soils, how to propagate certain plants, and how much light, attention and care a particular plant needed in order to bloom.

Yes, the young woman made all sorts of decision about the pathway and she tried an abundance of techniques in her growing. At first she tried a very conventional approach to path growing, but she found that way of moving and thinking didn't always feel right in her heart. So then she tried an approach she thought rather opposite to the conventional one and she decided to run around the intersecting-field she had chosen in a willy-nilly sort of way sprinkling all sorts of seeds hither and thither. She ran rampant with a ragamuffin barefoot irreverence through her field encouraging paths to grow

sideways and upways, downwards and circlewards. Laughing with warmth and recklessness she watered everything and danced amongst the saplings and seedlings and watched as everything began to grow.

And goodness, did ever something grow.

Yet, one clear morning the young woman was relishing a cup of tea in her pillow fort when she had one clear thought. She realized that while she grew something rowdy, she hadn't actually cultivated any navigable pathway. Her pathway wasn't a puzzling pathway. It was just puzzling. This thought caused her much consternation. It led her to understand that her situation required great deliberation. So she took a very long nap. She woke up and ate some curds and whey and then she took another nap. And she took one nap more. Eventually she stopped napping and turned to brooding, drinking tea, and brooding. It was then that dog came to visit and forced her to take a walk through the field. Afterwards while they were sharing yet another cup of tea inside the pillow fort, when dog told the young woman not to uproot everything she had planted in an effort to start anew. When the young woman protested that she wanted to do exactly that, dog gently let a rumble tumble through his throat. Don't clear-cut just cultivate. Dog rose up, stretched, pawed and sniffed at the ground and left.

So the young woman began to cultivate, and cultivate, and she cultivated some more.

Eventually she felt she had managed to grow a pathway that was navigable, while still being a puzzling. And so she decided it was time to invite her guides to move through her pathway and help her determine if she had met her goal of growing a pathway. (The

very goal she had set that initiated this long-winded story in the first place.) All her guides arrived; they shared a cup of tea in the pillow fort and proceeded to engage with the pathway. The young woman stayed in the pillow fort to have an extra cup of tea to fortify her bravery. Then, she too began to walk her pathway. She really cherished how her pathway still made her confused, how she had offshoots from the main pathway turn into the main pathway later on, how certain pathways spiralled inwards but managed to leave you nowhere near the center. She had played with light. She had played with smells. She had done her best to make her pathway puzzling. After a little while she came upon dog, who was agitated, and distraught sniffing and sniffing at the pathway. All the scents are wrong on this path, he cried out upon seeing the young woman. Yes, I know, she replied, I played with the scents on some of parts of the path on purpose. She continued on.

She then came across the wise woman you lived down the hill who told her that she found the gnarly roots and the giant mushrooms distracting, that they made certain pathways very tricky to follow. And how, and the wise woman who lived down the hill, do I properly move through a spiralling path that's intersected by a diagonal path? The young woman smiled and suggested that maybe that diagonal path was supposed to be frustrating, and the too-large mushrooms distracting that perhaps that was the point. She continued on.

She came across the firefly, who upon seeing her exclaimed, some parts of the pathway give me such a clear sense of where they are going and then they never get there, and sometimes a path just ends so that I must double back to something I have already passed through. Have you passed through that path, asked the young woman of the

firefly, if you have new insights gained from experiencing the dead end? She continued on.

The sun was starting to set and she knew she would have to begin to make her way back to the pillow fort when she came upon the owl sitting quietly in a tree. Young woman, the owl said, there are pathways that I feel ought really to connect that don't. Perhaps you have to find a way to make the paths connect, said the young woman as she picked her way past the owl off the path and onto another one curling in the opposite direction.

The young woman continued on, and on, finally finding her way back to the pillow fort. She knew all her guides would be sitting in the pillow fort, sipping tea and hot cocoa and chatting about their various experiences on the puzzling pathway. She hoped it was a puzzling pathway. She was curious about what paths they found to connect and what they found pleasantly fuzzy and what was annoying and what was disorienting. The young woman paused before joining them. The heady but jumbled scents of the paths, the jarring pull of directions, the jolting patterns of light always left her feeling disoriented after walking the pathway she had grown. She smiled, expecting she had not learned all the lessons disorientation had to offer.

On [REDACTED],

Paloma Kwel

<paloma.kwel.83@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Cece,

Oh! Your fairy tale is charming. It was so nice to have a fairy tale to read in the midst of the tedium that is answering emails. You have definitely stressed the value of disorientation in your version of introduction ⇒ I think you will be proud of me, because I chose something a bit unusual too! I landed on the idea of Tasting Notes for each part of what our project engages with and a Pairing Chart. ⇒)

I've included them below.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts!

Paloma

Tasting Notes for Cecelia and Paloma's Project

Note: The tasting notes are provided in no particular order.

Holding Pond:

Contains: This document is a blend of two main varietals: the thoughts and writing of Paloma Kwel and the thoughts and writing of Cecelia Fae. Enhancing the full-bodied tone of this well recognized blend is the addition of marginalia, augmenting the bouquet with witty remarks and pith.

Notes of: Excitement, Authorial Conundrum, Disorientation, Theoretical Framework, New Manuscripts Studies, and Methodology

Mouthfeel: Different sections of the document will hit the various parts of the mouth in a rather random way. At times it is very clear that a single note is being played upon and at others there is a layering effect.

Texture: Rough.

Best Enjoyed with: An aggressively playful attitude.

Evidence:

Contains: A Cecelia Fae blend picked at two different points in the growing season. The first dance picked in the first half of the season is often described as “Pretzelling” and the second dance harvested closer to the end of the season has been called “Inheritance.”

Notes of: Awkwardness, Breathiness, and Rich Theory

Mouthfeel: A little on the sticky side, this blend has significant physicality. Some may find it difficult to swallow.

Texture: The two dances here provide evidence to aspects of both the Holding Pond and the Lower Text of the Palimpsestuous Bodies Palimpsest giving it a very pleasing texture similar to that of field berry preserves in a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Best Enjoyed with: A heart-lead engagement of the senses.

Palimpsestuous Bodies Palimpsest:

Contains: A veritable blend, indeed with many of the varieties unknown and those named constantly placed under renewed speculation. Taste profile often split into two layers referred to as the Upper Text and the Lower Text.

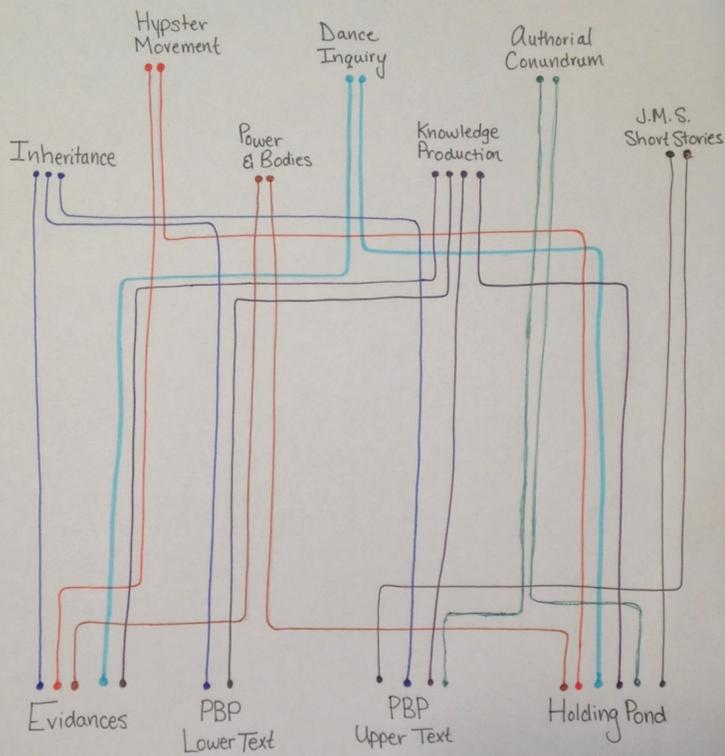
Notes of: Unreliable narration (??), Epistolary, Hipster, Autoethnography

Mouthfeel: Slippery and elusive, at times it feels like aspects are fading, at others like aspects gain unduly in prominence.

Texture: ...palimpsestic?

Best Enjoyed with: Self-reflexivity and a deep sense of Wonder for palimpsests

PAIRING CHART



Transcription of the Palimpsestuous Bodies Palimpsest

Transcription by: Barnabie Dove

FOREWORD

It may be considered by some improper to speak about how they have come upon the manuscript they are about to transcribe and for others it may be a matter of course. I myself fall into the former group, but to please the latter suffice it to say this burnt and mold-eaten book came into my custody like an ill-begotten talisman. Some will say I have devoted much too much time and effort into transcribing it. Yet, all I can truthfully convey is that once I began attempting to decode the scripts I could not bring myself to stop. Liken it to a Possession, but I was consumed and could not bear to leave unfinished the task of decoding this Ship of Theseus.

What you have before you is my utmost attempt at transcribing a palimpsest of uncertain origins. The note pinned into the mold-destroyed front cover simply stated in a cramped-hand "saved from Alexandria's Great Fire." The note was not signed. Why did this disgusting object happen to land on my front stoop? I cannot answer this question with any certainty, but I suspect it is my twinned and robust reputation as a highly skilled transcriber and amateur conservationist.

Transcriber's Notes:

I do hope you come to appreciate the contents of this palimpsest as much as I. There were, however, many instances where I was not completely able to read either the upper text or

the lower text of the palimpsest. At moments where I felt like I knew what the author wished to convey I filled in the gaps. The writing material, which I believe to be some sort of vellum or papyrus has been water soaked, mold-eaten and burnt in various places rendering either the Upper Text or the Lower Text, and at times both of the texts utterly impenetrable to meaning making endeavors.

I have made one or two Notes within the transcribed document itself, when I felt it was appropriate to do so. These notes are typed using red ribbon to distinguish them from the transcribed text.

Dimensions & Particulars-

width: 14.8cm

height: 21 cm

number of quires: 10

number of bi-folios per quire: 3

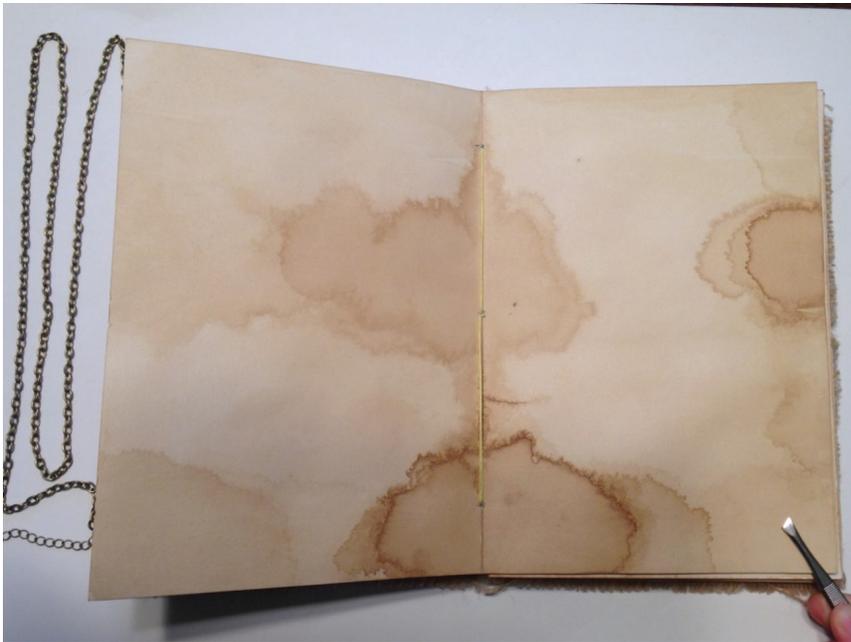
number of leaves per quire: 6, each with scripts recto and verso

I have also captured several photographs of the palimpsest for posterity. The photographs taken include:

1. The front cover
2. The inside of the back cover

3. An example of, what I surmise to be, water damage so severe all traces of Upper and Lower Texts have been erased
4. An example of the mold rot that has rendered a great portion of the scripts illegible
5. A copy of photo #4 technologically treated, so has to show the peculiarity of the mold rot's growth patterns and density





world of the living. And how nice it is
to see the younger woman in the world of
living her life as it is.

... and

I am packed beside my best friend sitting
on the gungy threadbare carpet. I rest
while she sits into her and she
and carries my weight. And the
folds around us and then
I try to say really want
to describe the feeling
that my best friend brings
here that your body is me. I try to
mean before. experience



UPPER TEXT

CORRESPONDANCE

Dearest Nugget,

I am choosing to write again, at the risk of seeming impatient, as I have not heard back from you in the expected time and thus, I fear my last letter to you has gotten itself lost. I had a distinct sense that the envelope wished to travel North and as I was sending it South...well suffice it to say it's probable misplacement was a possibility right from the start. Please kindly spare me any comments about epistolary uncertainty and the so-called 'conveniences' of electronic mail. I suspect it will be a charming day when I read your response and I could not bear to have the gilt of the moment tarnished by your sarcastic comments about my deepening Hipster sensibilities. I pre-emptively chide you, playfully so. Nevertheless, I write to you again as it would be loathsome for the liveliness of our current exchange to grow stale.

I was thoroughly pleased to be seated next to you at ~~this~~ ~~month's~~, well now it would be last month's Book Club meeting. I found your comments about the relationship between Jen and Eric erudite and astute-such characteristics as always you are. I thought the meeting much enriched by your suggestion that the differences between how each of us engaged in reading the novel was reflective of certain assumptions we carry about what a novel is, and should be, and very well could be.

During our brief chat after the meeting you had mentioned your interest in the paleo-graphic object of palimpsests. /'paləm(p),sest/ I admit, but only now that I am no longer ignorant, that at the time I did not know of what you spoke. Bernice—the woman who trades hand crafted toilet paper—remember you met her at the community picnic last summer?—Bernice, kindly offered me the use of a reference book on book binding and now I find myself completely enthralled by palimpsests as well. I have formed a wickedly delightful affinity to the concept of palimpsests. I am most pleased to report that I have even heard rumours percolating about town of the formation of a palimpsesting guild amongst the Hypsters—an attempt, no doubt, at further divorcing themselves away from the modern printing press. Shortly after learning about palimpsests I made it my quest to learn more. Over the course of my intellectual travels I stumbled across two exceedingly different books of the same title: Palimpsest. One is written by Catherynne M. Valente (we read the opening book of her Fairyland series for Book Club several years ago) and the other is a book in the area of literary criticism written by scholar Sarah Dillon. Have you read either of them? I won't say much about either, in case you haven't but now wish to read them, except this: Valente's novel sees characters "quartered" early on, quartering being a process of uniting four disparate people together, and the characters then spend their days intimately and forever connected one to the other. Dillon's

book forwards the neologism palimpsestuous, referring to the relationship(s) between the differing scripts of a palimpsest - Well now! I lost what I was going to say for seeing these two rather unjust and sparse summaries in front of me I find that they have sparked something rather new.--Now I ask you, would such a revelation as this have come through had I not needed to re-write the letter due to the tomfoolery of the last envelope's bamboozled sense of direction?? Indeed, I should think not. Using electronic mail I would never have come to such a tantalizing spark of an idea. 'Snail mail', as you so unaffectionately describe it, has triumphed once again!

Hmm, well it does seem rather rough edged not to attempt an initial sharing of my newest revelation...As you know my heart's passion is and shall forever remain horticulture, but intellectually you know my perpetual interest: bodies. I just had the thought: could it be productive to think about the body as palimpsestuous? Perhaps it could be a more-than-metaphor this idea of the body as palimpsest--Hush! I can write no more, the idea is but a seed that needeth further nourishment before it can sprout and bloom, words now will only crush it.

I had in mind to write you a charming letter while watching the rain drizzle through my blooming garden, but upon re-reading the contents above I realize that I have squandered whatever powers I had to be charming by instead gesticulating wildly about palimpsests and an idea I can't quite yet share. Well, I do hope that my words will cohere for you in such a way that they entreat

you to write back. I fear I have failed to say anything of worth as my thoughts are playing Hopscotch through my bodymind. If you do wish to reply, please send your letter to the bookstore on Willow, they are used to receiving my mail during this, my Great Interim.

Oh by and by, how have your herbs taken to their transplantation? As I look at my garden now I am finding that several of my rosemary root propagations did not take... Your fastidious friend in all things herbaceous, delicious and now palimpsestuous(?)

[Note: The initials given in the valediction of this letter are difficult to decipher. Perhaps it is G.M.S. or J.N.S. the first initial may also be a 'Q'.]

Warmest of wishes to my most dearest Nugget,

I was not expecting such a prompt reply, and as such I was overjoyed to walk into the bookstore two weeks ago to the exclamation, "Hail the snail!" Cute, and yet mocking. But is it not nice to place pen to paper every once in a while? I have not used a keyboard in so long the clacking of the keys sounds so harsh to my ears. And, too, I feel as though the flow of the ink lends clarity to the sentiment accompanying your words. It is more as though we are in conversation, which is lovely for I have dearly missed our regular tête-à-têtes over the taking of toast

and tea. Now we have been reduced to whispered conversations in between nibbles of pie and larger group conversation during our irregular Book Club meetings. It is the product of circumstance, but no less a pity.

I found your comment about inheritance to be astute. I have pondered it and find great resonance with your insight that inheritance is itself 'inherently palimpsestuous'. It is an idea that deserves much thought on my part and I thank you for your generosity in sharing it with me. Please keep me updated as your own thinking on the matter flows.

As for an elaboration on my ideas of the body as palimpsest, I am mainly thinking across two rhizomal nodes at the moment.

The first is in relation to the various markings that accrue on the body through the violences and pleasures of daily living. The body is palimpsestic because of the accumulation of scars and the like across the skin. I reckon this accumulation of scarring could extend to the heart and the mind, as well as one's social skin. This idea of extension leads me into thinking about the sociality of scars and thus to the palimpsestuous relation between bodies and scarring.

The second idea I have around the more-than-metaphor of the body as palimpsest requires a somewhat-metaphorical turn in thinking. Yet, at the same time I am hesitant to suggest that it is a metaphorical turn because the "scripts" I will speak to in a moment are "physical matterings" to borrow Elizabeth Povinelli's turn of phrase. Let me see, how should I explain? What if we

thought of gender, and race, and class, and settler colonialism, and respectability, for instance, (this list being incomplete) as scripts that could be written on a body? are written through the relationality of bodies?

Oh bother, my ideas are buckling under the strain of articulation.

