

U+ Zine is a cycle of short thematic explorations for alternative presents, futures and change, through the lens of arts and fiction developed by the Plurality University Network. It is a microscopic but collective look into the complexity of a subject.

How does it work? Every month, we send out a call around a theme and gather a small curatorial committee to exchange around the contributions received.

A theme makes you want to participate? Get in touch! Send us examples of your work and join the conversation!

## Curatorial Committee

The curatorial committee is composed by U+'s interested members and publics. During these sessions we exchange around the topic and the best way to read and spatialize the diversity of contributions received.

This curatorial committee was at a difficult time, during the third wave of the COVID pandemic. We had to put an end to our session faster than we thought.

Thank you Melissa Sterry and Gizem Oktay for your interest in the process and for the fruitful discussions that participated in putting this edition together.

In helping our search for authors that specifically develop temporal perspectives on history that cut across cultures, we would also like to thank CoFutures and Theory from the Margins for generously sharing reading recommendations with us. You can find them and other references in our shares library platform, here:

<https://platform.plurality-university.org/uzine-history-histoire>

Don't hesitate to include your references on the topic !

Some pages contain links to sources. They are marked with a \* star. Click on it and you will be redirected to the corresponding resource on the digital version of this zine.

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Moving away  
from dominant  
narratives  
by revisiting  
stories of  
the past

# Moving away from dominant narratives by revisiting stories of the past

“To think—outside the prick tale of Humans in History, when the knowledge of how to murder each other—and along with each other, uncountable multitudes of the living earth—is not scarce. Think we must; we must think. That means, simply, we must change the story; the story must change”

— Dona Harraway

Haraway, Donna J. *Staying with the Trouble (Experimental Futures)* (p. 40).  
Duke University Press.

The historian’s pledge to seek and recount only what is true is an old one and by general consensus remains valid. On the other hand, the claim that it is only possible to discover the truth by adopting a definite position, or even through partisanship, is a product of modernity. To state that every historical statement is bound to a particular stand-point would today meet with hardly any objection. Who would wish to deny that history is viewed from different perspectives, and that change in history is accompanied by alterations in historical statements about this history?

— Reinhart Koselleck,  
*Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (pp. 205-221) (pp. 128-152)

Who controls the past, controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.

— George Orwell, 1984,

\* [page online](#)

My land without name, without America, equinoctial  
stamen, lance-like purple, your aroma rose through  
my roots into the cup I drained, into the most tenuous  
word not yet born in my mouth.  
(Neruda)

“It is possible and necessary to approach Britain’s colonial history by more satisfactory methodological routes. Its racial subjects need a more complex genealogy than those debates allow. Industrial decline has been intertwined with technological change, with immigration and settlement, with ideological racism and spatial segregation along economic and cultural lines. We need to grasp how their coming together took place in a desperate setting which nonetheless allowed black communities over several generations to be recognised as political actors: they were irreducible to their class positions because racism entered into the multi-modal processes in which classes were being constituted. It helps to appreciate that this historical predicament was overdetermined by Britain’s painful loss of Empire and, that the country’s communities of the strange and alien are still sometimes at risk of being engulfed by the profound cultural and psychological consequences of decline which is evident on many levels: economic and material as well as cultural and psychological.”

— Paul Gilroy,

*There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack*, 1996.

Found in *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* (B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths, H. Tiffin), \* [online](#).

## Nous collective

### - S.O.S. O.M.A. : Shavka and Brodyaga's\* not responding ...



Author : Telmo Escapil-Inchauspé  
(NOUS.)

In this very short text written as a foot note at the the winner announcement for the Montparnasse tower refurbishment in Paris, Telmo Escapil-Inchauspé imagined the possibility of a losing proposal, that of the European architect Rem Koolhaas. Looking at the commonly identified « most hated building in France » through the hypothetical completion of this submission in a very refined way (despite appearances) the author raises questions about the perception of contemporary monuments and the creation of modern mythology. Expressing both his love (as a fight) for the building to be destroyed and for the reflection of the submitted design that will never be built, in sharp words.

MONT-PARNASSE in trouble, OMA please answer.

O.M.A A.M.O. ... O.M.A A.M.O. ... .... O.M.A A.M.O. ... <sup>1</sup>

#### DIAGNOSE

The Montparnasse skyscraper is already an out of time fetish. Put on a pedestal, he dominates the capital city. Straight on his mount, priapism over Paris. Here he is for eternity. Without color he is black, without reflection he is dark, without a noise, he is, already.

He is simply himself, affected by time. Are we sure he will stay, that he will stand up to prying eyes ? We must be sure that he will.

We have to adapt him to the times, improve the breed. To reach the mastodon, we have to mutate.

Following a theorized dream of ultimate greatness<sup>2</sup>, the architect decides that the transplant is the last option to bring the subject to immortality.

Him, who seemed already there from eternity. Whatever, we had to be sure, give ourselves the means to make of him the most beautiful specimen. It was necessary to make him a meta- architecture<sup>3</sup>: « in-flexible, immutable, definitive, present forever, generated by superhuman efforts. »<sup>4</sup>

The plan was as follows : giving the building a new face. Adding a new face to it, another brain, a second personality, merging to make him complete. The transformation had to do with trans- urbanism.<sup>5</sup>

#### IMPLANT

It was necessary to put him to sleep, for at least four years, to debone, to riddle with iron, to look after him, day and night. We had to embalm him, hollow out his entrances. Last operation: adding the graft and soldering.

## CPM OVERDOSE <sup>6</sup>

That's it. The drawing was done. A heavy dose of paranoia-criticism had been administered to restore the edifice. He was ready to face anything; he was two-headed.

Very early on we realized that the remedy was not the right one. Both bodies suspected each other, each wanted to have the advantage. There was no room for both. Black becomes paranoid of copper and vice versa.

## CONSANGUINE BATTLE

We witnessed a bitter struggle between these two spirits, each suffering from the pain of the other.

In this passionate relationship, one heart was not enough. In love as in war, the bowels were fierce.

## DISCIPLINARY REINFORCEMENT

Action had to be taken to ensure the prosperity of this augmented body. We clad the skeleton with supporting structures to prevent them from devouring each other. They had to be kept in place until the merge.

The forced marriage was a failure.

## EXIT THE LINER (DEATH OF)

Impossible to contain such a beast. We let the strongest win. The battle of the titan raged. Copper had to suffer its weakness. With a quiet creak and spitting out its foamy insulation, the liner died.

## THE ANDROGYNE TOWER

Who was what, who was who? The situation had been critical.

Copper isn't youth, love, and above all femininity.<sup>7</sup> Was this addition a coming out? A change of sex? No, rather the creation of an androgynous being, half tower, half skyscraper<sup>8</sup>.

We had suspicions but nothing permanent ... We said, dazzled by the sun... sometimes,... it let reveal some copper reflections.

The town hall, having learned in the myths that only the cerberus existed said that without a third head, it was necessary to refuse. The administration knew what it was risking, so it decided not to operate.

