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Possible Bodies' Underground Division

introducing

The Trans*Feminist Rendering Programme

at the Citizen Sci-Fi Future Fair

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Pareidolia (/pærɪ'doʊliə/ parr-i-DOH-lee-ə)

is the tendency to interpret a vague stimulus as something known to the observer, such as seeing shapes in clouds, seeing faces in inanimate objects or abstract patterns, or hearing hidden messages in music.

Common examples are perceived images of animals, faces, or objects in cloud formations, the Man in the Moon, the Moon rabbit, and other lunar pareidolia.

The concept of pareidolia may extend to include hidden messages in recorded music played in reverse or at higher- or lower-than-normal speeds, and hearing indistinct voices in random noise such as that produced by air conditioners or fans.

Pareidolia was at one time considered a symptom of human psychosis, but it is now seen as a normal human tendency.

Pareidolia is not confined to humans. Scientists have for years taught computers to use visual clues to "see" faces and other images.

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Ferreira da Silva, D. *In the Raw*

What is it that a black feminist poethics makes available? What can it offer to the task of unthinking the world, of releasing it from the grips of the abstract forms of modern representation and the violent juridic and economic architectures they support? If it is a practice of imaging and thinking (with/in/for) the world, without separability, determinacy, and sequentiality, then it approaches reflection as a kind of study, or as the play of the imagination without the constraints of the understanding. And, if the task is unthinking this world with a view to its end—that is, decolonization, or the return of the total value expropriated from conquered lands and enslaved bodies—the practice would not aim at providing answers but, instead, would involve raising questions that both expose and undermine the Kantian forms of the subject, that is, the implicit and explicit positions of enunciation

—in particular, the loci of decision or judgement or determination—this subject occupies.

Povinelli, E. *Can rocks die?* / *Geontologies*

Yes, sovereignty, discipline, and biopolitics stage, aestheticize, and publicize the dramas of life and death differently. And, yes, starting from the eighteenth century, the anthropological and physical sciences came to conceptualize humans as a single species subject to a natural law governing the life and death of individuals and species. And, yes, these new discourses opened a new relationship between the way that sovereign law organized its powers around life and death and the way that biopolitics did. And, yes, Foucault's quick summary of this transformation as a kind of inversion from the right to kill and let live to the power of making live and letting die should be modified in the light of the fact that contemporary states make live, let die, and kill. And, yes, all sorts of liberalism seem to evidence a biopolitical stain, from settler colonialism to developmental liberalism to full-on neoliberalism. But something is causing these statements to be irrevocably read and experienced through a new drama, not the drama of life and death, but a form of death that begins and ends in Nonlife—namely the extinction of humans, biological life, and, as it is often put, the planet itself—which takes us to a time before the life and death of individuals and species, a time of the geos, of soullessness. The modifying phrase “insofar as” now foregrounds the anthropos as just one element in the larger set of not merely animal life but all Life as opposed to the state of original and radical Nonlife, the vital in relation to the inert, the extinct in relation to the barren. In other words, it is increasingly clear that the anthropos remains an element in the set of life only insofar as Life can maintain its distinction from Death/Extinction and Nonlife. It is also clear that late liberal strategies for governing difference and markets also only work insofar as these distinctions are maintained.

And it is exactly because we can hear “insofar” that we know that these brackets are now visible, debatable, fraught, and anxious. It is certainly the case that the statement “clearly, x humans are more important than y rocks” continues to be made, persuade, stop political discourse. But what interests me in this book is the slight hesitation, the pause, the intake of breath that now can interrupt an immediate assent. This is the formula that is now unraveling:

Life (Life{birth, growth, reproduction} v. Death) v. Nonlife.

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Barad, K. *Transmaterialities*

The narrator's voice continues, “This first stage of lightning is called a stepped leader.” Then the scientist's voice: “You can see the stepped leader coming down here looking for a ground, going back and forth. You can see the tortuous channel it is taking as it divides back and forth.” Look closely, and you can see that the so-called back and forth motion is a discontinuous pattern of flashing (it flashes here and then over there, some distance away), and that some of the gestures are upward rather than downward. That is, what McHarg's film seems to have captured is a stepped leader gesturing toward the earth, variously expressing its yearnings. It is important to keep in mind that this is not a lightning bolt yet or even the birth of one. Stepped leaders are the barely luminous first gestures of a lightning bolt-to-come. What we are witnessing is the potential face of lightning yet to be born — a discontinuous exploration of different possible pathways — before a lightning stroke explodes and shatters the darkness.