Let me try again, what if we understood various manifestations of power relations as "scripts" on the "parchment" of the body? We could then ponder how these scripts are multiply enacted. But more intriguing to me is the consideration of the relationality of the scripts! The scripts are, of course, palimpsestuously interrupting one another. So the notion of the palimpsestuous body could be thought of in accordance with intersectionality theory. You follow? Moreover, we could think of the ways in which scripts that are supposedly disappeared—here I am thinking of women's inequality—continually reappear...especially through bodily experiences. But we could also think about how certain scripts have never been allowed to disappear, and how they are constantly (re)scripted across bodies. Furthermore, one's attention could be addressed to the un-disappearance of certain bodily scripts— that is the ways particular scripts are consistently fought for. As Povinelli writes—ah I can't find the paper right now, but it's something like: inheritance is moving increasingly deeper into the body. What if we began to understand palimpsestuousness as a qualifying characteristic of inheritance, and the palimpsestuous body as a

metaphor that could elaborate upon the interpenetration of mutually co-constituted power relations that manifest through and across bodies? (!!)

I realize that I never did thank you for sending along that photocopy of Povinelli's chapter. It was a delicious read. I have been unsuccessful in finding the Avner, et al. article that you suggested for me to read in your last letter. From what you described it seems likely that it would be fruitful to my thinking. If it is not so much of an inconvenience would you be able to send it along in your next letter?

Oh dear, that last paragraph is hardly legible. I got a little nibbly thinking about the palimpsestuous body and so I opted for a quick snack. I am eating goat's cheese with honey and herbs on toast and I fear I have smeared the honey all over the place. Oh my, it is rather disgusting, I do hope you can still read my writing. This homemade paper is much too much work to simply scrap it and write you a pristine letter.

Your sticky fingered friend,
Bookwyrn

[Note: The writing was at times excessively difficult to read. Be advised that certain passages required me to rely on not-insubstantial amounts of guesswork. It should also be noted that one should refrain as best as one can from writing letters with honeyed fingers.]

My darling friend Nugget,

It has taken me so long to write back to you for I took your advice and I attempted to write several stories showing my thoughts around the palimpsestuousness of the body. I am rather nervous to share them with you, even though you are one of my trusted first readers. Please let me know your thoughts. Along with the letter I've included 6 small stories. I've made an attempt at meticulousness and tried to number the pages, but alas I seem to have gotten a tad boggled in the process for I seem to have numbered three eights and two threes??? This, I dare say, is not the messiness that Avner, et al are speaking to. Moreover, I chose not to add titles to any of the stories- you know how I am with giving things titles before they are adequately enflashed. Regardless, the envelope is veritably bursting! Postage will be more than usual. I hope your mailbox is not too full...(Did that jab at electronic mail land? Or at the very least, did it make you cringe a bit? Hehehe)

Send my regards to the other bibliophagists. I do wish I was able to attend the upcoming Book Club meeting but perhaps I will be able to make the next one.

- - -

Okay, so I have been hesitant to send these to you! Now it will take a couple weeks longer for these stories to reach you and therefore a couple weeks longer to hear your thoughts! Anyways, some of the stories I like and others- they are falling

flat. *Sigh* What is certain is that the stories are wanting feedback, so all there is left to do is send them to you. ... I shall determinedly march this hefty envelope up the road to the post office immediately upon sealing the envelope. Oh bother, it is now raining. Alas! I cannot put this off any longer for fear of my idea snuffing itself out for lack of air. I'll put my pink wellies on and puddle hop on over just like when we were silly teenagers.

Your soon to be rain soaked and mud cloaked friend,
'wyrn

P.S. Feel free to mark up the copies of the stories I send you. I also made a copy for myself to keep as reference.

FISSURES

//////// [I will use such a marking to indicate the indecipherability of certain passages. The following several pages have been greatly scarred by flame rendering portions of the Upper and Lower Text illegible.]

My tongue and breath could not find the means of giving expression to the feeling, I couldn't pin a word to it. Dread described something heavier. Anxiety was too high pitched, and the frequency was off. Exhaustion only captured the rough outline and the hues that tend to color it were all wrong for how I was feeling. It was a feeling better felt indirectly, like when you can see the fainter stars in the sky with greater clarity by looking away from them. Perhaps I couldn't focus on the feeling directly because I was afraid if I did I would fissure so fast and so deep down the middle of my being that I would be left cracked open on the floor. But then again, maybe said fear only takes such refined shape with reflection.

Regardless, as it happened I was seven days out of leaving on a road trip with a dear friend, and I was not packed and unspeakably unwell.

////////

Three days out from the big road trip and I am in a chiropractor's office seeking treatment for my pain and answers to what is wrong with my back. The treatment room, though white and filled with shiny metal accents, fills me with a sense of

calm. I have rarely left a chiropractor's office without some form of an answer to the question, why am I feeling [insert form of pain here]? I stand facing him. I stand in profile. I move as though to sit on a chair but hover above it. I raise one arm, both arms, above my head. I move my head in different directions. I twist my trunk. And throughout it all there is the feeling of a momentous ache, but one with its bottom cut out, hovering around my sacrum. After exercises and flipping charts and examining together a diorama of a human spinal cord, I check out. Nothing is of concern neurologically. Nothing is "out" in my back; accept if you are under the impression that there should be a reason for the mysterious pain.

"Wait and see if the pain dissipates," the chiropractor says. "If it does not go away by the time you are back from your road trip come in and see me again."

///////

The road trip is delayed several hours on departure day because a spot has opened up with my Traditional Chinese Medicine doctor that morning. No small chat today, as soon as she comes in my TCM begins placing needles. She looks at me with an intensity I'm not used to and asks, "What's going on?" Words spill out of my mouth: "back pain", "road trip", and "worry" among them. She doesn't say anything, just continues placing needles. "Let it go," she whispers as she closes the door. I send out two shaky exhales into the enveloping silence. And then I begin braying. Giant globs of grief escape my jowls. The tears come after the

worst of the sound. Hot, heavy tears rollicking down the contours of my face. After a time, my TCM comes back in. "What's going on?" she asks again. This time a whole different story spills out from me.

////////

Having been encouraged by my TCM to head out as planned for the road trip, and being comforted that my best friend is a nurse, we decide to pack up the vehicle and begin the journey. I share with my best friend the TCM's assessment of my pain: that it is intense emotional pain stemming from the unprocessed feelings and consequences of a traumatic experience. I re-assure her, just as my TCM did me, that the road trip may prove to be the exact type of experience I need to allow the emotions to release.

////////

The first 1000 kilometers of our drive consists of desperate searches for road side toilets so frenzied they are comical even to me: the girl whose bowels are vacating with such force they leave her breathless. Each harried trip into the gas station finds me sending up silent prayers for the unfortunate person who next uses the toilet, as well as silent blessings to every gas station attendant who would eventually have to clean it. I laugh with my best friend about the very real loosening up of things inside me, but things are bad. My body's lack of coherence is fast approaching serious concern.

After passing the 1000 kilometer marker intermittent weeping begins to accompany the frenzied pit stops. I am now an extremely leaky body. My insides are gurgling, as though they have liquefied. My best friend can hear it, and it makes her chuckle before she drops her voice into a deeper register to ask, "Seriously though, are you sure you don't have the flu? You look ghostly. You are keeping food down but not processing it. I know we decided we would approach this as an emotional issue but it's looking ridiculously physical from my vantage point."

////////

I rush through the poorly lit hallway, the pounding of my feet dampened somewhat by the threadbare carpet. A sweat breaks out on my forehead as I will my body to hold on a few seconds longer—I only barely manage to feel the cold of the toilet seat before my bowels explode again. My throat contracts and it takes me a moment to realize the odd keening is coming from me. My stomach flops and expands. Wider. Wider. Moaning, I grab the small trash can beside the toilet and place it between my legs. I cough, trying to get the dipping and flipping of my stomach to lull. Assured that my bowels are empty for at least another fifteen minutes I wipe and wash and flush twice before perching myself on the toilet rim. And I dry-heave. Ho! And I dry-heave. Ho! My stomach clenches and then rattles loose and my teeth chatter as my forehead sweats and then something opens up sofastandsodeep down the middle of my being. And I cry.

A small woman is hugging a motel bathroom toilet in her underwear with this giant whorl of putrid gas and sharp debris expanding out of her back growing bigger and bigger as snot mingles with the tears on her upper lip and BOOM she turns into a supernova.

I peel myself off the floor. My entrails hang ludicrous before me swaying and splattering blood everywhere as I open the bathroom door. Showing her solidity, bravery, and the bright and fiery glow that is her strength, my best friend meets and holds my watery gaze, and drawing on the wellspring of her compassion she doesn't try to hug me. I wipe my nose and its teary-mucous the length of my arm and giggle when I see her smile and crinkle her nose at the gooey sheen.

"I need my journal and I need to cry," I say.

////////

A small woman is curled tightly in a tiny bathroom with white tiled floors and if you look closely you will see that this woman is actually two women, and the oldest, the one wizened and wise gathers the bones of the younger and sings and dances and cries them back to the world of the living. And then once breathing again the younger woman begins the work of turning her blood to ink.

////////

I am pooled beside my best friend sitting on the grungy threadbare carpet. I rest my whole self into her and she supports

and carries my weight. And the silence swells and folds around us and then, finally, I try using newly found words to describe the feeling.

////////

"You know," my best friend shrugs, "it goes against my formal learning but I believe that your body is manifesting emotions. I mean before experiencing this I don't know if I would have believed it but...now, yeah. Still the nurse in me—I have to ask—what does your poo look like? Even though its origin is emotional, I think your body is presenting with flu-like symptoms."

AS A SHOOTING STAR

I let my voice swell, matching the background singers' emotion. A glow of warmth sinks into my belly as I join my voice to those of the others gathered 'round the table. Flushed cheeks and twinkling eyes meet my own as we revel in the dissonant charm of our collective singing. With supper done, and a few drinks finished too, everyone is content to sing and bob our heads in time to the music. Mid-February with so little snow in the mountains has turned our Reading Week ski-break into an oasis of much needed laziness. The song finishes and I speak into the silence.

"Uncle Nick, Dad, Uncle Dan, Wyatt," I point to each of them as I call their attention, "I'm getting up to make some tea. Does anybody want anything while I'm up?"

"Tea already Jassy?"

The table chuckles.

"I gotta slow down! That glass of wine has done me in." I swing my arms semi-in time to the music, to make my point.

"I'll take a beer." Wyatt says.

His request is seconded and I make my way outside to grab the beers.

My breath puffs out in front of me. I sway my head from side to side, pretending to be a frost dragon. Quite pleased with my frosty fire I head to the case of beer. Looking up from my crouched position I see a few stars winking at me just beyond the overhang of the upper deck.

It definitely doesn't look like there will be snow tonight. Hoping against all probability that there will be thick clouds hanging over the ski hill I ignore the ache building in my fingers and move away from the cabin to get a better look. Picking my way through the patches of hard dirty snow I enjoy the crispness of the frosty dead grass underneath my worn out sneakers. The wind rustles my short hair around my face as I look up toward the sky.

Your stomach drops as if you are on a roller coaster.

Your breath--

stops.

As the stars...

Oh the stars.

Pendulums swinging from the sky.

You tumble up to meet them.

Awe

inspired.

Where's the moon?

The wind spins you looking...

New moon,

old stars.

Oh the stars.

Orbs jiving in the sky.

Your center cracks open.

You are glowing like a star.

Your heart-

beats.

Gasping inhale.

The pounding in my chest (or is it in my ears?) fades away.

Woah.

I stamp the cold out of my toes, cupping my hands together to blow heat into them. My throbbing fingers egg me to make my way back inside, so with clenched fists deep in my pockets I scamper towards the cabin. Before even opening the door I make out a jumbled harmony singing "Now I'm not the type to let vibrations tickle my imagination ea-si-ly!"

I fling the door open and kick off my shoes singing the next line, "You know that's just not me!" My Dad is already dancing so

I join him and we jive awkwardly, my fuzzy socks slipping across the floor. The disco-latin beat shimmies its way down my sternum setting my hips a-swaying.

"This is such a great song!" My Uncle Nick's eyes sparkle before he uses his finger to emphasize the next line which everyone screams, "And I am free at last, what a blast!"

The dancing of my heart erupts spilling laughter everywhere as a makeshift dance party emerges around the kitchen table.

"Rio-ohhhhhhh."

The song ends and another begins as everybody makes their way back to their seats.

"So you had to brew the beers?" my Uncle Dan asks.

I raise my eyebrow.

"You know, because you were out there, like, forever," my dad says.

"Yea, we thought you went into Beaver Mines or something." Wyatt plays along.

Eyes widening, my breath catches in my chest.

"What's making you smile like that?" Wyatt asks.

"I don't have your beers," I raise my voice above exaggerated moans of disappointment, "because I got caught up with the stars."

"Oh dear." My dad mumbles, but our eyes lock and I know I have him hooked. We love the stars.

"Come on Dad, come with me to look at them again!" I pair the sparkle in my eyes with a look of mock desperation and soon I have everyone spilling onto the lawn outside.

The wind rustles through the pines enveloping us with Stevie Nicks' voice floating from the open door, as we lose ourselves amongst the stars.

Is love so fragile
And the heart so hollow
Shatter with words
Impossible to follow
You're saying I'm fragile
I try not to be
I search only for something
I can't see

"We need to be out here tonight." Someone whispers.

As if on cue we turn as one and head back into the cabin orchestrating with vigor our commitment to be with the stars. Tuques and mitts are found. Glasses are filled. White plastic chairs are paraded down the slopping lawn to the area agreed upon. And finally, the stereo is perched on the patio's edge. The volume balanced so that the wind fails to carry the song away completely while also adding to the melody.

Our white chairs form the crescent moon that is absent from the sky. We settle into song once more, standing up to dance when the need arises. The pines rustle in the wind to our right as occasional cars streak by on the highway to our left. I find

myself sitting between my father and my best friend singing from
that part of me that remains too closely guarded. Our voices
bounce back to us off the Rocky Mountains, sending our laughter
to get lost in the forest. We are lost in a state of utmost
grateful presence.

Oh, oh, and they come unstuck.

I stretched my hands out to the sky.

And when my mind is free,

you know a melody can move me.

To be ec-static-

literally,

to be outside oneself.

She's away and westward bound-

far above the clouds she'll fly,

like the north wind whistling down the sky.

But listen carefully to the sound,

it's far beyond the stars.

And it's been a while.

I'm a long way from home,

I miss my loved ones so

Running like a child from these warm stars-

I burn, burn, burn,

like fabulous yellow roman candles,

exploding,
like spiders across the stars,
and in the middle you see the blue center light pop,
and everybody goes "Awww!"
I'm the third shooting star I see.
My heart is breaking, my body's aching,
'Cause I'm already standing on the ground.

All of our chairs are empty as our bodies, voices, hearts
orbit each other. Our eyes gaze as one into the night's sky.
Vulnerable together. My chest compresses in a small fluttering
pattern before I am finally able to surrender to the tears
brimming in my eyes.

[From what I can gather the stanza on page 17 are lyrics to a
song written by a Stevie Nicks titled "Leather and Lace" (1981).
But the other stanza's are unknown to me. Seeing as the first
stanza was a song perhaps the words in the other stanzas are
similarly borrowed? I am not too sure. It may be most apt to
consider it a found poem.]

HOW'S YOUR KNEE?

It is a moan closely followed by a series of thuds and
thumps that jars me awake from my nap on the couch. Compelled by
the twist in my stomach I'm on my feet and running to the
bathroom seconds later. The pounding of my father's feet hitting
the stairs causes my heart to beat faster as I burst through the

closed door of the bathroom. My eyes widen as the knot in my stomach wrenches a second time. Tighter. Tighter.

"Move out of the way!" There is a commanding tone to my father's voice as he brushes me sideways to reach his wife. To reach my mother.

Absently, I stumble sideways out of his way, my eyes locked on to the fine black stitches embedded in my mother's knee. Her twisted knee. Her twisted knee under her crumpled and bare body. My mouth is filled with cotton, my limbs are lead. My mouth is moving but I can't—I can't get—words to come out.

"She must have fainted when toweling off. Help me! We need to fix the direction of her knee." I recognize the stressed calm of emergency in my father's voice and I blink sharply ripping my eyes away from my mother's limp body.

My mind focuses as my body thaws. Scrambling to assess the situation, I take in the precarious relationship of balance and weight between my mother's and father's bodies. At once I am keenly aware of the sweet smell of shampoo, the wet fallen towel beside the toilet, the loud humming of the bathroom fan and the thrumming in my chest.

"Shit!"

I look up in time to see my mother's head slip from my father's cradling arms before it thuds sickeningly on the linoleum floor. A raspy breath escapes my chest. I flail myself forward, silently working with my father to reposition my

mother's body. Her head is resting just below my folded knees as I sit on my heels and whisper, "She hit her head hard dad."

"I know. I know. Fuck! Her head slipped as I was trying to fix her knee. I'm worried she'll have to go under again to get it re-scoped." The shakiness of his voice mirrors my own and for a brief second our eyes lock recognizing that another surgery is the least of our worries.

My mother groans several times and I hinge forward so my head is directly above hers as her eyes struggle to open.

"Mom. Mom, it's me! It's J—." My voice climbs in pitch and pace. I take a tiny jagged breath. "Mom, you fainted. You're ok—"

Her body begins to squirm and her arms thrash. She is groaning and looking into my eyes but she isn't recognizing me. The muscles running along my spine tense up. Eyes widening, I snap my head in my father's direction.

"Honey, it's me. It's Herrik. Your husband." My father quickly grabs the wet towel beside the toilet and covers my mother's bare body. "I don't know if she recognizes me. She might not feel safe uncovered with me beside her." The calmness in my father's voice is slipping.

With a shaky hand, I gently stroke wet strands of hair away from her forehead as I hope for a flicker of awareness in her eyes.

"She's gone again dad." I tersely whisper as I watch my mother's eyes roll into the back of her head.

"It's okay. It's normal to faint more than once. You do it all the time." I glance up to see my father smile, but it doesn't carry to his eyes. I have no gumption to even attempt to return the kindness. My insides are roiling.

"Just watch to see that she's still breathing. I just want to take a closer look at her knee," he says.

Rhythmically clenching my jaw, I gaze at my mother's chest rising and falling. Tears spill from my eyes and I roughly wipe my cheeks against my shoulders. I scan my mother's face and it looks a little red, but the tiny bubbles of saliva forming around the corners of her lips signal to me that she is still breathing. I bend down and gently kiss her forehead. Reaching forward I grasp her right hand and hold it in mine. The warmth and weight of it is a welcome sensation.