*Notes ;*

*\* Vladimir Demikhov, a Russian doctor, tried in 1959 through a series of experiments to transplant one half of a dog to another, and to make this cohabitation viable. The anterior part of a dog without a heart is transplanted into the entire body of a second. The 24th two-headed dog experiment is performed on two canines, Shavka and Brodyaga. The life of the graft was 4 days, the most resistant graft having lived 26 days. These experiments led to many advances in the surgery.*

- 1. O.M.A : Office for Metropolitan Architecture, founded by Rem Koolhaas (author of the retroactive manifesto for New York « Delirious New York » describing the creation of this district and the possibilities of intervening by appealing to concepts such as active paranoia). A.M.O constitutes the theoretical division of the office. In 2017, the office responded to the competition for the renovation of the Montparnasse tower with the TM2 project.*
- 2. Rem Koolhaas describes in Junkspace « Bigness » as the ultimate architecture, buildings falling into an a-moral realm: « Bigness is the last bastion of architecture. They will be landmarks in a post-architectural landscape. Bigness leaves the field open to post- architecture. » see note 4*
- 3. Object made eternal by their increase in quality and size.*
- 4. Koolhaas (Rem), Junkspace, Paris, Payot, 2011.*
- 5. Term explaining this passage from building to object made eternal by its increase in quality and size.*
- 6. Critical Paranoia Method (CPM): Method of creation enabled by the ability to share one's paranoia with others. A systematic delirium of interpretation reveals invisible realities that can then be shown.*
- 7. Traditionally, copper has been associated with the planet Venus. Alchemists used the symbol to represent it. It is therefore a metal associated with femininity, youth and love. Old mirrors, symbols of narcissism, were made of copper.*
- 8. Play on words based on French gender of tower (tour ; feminine) and skyscraper (gratte-ciel ; masculine).*

*Collage made with following illustrations, credits :*

- Renders, TM2, OMA, Rem Koolhaas, OMA.eu, 2018, all rights reserved ;*
- Greek pottery : Hydrie de Caere à figures noires représentant Héraclès amenant Cerbère à Eurysthée, peintre des Aigles, 6000 av. J.C, Paris, Musée du Louvre.*
- Shavka and Brodyaga's surgery photograph, Weiss, Günter, 13 january 1959, Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-61478-0004.*

## K. Matsunami

# Disaster memorials of the alt.human + with voices from chernobyl

At the same time that disasters manifest in the physical dimension (collapsed industrial complexes, abandoned homes, vegetable gardens turned over); so too do they herald ends in the metaphysical. The Western philosophical study of being and its ontological taxonomies are laden with dualisms (mind/matter, nature/culture, sentient/non-sentient, man/animal). In times of disaster (especially radiochemical) impacted humans (especially those pathologically altered) experience an apocalyptic trip into the opposite end of separatism's one-way matrix – towards the non-human realm of socially constructed reality. Yet surviving Hibakushas, Chernobylites, or “invalids” are testimony to the absence of any intrinsic boundary separating human-ness from non-human-ness by virtue of their trespass. We are reckoning with a spectral form of differentiation, in which personhood is construed and constructed by systems of power. These are the same systems by which Val Plumwood describes the indigenous have been made to prove their credentials as human, acquire our language, and behave in accordance with a prescribed rationality.[1] What was lost in the face of the 1986 Chernobyl Nuclear Disaster is therefore not so much the city of Pripyat itself, but its conformity and relevance to an expired way of “being” human.

If the apocalypse signifies “the end of anything,”[2] it is the dissonant coda to an uppercase World (institutional structures, human lexicon, consensus reality), leaving in the remains of its enduring backdrop a lowercase world (all that's been other-ed in conformity to the hegemonic human matrix). Often, what government officials and historical societies choose to monument in the relief of disaster are the flash-burnt shadows of a bygone dominion. Statues of liquidators commemorate the last of Pripyat's conforming humans. The steel and concrete sarcophagus containing the failed nuclear reactor No. 4 has already deteriorated to the point of necessitating a larger, second confining structure they call the New Safe Confinement. These constructions are nesting dolls of no longer tenable ideas.

In order to envision solutions that are truly regenerative for the survivors of a place and meaning-based displacement, we must reassess the convention of eulogizing lost Worlds (an institutionalized narrative) and instead commemorate the private awakenings of altered humans occurring on the breaking ground of disaster. At their nexus, it is an awakening to the wider, more enduring world, an intersectional ecology of what Arkady Filin, calls “that

separate people” – animals, microbes, the non-sentient, the neurologically and biologically divergent, their creations, their secrets.

This is more than a call to democratize disaster memorialization, but a call to re-envision the institution of democracy itself by elevating the marginalized change agents of disaster-stricken places to reconstruct ground zero in their own emerging post-human expressions. Disaster memorials are commemorative of the ideas we choose to bring with us on our ark in the wake of flood, to borrow a metaphor from Wislawa Szymborska.[3] A monument thus conceived could run the gamut from the works of local artists like Masha Samagolova, whose contribution to the “Children of Chernobyl” exhibit at the Schaumburg branch of The Chicago Athenaeum is not a tinsel headstone, but a zephyr from the future: the depiction of a two-headed butterfly visiting a lone flower; to the breathing formations of microbial creators, who work live to remediate the area's toxicology under the roofs of floating gardens and mycotectured masses. Experiments held at the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone have demonstrated that plant species like common heather, amaranths, mustard green, and sunflower have the ability to effectively phytoextract and/or rhizofiltration the area's most abundant radionuclides. In 1991, species of dark colored radiotrophic fungi were found growing in reactor No.4; and subsequent research has confirmed that melanin-rich fungi have the ability to ionize radiation as energy and are often found thriving in “glowing” areas by virtue of their pigment's radio-protective properties.

A memorial structure could therefore serve an additional environmentally mitigative function owing to its more-than-human credo. This alternative is not only potentially more ergonomic, cost-effective, and sustainable to construct and maintain than your conventional structures of memorialization, toxic remediation, and/or radioactive confinement. Its life-giving properties are reflective of disasters as something more than the subject of fleeting field-trip voyeurism. It illustrates an unrelenting process of survival, one deserving of engaged public buy-in and close scrutiny on behalf of many more Worlds on the brink of transmutation.

[1] Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. London: Routledge, 1993.

[2] Ira Churnis, “Apocalypses Everywhere: Is There Any Hope in a Doom and Gloom Filled Era?” *TomDispatch*: 2014.

[3] Wislawa Szymborska, *View With a Grain of Sand: Selected Poems*. Harcourt Brace, 1993.

[4] Svetlana Alexievich, *Voices from Chernobyl*. New York: Picador, 1997.

Legends:

“It’s the little things that change (things)”

His(her)-  
story and  
timelessness

# Legends: “It’s the little things that change (things)”<sup>20</sup> His(her)-story and timelessness

“The fiction that we should imagine is a particular fiction, at once intimate and open. Intimate, because it is necessary to construct the setting and because one has a personal mythology, and open, because we are acted upon by the totality-world. This is the great debate, the great drama that we live in.”

— Patrick Chamoiseau,  
“Entretien avec Patrick Chamoiseau”,  
2003 \* [online](#).

