

low theory

iss ue 2.

THE BODY
DEC 2020

low theory
issue 2: the body

December, 2020

The cracks have always been there. But a shaky or worm-eaten foundation is not apparent until the edifice is confronted by an external force: a creeping damp, an earthquake, subsidence.

This year's force, or to borrow a term from Christina Sharpe, this year's 'weather', has been defined in large by COVID-19. Like a rolling fog the novel coronavirus descended upon the city of Wuhan in the first few weeks of the year, swiftly and silently infecting the bodies of hundreds and then thousands. After nearly a year the virus has unquestionably transformed human behaviour. After over 1.6 million human deaths the virus has caused a re-evaluation of somatic vulnerability on mass scale, and each of us has been implicated physically and psychically.

The virus, however, has not affected each human being in the same way. Though we have on one level become united through the shared experience of the pandemic, its repercussions are not distributed equally across the human species. Having been able to keep studying and working from the safety of my home this year, I have been fortunate. When I did not have work I was supported by my partner who was also able to work without leaving the house. The privilege of our identities has kept our bodies safe.

But other bodies - those who under the myth of race have been systematically rendered disposable, or what Françoise Vergès calls 'waste bodies'¹ - have not experienced COVID-19 in this way. These are the black and brown and immigrant bodies that have kept our transit systems running and the parks we have all been spending more time in clean. These are the bodies who travel to attend to the sick and the elderly in hospitals and care homes. These are the bodies who do not have the luxury of a life sustained by cognitive labour that can be performed from the safety of their homes. These are the most vulnerable members of our communities who leave their houses each morning or evening to perform work that has been deemed undesirable and least deserving of respect, but that all of our lives and the functioning of the economy rely upon. These are the precarious bodies who, within a biopolitical system of governance, fall between the cracks - those who do not receive the same support and care as others. Vergès' waste bodies are those to whom the virus is the most detrimental; and they are the human beings who capitalism needs to sustain itself².

These vulnerable bodies are who we must attend to and care for with all our dedication and love, and so as this unprecedented year draws to a close, I hope you will join me. First, to challenge ourselves to fight for those we don't know as hard as we fight for ourselves³ - to really consider how each of our bodies can and do affect those of others. And second, to support The Okra Project - a grassroots mutual aid collective based in New York that provides support to black trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people - and who have this past year dedicated substantial efforts to supporting vulnerable groups who have been affected by COVID-19. Please follow the link to donate. All proceeds will go towards the organization:

<https://gf.me/u/zctk6p>

Thank you to all those who have contributed to this issue of low theory, and in particular to Rachel Bungey of Mantis Studio for her design efforts.

I hope you will enjoy.

x Kate

¹. Françoise Vergès, "Capitalocene: Waste, Race, and Gender", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0cw0s0AyQil&t=1204s>.

². Johanna Hedva, "Sick Woman Theory", Mask Magazine, The Not Again Issue (No 24), January 2016, <http://www.maskmagazine.com/not-again/struggle/sick-woman-theory>.

³. Senator Bernie Sanders, "Bernie's Back rally", speech at Queensbridge Park, Long Island City, NY, 19 October 2019.



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- 31.// _____ DANIEL TAYLOR
- 32.// _____ MEARA SHARMA AND LUCY SPARKS
- 33.// _____ DANIEL THOMAS WILLIAMS

Sundays are for poetry and Daria. I clutch the flesh of my buttox and
meet with the fur lined fountain as a means of understanding dissonance.
A two party system: skin and hair. Sometimes more sometime less
always en masse.

I would love to fuck someone forever.
Forever held
over creased
parted
lipsed danced
and love them only when they died.

Because to love is to memorialise
and to memorialise is to rest
awhile

in subordinate bliss
I don't wish to be subordinately blissful
in this lifetime I seek to actively hold.

They say all we know are mourning and mornings
but all I hear is the same cry
for rebirth.
Tek time
I'm happy to
I'm learning to
tek time with others
my wife
with life.

Time must be taken for the flowers to grow.
Time must be taken for the seeds to be sown.

Hypothetical hypocritical lies feed the weeds of the soul
so
- no sheath baring -
I demand
time and space for me to
grow. slow. flow.

TEK TIME

Things I learnt from an east evening:

// *People find more comfort going in circles than
following a straight line. The dizziness occupies
them merrily.*

// *Never call a baby a seed.*

// *I'd make a great surrogate (why are they called
mothers, they should be called sluice gates).*

// *People are goldfish. Goldfish is whiteness.*

// *'At least they followed for your work' is still a
plausible white guilt for the Black artist, no
reverence for artistry.*

// *Seeking refuge in video games where the goal is to
kill people isn't alarming. It can even ensue chuckles.*

// *I am a diaspora child not a child of the state.*

// *Non black subordination is key.*

// *Basenjis are one of the oldest dog breeds in
the world.*

// *Real stans know when to put down the foghorn.*

// *There is no point in buying a book and keeping it in
its wrapping. Just like having a trophy wife is
pointless if she doesn't win anything.*

*SOCIAL CHOREOGRAPHY
(OF FOLLOWING X OFF THE CLIFF)*

low theory

low theory is a bi-annual collaborative journal and curatorial project. Borrowing the term from cultural theorist, Stuart Hall, Jack Halberstam uses the concept of low theory as a way to undermine heteronormative definitions of success, and to argue that failure to live up to societal standards can open up more creative ways of thinking and being.

Though less focused on the concept of failure, this digital publication is interested in alternative, unconventional and therefore radical ways of thinking and making as part of decolonial and emancipatory praxis. low theory is focused on bringing together a multiplicity of makers who, through their creative output, seek out new forms of knowledge and interdependent ways of being.

low theory is a not-for-profit project and each issue fundraises for a charity organization.

<https://linktr.ee/lowtheory>
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