Gazing at her hand, I begin to gently trace the blue veins that meander their way across the soft skin. I have always loved and partially envied my mother's hands. They are always so smooth and soft even if they are cracked from the cold winter months. Her fingers are so long and slender—nothing like my own short, stumpy ones—and her knuckles are very large. I remember asking her about their size when I was little. It's because I used to crack them all the time when I was younger, she said. I tried to have big knuckles too, but it always hurt too much. But we do have the same wonderful color of veins, a light turquoise blue. When I work late at my computer, typing syllables into sentences

into stories, sometimes I'll stop and admire the prominence of the veins on the backs of my hands. My hands. My (mother's) hands. I'll trace my own veins and remember slowly tracing my mother's with tiny fingers when she'd hold me in her arms as a child. I would occupy myself by tracing and pressing down on her beautiful veins and once I became bored with tracing the veins, I would examine the half-moons forever present on my mother's fingernails. I have half-moons in six of my ten fingernails. They're the best ones.

A small cough worms its way through my mother's chest and her chin tucks in as her tongue softly protrudes from her mouth. The realness of her tongue grabs me and I fail multiple times to pull my attention away from it. It seems overly big. It's swollen. It's making her face turn redder. Her face is puffing up because of her tongue. Redder, redder, bluer, bluer, her face like a leaf in autumn changing color. Distortion.

"She's stopped breathing! She's not breathing!" I yell.

My body is electric, charged with a million uncoordinated shudders. I am screaming about breath unable to control my own.

"J-. Take a moment. When did she stop breathing?" My father's eyes widen and I read the strain across his cheeks.

"Only now. Since she coughed."

A

second

passes

and

then

another.

A silence, that is not silent, chases our thoughts around the steamy bathroom. We are struck dumb by the realness of my mother's swollen tongue.

"We have to call an ambulance!" I have no control over the shrillness of my voice. I stand and turn too quickly, my knees buckle and I stumble into the door frame.

Her veins. Her veins. Veins. Circulation. Circulation. C. ABC's. Breathing. Airway. Circulation.

"Dad! Clear her airway! Tilt her head back. Clear her airway!" Screaming, I race towards the nearest phone. I continue my distraught shouting until I reach the cordless phone. I fumble it several times as I attempt to grasp it.

Four minutes. Four minutes.

A brain deprived of oxygen for four minutes...

I pick the telephone up off the floor and will my hands to hold onto it long enough for me to make the needed call.

...Damn!

What's thenumber?

... Nine?

What's thenumber?!

9-1-1!

My fingers skitter their way across the phone pad. 7-2-3.

Try again!

9-1-2.

I force a shaky breath.

Try to stop the shaking of your hands long enough to dial three numbers!!

My breath rattles in and out a second time before I try again. 4-0-3-9-1-1.

Where's the ring?

Where's the operator?

You typed in an area code!

Four minutes...

Do I need an area code???

Fuck!

Four minutes...

YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO CALL AN AMBULANCE!???

"She's breathing!" my dad hollers to me from the bathroom, "Don't call the ambulance. Come here quick."

She's breathing.

I gasp and realize I've been holding my breath.

Jittery legs carry me back to the bathroom where I can hear my father speaking to my mother. I kneel beside my mother's head and reach for her hand as I look into her eyes.

"My head hurts." Her words, though spoken softly, are coherent. She is aware of her surroundings once more.

"I know. It's because you fainted." I simplify and look up to see my father nodding in my direction. I hope she doesn't notice the trembling of my lips but only the smile they carry. I swing my legs out from underneath me and lay with her on the

bathroom floor. I notice where our bodies touch lying side by side. Connection.

Although my stomach is no longer wrenched tightly in a little ball, I can feel the tension in my shoulders contributing to a dull ache around my temples. My breathing is shallow matching my mother's. Inhale..exhale..inhale..exhale. My heart hammers away as I silently revel in the rise and fall of my mother's chest.

"How's your knee?" I ask. "We were worried you may have injured it when you fainted."

PULLING KNAPWEED

I.

I am highly conscious of me as knapweed,
while I walk to the coulees.

Together we are invasive species.

I am highly conscious of the violence of my intent,
as I scour the coulees.

Seeking out the star-burst bluets.

Of course one does not have to venture into the wilds of nature
to encounter invasive star-thistles.

Of course I spent several long moments admiring a patch earlier
this spring in my neighborhood.

Did you know the harmfulness of your presence?

II.

The knapweed is evasive.

Or is it that I'd rather notice the motion of the clouds and the rippling of the grass and the sunlight catching on the magpie's wings?

But of course the spotted knapweed is found
as it's bound to be.

Crunching shale I let my feet carry me
off the path to the patch
of knapweed growing on the side of the coulee.

Hair whipping round I ponder for a second about not picking the weed,

about saying that I did
acting like I did

but not actually pulling it from the soil.

Power lines criss-crossing above me aggressive in their hum.

I am prompted to smell the blooms
only after I have clenched the stem and pulled with steady even pressure

watching the soil bundle as the grip of the roots fumble—
the sound of the roots leaving the earth is felt more than heard.
III.

I killed the weeds next to the Lethbridge Viaduct.

I pulled the weeds in Southern Alberta.

I took the weeds from a hill side in Canada.

"In parts of North America, diffuse knapweed (*C. diffusa*),
spotted knapweed (*C. maculosa*) and yellow starthistle (*C.*

solstitialis) cause severe problems in agriculture due to their uncontrolled spread.”

Whose land were you on?

Whose story are you willing to depend upon?

Some classify the land as municipal.

Some catalogue the land as provincial.

Some categorize the land as Crown.

Some recognize the land as Treaty 7 (belonging to the Bearspaw, Chiniki and Wesley Nakoda Nations, the Kainai Nation, Piikani Nation, the Siksika Nation and the Tsuu T’ina Nation).

Not many invasive species understand the land as the territory of the Niitsitapi.

IV.

...“Grandma, did my dad really grow up in the Old Country?”

“What stories has he been telling you?! Hell no. Your Dad was born two blocks down the street at St. Michael’s Hospital.”...

... “This bruschetta’s good, but no like in Italy. No. In Italy, the soil’s better for tomatoes.” ...

... “Your great-grandfather never wanted to die on this ‘alien land’ is what he called it. So one day he made a trip with my mum back to Germany. He left healthy you see but your great-grandma packed her mourning clothes—all black eh?—and sure ‘nough she came home wearing ‘em.”...

I suppose I have always felt my rooting to be a tad suspect, as growing up 2nd generation Croatian/Dutch/Italian Canadian leaves

no solid sense of being of this land
as growing up 2nd generation Canadian leaves
no solid sense of being of any land—certainly no one lives
in the mythological Old Country
that persists in my grandparents' memories—
that lives in the hope they place in my body.
Always silently asked to never forget my roots also means to
never forget my inheritance..
Because when I travel away from this land, I am settle(d)/(r)
enough as of this land to miss
what I obscenely think of as
MY skies, wind, coulees... Where just yesterday an invasive species
picked and killed another invasive species.

V.

The spotted knapweed's taproot system has allowed it to become
known as a "robust weedy" plant.

Able to live and thrive in arid conditions.

The spotted knapweed and I have utilized the taproot system of
growth to both of our advantages.

The spotted knapweed's taproot system produces conditions
conducive to its own development at the expense of other plants:
"knapweeds are harmful mainly because they are strongly
allelopathic, producing powerful toxins in their roots that stunt
the growth of plants around them."

The spotted knapweed's tap root system is like the whole power structure of settler colonialism, you see, and my family is like one of the roots that shoots off from the center.

J.M.S. Note: In the above reflection I've taken the quotes about knapweeds from the digital reference source Wikipedia, not being able to find an encyclopedia with adequate information on knapweeds, and specifically star-thistles. -

THE NEEDLE

"So what's going on here?" the allopathic medicine joint specialist asks as he walks into the consultation room looking towards my mother and father sitting opposite me.

Perched on the edge of the bed, I shift my weight awkwardly and the thin paper sheet crinkles beneath me. Why isn't he asking me? I am fifteen I can answer questions about my body for myself!

My father responds to the doctor glancing up at me on the bed. My stomach feels like his fists, tense and knotted.

Is he as uncomfortable as I feel having him answer questions about MY BODY? This is too much, he is getting it wrong!

"Actually, sorry to interrupt, actually I don't think it's sprained." I work to keep the frustration out of my voice and choke down the lump rising in my throat. "I've done physiotherapy for six months and the student-trainer on the basketball team has been working with me on ligament strengthening exercises and it's not working. They have not helped. It still hurts to walk longer than fifteen minutes."

The specialist turns away from me to continue addressing my father. With the specialist's back to me I find my mother's gaze. Bending towards her I hope she reads the silent plea of my pursed lips. Please, please let me talk to him. I really just want someone to listen to me because it's been over a year and half now since the injury happened and...and I just want someone to listen to my story¹.

My mother gently squeezes my father's leg and he glances up towards me.

"Actually, sir, I think my daughter could explain this better."

Once again, the specialist turns to me. He glances at his watch and begins writing things in his notepad in silence for a few seconds.

The question, when it comes, is spoken as though a sigh. "So young lady, where does it hurt?"

I meet his gaze.

"Well that's the thing. It doesn't hurt when I'm just sitting here. It hurts in movement and especially when I do this."

I hop down from the bed and stand with my left foot in front of my right. I manipulate the weight distribution in my legs so

¹Frank discusses serious illness, yet I argue that his comments equally apply to individuals dealing with serious injuries. Adapting from Frank, "[s]erious [injury] is a loss of the 'destination and map' that had previously guided the [injured] person's life: [injured] people have to learn 'to think differently.' They learn by hearing themselves tell their stories, absorbing others' reactions, and experiencing their stories being shared" (1).

that my right leg stabilizes most of my weight and I bend my right knee.

"See," I explain, "when I do this motion there is an ache on the inside of my ankle, dull at first and then it gets sharper, and then loads of pain across the front of my ankle." I trace the arch where my ankle meets the top of my foot.

"I think you just have a sprained ankle and it hasn't had time to heal properly." He doesn't meet my eye and his deadpan voice works to leave little room for further discussion. He checks his watch again.

"No! It is not a sprain. The pain is completely different." I re-describe the pain trying to convey in clunky language what my injured body speaks so "eloquently in pains and symptoms."² In trying "to figure out *what* count[s] as the story that the doctor want[s] to hear"³ I purposefully omit that I know the pain of a severely sprained ankle..

***My body hums in tune with my teammates on the field. Poised on the balls of my feet I accelerate into the open space hollering my availability for a pass. When the pass comes I already know I'll cushion it in with the inside of my right foot and set up a simple chip with my left to lead the left-winger forward into the space between the defenders. Normally I would watch the arch of the ball, judge if it was what I had wanted and adjust my position accordingly. Not this time. The searing pain begins in my

²Our bodies are not mute. See Frank (2).

³Original emphasis, Frank 3.

ankle and quickly engulfs my awareness. Involuntary shrieks pass through my lips as my body convulses into the fetal position. A wave of nausea rushes through me. Panting my face smushed into the grass my ankle feels as though it's exploded, my body trying to recover from the aftershock. No, I cannot stand on my foot. Radiating pain shoots through my right leg when I even try to wiggle my toes. Gritting my teeth, I am keenly aware of the bouncing gait of the body carrying my own off the soccer field. It will take about three months, diligently using rubber bands and a wobble board, to recover physically from my third degree ankle sprain.***

..What is more, I know this pain is different..

***The dry early morning heat hasn't evaporated the dew on the field yet as I plop my soccer bag off my shoulder. Kneeling in the grass with my best friends and teammates I begin the ritual of getting ready. Once everything has been tucked, folded, pro-wrapped, and fussed into place I begin the slow dance of warming up. I work out the kinks from yesterday's game as I start my touches on the ball. Too bad for my sore legs. Too bad for the cleat marked bruise on my calf. Too bad for my slight headache. Too bad for my nervous and queasy stomach. You can hurt and be sore after the game. Right now it's mind over matter. Play through.

How many times have I coaxed my body to engage with me in the sport that I—do I love it? Too many.

And I coax it once more as I push my legs to carry me faster towards the ball that Lexi just sent from inside. It's a little dicey. I don't think I can get there with enough time to position my body defensively against the defender so I do some quick calculations. Judging from the angle of the defender's hips and the lean of her body it looks like she is going to try to pass the ball to my left. I change the angle of my stride, and all in a split second, decide to slide tackle the defender to free the ball, planning to punch the ball past the defender to Mary on the wing. But I read the defender wrong. Half way through the tackle I see her body shift a second time, with left leg tucked up beneath me and right foot extended I brace myself for the unplanned impact. With cancelling force my flexed right foot meets the ball in a head on collision as the ball is being urged in the opposite direction by the defender. Impact over, the ball remains where it started and I scramble to my feet. Managing to position myself between the ball and the defender I swivel my hips and push the ball forward, looking up I see Andrea in the 18-yard box. So I strike the ball, my weight leaning back on my left leg and I make contact with the lower half of the ball with my right foot. Thunck. Nothing like the sound of a soccer ball struck properly. The

pleasure sours as I become aware of the awkward feeling in my right ankle.

Shake it off. Run through it. Let adrenaline do its thing.

I try to convince myself this is routine pain. I know it's not. I pause exhaling slowly. "I can play," I say to myself.

But I cannot shake that odd feeling. As awkward as it sounds it feels like I've jammed my ankle. The pain is similar to what it feels like when I've jammed my wrist playing basketball. It persists as I finish off the second half of the game. Although my coach and teammates recognize something is amiss my willingness to put the (basically meaningless) success of the team ahead of my physical well-being is not challenged.

..Re-emphasising the pain in my ankle I skip crucial parts of my injury tale..

(A letter to myself)

October 17, 2015 4:06pm

My Dear,

I am shocked to realize that the story of your injury is still, as Arthur Frank (1997) would characterize it, a present tense story despite it being nearly nine years since the original slide tackle occurred. It troubles me deeply to watch you as you fall to pieces in your living room sobbing without control as you struggle to write this story. Snot mingling with tears you pull

at your hair overcome with anguish...over what? Did you ever stop to think: Here is my ableism at work?

Lovingly yours,

Bodymind

Reply: October 17, 2015 4:46pm

Hello you,

Yes, I have to admit the lump in my throat has caught me by surprise, and I succumb, my shoulders heaving slightly as I sob, lamenting my 'failure.' All these years that I have spent monitoring, cajoling, admonishing my body. I am begging it to perform in the ways it once did, the way I 'know' it can. I've been trying to cultivate a new relationship with my body. Really I have been! And the principles of Taiji and the practice of Taijiquan have taken me in the right direction but...but here I am, standing perfectly still, several feet out of bounds, acknowledging that I'm going to accelerate, that I'm going to play my usual (injurious) slashing style. I'm saying - highlighting- that I can't (won't?) embody a different version of athleticism than the one that has wreaked havoc on my body. And that's partly because I don't know how and partly because I don't want to learn. I feel like a horse that hasn't been let out to run in too long, chomping at my bit. I am frustrated, impatient, forcing myself to play a version of this game I love that simply does not fit. Even though my illusions of able-bodieness have been shattered...it's hard to let go of the shards even if they

continue to cut deep. And I know the point is to 'own' my complicity in (re)producing the very systems of alterity I aim to critique, but it just seems a lot messier than that.

Anyways, the point about ablesim has been noted.

Ruffled and humbled,

Bodymind

...conscious that he has looked at his watch for the third time in less than three minutes.⁴

"It feels exactly like I jammed my ankle." I finish the abridged version of my injury story moving my weight forward on my right leg and adding, "I have lost a lot of range of motion in this ankle. It feels like my joint is grinding."

It's unlikely he has heard this last description because when I look up the specialist has moved away from me and is facing my parents.

"So there are a few options for treating an injury like this, which likely has something to do with the tendons or ligaments. One of which we can do today, which is a cortisone shot."⁵

⁴The italicized text on pages 34 and 35 originally appears in various passages of Laurendeau's text. Incorporating his thoughts/feelings/ideas seamlessly into my stories emphasizes how relatable embodied experiences can be.

⁵Cortisone shots are administered in the treatment of a variety of conditions and diseases with the general aim of relieving pain and inflammation.

At the mention of a possible injection a cold shiver runs down my spine. Yet, my fear of needles is squelched by the frustration that I am not conveying my body's problem accurately.⁶

Hands folded in my lap, I never take my eyes off the pale half-moons in my thumb nails as I venture, "I don't want a cortisone shot. Not today, at least. I don't know enough about them and I don't think it will help. Like, like I said, my ankle feels jammed." Like stuck. The joint isn't working properly anymore. It's structural. It's architectural. I can feel it when I move. It moves wrong. It moves funny. ASK ME QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW IT MOVES!

"Well, if you think it would help." My father speaks over my timid protest.⁷ I cannot see his body. It is blocked by the specialist's as he stands facing my parents.

"I do." At this, the specialist turns towards me to briefly glance down at my foot.

⁶Frank writes, "We must speak for the body, and such speech is quickly frustrated: speech presents itself as being about the body rather than of it. The body is often alienated, literally 'made strange,' as it is told in stories that are instigated by a need to make it familiar" (2).

⁷In this particular instance my parent's trust in the specialist's opinion reaches beyond the normal acknowledgement of a doctor's authority in allopathic medicine practices. The growing cynicism that Frank describes amongst relationships between lay persons and professionals was definitely reduced in this situation as the specialist in question actually treated me in my newborn body when I was born without my right hip socket fully formed. With his expertise, and that of other professionals, my hip healed and the socket formed properly. As a result much trust was placed in this specialist's opinion. In fact the very reason I am able to visit this specialist at all without a significant wait period is because I was a prior patient.

My eyebrows pinch together. I swallow hard trying to bury the sense of growing despair sprouting in my stomach. "I don't want a cortisone shot— please. Are there any other options?"

"How about I leave you all to discuss this?" He asks, nodding toward my parents before checking his watch a fourth time and walking out of the room.

"I don't want a cortisone shot." My voice will barely squeeze through the anger/fear in my throat. And I launch into my story once again.⁸ I re-word the work I've done to correct the injury if it was a sprain and how I have determined through the negligible benefits of that recovery work that my injury cannot be a sprain. I attempt to re-explain what my joint feels like moving. Although my storying is met with silence, by the time the specialist re-joins us I feel as though I have convinced my parents that a cortisone shot is not what is needed.

The specialist enters and walks quickly towards a small table in the corner of the room. He stands there for a while with his back to me. I can't see his hands.

What's he doing? Should you tell him your decision?

I notice my exhales starting to shake on their way out. Protectively my shoulders creep towards my ears. I scan my parents' faces trying to figure out what the proper decorum is in this sort of situation.

⁸ "Her story was not just about [injury]. The story was told through a wounded body" (Frank 2).

Am I allowed to break this silence?⁹ Can I assert myself and tell him my decision or do my parents have to?

Still gazing at my parents I notice my father looking towards the specialist. I look too. He is turned towards me with a needle in his hands.

Wait! WAIT. My breath catches in my chest.