While imagination is intangible, it creates and shapes our reality; while a mental tool, it affects our behaviour and expectations. We will have to imagine our way out of the postnormal times. (...)

— Ziauddin Sardar  
“Welcome to Postnormal Times”,  
Futures, 2009  
\* [online](#)

“For, perhaps, the entirety of its history, humanity has established itself over and against the rest of existence, mainly against other animals, certainly against the plant life, microbes and inanimate matter that make up the rest of existence on this planet. Humankind’s ability to dominate over nature has in fact characterised its definition of itself.”

— Latour, B. Bruno Latour and the myth of autonomous academic discipline: Rethinking education in the light of various modes of existence, 2019 \* [online](#)

Si fingat, peccat in historiam; si non fingat, peccat in poesin. He who invents, violates the writing of history; he who does not, violates poetic art. With this seventeenth-century statement John Heinrich Alsted formulated a simple opposition that had been a topos for two thousand years.<sup>1</sup> The business of Historie was to address itself to actions and events, to res gestae, whereas poetry lived upon fiction. The criteria distinguishing history from poetics involved the modes of representation, which (if we might exaggerate somewhat) were intended to articulate either being or appearance...

— Reinhart Koselleck, Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time  
(pp. 205-221)

## Irina Novikova

### - Creature Stories

When I draw a creature, I always think how it could spend its time, what it can do, what it thinks. I always draw the history of a creature, his inner world, and the world that surrounds him. Often, I invent and write down the stories of these creatures. For each creature there is a story. And I draw these stories on paper.

"When a brush was dipped in red and a line was drawn  
The world has become a red strip ..."

"It pierces, as if you are lying in a dead land ... As if a catastrophe of chaos happened, and the world split at the bottom of unequal halves"

"The dark blue clothes are like a stormy sky, and the altar seems to be a ghost in this reality ... The boy whispers and sees numerous and lonely creatures emerging from under the cover, his delirium himself pesters these creatures, and from the words they evaporate .. And when the boy stops raving and will wake up, this whole fairy tale will disappear forever, dissolving in the high temperature that is gone, like death ... This old woman was not allowed to take her soul with her again, her sword was left without recharge ..."



## Aurora Bertoli

-

### The "Myth" of the discovery of the gravitation law from Isaac Newton

What if the famous apple didn't fall on his head and he didn't discover the gravitation. Pointing out to the effect of a small character in history - a hungry caterpillar! - and how it could drastically affect our perception of the present.



Looking back  
from the  
future:  
History is  
today in  
the making

# Looking back from the future: History is today in the making

“Recently, our presentist bubble has encountered a threat that is all the more serious as it is carried by a radically new era, which we do not know how to face: the Anthropocene”

— François Hartog, “Facing the present”, AOC, 2018 \* [online](#)

“Philosophers and students of history have often displayed a conscious tendency to separate human history— or the story of human affairs, as R. G. Collingwood put it—from natural history, sometimes proceeding even to deny that nature could ever have history quite in the same way humans have it. This practice itself has a long and rich past of which, for reasons of space and personal limitations...”

— Chakrabarty, *The Climate of history: Four theses*, 2009 \* [online](#)

«Civilization is to groups what intelligence is to individuals. It is a means of combining the intelligence of many to achieve ongoing group adaptation.»

— Octavia Butler

“For centuries, scientists thought that earth processes were so large and powerful that nothing we could do could change them. This was a basic tenet of geological science: that human chronologies were insignificant compared with the vastness of geological time; that human activities were insignificant compared with the force of geological processes. And once they were. But no more. There are now so many of us cutting down so many trees and burning so many billions of tons of fossil fuels that we have indeed become geological agents. We have changed the chemistry of our atmosphere, causing sea level to rise, ice to melt, and climate to change. There is no reason to think otherwise.”

— Oreskes, *The Scientific Consensus*, p. 93, 2009

\* [online](#)

“How are bodies differently valued temporally, and what temporal processes are employed to make people productive for capital?”“whose labor is explicitly oriented toward negotiating time and the time of others...Mankind will remain a major geological force for many millennia, maybe millions of years, to come. To develop a world-wide accepted strategy leading to sustainability of ecosystems against human-induced stresses will be one of the great future tasks of mankind, requiring intensive research efforts and wise application of knowledge thus acquired. . . .”

— Crutzen and Stoermer, *The Climate of history: Four theses*, 2009

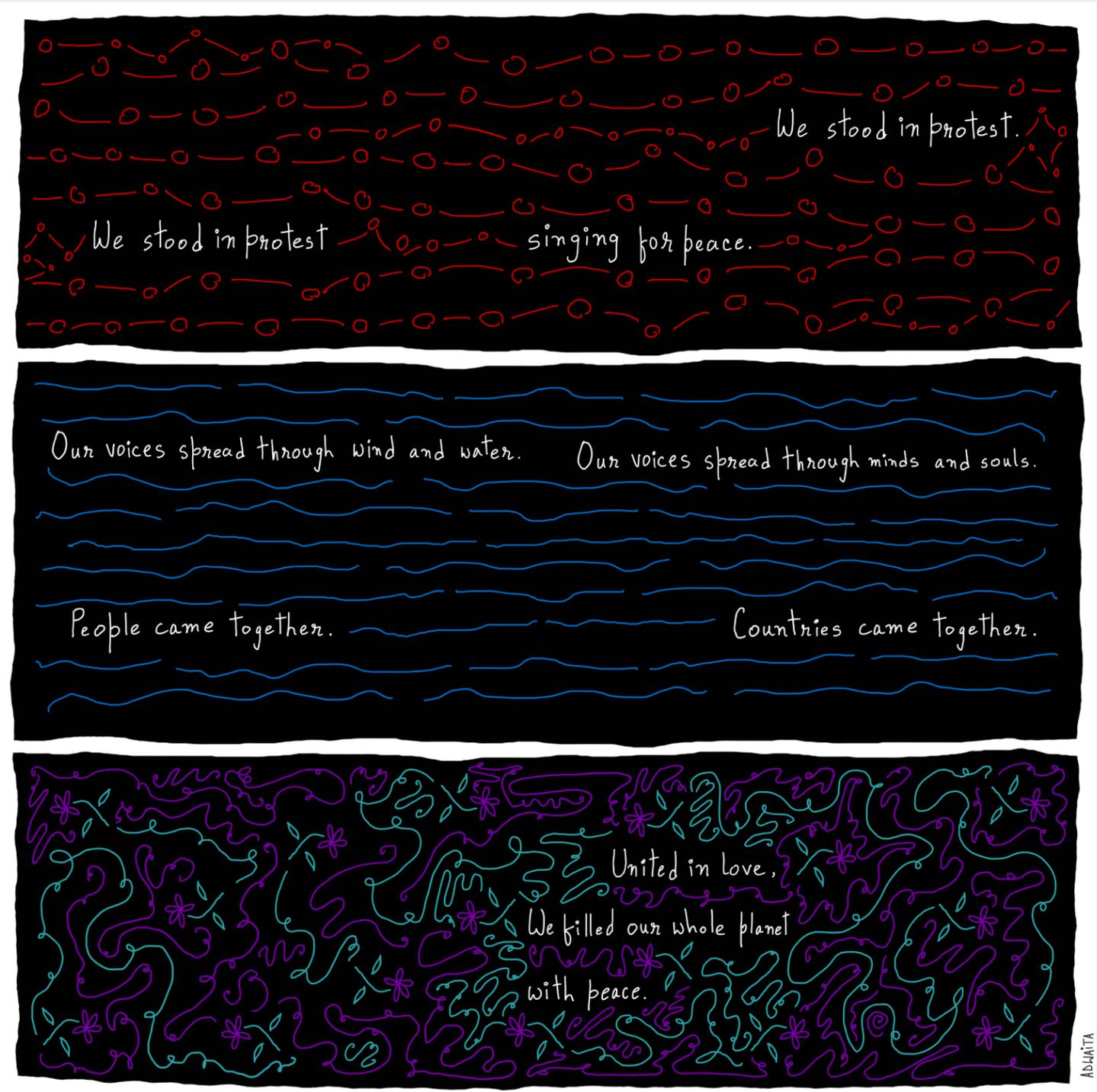
\* [online](#)