Uman points to the fractal-like nature of the stepped leader's musings and attributes this wondering/wandering to a kind of electrical confusion: There are zigs and zags 100 yards long and, within these, other zigs and zags yards long, and within these yet smaller zigs and zags. ... Why is the lightning channel so tortuous? The answer is not known, but some reasonable guesses may be made. The larger-scale tortuosity in the channel (representing, say, tens of yards or

more) is due to the fact that the stepped leader makes such an errant trip to ground. Why does it do this? Possibly various airborne regions of charge (space charge) divert the leader on its trip. More likely, the leader just doesn't know exactly where it wants to go, except that ultimately it wants to move downward. (my emphasis). It is as if the electrons are trying out different paths, feeling out this desiring field, exploring entanglements of yearning, before any discharge to the ground takes place. Remember that the buildup of negative charges (electrons) in the lower portion of the cloud does not resolve itself by a direct channel of electrons making their way to the earth by a stepped leader moving to the ground. Instead, the ground responds next with an upward signal of its own. These gestures are material imaginings, electrical flirtations signaling connections-to-come. Lightning is born of discontinuous spooky-action-at-a-distance signaling in a decidedly queer communication between earth and sky as they exchange gestures toward the other before either exists, signals of the desiring field that animates their intra-active becoming. If this is reminiscent of the indeterminate exploration of the multiple errant pathways of a quantum phenomenon, it may not be that surprising. Lightning is, after all, the luminous activity of strong electromagnetic fields where photons and electrons engage in a quantum exploration of multiple temporalities and polymorphous/polyamorous couplings — the dance of indeterminacy.

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Yusoff, K., *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*

Across the spaces and places of geology, its languages of description and dispossession, the question of the Anthropocene shapeshifts, world making in epochal pronouncements of the “New World” of humanity, world breaking in the formation of the “Ends” of master subjects: Man, History, Civilization. In its brief tenure, the Anthropocene has metamorphosed. It has been taken up in the world, purposed, and put to work as a conceptual grab, materialist history, and cautionary tale of planetary predicament. Equally, this planetary analytic has failed to do the work to properly identify its own histories of colonial earth-writing, to name the masters of broken earths, and to redress the legacy of racialized subjects that geology leaves in its wake. It has failed to grapple with the inheritance of violent dispossession of indigenous land under the auspices of a colonial geo-logics or to address the extractive grammars of geology that labor in the instrumentation and instrumentalization of dominant colonial narratives and their subjective, often subjugating registers that are an ongoing praxis of displacement.

Modern liberalism is forged through colonial violence, and slavery is at least coterminous with its ideas and experiences of freedom, if not with the material root of its historical possibility. Thus the ways in which geology underwrites that continuum—of liberal subjectivity and its historicity—and how geology as a praxis materially carries this relation into the future should matter in an epochal swerve. As the Anthropocene proclaims the language of species life—anthropos—through a universalist geologic commons, it neatly erases histories of racism that were incubated through the regulatory structure of geologic relations. The racial categorization of Blackness shares its natality with mining the New World, as does the material impetus for colonialism in the first instance. This means that the idea of Blackness and the displacement and eradication of indigenous peoples get caught and defined in the ontological wake of geology. The human and its subcategory, the inhuman, are historically relational to a discourse of settler-colonial rights and the material practices of extraction, which is to say that the categorization of matter is a spatial execution, of place, land, and person cut from relation through geographic displacement (and relocation through forced settlement and transatlantic slavery).

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Jemesin, N. K., **The Fifth Season**

“I can’t leave it like this,” she murmurs, almost to herself. The whole area is a swelling, deadly boil ready to burst. The volcano is only the first warning. Most vents in the earth are tiny, convoluted things, struggling to escape through varying layers of rock and metal and their own inertia. They seep and cool and plug themselves and then seep upward again, twisting and winding every which way in the process. This, though, is a gigantic lava tube channeled straight up from wherever the garnet obelisk has gone, funneling pure Earth-hate toward the surface. If nothing is done, the whole region will soon blow sky-high, in a massive explosion that will almost surely touch off a Season.