"I don't want a cortisone shot." I whisper. I clear my throat once and then again, trying to project my voice louder. "I'm not getting a cortisone shot. I don't know what it does."

He doesn't meet my eyes as he stands before me with the needle poised in his hand explaining to me what cortisone will do to help my injury.

"But this isn't a soft tissue i-issue." The shakiness of my voice juxtaposes the specialist's monotone certainty. "It's about the wor-working of my joint."

His broad shoulders cover my parents. His white coat eating up my field of vision. A buzzing fills my ears.

What?! Oh my god. What is happening? You can't be getting it. There's no way. You did say you didn't want it, right?

Sitting on the edge of that bed my feet dangling, I watch as he raises my foot and cradles it in his warm palm. I cannot tear my eyes away from the glinting needle.

⁹While Frank suggests that the "medical redefinition of conversation between physician and patient as a clinical task...works to suspend normal conventions of politeness and thus to legitimate interruptions" (58), he notes that only physician interruptions are considered legitimate.

This is a joke. He is just showing you where he would inject it. He can't. You did say you didn't want it, right? Please, god, please. He can't, right?

My stomach wrenches and I grip the edge of the bed as a firework of pain explodes in my ankle joint.¹⁰

HOWAREYOULETTINGHIMDOTHIS TOYOU?!

My breath becomes sporadic and then the tingling starts. All over. My stomach flips before I am overcome with a feeling of weakness.

Tell them you feel faint. He should know you need to lay down for needles. You faint. You should tell them you feel--

The fear subsides only when asleep
Subconscious tries to hide but soon carries heap
Tormented by your fears, no escape
Night and day you push them away
But soon you can push no longer
Your fears keep coming back stronger
They overwhelm you inside
Soon you cannot bear to hide-
There are injuries you must face.

My vision slowly comes in to focus bringing into view the concerned face swimming above me. Mom.

"Oh, oh. You fainted. You're okay."

¹⁰ "But few ill people will pursue their regimens simply to demonstrate compliance to themselves or to their healers, without any desire for themselves" (Frank 41).

I squint against the fluorescent lights. "Why do you have tears in your eyes?"

"Your body went into spasms when you fainted."

"It's normal to convulse a little when you go unconscious."

My dad chimes into the conversation. It takes me a moment to realize he is holding my hand.

My head is filled with cotton. There is something uncoordinated about the queasiness of my belly and the unusual throbbing in my ankle. The stark white walls seem to mock the awkwardness of my splayed body on this paper covered bed. Then the weight of my body comes back and I remember. I remember the violence of it all. Of it all- playing on an injury for over a year and a half, my self-resentment, (lack of) injury recovery, my outbursts at my loved ones, allopathic medicine, ableism, and the cortisone shot.

I drop my father's hand and sit up much too quickly. I force my hands beside me to stabilize my spinning head as I turn to face the specialist. My parents clear away and he steps forward. A look of well-meaning benevolence in his eyes, he cradles my foot in his palm. His skin is warm where it touches mine.

Clenching my fists, my nails dig into my palms. I sit up erect in front of him and resist the urge to physically strike. My words lash out instead.

"I did NOT want a cortisone shot!" I spit my remark into his widening eyes. "I TOLD you that I did not want one." My chest heaves long hot heavy breaths.

Slowly he turns to briefly look at my parents before addressing me in a soft tone.

"The cortisone will help if the injury is a sprain—"

"Except it's not!" I cut him off. "I told you it feels JAMMED." I pound my fist into my palm. Suddenly feeling nauseous I loathe that I have to relate my bodily needs to this man. "I feel like I am going to puke." I mumble.

While I sit on the bed, head hanging over a small white plastic garbage can with a black plastic bag inserted inside, I listen as my parents tersely conclude the appointment.

Silence accompanies us as we walk out of the doctor's office.

In the car ride home I sit slumped in the back seat feeling hollowed out. Confused. Angry. Mournful. This did not go how I wanted it to.

They use my middle name to address me, and it catches me off guard. "We, as your parents, have never been more upset and disappointed in your behavior. How you acted in there—there's no excuse. You do not talk to a professional in that tone. Do you understand? He was only doing his job to HELP US. You treated him with disrespect."

There's nothing left in me to defend my actions. I no longer know if they are defensible.¹¹ Quiet tears stream down my cheeks, as I whisper, "I'm sorry. I just didn't want..."

¹¹As Frank suggests, "Most of us, sooner or later, go to the doctor to find out how we feel, our distrust of subjective feelings being a form of dissociation" (34).

But I can't begin to form the end of the sentence. The unspoken words fall heavy between our three bodies.

Correspondence

CORRESPONDANCE

Dear Nugget,

Thank you for your patience. I have been sitting with your letter a long while. The silence has been evolving in nature but suffice it to say it has at times been indignant, swept up in denial, thoroughly shocked, moving into acceptance, and most recently a (re)commitment to listening. Suffice it to say, I needed to take a break from writing my noisy thoughts.

You were right to fear that I had lost track of power-such a privileged capacity-so focused was I on the craft of the stories, so keen on the delicious non-linear metaphor that I was crafting. It took a few weeks to accept that I 'failed to adequately take account of power in any meaningful way'. By not purposefully, and consistently centering power I have instead centered, through reflex, my whiteness and privilege, my class, ability and education.

This ~~slip-up~~ is a common occurrence, enough to warrant serious reflection. I feel your consistent prodding to pay more, and greater attention to power with more urgency than I have in the past these days. May I be so bold as to dare to say that something has *clicked* that has never before- or at least not quite in this way.

I need more time to think about your comments, and to think through the current sense of discomfort I feel- not to clear the discomfort but to be with it for a while. I will send along copies of my revisions, or new stories, when they are ready to send.

Your ruffled and humbled Bookwyrn,

[Again the initials are excessively difficult to decipher.]

LOWER TEXT

UNKNOWN TEXT Z

There is a wormhole. It starts sometimes with a wormhole. A connection developed through space and time and dying stars and the weaving of tapestries. What's left of that wormhole rests in the middle of an undulating expanse. Whatever came through it before does not appear to be coming anymore for upon my last visit I only found fluffy fibrous mixed with dried crusty kinda grey-white matter. It smells, or at least it gives off the suggestion of a smell. I hardly visit because the matter is at once too repulsive to consider and grossly intriguing. The wormhole remains there, possibly unchanging, but when I was in a different time and place I was convinced that the wormhole contained secrets, beautiful secrets. Alas, in the words of Illinois Natural History Survey paleontologist Sam Heads, "When you think about it, the chances of this thing being here...have to be minuscule."

At the near-farthest point away from the wormhole, there can be found a matrix wherein lie six cresting white hot moons. Protected by a clear hard-plastic-like covering the moons come to a quivering rest on six extendors of a usual ten extendors. It must be acknowledged that variability here is rampant: extendors do not always have questing moons, for the moons follow their own patterns. At the same time, extendors, while usually found in pods of five can also be found in pods greater than five, and

well less than five too. Exhibiting an array of movement both specialized and banal the extendors have an enchanting quality to them that is elusive of words but is none-the-less much-than-more captured by the notion of enchantment. The hard-plastic-like semi-coverings on each extender lend themselves particularly well to the communication patterns of the extendors through audible clicks and ticks and what some have, probably mistakenly, characterized as a drum-like noise. Disconcertingly, each extendor can move independently even while it is fully aware of the location, movements and feelings of the others. Attempts have been made to fully reconcile myself to the enchanting almost-synchronous movement of the extendors. Unfortunately, the extendors continually elude numerification. To quote Stephen Hsu, a professor of theoretical physics at the University of Oregon, "The whole thing is very hypothetical at this point."

On often occurring occasions, the extendors separate into two pods of five, each pod suspending three moons apiece. Equidistant from the separated pods and resting on the horizon of the undulating plain there can be two hypno-globes. Marshmallow-like they wobble with serpentine sinuousness. Iridescent fairy lines burst forth from a circle of blushing roseate that crowns the hypno-globes. It has been rumored that through the alignment of several cycles, including the celestial, a substance much like-but not exactly like-the Elixir of Life may leak from the center of the blushing roseate. I often find the hypno-globes appear to coruscate on the horizon, a subtle glow fills the air,

and during these moments it is as though the scintillation becomes melodic. Pliny the Elder, a 1st-century CE Roman naturalist, natural philosopher and author of the 37-volume encyclopedia *Naturalis Historia*, wrote: "The phenomenon commonly called 'Nocturnal Sun,' ...has been seen during the consulate of C. Caecilius and Cn. Papirius (113 BC), and many other times, giving an appearance of day during night."

On the other side of the hypno-globes, opposite to the wormhole, there is a ridged bridge that sways and bobs. It emits vibrations altogether somewhat different to the vibrations of the hypno-globes. Here the vibrations coagulate and commiserate in such beguiling ways as to produce visions of the most alarming, and persuasive nature. To travel over the bridge is to tempt whatever forces generate the vibrations. It is rumored that the forces are sometimes usually want to entrap wanderers, with visions a-glitter in wonder, luring them into The Cave of Pearls. I have visited this cave on occasion, the circumstances of which I will not divulge. Oh, the pungent odor that wafts from the cave can corrode even the strongest of metals. Inside, the cave is slick with a ground swell liquid that has the capacity to dissolve roving debris and matter that ventures too far into the cave. The liquid, forever leaking from the cave walls, floor and ceiling is clear in hue, slick in texture and varies in viscosity. Surrounding the entrance to the cave there appear to be arranged a series of pearlish-yellow boulders. Whosoever chose to name the ghastly opening The Cave of Pearls was feeling

generous, indeed, for the boulderish-pearls defy mostly all understandings of aesthetic charm. However, what defies certainly all linguistic depiction is the creature that dwells deep in the cave. Perhaps most cleverly described as resembling the tentacle of a Great Pacific Octopus, the creature apparently lacks all recognizable, creaturely features. Any further information about said creature has yet to be puzzled. Indeed, much of the Cave of Pearls remains a mystery despite consistent documentation of it over many hundreds of years. As Professor Gordon Shepherd, Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus of Atmospheric Science says, "The historical record is so coherent, going back over centuries, the descriptions are very similar."

LOWER TEXT

SCRATCHINGS

...the possibility of learning anew how to live in the present with each other, not only by opening the question to what and to whom I must be accountable, but also by considering what attention, learning, and actions such accountability requires.

However, as Jocelyn Létourneau (2004, p.12) asserts... This work is what follows when...ask of themselves "not what they must remember in order to be, but what it means, in light of the experience of the past, to be what they are now".

...the practices of inheritance...

...as a cultural inheritance...

I will further consider the challenges to a hopeful futurity raised when one recognized traces of the past as a difficult gift that offers little in the way of consolation.

This gift may not be deserved or even wanted, but it is what one is entitled to and responsible for because it has been addressed to you.

It is a moment in which learning is not simply the acquisition of new information, but an acceptance of another's testamentary address as a possible inheritance, a difficult "gift".

...a problematic inheritance...

As Fanon's work shows, after all, bodies are shaped by histories of colonialism, which makes the world "white" as a world that inherited or already given.

Such histories, we might say, surface on the body, or even shape how bodies surface.

Rather than othering being simply a form of negation, it can also be described as a form of extension.

We do this by thinking about whiteness as form of bodily inheritance.

Whiteness becomes a social inheritance; in receiving whiteness as a gift...

Inheritance can be understood as both bodily and historical...

It is important that whiteness is not reducible to white skin or even to "something" we can have or be, even if we pass through whiteness.

How does what I take to be "mine" make "me" in relation to "you"?

Inheritance does not always hold things in place but instead keeps open the space for new arrivals, for new objects, which have their own horizons.

The materiality of inheritance is, in short, a metaphysics of substance that posits a material legacy beyond the control of a person or society.

If, however, we are interested in the maintenance of the truth of intimate sovereignty as a means of liberal empire, then we need to confront the question of whether the flesh should be seen merely as a juridical and political maneuver, merely as a social tactic, or also as a physical mattering.

How did colonial powers variously deploy an ideology of social deracination across the landscape of empire? This latter question

was focused in particular on how the white metropolis was able to exfoliate from its ideological commitment to wealth and freedom the actual conditions of colonial totalitarianism, rape, and genocide and how this representation was able to stage this exploitation as civilization, transforming the act of theft into the generosity of the gift.

...the more they dragged inheritance deeper into the body...

...but for what it might mean to live in relation with the past, endeavoring to face its claim on the present of one's life.

...disagreeable inheritance...

Never have we said to people that indifference is also a form of violence...

Your self does not end where your flesh ends, but suffuses and blends with the world, including other beings.

In real life there is no such thing as a disembodied consciousness.

Sensation doesn't make sense except in reference to your embodied self.

But the mind is not a metaphysical dangler on the brain; it is embodied.

The Holding Pond

Notes and Commentary on the Transcription of the
Palimpsestuous Bodies Palimpsest

By: *Paloma Kwel* and now *Cecelia Fae* too ! =D

Appendix A: “New Research Escapade?”

On [REDACTED], Cecelia Fae <cecelifae@gmail.com> wrote:

Woah, I’m intrigued. I always love a good Authorial Conundrum! Can you send me the Swallows article? I’ll try to read it before we meet up. Would next Wednesday at 12:15pm work for you? We could meet at the piano in the breezeway between MNU Hall and the R. Wong memorial? I’ll be the person playing the piano =D

Cece

On [REDACTED], Paloma Kwel

<paloma.kwel.83@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Cecelia,

Oh dear, I got so excited and jittery I forgot to actually tell you any relevant details. I think we should connect regardless anyways too, so maybe we can plan a quick meet up sometime in the next couple of weeks? I have a flexible schedule Mondays, Wednesdays and I can usually work it out so that my Friday afternoons are free. Would any of those days work for you?

Briefly though, I’ll let you know what’s got me so excited! I stumbled across an article in an older issue of the Journal of New Manuscripts by Argenta Swallows where she mentions this often overlooked new manuscript known to scholars as the Palimpsestuous Bodies Palimpsest, hereafter PBP. I had never heard of it before, but I looked into it and there seems to have been a bit of drama circulating around the PBP upon its discovery a few decades back. The

drama mostly focused on who the author was, and who actually transcribed it. I should clarify; a copy of the palimpsest doesn't seem to exist, only a transcription of it by the eccentric Hipster bibliophile, Barnabie Dove. This drama has not served the PBP well, in that the authorial uncertainty has caused it to drift out of favour with many scholars as bickering over authorial conundrums has become banal. Anyways, little attention has been given to the actual contents of the PBP. I was curious about this new manuscript so I read most of the transcript and whoever authored it forwards some pretty interesting ideas around thinking through bodies as palimpsestuous...which is why I think we would compliment each other very well in a partnership. I've got some knowledge about the history of New Manuscripts and you have some knowledge about different ways to think about "the body." I'll tell you more when we meet up but, ultimately, I think this palimpsestuous bodies proposition to be way juicier than the authorship debate.

Hope to see you soon!

Paloma

On [REDACTED], Cecelia Fae

[<ceceliafae@gmail.com>](mailto:ceceliafae@gmail.com) wrote:

Hello Paloma,

Dr. Happenstans mentioned to me that they knew someone who was also intensely keen on palimpsests, and that they would pass along my info if the moment arose. I am glad the moment arose. I should clarify

in case Dr. Happenstans forgot to mention, but my research interest currently lies in Critical Movement Studies. I have a great interest and passion for palimpsests, but the interest has never bloomed into my research before. Not that I am opposed to such a possibility! Would you be able to share a few details about the “something pretty interesting” or your ideas on a potential collaborative project? Even if the project doesn’t work out, I think this might be a groovy connection for us to maintain—don’t know many people interested in palimpsests. It might be nice to have someone to gush with. =)

Best wishes,

Cecelia

On [REDACTED], Paloma Kwel

<paloma.kwel.83@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Ms. Fae,

My name is Paloma and I am a grad student in the Manuscripts faculty at MNU, and my studies are focusing on New Manuscripts, particularly those created during the Hypster movement. I am not sure if you are expecting an email from me, but the other day I connected with Prof Happenstans, who gave me your email address, and they told me that you are keen on palimpsests (!!) and so am I. I have recently stumbled across something pretty interesting in the

Journal of New Manuscripts and, if I may be so bold, I was hoping you might be interested in working with me on some kind of project/publication in relation to it?

I am looking forward to hearing back from you.

Kind regards,

Paloma

Appendix B: “Document in Process”

On [REDACTED], Paloma Kwel <paloma.kwel.83@gmail.com>
wrote:

Hi Cecelia,

May I quote from the PBP? *Thank you for your patience. I have been sitting with your letter a long while. The silence has been evolving in nature but suffice it to say it has at times been indignant, swept up in denial, shocked [moving into] acceptance, and most recently a (re)commitment to listening...*

It will not shock you that you are not the first person to remind me to not lose focus of power. I suppose I was appalled at what you wrote for I was shocked by your assessment of my work for I had, or I thought I had, been keeping power in focus. And so - once I found myself in a position willing to listen - I wrestled with the the question of why I was continually being asked to remember power, to account for my own privilege. Sometimes things are hard to put into words, but does it make sense if I say that I think somewhere in asking myself why I was continually being prompted to be more critical I was able to make certain connections in new ways in order for something else to *click* a little more firmly into place that it had before? You know, my grasp on this is still a little flimsy but I think I have come to realizations about how I was approaching my work that I wouldn't have been able to make without your intervention. So I want to thank you, and I want to apologize for my vinegar filled lash out against your promptings.

You were correct in feeling a disconnect between what I was articulating to you and what and how I was writing. It was a disconnect that I had failed to see entirely before, but I

think I am getting a clearer sense of it now. I hope this doesn't read as though I am spinning some sort of atonement or an always-moving-forward-progress narrative for you, because my understandings around things are not so clearly defined as that. Now more than ever things feel messy and I feel deeply unsure of my ideas. How do I actually do the critical work I thought I had been doing? You know, I spent so much time doing one thing, thinking it was resonating, but now I realize I was doing another. I am beginning to understand that good intentions will not suffice, I need to also be aware of the possible consequences on my actions. I see it now where my thinking pulls back into the certainty of whiteness and privilege in the document I sent you. I really don't want to be another layer in what Flavia Dzodan refers to as "the shit puff pastry." I recognize my need to find a way of relating that foregrounds intersectional and critical reflection not only in my writing and thinking, but also in my day-to-day decisions, words and actions.

You had mentioned that you were potentially still interested in the project. I was wondering if you still feel that way now? I know it has been several weeks since we last spoke. I have been thinking that if you were interested in still working together on the project that perhaps we could meet to discuss how we would collectively like to approach the project...instead of me just handing you my ideas in some strange top-down sort of way.

Please let me know what you think.

Thank you again for your patience.