# Adwaita Das

## The tale of Two Triptychs

A hundred years after they were defeated, the fascists rose again. Nations around the world were fighting to connect, communicate and evolve together, global communities standing against inequality as one. But supremacist fascism is a dangerous opponent, feeding on the primal human fear of the other. For tens of thousands of years humans have practiced hating the other. Even with rapidly growing self awareness, it was taking time for people to overthrow the xenophobic social conditioning embedded within each individual as well as the collective consciousness. And yet love persisted. Freedom fought batons and guns with poems and slogans. Peaceful protests stood facing violent retaliation, held their ground and brought down the religious fanatics in the central government. Wielding the power of education and information, the forces of inclusion defeated injustice in the beginning of the third millennium!

“I created this set of two triptychs to visualise templates for times now and next, pictures I could see, flowcharts almost; when I worry hatred has won and all is lost, they would be a source of much needed hope, be a reminder of the power in us to bring change with persistent love and protest; they’d provide me energy to keep at it, however possible, keep working everyday for a compassionate liberated future, which is one day going to become global human history.”



# Noam Youngrak Son

## Money in Vivo

The COVID-19 outbreak was/is/will be the most significant historic incident in the 21st century. The polyvocal-economic-SF-talkshow “Money in vivo” deviates from the pandemic by questioning “What if goods and services could be purchased with a virus?”

The invitation text for the premiere of “Money in vivo” started like the following:

“If you find this message, you are reading a letter from the future. I’ve been transmitting this signal to the past that I can not specify. I only wish this message to find its way and to end up around the period when COVID-19 outbreak has started, and reassure the people back then, that your species has managed to reform itself corresponding to the crisis that it was facing. The outbreak of coronavirus pandemic subverted the religion of unconditional growth and sufficiency that was widely shared among the humankind back then. And it worked as a kind of evolutionary pressure and induced the humankind to use Viruses as the currency. We still need more research about how this exactly happened, but for now, it’s the most widely-believed theory.”

In the context of this speculative fiction, the COVID-19 outbreak is a historical incident of the distant past. In our daily lives restricted by the pandemic, the sense of urgency makes it intractable for imagination to intervene. By stating the era of the COVID-19 that we’re in as a history, the project opened up a space for speculation, which can be filled up with various political wishes.

In other words, this means we’re constructing the history that can be seen from the future in which “Money in vivo” takes place by surviving this time of struggle. This is the history that is not fixed or homogenized yet. Everyone narrates this history disparately based on what they believe. Four different characters from various political contexts featured in “Money in vivo” represents this polyvocality.

Money in vivo is a talk show that takes place in the post-COVID-19 fictional world, in which viruses function as the currency. In this economic system, payments are made by the exchange of viruses through virus glands, an organ that has evolved to store and share this new bio-currency. A virus is a living form of capital.

Four fictional guests, three humans, and one bat, from various politico-economic contexts, were invited to this talk show. They shared how this interspecies economic infrastructure formed their ways of living. The talk show portrays a wide range of topics, including a dating app that functions as the biggest market for viruses, a massacre of bats done by the humans concerned with letting their wealth fly away. A political party that insists on the state-governed, common ownership of viruses, a policy that provides universal basic income by forming human-bat companionships.

Money in vivo was exhibited as a part of \* (IM)POSSIBLE BODIES.

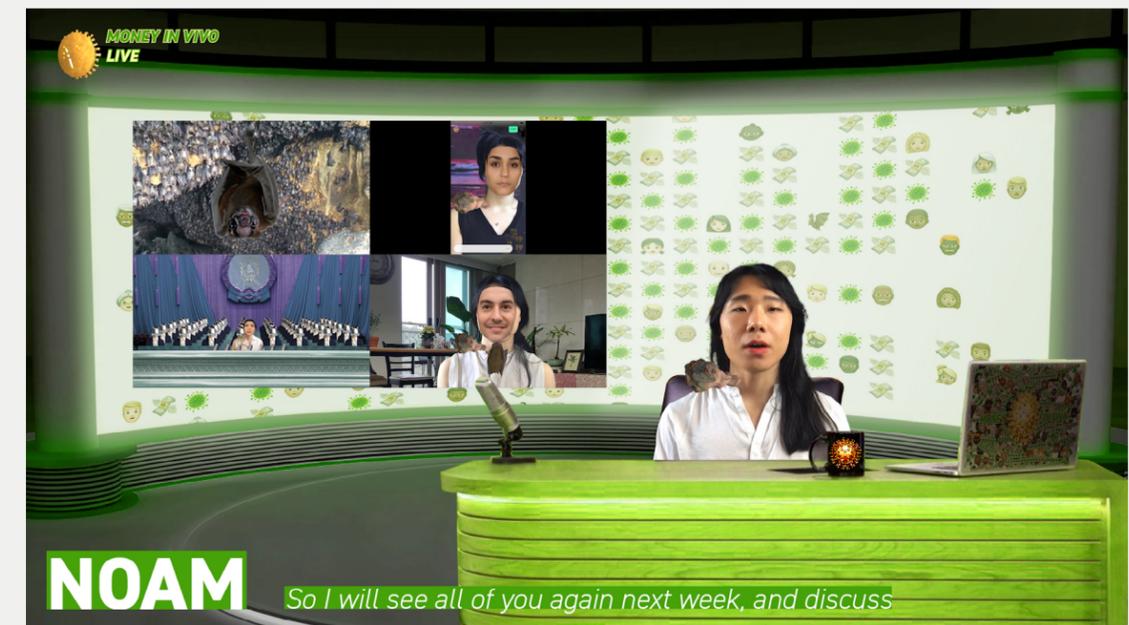
If you find this message, you are reading a letter from the future. I’ve been transmitting this signal to the past that I can not specify. I only wish this message to find its way and to end up around the period when COVID-19 outbreak has started, and reassure the people back then, that your species has managed to reform itself corresponding to the crisis that it was facing. The outbreak of coronavirus pandemic subverted the religion of unconditional growth and sufficiency that was widely shared among the humankind back then. And it worked as a kind of evolutionary pressure and induced the humankind to use Viruses as the currency. We still need more research about how this exactly happened, but for now, it’s the most widely-believed theory.