She cannot believe the Fulcrum has left things like this.

So Syenite stabs herself into that churning, building heat, and tears at it with all the fury she feels at seeing Allia, this was Allia, this was a human place, there were people here. People who didn’t deserve to die because of *me* or because they were too stupid to let sleeping obelisks lie, or because they dared to dream of a future. No one deserves to die for that.

It’s almost easy. This is what orogenes do, after all, and the hot spot is ripe for her use. The danger lies in not using it, really. If she takes in all that heat and force without channeling it elsewhere, it will destroy her. But fortunately—she laughs to herself, and her whole body shakes with it—she’s got a volcano to choke off.

So she curls the fingers of one hand into a fist, and sears down its throat with her awareness, not burning but cooling, turning its own fury back on it to seal every breach. She forces the growing magma chamber back, back, down, down—and as she does so, she deliberately drags together the strata in overlapping patterns so that each will press down on the one below it and keep the magma down, at least until it finds another, slower way to wend its way to the surface. It’s a delicate sort of operation, for all that it involves millions of tons of rock and the sorts of pressures that force diamonds into existence. But Syenite is a child of the Fulcrum, and the Fulcrum has trained her well.

She opens her eyes to find herself in Innon’s arms, with the ship heaving beneath her feet. Blinking in surprise, she looks up at Innon, whose eyes are wide and wild.

He notices that she’s back,

and the expressions of relief and fear on his face are both heartening and sobering.

“I told everyone you would not kill us,” he says, over the churning of the sea spray and the shouts of his crew. She looks around and sees them frantically trying to lower the sails, so that they can have more control amid a sea that is suddenly anything but placid. “Please try not to make me a liar, would you?”

Shit. She’s used to working orogeny on land, and forgot to account for the effects of her fault-sealing on water. They were shakes for a good purpose, but shakes nevertheless, and—oh Earth, she can feel it. She’s touched off a tsunami. And—she winces and groans as her sessapinae set up a ringing protest at the back of her head. She’s overdone it.

“Innon.” Her head is ringing agony.

“You need—nnh. Push waves of matching amplitude, subsurface...”

“What?” He looks away from her to shout something to one of the crewwomen in his tongue, and she curses inwardly. Of course he has no idea what she’s talking about.

He does not speak Fulcrum.

But then, all at once, there is a chill in the air all around them. The wood of the ship groans with the temperature change. Syen gasps in alarm, but it's not much of a change, really. Just the difference between a summer night and an autumn one, albeit over the span of minutes—and there is a presence to this change that is familiar as warm hands in the night. Innon abruptly inhales as he recognizes it, too: Alabaster. Of course his range stretches this far. He quells the gathering waves in moments.

When he's done, the ship sits on placid waters once more, facing the volcano of Allia... which has now gone quiet and dark. It's still smoking and will be hot for decades, but it no longer vents fresh magma or gas. The skies above are already clearing.

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BONUSTRACKS

Empirical formula for similarity degrees in point cloud

A model for calculating degree of spatial similarity between a point cloud and its generalized counterpart

Suppose that A_l is a point cloud consisting of N_l points on the map at scale l , and A_m is a generalized point cloud of A_l consisting of N_m points at scale m . The property set of A_l and A_m is $P = \{P_{\text{Topological}}, P_{\text{Direction}}, P_{\text{Distance}}, P_{\text{Attribute}}\}$, and the corresponding weight set is $W = \{w_{\text{Topological}}, w_{\text{Direction}}, w_{\text{Distance}}, w_{\text{Attribute}}\}$.

where $w_i \in W$

and $P_i \in P; i = 1, 2, 3, 4$.

Because the four weights were obtained by the experiment, it is necessary to propose methods for calculating and of point clouds at scales l and m .

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Drexciya Research Lab

Africa, thousands of years ago, high tech nomads began to emerge from a dimensional jump-hole... To those that know, they have left their mark all over the world (including in a subterranean city, deep on the ocean floor). For the Drexciyans are never idle, their principle has always been Research, Experimentation, Science, and Technology, from Neptune's time to today.

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