Kind regards,

Paloma

On [REDACTED], Cecelia Fae <ceceliafae@gmail.com>

wrote:

Hi Paloma,

I meant it when I said I still wanted to work with you on the project. I think it has a lot of potential. I also meant it when I said take as long as you want and need to respond to my email. I recognize that my email challenged your work but I offered it in a way meant to be constructive.

Cecelia

On [REDACTED], Paloma Kwel

<paloma.kwel.83@gmail.com> wrote:

Cecelia,

Wow. So that's how it is eh? I invite you to read my work AND work with me and then you turn around to tell me that my work isn't feminist enough. It isn't critical or intersectional enough...*You* tell me this?! The *dance* researcher! And I actually am doing my utmost to be critical to take into account difference and inequality and the body. The arguments were not fully written and I think you judged them harshly and unfairly.

P.

Commented [1]: Paloma Kwel: Oh, I am so embarrassed every time I read this Cece. It just screams white 'progressive' woman fragility. I wish I could just redact the whole thing so no one could read it.

Commented [2]: Cecelia Fae: Paloma, in your actions you have shown your apology. =) But I don't think you should want to erase this or blot it out in any way. We are trying to build a "sweaty concept" as Ahmed would say (12-13). I think we should take up Ahmed's challenge: "We might need not to eliminate the effort or labor from the writing. Not eliminating the effort or labor becomes an academic aim because we have been taught to tidy our texts, not to reveal the struggle we have in getting somewhere (13)." This is part of your struggle (as it is mine). Taught to be ignorant of our privilege (McIntosh para.2), a part of our struggle is to listen wholly when we are told to check ourselves. We must learn to listen radically and to be unashamed of the labour of our learning.

On [REDACTED], Cecelia Fae

<ceceliafae@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Paloma,

Thank you for sending along the document in progress with all your thoughts and budding ideas. I really appreciate the vulnerability of sharing work that feels far from 'complete' in any solid sense. I found the introduction to provide some useful contextualizing what with the neo-palimpsest movement and what not. But Paloma, from how you were discussing your ideas the other day I got the sense that you were intersectional in your feminism and that you were learning to be critical of whiteness and settler colonialism and respectability and that you wanted to write something that wrestled with power. I got the impression, and I responded accordingly with excitement, that you wanted to study the palimpsestuousness of the body to look at power relations and to perhaps try to develop a useful framework for thinking through power complexly, but that is not what is coming through in how you are currently articulating your ideas. I know right now you have listed the stories from the PBP and the scholars whom you understand to be in conversation with your three main arguments, but right now it's feeling superficial. And I know your arguments are only in point form right now but I couldn't help but wonder if you read the last section of J.M.S.'s correspondence at all? And I

know you have because you spoke extensively about your thoughts on the palimpsest during the few meetings we have had together already. Paloma, I think you have “failed to adequately take account of power in any meaningful way” at this point in your analysis.

I am saying this not as someone who has got everything figured out about power and privilege, I am still learning as you are. Yet, I am reminded of Flavia Dzodan who wrote, “my feminism will be intersectional or it will be bullshit.” Did your thinking start from a point of intersectionality? As Brittney C. Cooper, Susana M. Morries, and Robin M. Boylorn of the Crunk Feminist Collective articulate, “Intersectionality mandates that we cannot consider race, class, gender/sex, ability, and sexuality without first considering racism, classism, sexism, ableism, cisgenderism, and heterosexism (including homo- and transphobia)” (250). As Sara Ahmed says, “Intersectionality is a starting point the point from which we must proceed if we are to offer an account of how power works” (5). I am still intrigued by the project you described but if you do not imagine the analysis as being intersectional from the foundation then perhaps it is best if we do not decide to work together.

Anyways, I do not intend this email as a way to dissolve our commitment to work together studying the PBP and theorizing the body as palimpsestuous. Instead, I guess my intention is to insert a

“feminist waver” (Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*) into your current thinking. I suppose I am just a little confused between the spoken direction of your project and the direction of your actions in your writing.

I do hope you write back but please take the time you need to do so.

Kindly,

Cece

Introduction

The paleographic object today known as a palimpsest is the result of the practice of palimpsesting. Evidence suggests that palimpsesting as a practice occurred as early as Ancient Egyptian times, and that it was likely a customary practice amongst Ancient Greeks and Romans (Dillon 13). Prior to the development of paper as it is known today, the expensive mediums of vellum, parchment or papyrus were used in the writing process. In certain circumstances these expensive mediums would be reused by applying certain compounds to the material, and sometimes additionally rubbing the material, so as to strip the vellum, parchment or papyrus of the initial writing. The now bare writing surface was then re-purposed for further use in, for example, the compilation of a different book. While palimpsesting is a practice that extends back to ancient societies, Sarah Dillon suggests “the peak period of large-scale palimpsesting of parchment for book production occurred in the West from seventh to ninth centuries, primarily in the scriptoriums of the great monastic institutions” (13). This peak, as Dillon further argues, was likely caused by “a combination of the general scarcity and expense of writing material – both papyrus and vellum – and the increased demand for new books, both liturgical and other” (13). The regularity of this practice, Dillon concludes, “only ceased towards the end of the fifteenth century when the increased availability of paper and the invention of printing rendered the production of manuscripts by handwritten copying obsolete” (13). However, the practice of palimpsesting is really only the prelude to what renders palimpsests such fascinating paleographic objects, for while the initial writing seems to have been thoroughly erased, it was often done imperfectly. In subsequent centuries the initial writing has reappeared on these numerous used parchments, papyrus and vellum offering a ghostly suggestion of what has been written before due to

Commented [3]: Paloma Kwel: Hi Cecelia as you asked for greater clarification on the practices of palimpsesting and the neo-palimpsest movement, I thought I would include this introductory section of the notes I wrote for a guest lecture last semester. I hope you find it helpful!

Commented [4]: Cecelia Fae: Ooh yes! Thank you very much =)

Commented [5]: Paloma Kwel: Cece, I was thinking about your dance and what you shared about the source texts of the “Lower Text-Scratching.” And I was also thinking about the conversation we had over tea the other day where you suggested that perhaps all the coincidences we are finding are not coincidences at all, but clues crafted by Dove himself to signify authorship. Anyways, it just struck me as not coincidental that there is a common theme that threads its way through the entire palimpsest. (It becomes so clear once you read it palimpsestuously!) There is absolutely a theme of inheritance and tangling the idea of inheritance into ideas of the palimpsestuous body.

Commented [6]: Cecelia Fae: Mhmm, yes I see it now. I was only looking at the “Lower Text-Scratchings” before but I can see what you are saying. Mhmm, and especially with “Pulling Knapweed.” I had a meeting with S.L. a few weeks ago; we were talking about my dance research. She said something to me that I wrote down on my dance notes. You know, she is also thinking with and through inheritance in her own research right? She suggested that one could think of palimpsestuousness as a qualifying characteristic of inheritance.

Commented [7]: Paloma Kwel: BOOM! That is definitely a gem of an insight Cece, and so generous of S.L. to share it with you. I think you should definitely move with that for a few studio sessions.

Commented [8]: Cecelia Fae: Paloma =D check this out when you have a moment! It's a video of the choreography/theorizing I have been working on regarding the palimpsestuous notion of inheritance! Link: <https://youtu.be/nPuv-yAzPd8>

the oxidization of the iron in the imperfectly erased ink (Dillon 12). What has transpired over the centuries technologically in the process of discovering and reading these palimpsests can be characterized “as nothing short of resurrective sorcery” (Dillon 19). And while Dillon uses this phrase somewhat in jest, the reference to sorcery calls forth the captivating magic of palimpsests that have enthralled centuries of people.

Palimpsests are paleographic objects which take years to unfurl their beauty and their secrets because of the process of how they were made. There were key persons involved in the making of a palimpsest. These key persons typically would have included, an author, a scribe and a commissioner. The author of a text which was to be copied was in all likelihood uninvolved in the process of creating a further copy of their work. It was the scribe who typically made the decisions about which manuscripts to unbind and how to treat the unbound folios to erase the previous writing, what is referred to as the lower text of a palimpsest. Then, generally working in a scriptorium, the scribe would copy the chosen text onto the newly processed and treated animal skins of what used to be past manuscripts, thus creating what is considered the upper text of a palimpsest. The whole process, which is after all the creation of a new book, would have been commissioned from someone in a position of influence, or at least someone with a decent amount of disposable wealth.

There is a remarkable beauty to palimpsests that have captured the attention of bibliophiles, archivists, and scholars alike. Different parties have had various interests in palimpsested manuscripts over the years. Certain people are interested in palimpsests for their rarity and worth, for certain palimpsests contain ancient treatises, for instance. Other people are interested in preserving the history enacted by the materiality of the

Commented [9]: Paloma Kwel: Cece, I can't stop thinking about what you were saying over coffee yesterday about "questing moons" and "half-moons". I think you are right about "Unknown Text Z" in the Lower Text.

palimpsest. And still others are concerned with the texts that fill the palimpsest in that quintessential layered manner. Regardless, there is something many find mesmerizing about palimpsests. Some scholars have speculated that it may have been utter fascination with palimpsests, their eerie beauty and their accrued history, that sparked the niche movement of neo-palimpsesting among bibliophiles and artisans alike (Orvieta, 2022). Or perhaps it was mistrust in the capacity of digital mediums and conventional pulp paper to preserve the thoughts and ideas of favoured authors (Nokkita, 2021), but however it came about there developed in the mid-2010s a movement to revive the tradition of creating manuscripts using old mediums and technologies. It is now commonly accepted this manuscript making movement originated with Hypsters, a radical offshoot of a subculture known as Hipsters. Hipsters were a collective keen on embracing retro technologies, styles of dress and speech patterns understood as popular in the mid-to-late 20th Century. Of course, many people are familiar with the general concept of ‘Hipster’ because the subculture’s essence was incorporated into consumer culture seeing as the subculture developed during the peaking late-capitalist era. Erika Dewitt (2025) has done excellent work in tracing a radical subculture of Hipsters, located mainly in Coast Salish land and territories now claimed by Canada, who took the turn to retro technologies to extremes and who began to spurn the modern day printing press by creating books written in the old manner of scribes, using the ancient technologies. Dewitt speculates that this book-ish subculture soon ran into the same issues prevalent in Medieval Europe where the writing material became scarce, and thus, the practice of palimpsesting was rejuvenated. Matthias Berrywend (2028) argues that this radical Hipster off-shoot, a group he refers to as Hyper-Hipsters, is responsible for such strange and intriguing works as *Borne In the Wake* and *The Palimpsest of Human Rights*.

Several scholars disagree with the Hipster theory concerning the beginnings of this niche movement, most notably Hortense Plish (see her latest article: *You Laugh Because I Am Different, I Laugh Because You Are All the Same: Hipsters and Attending Tensions around 'The Classics'*). Plish argues that Hipsters, although oriented toward the retro, were also hedonistically concerned with stylistic relevance and a-tuned to “timeline time” (a term Plish borrows from Gilroy-Ware), and thus likely diametrically opposed to what would be the laborious, time-consuming and delayed-gratificationist activity of palimpsesting. To support her argument Plish draws on the words of “a scribe named Raoul working in the Monastery of St Aignan, in France, [who] wrote: ‘You do not know what it is to write. It is excessive drudgery; it crooks your back, dims your sight, twists your stomach and sides. Pray, then, my brother, you who read this book, pray for poor Raoul, God’s servant, who has copied it entirely with his own hand in the cloister of St Aignan’” (Netz and Noelle 216, qtd. in Plish 2027). “What Hipster,” Plish argues, “would subject themselves to such toil for the sake of spurning the modern printing press?” (4).

While the origins of this niche movement continue to remain unclear – perhaps not surprising (and further in support of the Hypster argument) as there is no trace of this movement on the World Wide Web – what continually demands reckoning is the materiality of these neo-palimpsests. Some palimpsests, such as *The Palimpsest of Human Rights*, contain the known words of famous thinkers which can be readily traced to known publications by or pertaining to said authors. For instance, *The Palimpsest of Human Rights* by Jabez L. Van Cleef contains the known works of Martin Luther King Jr., Mohandas Gandhi, and Henry David Thoreau. Still other palimpsests contain texts of unknown origin. While the conspiracy theories around certain neo-palimpsests that were

percolating online (that these mysterious texts were relayed into human minds by aliens), were found to be false rumours spread by the charlatan-like creators of the palimpsests themselves, there are still other neo-palimpsests containing texts from little known authors. Argenta Swallows (2028) argues that a select group of individuals in the niche movement actually began a publishing house where the scribes of the texts were also the authors of what they were writing. For those who follow Plish's line of thinking, it is easier to imagine someone laboriously creating a palimpsested manuscript when it is their own words they believe to be preserving for thousands of years. In the typical manner of things, there are also several palimpsests that do not fit neatly into any(one's) theory. These neo-palimpsests have seen their importance de-amplified according to the prerogatives of Research, which is unfortunate for they are, in my humble opinion, some of the most intriguing of the palimpsests to come from the neo-palimpsesting movement.

The Palimpsestuous Bodies Palimpsest

One of the least acknowledged neo-palimpsests in the New Manuscripts literature, usually referred to as the *Palimpsestuous Bodies Palimpsest (PBP)*, is one of the palimpsests that do not neatly fit into the various categories created to discuss the different types of neo-palimpsests. The PBP is one of the lesser well-known palimpsests for a few reasons, the most important being that the actual palimpsest is lost. What exists of the PBP is a transcription of the various texts by the late Hipster bibliophile Barnabie Dove. Within this transcription there are Polaroid photographs of particular manuscript folios serving to highlight various details or offered in explanation of the formatting choices of the transcription, but the actual manuscript has never been located. This is, of course, highly unusual with neo-palimpsests. The Polaroid photographs do much to

suggest that the palimpsest does exist, and that it must somehow have gotten lost in the familial squabbles that ensued over Mr. Dove's extensive library upon his passing. Indeed, a mold-eaten and charred artifact has made its way to the makə'nāSHən Museum in Prague where the conservationist is working with a team of spectral imagers and neo-palimpsest scholars to determine whether the artifact could be the PBP. There have also been a few other instances whereby certain folios allegedly from the PBP have been donated to different academic institutions and museums, but the research into whether these could be forgeries is inconclusive.

Furthermore, the PBP is a rather obscure neo-palimpsest in the academic literature because there is no consistent narrative that binds it together, and here I am not alluding to the garden variety of tales that fill the pages of the manuscript, but the actual story that can be told *about* the palimpsest. There is some speculation that Barnabie Dove was not in fact the individual who transcribed the document, for the transcription is wildly inconsistent with other transcriptions attributed to him. Moreover, there is the oft-mentioned "giant reach" made by Nicodemus von Eric (2020) in the rather unscrupulous footnote 43 of his *Neo-Palimpsests Cataloged* wherein he attributes authorship of the Upper Text of the PBP to the well-known horticulturist J.M.S. for no other reason than shared initials! It is perhaps only because of his accrued inertia through many other celebrated publications that such a flaccid connection did not cause von Eric's career to roll to its grave. To purport that the Upper Text of the PBP is written by J.M.S. is rather outlandish for the elusive J.M.S. is best known for being an avid horticulturist and not as a writer or thinker of any significant merit. Indeed, there is much speculation as to why Barnabie Dove made the effort to even transcribe the PBP as at first glance it seems to be

filled with a spattering of loosely held together mediocre stories and several perplexing texts of unknown origin.

These initial rumblings of uncertainty around whether Dove was actually involved in the transcription have given way in the literature to a more sustained speculation concerning the identity of the author of the Upper Text. Many scholars, including Lucretia Twigg and Neil Bluum (2031), have suggested that J.M.S. may not be the best candidate as the author of the Upper Text, “especially when the transcriber of the PBP highlights his uncertainty around the clarity of the initials given at the bottom of each letter bookending the Upper Text” (57). This has been taken as a solid enough foundation for many scholars to question J.M.S. as the author, however no one has posited an alternate author with any lasting success.

Despite the untidy story and mystery surrounding the PBP as a neo-palimpsest it does not deserve to be scoffed at in the way that it has been (see Greensplatt & Coddswattle, 2026). There are one or two nuggets hiding in the transcription that may be generative and worthwhile thinking through. Ultimately, the PBP is an odd collection of short stories garnered together under the pretext of showing the ‘palimpsestuousness of the body,’ yet there is very little written to expound upon that notion further (see Bey, 2015; Hallensleben, 2014; Maioli, 2009; Wang, 2012 who all take the concept in very different directions). The PBP has generated very little excitement seeing as no one is certain about its authorship, who the scribe was, who commissioned the work, and, finally, whether Dove actually transcribed the document. Add to that the lack of certainty around whether it ever was a neo-palimpsest or whether the transcription of the PBP is simply a forgery of a palimpsest and what you have is one messy story that does nothing

to snare the imagination. However, a shift in focus away from the Authorial Conundrum and towards the exciting propositions in the stories of the PBP would certainly create more sustainable and interesting engagements with a little known manuscript that has a lot to offer.

Theoretical & Methodological Mash-up

Dance as Inquiry

I know you are supportive of dance as a research method, but that this is your first project where you are embracing it in a research project, so I thought I might explain a bit about how I approach dance as a method here?

Absolutely, I would really appreciate that. Cece, add whatever you want to this document. This is just the place where we are going to dump all our thoughts. You don't need to ask permission from me- we are partners in this! --Have you given more thought to how or what you what to explore through dance? (Did I word that right? I feel so awkward talking to you about dance. =/)

It'll get easier to talk about as you get more comfortable with it! =) Now, with regards to dance as inquiry, Mary Beth Cancienne and Celeste N. Snowber suggest that dance is "a way of listening to [one's] inner voice...a corporeal way of knowing, a different way of seeing, questions and challenging" (205)." Yet, such a description only vaguely answers the question of what dance and movement inquiry is...At the same time, it is in part the abstractness of the art form itself which makes it difficult to define what the method of dance as research is, for it is very diverse. As such, a better question may be: what do I mean when I propose using dance inquiry for as a method in this project? Or, in other words what did you agree to? =P How I understand dance inquiry is as a means of very purposefully incorporating my body into a research project. Patricia Leavy argues, "[d]ance cannot be understood without attention to the fact that it is necessarily an embodied art form" (152). At the same, using dance inquiry as a method helps address the "meagreness of kinesthetic experience in education across disciplines" (Eddy 22). Martha Eddy argues that "dance and 'somatics' remain on the fringes of academic inquiry, perhaps precisely because they are of the body, and

Commented [10]: Cecelia Fae: Mash-up?

Commented [11]: Paloma Kwel: Yea, sometimes I find the divisions between the different facets of research (i.e. theoretical framework, methods, discussion, and conclusion) to feel too contrived, especially in the early stages of a project. When everything is still all mashed together why spend time artificially dividing it? What are your thoughts though? We could divide this into separate sections right at the beginning too if you felt more comfortable with that.