What we use instead of what you call “wallet” is the gland that we’re all born with. It’s an organ that has evolved to accumulate viruses. It also mediates the exchange of viruses through portals on its surface that connect the virus storing tissues to the outside. Shapes and colors of the virus gland are very diverse because they are constantly infected and deformed by the high concentration of virus in it. The more viruses one has in the gland, the splendid the gland will look.

Thus, in this era, goods and services can be purchased with a virus. The transactions can be done consciously through the viral glands, but sometimes unintentionally by coughs, sneezes, touches, and exchanges of bodily fluid. And those unconscious payments are like what you call tax now. Most of the countries have built a system for collecting those free-released viruses for running social services.

A virus is a living form of capital. They are reproduced in human bodies, mainly in people's viral glands. The unit of this currency is the genetic diversity of the virus in one's body. The number of the species of virus in your body determines how wealthy you are. We all have a heightened sense of the virus in the gland so that we can naturally feel how much we own. A virus may destroy our body to a certain extent, like what capitalism of yours does to laborers. "Economic class" here is equivalent to "an ability to live with more virus". This capacity can be either just genetically inherited or grown by being exposed to more viruses, for example, by vaccination. People with a talented immune system can always earn more with less damage to their bodies. Having an elegant immunity is a form of status symbol.

Bats play a crucial role in the economic systems of ours. Bats have an outstanding capability of gathering, storing, reproducing viruses in their body, and therefore always have been associated with capital and wealth. It's unavoidable for us to mention bats to talk about the economy. Yet I am very aware of that many people of your time are pre-conceived with a certain idea about bats, especially from the racist statements that try to mock East Asians as "bat-eating savages" only because the coronavirus pandemic has purportedly started from contact with a bat, and the contact happened to take place in China. I wish the racist narrow-mindedness to be disturbed and opened up by the way we perceive bats. Trading of a virus is not only an exchange of capital but also that of kinship. Retrovirus has been rewriting human genes for millions of years through reverse-transcription. To share a virus is to share kinship and to share genetic information. In the long term, this is an alternative way of enhancing our species' genetic diversity, not by having sex, reproducing ourselves, and increasing population, but just reproducing viruses and making kins. Consequently, we feel pleasures that are equivalent to your sexual pleasures when we exchange viruses through the virus portals. The virus gland is as sensitive as your genitals. So it facilitates the exchange of viruses, which is trading of currencies and sharing of kinship just like that you enjoy both sex and spending money. How these economic models function is such a fascinating topic to talk about in detail. There are a number of distinctive systems, and I wasn't sure if I could represent this diversity. What I am going to show you from now is a talk show that I found, in which speakers from various backgrounds explain how their economic systems work.



Following,  
items, words,  
signs, articles,  
fossils,  
metaphors,  
artefacts,  
through time...

Following, items, words, signs, articles, fossils, metaphors, artefacts, through time...

What if the first cultural device was not a weapon, but a recipient?, asks. Ursula K. Le Guin «This theory not only explains large areas of theoretical obscurity and avoids large areas of theoretical nonsense (inhabited largely by tigers, foxes, other highly territorial mammals); it also grounds me, personally, in human culture in a way I never felt grounded before. So long as culture was explained as originating from and elaborating upon the use of long, hard objects for sticking, bashing, and killing, I never thought that I had, or wanted, any particular share in it.»

— Ursula K. Le Guin,  
Carrier bag theory, 1986 \* [online](#)

“Who was that person? A woman, first of all. According to radiocarbon dating, she lived around 997 to 1162, and she was buried at a women’s monastery in Dalheim, Germany. And so these embedded blue particles in her teeth illuminate a forgotten history of medieval manuscripts: Not just monks made them. In the medieval ages, nuns also produced the famously laborious and beautiful books. And some of these women must have been very good, if they were using pigment as precious and rare as ultramarine.”

— Zhang, Sarah. Why a Medieval Woman Had Lapis Lazuli Hidden in Her Teeth: An analysis of dental plaque illuminates the forgotten history of female scribes. January 9th, 2019. \* [online](#)

“What must be remembered is that fossils like ‘living’ beings contain restrictive as well as explosive rooms or spaces and the fossil value of our human and a-human antecedents can either act as positive forces or can become prejudices, hideous biases, leading to implacable animism. So in fact one half of our ‘fossil value’ is constantly combating the other half.”

— K.Holst Petersen and A.Rutherford in Post-colonial Studies Reader (B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths, H. Tiffin) \* [online](#)

“Captain James Cook looms large as an iconic figure in the Australian imaginary. His name is synonymous with “discovering” Australia, and his reputation has grown over time as the West’s greatest seafarer. As an enduring icon, his face is displayed on water bottles, plates, and other paraphernalia in Australian popular culture. As a historical figure, he is placed at the beginning of Australian history.<sup>1</sup> Within the academy, there is an impressive array of literature about Captain Cook, but perhaps the most controversial is the debate between Marshall Sahlins and Gananath Obeyesekere” Sahlins argued in How “Natives” Think: About Captain Cook...”

— Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty*, 2015 (pp. 109-122)

## Lara Baclig and Giuliana Mazzetta

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 ‘Recording of objects found for an Archaeological fieldwork in the ancient city of Sardis: Ancient artefacts unearthed during dig by a team of feminist archeologists confirms underground network of Sapphic poetesses’

Archaeologists Unearth ‘Ancient Chamber Belonging to the Sappho Feminist Cult’ in Lesbos

The newly discovered chamber was built over 2,000 years ago and contains over one-hundred surreal objects confirming the existence of a radical secret network of poetesses thriving among a male-centric life in the Greek polis.

LESBOS - South of the temple of Aphrodite on the island of Lesbos archaeologists have uncovered a time capsule that will challenge the very canons of history. Initial studies of the artefacts prove the existence of a clandestine pre-feminist cult which developed underground in Lesbos, Sardis and as far as Sicily and Egypt around the feminist and gay icon Sappho of Lesbos (630 - 570 BC) and her poetry. Sappho is revered as the female counterpart of Homer, her work vetted by Aristotle, Plato and other philosophers “although she was a woman.» But 90% of her work disappeared by the Middle Ages, that is until today.

A local legend around a chamber called the ‘Red Room’ is said to have been the meeting place for an underground network of women. The team of archaeologists surveying the area first excavated a circular pattern of stones which at the centre hid the entrance to a tunnel leading to a chamber ten meters underground. What they found is a treasure trove in a

remarkable state of natural preservation due to the frigid conditions, which establishes women’s innovation and intellect in a history and civilisation that favours men as first-class citizens.