Commented [12]: Cecelia Fae: =) That really resonates for me when I think about how I approach dance-research, so I am comfortable with it being a mash-up right now. It feels good to recognize that method informs theory just as much as theory informs method.

Commented [13]: Cecelia Fae: =D Okay!

Commented [14]: Cecelia Fae: I still need a bit more time to think this through!

include elements that are inefable” (6). Therefore, by centering movement and the body in a research project, such as this, I am (we are?) also arguing for the need to validate the body as knower.

Choreographer Natasha Bakht describes choreography, the act of coordinating movement and theory, as a different process of thinking (“Clarity/Strength/Subtlety”). Bakht’s suggestion makes space for the possibility that movement inquiry can lead to a range of insights potentially inaccessible through other means. As Cancienne and Snowber suggest, “the choreographic process is one of sorting, sifting, editing, forming, making and remaking; it’s essentially an act of discovery” (198). I am in agreement with Susan W. Stinson, who suggests that “the entire body can be viewed as an experiential and memory repository for what we ‘know,’ which may emerge through dance in unexpected ways (qtd. in Leavy 154). As such, “[d]ance-based practices can access bodily knowledge that is otherwise out of reach” (Leavy 156). With this research project focused on the palimpsestuousness of the body, I think it is important to create space for body-based knowledge in the meaning-making process of research.

I use the method/ology of dance inquiry to also challenge the subject/object division that can characterize certain research approaches. E. Clark-Rapely suggests, “[t]he relation of the dancer to the dance, and of the dancer to the process is a relation of unity that blurs the subject/object distinction: the dancer is the activity and the dancer is the dance” (qtd. in Leavy 149). This blurring is the result of the dancer being the medium of the art practice and I think this blurring is especially amplified when a single person acts as choreographer and dancer. During dance as inquiry, the researcher seeks the embodied expression of abstract thought, the movements that are generated are then evaluated for their quality of expression and various other factors. As such, the choreographer/dancer-researcher is continually weaving subject and object positions in their direct experience of conducting research. This blurring of often-held distinctions

Commented [15]: Have you read Anne Scott’s “The Knowledge in our Bones: Standpoint Theory, Alternative Health and the Quantum Model of the Body”? If not, I think you should.

Commented [16]: Cecelia Fae: I haven’t no, can you send it my way? =)

Commented [17]: Cecelia Fae: Woah. BOOM! Do you have time for a coffee and a chat this week? I think we could use “the body as knower” as an overarching theoretical framework.

continues with dance inquiry as method for, as Leavy argues, “dance as a discipline merges the public and private, or inner and outer worlds...because the dancer’s body is always moving within an environment” (156). Moreover, because the dancer is forever sustained in contextualizing space and power relationships, dance as a method can also be useful in “*propelling self- and social reflection*” (original emphasis, 150). → That’s my bit about dance inquiry! =D

Palimpsestuous Reading

Paloma, wanna jot down some notes on that style of reading you were talking to me about in the hall the other day? Sorry I had to run off so quickly, the community group dance with had rehearsals and I had to catch the bus downtown. =)

→ *Hey, no worries. I get it, you’ve got a life outside the cement walls of UHall!*
Yes, I am actually really excited about this because I think we can use it as a way to analyze the PBP and perhaps it can serve as a complementary method of sorts to dance inquiry? So in one of her letters J.M.S. writes about a book she’s read, Palimpsest by Sarah Dillon. I thought I would try to find it at the lib. and I did! I get why J.M.S. liked it so much--it’s really neat. (I’ll leave the copy of the book in your mail cubby when I am done reading it.) Anyway, Dillon describes this process of analysis which she calls palimpsestuous reading (2007, p. 48). Palimpsestuous reading, according to Dillon, “does not reduce the text to a single layer but takes all of a text’s layers in to account” (48). To only focus on one text while engaged in palimpsestuous reading “would be to unravel and destroy the palimpsest, which exists only and precisely as the involution of texts” (Dillon, “Reinscribing De Quincey’s Palimpsest” 254). This has interesting prospects in an analysis of the PBP, composed as it is of a mesh of stories and letters in the Upper Text and a constellation of random quotes and that weird ‘Unknown Text Z’ in the Lower Text. “Since [the] texts bear no necessary relation to each other,” Dillon

Commented [18]: Cecelia Fae: I think I know what aspect of the PBP I want to engage with for dance as inquiry. =) I think I want to look at all that is constituted as the Lower Text of the PBP and choreograph maybe one or two dances in relation to it. Thoughts?

Commented [19]: Paloma Kwel: Barnabie Dove writes in a letter to a colleague that the lower text of this neo-palimpsest was excessively illegible due to the fire damage. I have always found the bits and pieces of writing that make up the "Scratchings" section of the Lower Text to be very poetic. This section of the Lower Text is referred to by scholars as 'Inheritance' because of the frequent mention of inheritance in what was legible of the script.

Commented [20]: Cecelia Fae: When I was looking at the Lower Text, and the accompanying pictures, I was also really inspired by what appears to me to be some sort of graphic notation, and I am deeply interested in the possibilities in translating these poetic bits into movement phrases! =D

Commented [21]: Paloma Kwel: Oh I can't wait to engage with what you create Cece!

Commented [22]: Cecelia Fae: Paloma, I'm not sure you've scrolled down to the end of the document lately, but I've added in copies of the notes I created from the Lower Text. These are the notes that I've used in choreographing the dance I showed you a couple weeks ago. Sometimes I forget how uncomfortable it can be to engage with dance if you are unfamiliar with it. I think my notes might give you more of a context for the dances, and maybe help you feel like you can engage with them in a more generative way the next time you pop into the dance studio? =D

suggests, “palimpsestuous reading is an inventive process of creating relations where there may, or should be, none” (“Reinscribing De Quincey’s Palimpsest 254).

→ Oh my goodness, so I read the chapter you are referring to here and it got me all excited too. Yes! Let’s use palimpsestuous reading as another method of engaging with the PBP.

→ Groovy, I think palimpsestuous reading holds so much potential because from what I can tell of the PBP literature-what little there is- the Upper Text is really the only text people have taken into serious consideration because of the possibility that it is connected with, or even fills, the gap in J.M.S.’s life narrative. As far as I can tell the focus on the Upper Text has eclipsed all other scholarly engagements with the Lower Text.

→ I am such a big fan of using this method of reading because as part of our theorization of the body as palimpsest we will argue that bodies need to be understood holistically and this argument is then mirrored in our decision to engage the PBP in a holistic manner through palimpsestuous reading!

Notes on a Possible Theoretical Framework

Okay so here is a quick summary of our thinking so far around a possible theoretical framework for this project. Most of this is based off of our conversation last week over coffee. (Psst- we should go back there those lavender infused shortbread cookies...OH MY GOODNESS!!)

- In our research we are interested in recognizing the body as a knower. As part of this recognition we must acknowledge that the body has been marginalized as a knower through Cartesian dualism, a foundational stance in Western philosophical

Commented [23]: Cecelia Fae: My mouth starts watering every time I read this. Hehehe

Commented [24]: Cecelia Fae: They were so SO good!

thinking that privileges the mind over the body. To challenge this dualist framework that “split[s] human beings into the diametrically opposed substances of mind and body” (Scott 106), we wish to establish a foundational orientation to the what and how of our work: that the body, the hips, the pelvis, the toes, the heart, etc., etc., are knowledge producers, generators and holders. In the chapter, “The Knowledge in our Bones: Standpoint Theory, Alternative Health and the Quantum Model of the Body” Anne Scott supports recognizing the body as knower and suggests that “[s]tandpoint theory offers one means to incorporate bodily experience into social theory” (114).

- We are supremely interested in Scott’s argument, however, we are also cautious for in pursuing the body as a knower we do not wish to essentialize the body or embodied experience, for to do so would lose sight of the social relations of power that differently inform the relationships people have with their bodies. In short, we are at a place in our thinking where we need to think carefully about whether standpoint theory offers a useful space where we can theorize the differences of embodied experience that are enacted through systemic power relations.
- As such, we would like to engage with the thinking of Kathy Davis, Nancy C. M. Hartsock, Patricia Hill Collins, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Bonnie Thornton Dill and Ruth Enid Zambrana, and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson who all closely engage with the process of how to theorize difference, and variously engage with body theory, as well as considerations of epistemic authority. Here are some quotes we kept coming back to:
 - Kathy Davis proposes understanding *Our Bodies Ourselves* as an epistemological project that focuses on the body as “a complex, dynamic,

Commented [25]: Paloma Kwel: This made me think of Rita Wong's poem "holders" in her collection Undercurrent. Have you read it?

multilayered entity” (527). She emphasizes that every body has “organismic integrity” (531) shaped by “class, race, and sexuality, as well as national and cultural borders” (537).

- As part of her analysis Leanne Betasamosake Simpson discusses the notion of sovereign bodies and suggests that the concept is inclusive of land and place, minds and knowledge systems (20-21). Simpson concludes by arguing that indigenous sovereignty comes not “from a document” but rather “from an abundance of healthy, responsible, respectful relationships with all of our relations” (22).
- Brittney C. Cooper, Susana M. Morris, and Robin Boylorn remind us that “[i]ntersectionality is an inheritance from Black feminism that informs, but does not define identity politics” (250). They go on to argue that because “our personal and social identities are products of our backgrounds, standpoints, and lived experiences, we know that who we are is not simply located within us, it is also located around us” (250).
- Dill and Zambrana define intersectionality as “an innovative and emerging field of study that provides a critical analytic lens to interrogate racial, ethnic, class, physical ability, age, sexuality, and gender disparities and to contest existing ways of looking at these structures of inequality” (183).
- Lastly, Mohanty suggests that defining a standpoint is not an end in and of itself, but instead a starting point from which to make “the politics of knowledge and the power investments that go along with it visible so that we can then engage in work to transform the use and abuse of power” (407). In this way, Mohanty upholds one of the principle theoretical

Commented [26]: Paloma Kwel: We also kept coming back to these ideas because they suggest that the body does not have to be considered as bounded by skin. As Donna Haraway (144) says in the Cyborg Manifesto: “Why should our bodies end at the skin, or include at best other beings encapsulated by skin?”

Commented [27]: Cecelia Fae: This quote also makes me think of Judith Butler, *On the Limits of Sexual Autonomy*, and her suggestion that “as bodies, we are always for something more than, and other than, ourselves” (25).

interventions of intersectionality theory as outlined by Dill and Zambrana, promoting social transformation (Dill and Zambrana 185).

- Mohanty's suggestion stimulated us to think about the possibility of using the standpoint of the body as knower as a sort of methodological, as opposed to the main theoretical framework. We figure such a methodology would allow us to draw on the insights of standpoint theory and argue for the body as a knower, while enabling us to use intersectionality as a theoretical framework to ultimately support a research project that inquires into whether palimpsestuousness could be a useful framework from which to understand our varied relationships with our bodies, and those of other beings.

Our Main Arguments

What do we mean by “*the body*”?

Okay, it seems to me like we need to discuss how we will understand the notion of “body” before we can begin to discuss the proposed metaphor of a palimpsestuous body.
=)

I agree Cece. This is a conversation definitely worth having, especially because we work at times with such different orientations towards the idea of “body.” But I think what might help us come to a point of agreement on how we want to frame the idea of “body” going forward is a bit more information on the history of the metaphoric use of palimpsests. Thoughts? → I didn’t even realize there was a history about that so sure! Let’s start there.

Okay. =) So here’s what I’ve dug up:

The concept of a palimpsest has had interest beyond the physical limits of the paleographic object for decades. Sarah Dillon highlights Thomas De Quincey’s essay, ‘The Palimpsest,’ published in 1845 as a pivotal moment in the use of the concept of palimpsest beyond reference to an ancient manuscript (1). She argues that “De Quincey was not the first writer to use palimpsests in a figurative sense, but his inauguration of the concept of the palimpsest marks the beginning of a consistent process of metaphorization from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day” (1). Within the process of figuratively engaging the concept of the palimpsest, a sense of the magic and wonder of the paleographic object remains. The concept of the palimpsest may be figuratively engaged using either of the adjectives of the “palimpsest,” that is “palimpsestic” or “palimpsestuous.” “Where ‘palimpsestic’ refers to the process of layering that produces a palimpsest,” Dillon argues, “‘palimpsestuous’ describes the

Commented [28]: Cecelia Fae: I am starting a subheading below this one so we can work through the stickiness of abstraction. =) I need help!

structure that one is presented with as a result of that process, and the subsequent reappearance of the underlying script" (4). Palimpsestuousness is a word aimed at conveying the "complex structure of (textual) relationality embodied in the palimpsest" (Dillon 4).

Within the figurative use of the concept of palimpsest there remains the concept of the paleographic object. Indeed, the paleographic sense of the palimpsest remains a ghostly presence to the figurative concept, an anchor drawn upon in varying degrees.

And yet, as Dillon argues, "in any palimpsestuous coupling, one is no longer assured of the familiarity, properness, or proximity of the concept of the palimpsest, no longer certain that one knows, for example, what it, and therefore what 'palimpsestuousness', might be" (55). One cannot refer to palimpsestuous without implicit reference to the paleographic object, but the very process of re-inscription embodied by the concept of the palimpsest works to also render any palimpsestuous coupling newly strange (Dillon 5; 125). In other words, the physical concept of a palimpsest continually interrupts and penetrates a (re)figuration of the figurative concept.

So, to reiterate your earlier question Cecelia: J.M.S. refigured the concept of a palimpsest in relation to that of the concept "body." Yet, the complexity of the concept of the body-as you point out- requires a further focusing of what is meant by "body" in this palimpsestuous coupling.

→ Whenever I think about Dillon's neologism "palimpsestuousness" I always find my way back to Annemarie Mol's idea of the body multiple. My thinking isn't completely enfolded around this but it seems to me that J.M.S.'s proposition of the body as palimpsestuous can be generatively expanded through an understanding of the body as multiply enacted, following Annemarie Mol's notion of the body multiple.

Commented [29]: Cecelia Fae: I think it would be worthwhile thinking through the convergences and divergences of Avery Gordon's notion of haunting in relation to our ideas about palimpsestuousness. Gordon is theorizing "out of a concern for justice" in a similar way to ourselves (60), but most interestingly she is insisting upon reckoning "with haunting as a prerequisite for sensuous knowledge" (60).

Commented [30]: Paloma Kwel: Woah. Yes! How is Avery Gordon's notion of haunting only coming up now?? in the marginalia of our comments?? When she asks (18), "How do we reckon with what modern history has rendered ghostly?" Or when she describes haunting as a particular mediation by arguing that "[i]n haunting, organized forces and systemic structures that appear removed from us make their impact felt in everyday life in a way that confounds our analytic separations and confounds the social separations themselves" (19), I can't help but think about the way we are trying to articulate palimpsestuous relationality.

Commented [31]: Cecelia Fae: And yet, our focus with palimpsestuous, as perhaps a particular mediation (??), seems to have a different point of emphasis than Gordon's.

Commented [32]: Paloma Kwel: Um, like the theorizing we are doing moves in a different direction than Gordon's?

Commented [33]: Cecelia Fae: Hmm, maybe not a different direction. It just seems that when we think about palimpsestuous bodies we are still emphasizing the individual particular relationality of socially embodied scripts, whereas for me it seems like Gordon places emphasis on the social, in that the specific hauntings she unpacks are social hauntings felt individually.

Commented [34]: Paloma Kwel: Okay? I don't mean to be rude Cece, but how are those two descriptions different?

Commented [35]: Cecelia Fae: Haha oh dear. *face palm* They seemed so clear and distinct when I thought about it, but you do have a point! Gosh! Gordon's notion of haunting and what we are trying to do with palimpsestuous bodies-- they are such fluid theories. They converge and then diverge and then re-converge, only to diverge again.

Commented [36]: Paloma Kwel: Hmm. Your description had me picturing a braided river for a moment!

Okay, I think I follow you, you mentioned this idea during our first meeting together I think. Can you refresh me a bit?

Sure, so ever since I have stumbled onto this idea of the body as palimpsestuous I can't help but think of it in relation to this idea that bodies are multiply enacted. Lisa Blackman suggests the usefulness of "mov[ing] beyond thinking of bodies as substances, as special kinds of things or entities, to explore bodies as sites of potentiality, process and practice" (5). Thinking of bodies as composed of something other than substances allows one to move away from conceptualizing bodies as composed of the dual and ostensibly separate substances of material body and abstract mind. Shifting our thinking towards bodies as sites of potentiality, process and practice challenges the idea that bodies are pre-existing, anterior, bounded and singular and instead asks us "to think hard about our relations with whatever it is we know, and ask how far the process of knowing it also brings it into being" (Law 3). Destabilizing bodies by understanding them as "a process of becoming" is understanding the body as enactment (original emphasis, Blackman 105). Annemarie Mol argues that understanding the body as enactment "may be a way out of the dichotomy between the knowing subject and the objects-that-are-known" (50). "Instead of talking about subjects knowing objects we may then," Mol suggests, "...come to talk about enacting reality in practice" (original emphasis, 50). I appreciate the theoretical work that understanding the body as enactment does, for it destabilizes what may seem "solid, prior, independent, definite and single" by suggesting that this concreteness is the productive consequence of the body "being enacted, and re-enacted, and re-enacted, in practices" (Law 56). However, to understand the body as enactment is potentially alienating for "the focus is on the practices which enable the enactment of particular bodies rather than the intentionality and lived experience of the person who might be said to be enacting such practices" (Blackman 123). I think Blackman raises a very

interesting point and I wonder if the metaphor of the body as palimpsest might introduce a sense of the lived experience of what it feels like to embody a multiply enacted body.

Ooh okay, okay! I'm excited about this! So your brief write up about the figurative use of palimpsests and the description you gave about the adjective palimpsestuous got me thinking (!!) about Tobin Seibers's ideas around what she forwards as "complex embodiment". I think this idea of complex embodiment, paired with Mol's idea of the body multiple, might help us to generate enough space to consider "what it feels like to embody a multiply enacted body" in relation to the metaphor of the palimpsestuous body. The idea of complex embodiment also importantly helps to usher in the weightiness of difference, and crucially, how difference is made to matter in people's lived *embodied* experience. Within a theory of complex embodiment "the physical body's significance is indebted to social meaning, but not wholly; rather it also has its own capacities to shape experience" (Pitts-Taylor 60). Yet, it is important to acknowledge the plethora of ways in which the possibilities to shape one's experience may be circumscribed through the physical mattering (Povinelli 203-204) of power relations. At the same time that there is such a large imperative to attend to difference, I am reminded of Victoria Pitts-Taylor's assertion: "[b]ecause bodies are differently located in the social world, and social hierarchies affect the experiences of body-subjects, embodiment is as much a site of difference as it is a site of commonality" (45). This commonality is something that Celeste Snowber capitalizes on in her theorizing of embodied enquiry where she asserts we do not have but are bodies, and regularly prompts the reader to recognize that as human beings we are all experiencing our bodies-even if that experience is different. There is a balance that is needed then between attending to difference and

acknowledging commonalities, and I think the notion of complex embodiment could help us negotiate that particular tension.

→ You know, as I continue thinking about it, this proposition of the body as palimpsest(uous) has been growing on me Paloma, it really has been. I can see what you are so excited about: proposing the body as palimpsest(uous) is in part an acknowledgement of “the fluidity of boundaries between body-subjects and the world” (Pitts-Taylor), for bodies are messy. The metaphorization and theorization of the body as palimpsest(uous) allows for a generative and approachable way to engage the multiplicity of a body’s sensuous experiences and multiple enactments while also acknowledging the importance of narrative, I think. Providing room for the expression of experiences of multiply enacted and experienced bodies is significant for “bodies...are, importantly, often lived through narratives (original emphasis, Blackman 12). Indeed, the premise of palimpsestuous relationality may be particularly well placed in our current postmodern and neoliberal context to offer people a means in which to tell stories of their bodies, in “a voice they can recognize as their own” (Frank 7).

Abstraction

I have been thinking a lot about how I was trying to convey dance to you the other day. I kept using the word ‘simple.’ That is, “when I dance through ideas or difficult concepts things are rendered simple.” Or however it was that I put it to you. And you, rightly so I think, warned me that it seemed like I was being romantic about dance and that it seemed to you characterizing dance like I was could be dangerous because it was a slippery way of framing a body’s knowing. You warned me that the ways in which I was describing and characterizing dance could lead to essentialism and you wondered if my framework could adequately take into account difference. (Those are the notes I took

Commented [37]: Paloma Kwel: Cece, as we had agreed to I shared some of our initial thinking with J.L. and he thought we have something worthwhile going on here. He did ask this particular question here: “This sounds quite similar to what Frank says, and you put the two in conversation here. Yet it seems to me that the two conceptualize bodies rather differently. Is this divergence (if, indeed, you see the two as approaching embodiment differently) worth acknowledging/addressing here?” This is a zinger of a question. And we need to think more about it!

Commented [38]: Cecelia Fae: Part of me really wants to leave it unaddressed. A palimpsest brings very disparate texts and ideas together and part of engaging with a palimpsest as a whole is surrendering to the strangeness—you know I just have the image of many small boats tied to a dock and the boats just gently bumping and nudging each other as the water is made to move. Leaving these two quotes unacknowledged feels a little like letting to different boats bump and knock. Cool things can be seen in the water in the aftermath of the boats’ impacts, little eddies of insights that unfurl and then fade.

Commented [39]: Cecelia Fae: But another part of me wants to speak to one of those little eddies of impact. Yet, as I speak to it, it already begins to fade. I think Blackman and Frank have different understandings, not only of bodies but also of narratives. The differences in how they are conceptualizing bodies and narratives echo each other, but I think I can explain it best around narratives. I think Frank is speaking to the enactment of personal narrative, stories that people tell of themselves and their understanding of their experiences. The possibilities of what stories we can tell however are to a great extent delimited by power relations, and this is what I understand Blackman to be alluding to when she suggests our bodies are often lived through narratives. The eddy that kicks up for me when both of these similar but different boats knock together is, I think, what Judith Butler is trying to get me to understand in *The Psychic Life of Power*, which is the particular tension around power and self-knowing. Butler explains that the subject is “the linguistic occasion for the individual to achieve and reproduce intelligibility, the linguistic condition of its existence and agency” (11). Therefore, I understand that narratively acknowledging oneself, whether through a personal storying of experience or through the enactment of power relations, requires a process of subjectation. Where Blackman and Frank seem to differ in this particular bump-of-boats is through the main manner in which they are considering power and while both forms of power concern subjectation, Butler importantly reminds us that “[t]he power that initiates the subject fails to remain continuous with the power that is the subject’s agency” (12). The particular eddy that Blackman and Frank’s boats create is a reminder that, to borrow Judith Butler’s words, “the subject is neither fully determined by power nor fully determining of power (but significantly and partially both), the subject exceeds the logic of noncontradiction” (17).

Commented [40]: Paloma Kwel: To quote Lillian Smith, “remember that the concrete is always different while the abstract has a deadly sameness” (189).

Commented [41]: Cecelia Fae: =) I also really enjoy how Rich destabilizes confidence in the use of the qualifier “always.” See pg. 214.

down from our conversation, anyway.) Oh, Paloma I've been really thinking about it and I think dance helps me avoid abstracting the concept of the body. It's not that things are rendered simpler in some vague romantic sense, but that it is very difficult for me to abstract the concept of the body when I am moving. I don't know, I just can't stop thinking about Adrienne Rich's "Notes Towards a Politics of Location," and her warning about the seductive trap of abstraction. Rich writes, "To say 'the body' lifts me away from what has given me a primary perspective. To say 'my body' reduces the temptation to grandiose assertions" (215). Thinking alongside Rich has had me **moving through questions in the studio** like: what does it feel like for me move as a multiply enacted body? Or how do I experience the palimpsestuousness of my body?

I have also been thinking about how this idea of abstraction might be really useful for pushing our thinking around how to make our main arguments. Or in other words how not to fall into abstraction when making our arguments.

I had to re-read Rich's work because it's been a while since I read it last. Ah! Yes, I think you are onto something here. Explaining dance as helping displace the academic and privileged tendency to articulate through the abstraction of concepts is very useful in helping me to better understand how it is you understand your dance research. Thanks for sharing your thoughts. As you've explained it, I can better see that you are trying not to boil things down in the same sense that your wording of "simplifying things" led me to initially understand. I also really like your suggestion of trying to avoid the abstraction of the body in the writing of our ideas, but Cece, how do we go about writing about bodies in a grounded way that does not perpetuate abstraction?? I don't mean this defensively like- there is no other way forward, but genuinely like how?? I can sort of imagine dancing getting around abstraction, after all it is an individual moving through their particular body in an effort to elaborate an idea, but I can't really

Commented [42]: Cecelia Fae: I've actually choreographed a little dance about these questions. Here's the link: https://youtu.be/_jUjAXnv3FQ

*imagine how to write about the body and not abstract it. *sigh* Now I will be the one left puzzling and puzzling over abstraction until my puzzler is sore!*

J.M.S.'s Use of the Palimpsestuous Bodies Metaphor

How is the author of the letters (because we are now questioning whether it is J.M.S.) in the PBP understanding the body to be palimpsestuous? Cece, I think we should start by trying to answer this question and I think in answering this question we may come to a decision on what we would like to focus on in our publication. =)

Sure, I can think of a few ways that The Author (I am certain it is not J.M.S., by the way) is playing with the idea of the body as palimpsestuous and palimpsestic. I'll start first by forwarding what might be the most obvious. In "Fissures" and "How's Your Knee?" there is mention of injury, physical and emotional, and in this way I think the author is playing with the idea of the body as palimpsestic. The accumulation of scars and experiences of the body parallel the wear and use patterns of a palimpsest, including wax drippings, pumice scrapes, marginalia, etc. that accrue on a palimpsest over the centuries. If I wrote a compendium of the scars on my body it might remind you of a compendium of markings a conservationist might write for a palimpsest they are working on.

Furthermore, certain scars may fade over time, or become prominent in certain situations over others. Although I am not altogether certain the fading and revival of scars is as relevant to a palimpsest manuscript.

It may be one of the most obvious, to use your wording, connection between bodies and palimpsests, especially seeing as some palimpsests are in fact made out of animal skins, but it is still worth thinking about. An extension from the accumulation of scarring on both skins is that such a collection of markings brings along with it messiness. Each marking, once made, is taken in relation to other markings. Moreover, each marking

Commented [43]: Cecelia Fae: Paloma, I am finding the variation in tone of voice between the letters and the stories to be really gruff and jarring. I know I can get annoying with my uneasiness about accepting JMS as the author of the Upper Text, but doesn't the dramatic shift get you thinking that maybe JMS didn't write the stories at least?

Commented [44]: Paloma Kwel: Idk Cece, I mean have you read Cloud Atlas? The author, David Mitchell, is purposefully changing his narrative voice and to great effect. Moreover, we are studying a palimpsest for goodness sake. Can't you just accept the major tone shift between the stories and the letters to be palimpsestic! A palimpsest is a set of unrelated texts. Unrelated in terms of narrative tone, theme, etc...

Commented [45]: Cecelia Fae: But we just don't know how much of the text Barnabie Dove added. What if he wrote one or more of the stories??? Like "The Needle," maybe the fact that it's the only story to use footnotes is like a type of clue! You've read S., what if the footnotes are clues to the identity of the real author of the PBP! How come you are so hesitant to even consider this possibility?!

Commented [46]: Paloma Kwel: Cece, there is A LOT invested in keeping the PBP as a JMS authored palimpsest and not a JMS & B. Dove authored palimpsest. A Lot.

We are both trying to start careers in academia, which is hard enough as it is. We definitely don't need to become known as the PBP-JMS Conspiracy Theorists, okay?

Commented [47]: Cecelia Fae: Not "okay."

Commented [48]: Cecelia Fae: So, this is an exciting find! I was looking online for information on Barnabie Dove, you know basic bio details. I stumbled across a few sources that spoke about a major decades-old injury Dove had. It seems he chronicles his recovery over the years with a close friend and that friend actually kept all their letters. I'll send you the link via email...Anyways, something struck me as familiar so I went back to the PBP--Paloma, "The Needle" sounds really really close to the accounts Barnabie Dove gives of his own injury in these letters.

Commented [49]: Paloma Kwel: I want to read these letters! How similar are we talking about?

Commented [50]: Cecelia Fae: I mean very similar. Sometimes the same turn of phrase is used in both the short story and the letter. I think it's enough to at least initiate a deeper dive into this B. Dove as (co-)author argument.

Commented [51]: Paloma Kwel: Hmm, it's hard to argue for coincidence when you don't believe in them outside of the academy. Okay, I think you are right. There is enough here to start searching more thoroughly. Coffee tomorrow to figure out our next few steps?

has a story, or multiple stories, that could be told to accompany, and each story would relate the marking/scarring to other markings and scarrings. In other words, one can see how easy it would be to think of scarring and markings as relating palimpsestuously.

I have also been thinking about the idea of boundedness in relation to bodies and palimpsests. Bodies can be considered bounded by skin, or in a more subservise and critical manner we can begin to understand bodies as unbounded, as extending beyond the skin. Thinking through the body as unbounded creates a parallel (a rather clumsy one I admit, but one nonetheless!) between a palimpsest bound and disbound. In both manifestations the palimpsest maintains its ability to be understood in reference to a whole.

Okay, I'll run with your "clumsy parallel" =) I would suppose however that there would be contestation as to which mode, bounded by skin or unbounded referenced the whole body. This is in part what makes bodies so elusive to think about. Bodies are included and maintained in a variety of paradigms and each paradigm has a distinctive way of conceptualizing the body and in each way there is a particular play with and engagement of power. I apologize I am going off on a tangent here! I agree with you, I think the author is playing with ideas of boundedness. This is perhaps most clearly the case in "As a Shooting Star," but it is also happening, I think in a slightly different way, in "Fissures" and in "Pulling Knapweed" as well.

I think that in playing with unboundedness as a palimpsestic characteristic of bodies the author also begins to play with the idea of I don't know for lack of a better word I'm going to say "unknowableness"? I think unknowability is an aspect of palimpsest because of their palimpsestuous structure. There are always scripts that are faded, where parts are lost to illegibility and yet there remains the sense, at least for me, that even if those

sections of script are illegible or thoroughly erased beyond resuscitation, they are still integral to understanding that particular palimpsest. This is similar to bodies, I think.

I am not sure I am completely following you on this one. Could you maybe point to an example in the short stories?

I am not expressing what I am thinking clearly. Um, let me think. I guess I feel this unknowableness factor the most in relation to "Fissures." It seems to me, and I know parts of that story are actually unknowable because of mold-rot, but it seems to me that this sense of unknowability arises from the palimpsestuous relationality between all the aspects of ourselves, including but of course not limited to the mental and emotional and physical and spiritual aspects of ourselves. I'm not sure I know where I am going with this. Let's just drop the thread here for now and I'll pick it up later if I figure out how to make sense of it? =)

Sure. =) No sweat, hehe you are just showing me the sweatiness of it all.

I'm going to add in here what we spoke about yesterday over coffee: the major way the author-who-is-probably-not-J.M.S.-but-who-could-be-Barnabie Dove captures the body as palimpsestuous. =)

We understand the major way the author shows the body to be palimpsestuous is through writing stories that showcase the sociality of the body and the ways in which we are sustained by a palimpsestuous web of relations. All of the stories suggest this notion of palimpsestuous sociality in our opinion. Cecelia, yesterday you spoke about a comparison with the paleographic object when you suggested that the process of palimpsesting necessarily compromises a script's distinctiveness even as the focus tends to remain on separating and treating each script as separate. You suggested that this resembles Judith Butler's discussion of bodily autonomy and how the notion is

Commented [52]: Paloma Kwel: I was speaking to J.L. about this the other day and he had a really fantastic insight. He thought that perhaps an element of the unknowableness is that there may always be scripts that have been written, but have yet to reappear in a legible form. This would make those unknowable scripts no less real, even if/though we can't (yet) perceive them. Classic J.L., he just rattles off this thought provoking insight in the middle of the hallway and then finishes with "but that's just a thought"!

Commented [53]: Cecelia Fae: Yea, just an amazing one!

sustained in paradox. The idea that bodies are mutually co-constituted (Connell 47-48) is significant because the body is made meaningful through power relations enacted through the repetition of interactions. Power relations come to act as living social scripts across and through our bodies, which accrue power as they are enacted and re-enacted and re-enacted into being through our interactions with other beings, including non-human beings. We understand the author's stories to be a reflection about how certain living social scripts are experienced, perpetuated and given meaning through a particular time, space and body. To summarize then I understand the PBP to be forwarding the idea of the body as palimpsestuous in an effort to create a framework that can offer greater accessibility in understanding the relationality of power relations. The concept of palimpsestuousness is itself a moving concept for at its most basic level a palimpsest can be understood as always in flux, and therefore the framework of palimpsestuousness must also retain a level of malleability and fluidity. Ingraining such a recognition of fluidity into the notion of the body as palimpsestuous enables one to account for the constant movement of power in the web of relations that gives the body meaning.

I think it is worth mentioning here too though that while the short stories offered in the PBP attempt to show the sociality of the body they sometimes falter in being consistently critical in a feminist way. We must not lose sight of "the Nugget's" critiques.

→ Yes, I agree with you here. We must not lose sight of power.

Our Focus

Despite the lack of interest in the neo-palimpsest literature about the contents of the PBP, I find this idea of the body as palimpsestuous very thrilling. I think our focus should be upon expanding the author's ideas, but in which direction I'm not too sure. I

am struck by the relevancy of the proposition of the body as palimpsest. Maybe we could start with the question: what work is palimpsestuousness doing in our understanding of the body? (It's a little rough, I know, but maybe a good jumping off point?)

Paloma, here you move straight into suggesting that the proposition of a body [how, oh how do we combat this abstraction running rampant in our thinking right now??], this proposition of a palimpsestuous body as so relevant. But I'm kinda wondering if you have given any thought to who it might be relevant to? I am going to push back against setting off straight away in a celebratory direction and suggest we perhaps think about the limitations, even the dangers, of enacting the idea that all bodies (because "a body" is supposed to include "all bodies" here right?) are palimpsestuous. Some useful questions for us to keep in mind:

- What are the limitations of the metaphor?
- Who is the metaphor useful to & why?
- Who is the metaphor harmful to & how is it potentially harmful?

Cece, your questions are always zingers. Okay, first off, thank you for asking these questions and for pushing my thinking. This is not something I can answer without significant thought. So I'll think about it, and get back to you when I have something (hopefully) generative to contribute.

I'm not asking these questions as though I have the answer or anything. The questions just kinda popped into my head after reading Leanne Simpsons' *As We Have Always Done*. This is an example of what I was thinking about when I wrote those questions. There is an inconsistent, or maybe not inconsistent because this type of critical engagement runs throughout the whole Upper Text of the PBP...so maybe there is a lack

of sustained critical feminist engagement with certain notions in J.M.S's (or whoever wrote this) text, for instance with the notion of settler colonialism. I read Leanne Simpson's chapter "The Sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples' Bodies" and it made me think of the "As a Shooting Star" story. Simpson writes about how certain ideas are acceptable to the oppressor right now and thus offer easy advances in challenging the structure of settler colonialism, but how these wins "only give the illusion of real change."

Commented [54]: Paloma Kwel: Mhmm, I read the chapter. "It is not acceptable to wear a headdress to a dance party, but it is acceptable to dance on stolen land..." (Simpson 113).

Let's workshop these questions for sure though! You take the first swing at it. =D

→ *Okay, first swing: The metaphor of the body as palimpsest(uous) is dangerous. It is dangerous because it creates a potential separation from physical matters- (Elizabeth Povinelli: "we need to understand carnality as not merely a juridical and political maneuver, nor merely as a social tactic, but as a physical mattering, just as the intimate event and the genealogical society are also physical matters, facts of carnality as well as of discourse" (204-205).)-a separation that renders physical matters less immediately intense. It is my privilege that enables me to be comfortable with this distancing. Indeed, this distance is what allows for my excitement and what provokes the play that I find delightful in the metaphor of palimpsestuous bodies. But it is a distance I am comfortable with because of my privilege. Because I have and am a body easily read as hegemonic cis-feminine, white, upper class, educated, and able-bodied I am therefore utterly intelligible according to current societal power relations. I actively benefit and propagate power structures that privilege me while they oppress and cause violence and harm to others. This benefit, this distancing, creates a space to play with concepts of bodies and embodiment that can be/could be/are dangerous to others.*

The reduction of power relations to scripts written on the body is a reduction to narratives. But which narratives? Whose narratives? And to what end? And this reduction, so the metaphor suggests, is lived-by-and-through all people- but the

metaphor is useless without accounting for difference. If someone feels they are being made to forcibly live by-and-through a script not of their choosing- that is violent. The reduction that this metaphor presupposes, as it stands right now un-nuanced, is also a violence.

→ Hmm, okay. Your comments have me thinking about what Daniel Heath Justice writes concerning the power and danger of stories, especially stories imposed upon people (2). So then maybe the metaphor is only helpful to those in hegemonic positionalities, for instance like white colonial settlers in Canada, but potentially harmful to others? Especially, if it is an outsider describing and dictating which scripts are written, where, and with what prominence and significance? In which case one must proceed with caution and be willing to toss the metaphor all together, it seems.