*Moon Circle, BigHorn Medicine Wheel, Wyoming*

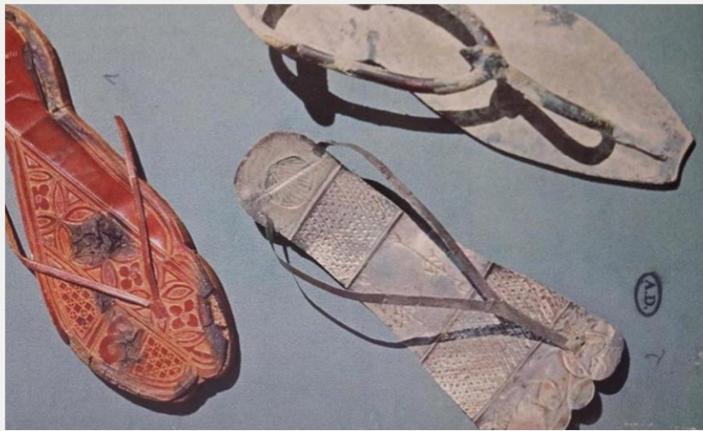


*Canaanite shrine, Yigael Yadin's excavations at Hazor, Palestine*

What the excavation truly reveals is a cunning and avant-garde group of poetesses, inventing and applying objects and tools more akin to alchemy as each artefact defies and overwhelms our very understanding of science and technology. According to the lead archaeologist “this is an unprecedented and extraordinary discovery. Finally, a female narrative marked greatly by ‘soft’ materials survives.” She firmly states “this will change a lot of what we believed about the role of women in the ancient world. They may have been far more advanced technologically than we ever imagined.”

For so long, ritualistic objects associated with women have largely been those used for gendered ceremonies including fertility, marriage and seduction. Forced into hiding because of societal expectations, this cult developed objects for rituals around intellect, creativity and power. This breakthrough shows a sophisticated network of communications, established black economy and innovative gadgets and technologies used to protect and celebrate the cult of the woman. There is no doubt that these women sowed the seeds of feminism, beginning the fight to deconstruct the gender normative roles that we continue to break down to this day.

Records of some of the artefacts from the dig:



*Invisibility Slippers, "Sandales des femmes Byzantine," Musée d'Arts Decoratifs, Paris via Sabrina Kraus*

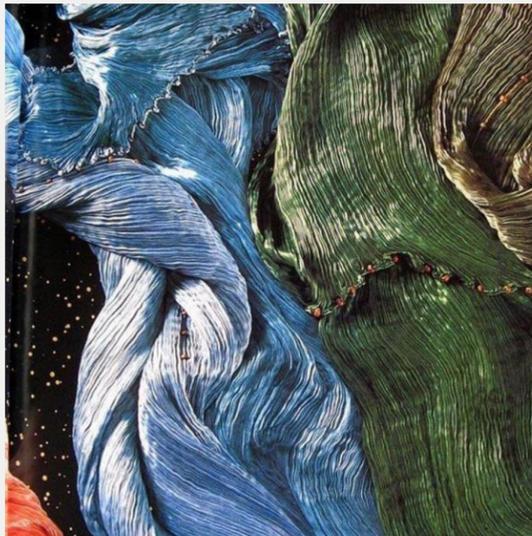
Figure a) Invisibility slippers for travelling. Possibly inspired by the Cap of Invisibility in classical mythology, the slippers are worn to travel freely and covertly across the region for group meetings in the Red Room or even trysts among female lovers. Although its inner workings are still being studied the power of invisibility enabled women to access public spaces reserved for men

Figure b) Gold pin decorated with antithetic birds on the head. Worn strictly by group members to identify fellow poetesses across the ancient world. More importantly, it functioned as a key to enter the secret underground tunnel to the Red Room. Here, the poetesses likely congregated every full moon to discuss politics, philosophy and poetry - 'male' subjects women were typically excluded from..



*Gold pin decorated with antithetic birds on the head. Poliochni, Lemnos from The National Archaeological Museum of Greece*

Figure c) Silk textiles with Sapphic 'melê' (songs) woven in. The colourful silks were used as uniforms but also a record of hundreds of Sapphic poetry and erotic imagery, all woven in gold on the inner pleats. It's believed textiles were sold on the black market to generate income for the cult and circulated among members to securely share recently



*Silk Textiles, Fortuny pleated silk weighed down by glass Venetian beads*



*Silk Textiles, Fortuny pleated silk for Delphos gown, via @AtelierBaba*

*Glass Amphoriskos, Balsamaires - Flacons à parfums ou à onguents, Pompéi*



Figure d) Glass Amphoriskos - perfume bottles in translucent blue and green glass. The glass material is said to have possessed transformative powers, where dabbing the liquid content of the glass on each wrist, temple and heart, the scent pushed the poetess into a state of catharsis - from the Greek katharsis, meaning purification or purging of emotions - which allowed a stream of consciousness to produce Sapphic poetry.

*Traditional Seed Coins, Bonhams: A group of Byzantine, decorative, Fatimid and Mamluk glass Weights*



Figure e) Traditional seeds. The seeds discovered could only be grown inside the Red Room for its optimum environment underground. According to an index of the seeds on the walls of the chamber, they yielded colourful species of plants unknown to us which served many uses (examples: food, medicine, craft materials, religious artifacts.) Making objects from the plant fibres was an important activity, creating textile and fabrics and ritual objects used for religious ceremonies to honour Aphrodite and

Sappho. Disguised as coins, these seeds could have been used as a form of currency within the network.