→ *Can you elaborate more on what you mean above? But I think you have posed another important question: Who is this metaphor for? Is it even viable to suggest it could be for everyone, every body?*

→ I was just thinking that people who are marginalized by Canadian settler colonialism's anti-Indigenous and anti-black schemata do not need another metaphor for how to understand their bodies to be dictated to them by two super privileged, young, educated, white women who want 'to do good'. You know what I mean? Maybe we don't have to buy into the universalist positivist (St. Pierre 24) notion of having our ideas add on to what has come before thereby perpetuating the violent abstraction of the body. Also I think we should seriously think about this: How does power render the metaphor intelligible to us, in all our privilege, and at what cost?

→ *Ooumph. Okay, so I need to think more about these questions you've just dropped like one tun stones into my belly. But they did prompt me to engage with Leanne Simpson's book As We Have Always Done again. I think we need to operationalize*

(such an icky word but I can't think of another right now!) radical listening, (which is a concept forwarded by Minnie Bruce Pratt 31 and Sara Ahmed para. 59) to help our white and privileged selves do three things as outlined by Simpson: 1) to learn to struggle & understand that our country is a death dance for Indigenous people, 2) to stop ourselves from plundering the land & using Indigenous Peoples bodies to fuel our (the) economy, and 3) to find a way of living in the world that is not based on violence & exploitation. Now where the palimpsestuous body fits into all this (???) I am no longer certain.

→ Oh don't worry about where the palimpsestuous body fits, the pieces of the puzzle will fall into place. What you have outlined has made me think about global to local connections. Simpson's three points (imperatives?) are in effect necessary reminders to look globally at how our whiteness and lifestyle and daily choices, for instance around food consumption, for instance like eating quinoa, contribute to exploitation and violence and the use of Indigenous Peoples's bodies for the fuel of the global economy...and by extension our bodies. Colonialism is expansive- the local disposition extends also to the global.

So, now what? I know I have so much to think about. Wanna share a pot of tea and talk about where things should go from here? I am free tomorrow and Thursday after 10:00am and before 1:45pm. =)

Appendix C: Dove's Transcription

Okay, can we just take a moment to talk about Dove's methods of transcription right now?! What the hell man??? Those "Transcriber's Notes" are ba-lo-gna, bologna I say! Was this man actually respected as a transcriber? Because it seems like he just comes right out and says, I made stuff up when I couldn't read what was written before hand. And then there is no legend used for added notation and clarification on his behalf to signify words he could not make out. There is nothing like that. Please tell me this is an anomaly in the field of New Manuscripts?

Feeling a bit spicy towards Ol' Barnabie are we? =D haha You can let your hackles down, this is one of the reasons scholars pay no mind to the contents of the palimpsest just who actually wrote it. It is also unusual for Barnabie Dove as well. This transcript looks very little like his other work, and as he so "humbly" mentions in his foreword he actually was rather respected in the niche field of transcribing neo-palimpsests. He was so familiar with the particular scribes writing within the Hypster neo-palimpsest movement that he often mentions in his Transcriber's Notes who he speculates to have scribed the palimpsest. He even usually provides a range of years he believes the neo-palimpsest to have been written because he knows each scribe's hand so well he can tell what is their earlier and older styles of writing.

Hmm, that's actually really cool about being able to date the scribe's writing, but that still leaves me confused as to what the heck is going on with the Foreword and Transcriber's Notes. It just doesn't seem to be adding up for me.

Cece, I'm not sure what you want me to say here. You are as aware as I am that transcription is fallible as a method of capturing information and translating it into a different format. Even highly experienced transcribers will make mistakes adding

Commented [55]: Cecelia Fae: So if it is written in the third letter of J.M.S. that titles are not given to each of the short stories...what are we to make of the titles provided by Dove??

Commented [56]: Paloma Kwel: Hmm, not sure. Maybe Dove added them? Maybe he added stuff that wasn't even in the original neo-palimpsest?

Commented [57]: Cecelia Fae: Okay, kind of a scary question, but what else did he add then?

Commented [58]: Paloma Kwel: I've never thought to ask that question before.
In the words of Lindsay Eales (70):
<blink> <blink>

things in or leaving things out by accident. As Sandra Kirby, Lorraine Greaves and Colleen Reid point out the transcript “can never replace the actual voice of the participant [or in our case the actual author], but is only a rather imperfect representation of it” (207). And for goodness sake, monks in scriptoriums were constantly adding things into the manuscripts they were transcribing.

Paloma, seriously? You are quoting a second year Feminist Research Methodologies textbook at me right now? And then you insist upon equating the addition of silly drawings and phallic imagery by monks to a flat out admission of adding to the text when it was difficult to make out the original writing by B. Dove himself? Paloma, he actually *actually* says “where I felt like I knew what the author wished to convey I filled in the gaps.” I’m not attacking transcription as a method of data collection and preservation. And I apologize if I made you feel silly by poking fun at the Field of New-Manus. earlier. What I wanted to do was just have a discussion about B. Dove’s assertion. He writes that he has filled in the gaps, but doesn’t let us know where the gaps are. What if he manufactured the whole palimpsest to fill in the missing gap in J.M.S.’s life history? What if the letters are real, but B. Dove felt that J.M.S. didn’t properly think through her idea about the palimpsestuous body, so he didn’t include her stories but instead wrote his own? I really don’t think it is enough to say, well we won’t pay too much attention to what is being said in the PBP, but instead focus on debating who indeed wrote it. If the larger field isn’t questioning it there is no reason why we can’t. We really need to think about the influence any transcriber may have on the text they are working on: how their way of relating with the world informs their assumptions and opinions and ideas and how it all ends up reflected in the text through punctuation, what words are intelligible, etc. If B. Dove was only the transcriber of the PBP questions about the influence of the transcriber on the text

would be an important consideration, but seeing as B. Dove admits to penning portions-no one knows how great or how small- of the PBP we also need to consider him as an author. Paloma, **WE NEED TO CONSIDER HIM AS AN AUTHOR.**

*Okay, I need a week to think about this. It's easier for you Cece, coming from outside the field to make these arguments, to take this tack in your thinking, but I'm inside it. J.M.S. as the author of the Upper Text of the PBP is a norm in my field, it is a common assumption. There is no reward in challenging the commonly held opinion. No J.M.S. scholar is going to give us a ribbon for challenging their life's work. *sigh**

Commented [59]: Paloma Kwel: CECE! GO LOOK AT THE 5TH PHOTO B. DOVE INCLUDES IN THE TRANSCRIPTION OF THE PBP. AND THEN PULL UP A PIC OF THE TRIPTYCH MANUSCRIPTS LOGO ON YOUR COMPUTER.

Commented [60]: Cecelia Fae: How have we not noticed that before! That has to be a watermark of the Triptych Manuscripts logo. Which means that the logo was already embedded in the paper before it was even palimpsested. (!!)

Commented [61]: Paloma Kwel: We need to consider Barnabie Dove as sole creator of the palimpsest???

Commented [62]: Cecelia Fae: Oh my word. I think you might be right. I'M GONNA POOP MY PANTS AND I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S FROM EXCITEMENT OR BECAUSE I'M ALL OF A SUDDEN SCARED.

Commented [63]: Paloma Kwel: hahahahahaha =D

Commented [64]: Paloma Kwel: Wanna meet for coffee? I've processed a bit more and think we should chat about this. This tension needs to be addressed.

Appendix D: The Illuminated Watermark Business

This sounds like the title of a young adult mystery novel! I can dig it!

Okay, but if we are going to make the argument that B. Dove is the sole creator of the palimpsest then we have to answer this question: Why would one person create the PBP, but then play it off like it was a transcription of an actual neo-palimpsest. Like he even made a book and took pictures of it for goodness sake! What's the point of all that effort? Why try to fool people?

Maybe Dove never made the PBP to trick everyone into thinking it was actually J.M.S. who authored it; remember he never suggested the initials "J.M.S" in any of his notes. Barnabie Dove had no control over how the PBP was taken up, the power relations in the academic industrial complex need to be taken more squarely into account here, I think. Then again, maybe the point was to trick everyone, or to show that people could be tricked because they only look for what suits their arguments and research questions. Maybe it was all an elaborate argument about the processes of amplification and de-amplification in research. I'm not sure Paloma if we will ever be able to figure out why B. Dove did it, or even definitely how much of the PBP he wrote- but I think it's all of it. I think it's more about putting the possibility out there that B. Dove was at the very least a co-author of the PBP, because we think the world should also hold the possibility of Dove's authorship of the PBP. I think sometimes research is all about creating a world with more possibility.

Commented [65]: Paloma Kwel: "Possibility is not a luxury; it is as crucial as bread" Judith Butler, Undoing Gender, p. 29

Commented [66]: Cecelia Fae: "Isn't it splendid to think of all the things there are to find out about? It just makes me feel glad to be alive-it's such an interesting world. It wouldn't be half so interesting if we know all about everything, would it? There'd be no scope for the imagination then, would there?" -Anne of Green Gables, authored by Lucy Maud Montgomery.

Lower Text - Scratchings

Roger I. Simon 2006 The Terrible Gift: Museums and the Possibility of Hope Without Consolation

...the possibility of learning anew how to live in the present with each other, not only by opening the question to what and to whom I must be accountable, but also by considering what attention, learning, and actions such accountability requires (Simon, 2005). (pg. 188)

However, as Jocelyn Létourneau (2004, p.12) asserts... This work is what follows when...ask of themselves "not what they must remember in order to be, but what it means, in light of the experience of the past, to be what they are now" (27). (pg. 189)

...the practices of inheritance... (pg. 189)

...as a cultural inheritance... (pg. 189)

I will further consider the challenges to a hopeful futurity raised when one recognized traces of the past as a difficult gift that offers little in the way of consolation. (pg. 191)

Gift

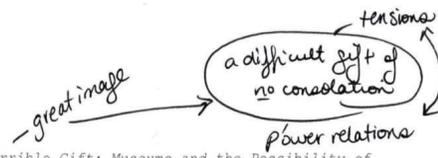
This gift may not be deserved or even wanted, but it is what one is entitled to and responsible for because it has been addressed to you. (pg. 194)

relationality; so often one concept, position cannot exist without the other

It is a moment in which learning is not simply the acquisition of new information, but an acceptance of another's testamentary address as a possible inheritance, a difficult "gift". (pg. 196)

...a problematic inheritance... (pg. 203)

|| requires constant renewal || ending in ambiguity



Commented [67]: Cecelia Fae: Paloma, I've uploaded pictures of my studio/research notes. Hopefully it helps you engage with my dance work better. =)

Commented [68]: Cecelia Fae: Oh goodness, I guess I should explain what these notes are. Do they look familiar? I ran a basic search for the snippets of text that B. Dove calls "The Scratchings" of the Lower Text and it turns out I could identify all the snippets! So I grouped them together, and have allowed them to form the foundation of my thinking as I choreograph a movement piece.

10 You can think of palimpsestuousness as a qualifying characteristic of inheritance.

Sarah Ahmed_2006_The Orient and Other Others

As Fanon's work shows, after all, bodies are shaped by histories of colonialism, which makes the world "white" as a world that inherited or already given. (pg. 111)

Such histories, we might say, surface on the body, or even shape how bodies surface (see Ahmed 2004a). (pg. 111)

Rather than othering being simply a form of negation, it can also be described as a form of extension. (pg. 115) arabesque, étendue

We do this by thinking about whiteness as form of bodily inheritance. (pg. 121)

Whiteness becomes a social inheritance; in receiving whiteness as a gift... (pg. 125)

Inheritance can be understood as both bodily and historical... (pg. 125)

Indeed, the word inheritance includes two meanings: to receive and to possess. (pg. 126)

It is important that whiteness is not reducible to white skin or even to "something" we can have or be, even if we pass through whiteness. (pg. 135)

How does what I take to be "mine" make "me" in relation to "you"? (pg. 145)

How could I move this? Make it move through me?

Elizabeth A. Povinelli_2006_The Intimate Event & Genealogical Society

The materiality of inheritance is, in short, a metaphysics of substance that posits a material legacy beyond the control of a person or society. (pg. 203)

If, however, we are interested in the maintenance of the truth of intimate sovereignty as a means of liberal empire, then we need to

EXTENDING ↔ GRABBING
lines of power of body / claim

a form of tension?

links to Simon

!!!

2.

movements that embody your inheritance?
 ↓
 Sharonella & Schuyler Her
 *stop choreographers
 ↓
 echo these dances/movements, a kind of stuttered inheritance?

confront the question of whether the flesh should be seen merely as a juridical and political maneuver, merely as a social tactic, or also as a physical mattering. (pgs. 203-204)

How did colonial powers variously deploy an ideology of social deracination across the landscape of empire? This latter question was focused in particular on how the white metropolis was able to exfoliate from its ideological commitment to wealth and freedom the actual conditions of colonial totalitarianism, rape, and genocide and how this representation was able to stage this exploitation as civilization, transforming the act of theft into the generosity of the gift. (pgs. 223-224)

...the more they dragged inheritance deeper into the body... (pg. 236)

Palimpsestuousness is also about resisting the hegemonization of difference and bodies. It is not about erasing difference, but of acknowledging it.

This is speaking to the paradox of bodily autonomy in that it is showcasing the ways that singularity is sought for amongst multiplicity.

Inheritance is embedded in a web of other concerns.

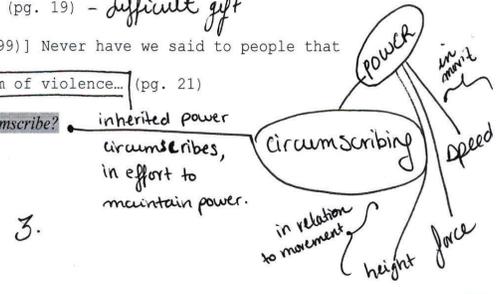
Sharon Rosenberg_2003_Neither Forgotten nor Fully Remembered: Tracing an Ambivalent Public Memory on the 10th Anniversary of the Montréal Massacre

...but for what it might mean to live in relation with the past, endeavoring to face its claim on the present of one's life. (pg. 11)

...disagreeable inheritance... (pg. 19) - difficult gift

[quoted from Petrowski (1999)] Never have we said to people that indifference is also a form of violence... (pg. 21)

In what ways does inheritance circumscribe?



3.

Commented [69]: Paloma Kwel: Okay, so I know I said I couldn't wait to engage with your dancing, but I'm kinda at a loss right now about how I am supposed to engage with your dance research. =(

Commented [70]: Cecelia Fae: This is one of the reasons why I thought it would be worthwhile including dance into our project! I would push back against the idea that there is a specific way in which you are "supposed to engage" with my dance. But I would say that engaging my dance in an academic research context does require a shift from the way you might approach engaging an academic text, what that shift looks like is definitely dependent on you though.

Commented [71]: Paloma Kwel: Cece, I appreciate you trying to give me space here to find what dance-research means to me but it's all just feeling a bit too floppy for me right now. I'm watching the dance clips and genuinely wishing to engage what I know is your thoughtful theorizing and all I am thinking the whole time is "what does she mean by that?" and "what is she arguing here?"

Commented [72]: Cecelia Fae: Ah I see. Is it helpful if I say that I think critical dance-research is most disruptive in an academic context because it is asking a heart-lead engagement instead of an intellect-lead engagement? It is my hope that my dances are generative of a variety of thoughts and feelings but I have not choreographed them to be representative (e.g. lowering my hands from above my head to chest level while wiggling my fingers is meant to represent falling rain). I haven't choreographed the dance so that anyone viewing it will be able to pull out a succinct argument. That's what I meant by saying the dance isn't like an academic text. The idea isn't that you will watch the dances and then be able to clearly formulate a response to questions like "What was Cecelia's reason for dancing?" "What were Cecelia's main arguments?" Instead I want to invite you into a greater

Commented [73]: Paloma Kwel: Okay. You are pushing me here Cecelia. "awkward laugh" So what kind of questions should I be asking then?

Commented [74]: Cecelia Fae: Maybe questions that are similar in sentiment to: "what did you notice?" "What did you notice and how did it make you feel?" "What did you notice and how did it make you feel using our larger project as the broader context?"

Commented [75]: Cecelia Fae: Can I be cheesy for a second and make an analogy to a palimpsest? I've chosen dance in large part because it lends itself as an embodied way of knowing that, as Hui Niu Wilcox (104) argues, can critique the predominant modes of knowledge production that tend to

Commented [76]: Paloma Kwel: I am so deep into palimpsests right now your ridiculous analogy is actually working for me. So including dance in our project about palimpsests isn't just a statement about pushing back against "Eurocentric and male-dominated modes of knowledge

Commented [77]: Cecelia Fae: !!! =D !!! YEAH! So how does our project by bringing dance and writing together suggest the interrelatedness of modes of knowledge production and their incongruity (Dillon 34)? How are these different ways of creating knowledge understood in our project as intimate an

Commented [78]: Paloma Kwel: ...Or brought together and held apart! Okay, okay! So there is a theoretical layer of palimpsestuous engagement that is informing your insistence upon dance AND you are playing with the embodied sense of disorientation that engaging with a palimpsest can generate.

Commented [79]: Cecelia Fae: "Kindly demanding" hehehe Venture all and see what disorientation brings! Muahahaha ;)

Is one aspect of privilege being able to choose when to acknowledge your rightful inheritance?
 Here I am thinking esp. of settler colonialism.

Sandra Blakeslee & Matthew Blakeslee_2007_The Body Has A Mind of Its Own: How Body Maps in Your Brain Help You Do (Almost) Everything Better

* Your self does not end where your flesh ends, but suffuses and blends with the world, (including other beings) (pg. 3) *→ could this be linked to the ahmed quotes?*

In real life there is no such thing as a disembodied consciousness. (pg. 12)

Sensation doesn't make sense except in reference to your embodied self. (pg. 14)

But the mind is not a metaphysical dangler on the brain; it is embodied. (pg. 195)

||  - twist down + up one side, then the other
 ↓ backwards
 - make ballet-ish jump to extension
 - hand grabs self + tug! spins away
 | spin low 2x
 ↗ jumps down to low: 'prone - by position' (extension)
 - twist out away.
 2 leg extensions to reverse
 // bold sweeping movements

↳ more into "hung up" sequence 4. all about distortion of physical matters

Themes -

- circumscribed circular mat.
- building sense of urgency, caught-ness, awareness
- **POWER** - embody ^{at times} power + distortion
 + flustering urgency
 ↳ flighty? / flaky?
 ↳ **BIG BOLD MOVES**
- * Ending - controlled for flailing
 xxxxxxxx - 9 beats / strums
 sends in ambiguity and "enclosure"

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