*Sun Starfish, from Shells of Aquarius*



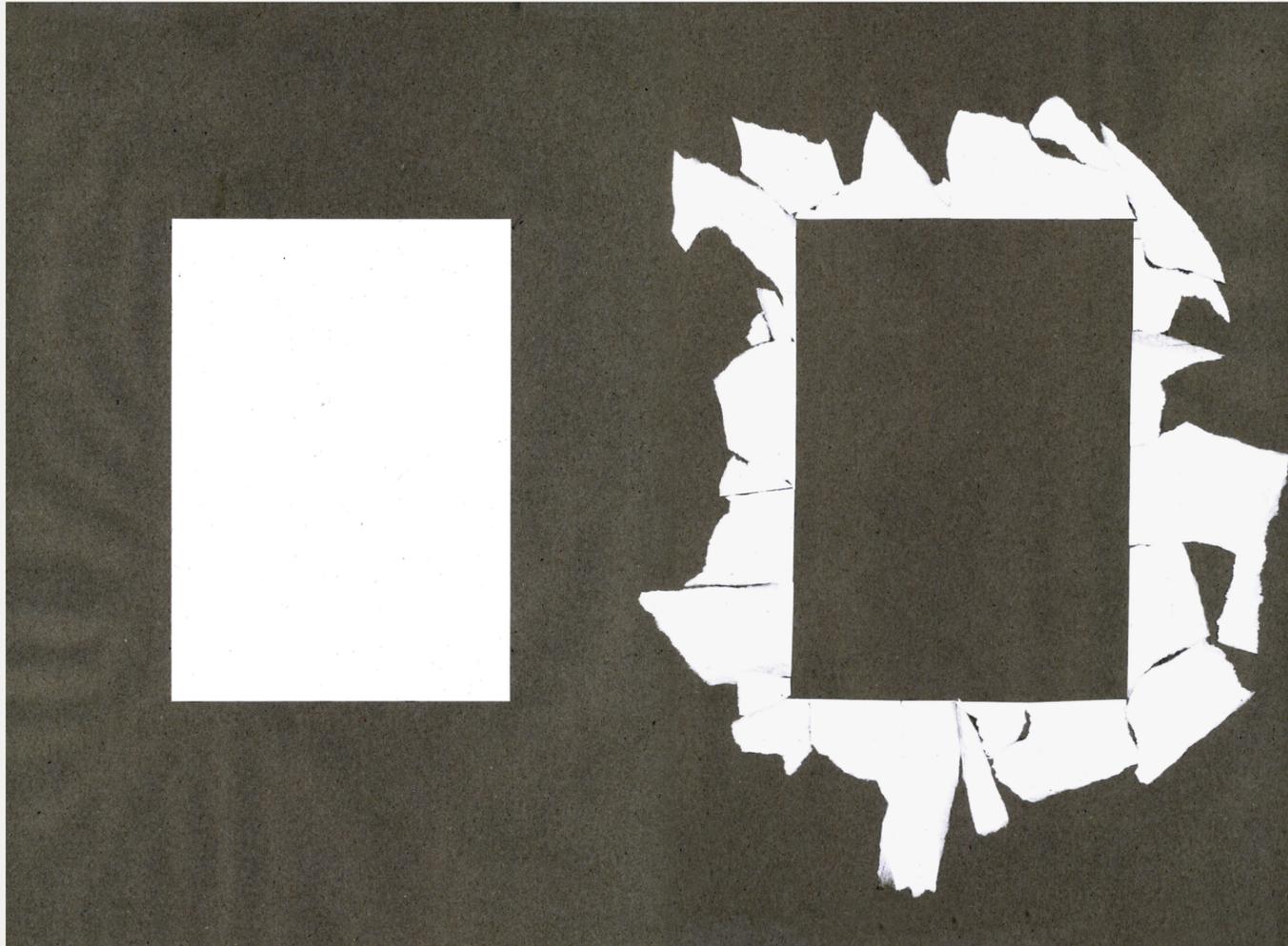
Figure f) Sea Star Cull. A horn for communication, culls were frequently used across the region for making announcements, calling meetings and gathering attention in groups, something that might have occurred with the Sapphic secret society upon new moons, full moons and other key dates in the lunar calendar. However, on further examination, forensic archaeologists were stunned to discover several other culls alongside a recording device within the chamber. Upon placing the culls within the device and turning a wheel, voices emerged reciting Sapphic poetry, along with general discourse among members. One of the most coincidental moments came with the

recital of a specific poem.

«You may forget but let me tell you this: someone in some future time will think of us.»  
– Sappho

## Filips Staņislavskis

### - Constructing the Past: Archaeological imagination



Most artefacts from the past have been partly or completely lost, fragmented and composted. How do we inquire about our history from these remains? The archaeologist combines the found and imagines the missing. This approach goes for the physical object just as much as for the socio-cultural narrative where the artefact gets situated. Constructing an object from fragments is like constructing a word from letters. Arranging the pieces for meaning to emerge.

The approach of putting fragments together can be followed by a diversity of lines. It can be an arrangement of purely formalistically matching pieces - like a jigsaw puzzle. Or a unity made by connecting the symbolic meaning of the pieces. Either way, the fragments get organised, in order to be able to tell a story, clarify an event, and assign meaning to the forgotten. Hoping to get a step closer in understanding who we are.

Knowledge of our history is constructed out of speculation and imagination holding together the shattered pieces of a time no more. Archaeology, the study of human activity through the recovery and analysis of material culture, does not dig up parts of history. It constructs a history by actualizing the found in the present.

«The archaeological imagination is a faculty of the metaphysical detective, constantly doubting, balancing report against material witness, questioning the forms of representation that allow us to inquire of the past.»

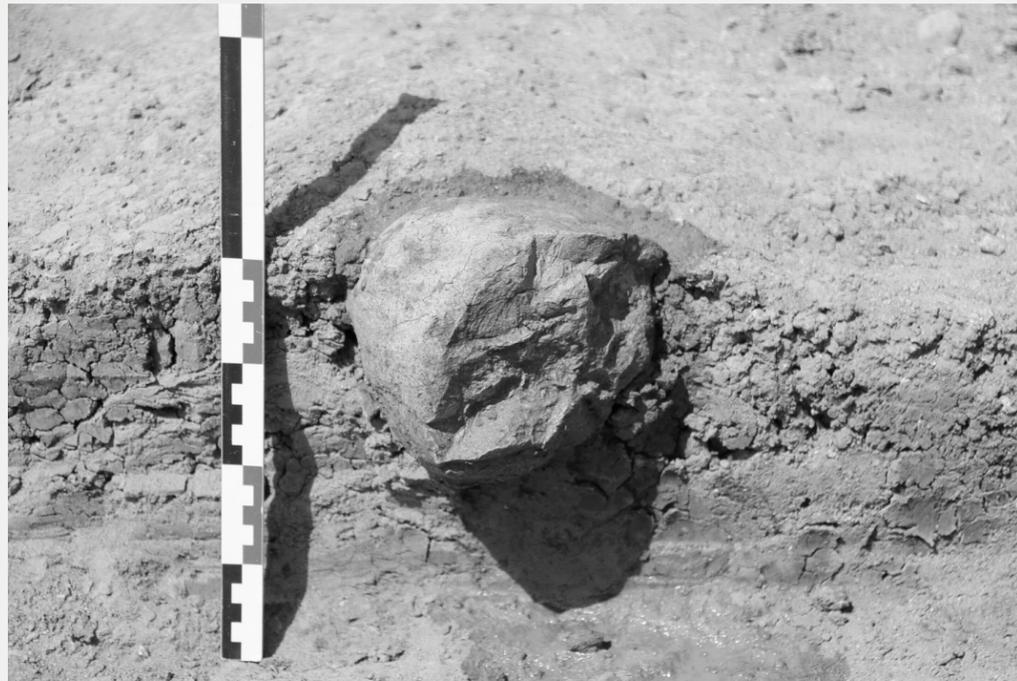
— Michael Shanks, archaeologist



The research tool and method that is being used to gather information plays a significant role in the knowledge of the research subject.

The project reflects on how relationships to the past are constituted through the tools used to unearth, measure and restore artefacts. By placing the tools in the space of the missing pieces, their influence in the construction of historical narratives is displayed.

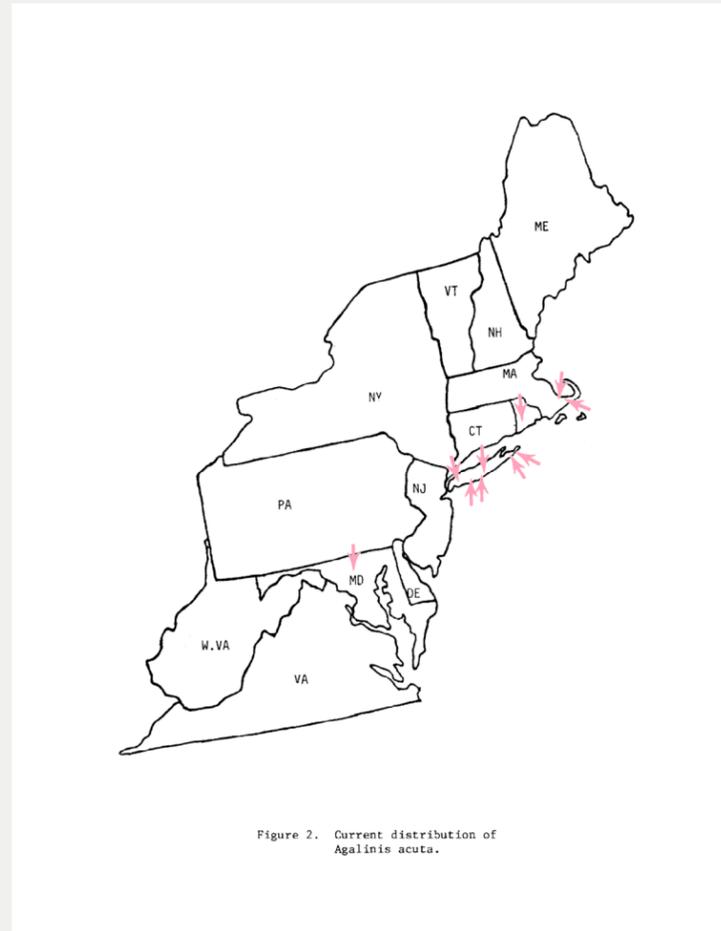
«It's difficult to really understand the degree to which we are made by things. It's only when we go back in time to see how this began that this fact seems true. It isn't that we are the only animal to use tools; it's that we rely on them for survival and we depend on them, to say who we are.»



## Miriam Simun

### What is known

In 2014 I set out to capture the scent of New York's only federally protected flora, the *Agalinis acuta*. Over the course of a year, I visited nature preserves, biology laboratories, and US Fish & Wildlife offices across the Northeast, meeting with botanists, biologists, land managers, wildflower advocates, and conservationists. While I spoke to them about their work with the flower, I heard time and again, that the tiny *Agalinis acuta* has no scent. In fact, the flower does release traces of volatile chemical in the wild—amounts undetectable to humans. I wanted to smell her. Together with chemists and perfumers from International Flavors & Fragrances Inc, we captured the aromatic molecules released during the blossom and recreated her aroma for our perception. That year, I visited 6 of the 11 remaining communities, the largest of which appeared as a small field of pink. At the time, extinction felt distant. But in the years since, the flower's numbers have dwindled. As I watch the *Agalinis acuta* disappear, her scent comes into focus.



### *Natural History*

Before the pavement, this land used to burn. Some point to lightning, others to the Lenape, who lived here four hundred generations before the Dutch arrived, then the British, and eventually, the rest of the world.

The Lenape burned land to keep the ground open — better to spot prey and make their kill. But their flame enabled life for another: a flower, a tiny pink one, once grew wild under this sky.

Left alone, things don't stay as they are for very long. What Marker called "the impermanence of things."

In this place, grasslands may simply be a stage in succession to forest, rather than an ecological endpoint. Thus, maintenance of land in perpetual grassy equilibrium might be less ecological restoration, and more — protection of landscape from the onslaught of history.

### *Bloom*

Just one morning a year, she blooms... by noon, she's already starting to fall.



# Create your own alternative fiction

Here is a short exercise you can try with your community, friends, family..The group needs to be composed of 2 to 10 persons. You can also try this exercise on your own and-or modify it to fit your needs.

1. [individually; 5 mins]

CHOOSE A HISTORICAL EVENT CORRESPONDING TO THE DAY (BUT NOT NECESSARILY THE YEAR) OF YOUR BIRTH [BETWEEN 1800 AND YOUR ACTUAL YEAR OF BIRTH]

How? type the day of your birth on <https://fr.wikipedia.org>

> Example: February 24, 1848, abdication of Louis-Philippe, King of the French and establishment of the Second Republic.

2. [together; 10 mn]

IMAGINE TOGETHER THAT THE DATE CLOSEST TO 1800, PIVOTS: IT DIFFERS FROM THE WAY HISTORY TELLS IT

How can you imagine a historical «pivotal point/point of divergence»?

-The event does not happen (the attack on Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria fails)

-The event occurs but gives a different result (a French victory at Waterloo)

-The event takes place but with different protagonists (the Chinese «discover» America)

-The event occurs but at a different time (discovery of penicillin a century earlier)

-An event that did not take place, occurs (the Petit-Clamart attack results in the death of Charles de Gaulle)

3. [individual; 10 mins]

IMAGINE HOW THE EVENT CORRESPONDING TO YOUR DATE OF BIRTH IS CHANGED BY THIS INITIAL PIVOTAL MOMENT

(if the result sounds weird, you're on the right track!)

4. [individual; 15 mn]

LETS IMAGINE WE ARE IN 2030: HOW HAS THE WORLD BEEN TRANSFORMED BY THIS INITIAL BIFURCATION?

To keep it simple, each choose a «domain» or a character and describe in a few lines how the reality of 2030 differs from what we know, due to the initial pivotal moment in history:

Proposed fields (if you prefer to explore another, its up to you): art / economy / politics / tourism / education / health / sport / mobility / science / work / fashion / sex / migration

Proposed characters (but you can prefer exploring another): Judge / Mayor / Mother, father / Bandit / Child / Cow / Entrepreneur / Teacher / Beggar

> Example: «in 2030, tourism [characteristic modified because of the bifurcation]»

5. [together; depending on the time remaining]

TRY TO DEDUCT FROM ALL OF THESE OVERVIEWS THE MAJOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WORLD TODAY AND THE WORLD OF 2030, MODIFIED BY THE INITIAL PIVOTAL POINT

> Example: «Because of what happened on XX / XX / XXXX, the World ...

# The contributors, in order of appearance

50

51

Nous collective - S.O.S. O.M.A. \* Shavka and Brodyaga's\* not responding ...: @nous.computer

K. Matsunami - Disaster Memorials of the Alt.Human + with voices from chernobyl \* @Speculaiche

Irina Novikova - Creature Stories \* @irinanov4155

Aurora Bertoli - The "Myth" of the discovery of the gravitation law from Isaac Newton \* @sosesusisa

Adwaita Das - The tale of Two Triptychs \* linktr.ee/adwaita

Noam Youngrak Son - Money in Vivo \* Impossiblebodies.nl/en/program/money-in-vivo/

Lara Baclig and Giuliana Mazzetta - 'Recording of objects found for an Archaeological fieldwork in the ancient city of Sardis: Ancient artefacts unearthed during dig by a team of feminist archeologists confirms underground network of Sapphic poetesses' \* @futures\_archive & \* @gmazzetta & \* @lara\_carbonara92

Filips Stanislavskis - Constructing the Past \* Archaeological imagination: filips.info/constructing-the-past

Miriam Simun - What is know \* linktr.ee/mseamoon

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Réseau Université de la Pluralité