

12)

... In other words,
when we write, or read
criticism - are we doing so with a
voice that is from the future ?
and if our voices — or the voices
with which we think, are
speaking from a certain future
but through the present tense, is
thinking in the future tense then
an anxious language projection
of how we desire the future to look, with
the knowledge that these desires
themselves, can, very well, fail to
act like, uh... you know, like real, living, things ?

the horniness of the unmoored thought:

transssfferring the lines from Sandra Vida's recent exhibition
"Portal" to, to a textual surface that combines the, the act
of writing with its own subjective labour as a way to, to, to
reach, lean on, and rest on the marginal surfaces one might find
in their performance of cultural critique, and how writing and
thinking from the periphery of dominant discourses might
remediate one's labour in writing about art with the possibility
that unproductive wandering is itsself, a form of publishing.

1)

what is the point to analyze
life when life itself seems to be
such a careless and unpredictable
performance?

June 13, 2016

Cradled by my phone's heartbeat, I spent hours on the couch, staring
at the different ways in which the world (or rather my uneven
experiences of it) reflects its textures inside the murky surface of this
wi-fi network that now, like a mental IV pump, infuses my

thoughts with bizarrely random and sometimes paranoid streams of news coverage, Facebook posts and outbursts of personal gestures that comment on, as they rearrange details from the recent Orlando nightclub shooting in Florida (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2016_Orlando_nightclub_shooting). Next to this endless precipitation of images, one thing is clear - that the more I think about these events, the more unable to write I feel: I don't know anymore if what I am unable to write is a text that performs itself critically, and vigorously critical of its criticality, or if something deeper from inside me had snapped in such a way that criticality - or the labour that one is prepared to invest in their attempt to, to, to change what they want to see changed in the world; if the idea of an activist textual action, at this present moment, has rendered itself to be counterproductive to reaching any sort of sensible resolution. *(with this I wonder if it is possible to change the world through one's absence from it, and if so, how can this inaction, act in the world? aaand.. can passivity be performed as a form of political action?)*

8)

Although I was five years old at the time, one of my earliest childhood memories is marked by the crackling sound of bullets as they dug their way through the walls of the nearby apartment buildings where I grew up, in Bucharest, during the 1989 Revolution <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFBnPIHQ7rQ>. Today, having lived in Canada for a large chunk of my adult life, looking back on these events with a somewhat detached perspective, I see the 1989 Romanian revolution as part of a larger political moment that had began to change the East-European reality with the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 10, 1989, and which continues to unfold to today, as member nations of the former Eastern bloc struggle to find links between their own regional identities and a larger, western, globalized context. What makes this specific memory a pivotal event for me however, is how the experience of the revolution, at the time, made me recognize the possibility that reality could become something that is not always experienced in the same way by everyone, even if the circumstances that frame our experiences of reality in a given moment, are the same. As I re-walk through the images from that day, I remember being gathered together with other local children from the neighbourhood and then brought to, uh, to an upper floor apartment with darkened windows where we were told to begin playing a series of imaginary games, the same games, or rituals, that we usually played with each other when on the street, but now within, ah, the enclosed perimeter of this strangely un-lived apartment; a gesture which communicated, nonverbally, this concept that our play should figurate the shape of its own outside-of-the-current-reality reality. And that is exactly what we, as kids, did,

nonverbally, but also very consciously and deliberately, perhaps to satisfy ourselves, but also to satisfy the others; the others that were there with us, and the others that were on the other side, downstairs, outside of the apartment, trying to permanently shift a larger political reality. I don't remember the exact games we played, but I remember feeling like I was under the spell of this strange combination of feelings that at any moment, could have slipped from that almost artificial excitement that one surrounds themselves with in order to fit-in when amongst an uninvited group of bodies, towards this abrupt physical fear that something irreversibly "bad" can suddenly take place. Years after I first enacted these mental moves as a way to subvert my perception of reality, which, witch, witch, which as I learned later, were performing simultaneous temporalities through which I could then proceed in parallel and invisibly towards places and worlds from within these spaces that were themselves far away from the reality that referenced them, I find myself continuing with seeking their views, but now as they make up working surfaces (here I imagine a catalogue of rare, Bauhaus-style desks with stark, clean, modern lines that exist invisibly and on-demand through the kind of-of-of imagination one gains access to, from and because of writing // <http://www.bauhaus-dessau.de/en/academy/bauhaus-lab/interview.html>) sssuurfffaaceeessss - surfaces from where to write and to think from, *surfaces* that through their open architecture(s) give me, or the character that plays *me* in the writing position from where I write them from, the, the, the choice to in a sense "direct" how these influence what I write and how what I write performs in real-time, my staging of someone — a character, a man - actually, many kinds of men and women and other non-non-non-human things and objects, each with a different voice and a, a, a, a an individual style of speaking and thinking; a self-multiplying double image if you'd like, that stamps its desires on the world, and in the world, on my behalf as it follows, or thinks with and-and-and-and-through the lives of other people // and then how in turn, these images themselves, collapse into unmoored situations / thought precipitations, themselves erected, erecting in the world: this world and their world simultaneously. Performatively acting out of a textual version of reality without words and through other characters or the satellite ideas of those characters that live life, or versions of their life on, on - my behalf, is something that I seek and occupy with a great deal of pleasure because, be-be-because once one is cornered in this way of living, like-suddenly-being-sucked-inside-their-smart-phone-screen-and-then-directed-to-the-insiide-of-a-parell-world-app (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.nianticlabs.pokemongo&hl=en>) there is no other option but to construct separate, more fulfilling lives that live the one that you dddon't want to live any longer, on your behalf.

9)

/ city of angles

something I wrote for myself the other day on a piece of paper that now rests crumpled somewhere at the bottom of my backpack, like a textual totem that I'm keeping to remind my future-self of why I need to write, and how I need what I write to continue walking:

You search for hours and hours - until you hear their voices.
First, you walk to the places where you saw them the day before,
and then if they're not there, you go to the places where
you imagine they might be.
Some places are out of the way
while others, if you have spent years to search for different angles
like you wanted to when you wrote this note,
have, by now, become familiar to you.

Sometimes you've seen them sitting on a bench in a train station,
and sometimes they're lying down
underneath the, the, the same tree from the park
that you pass through each day.
And then, when you don't see them,
they're probably just flying above,
at a distance from where you and your problems
appear as only an insignificant dot
in a landscape filled with many other,
more important emergencies.

When you do find them, they'll usually make you smile.
And then, with them, you start to write
because writing to you is never really a solitary act.

But right now, as I'm writing this note to my future self, to you,
I, i, i, i - still think of them, the angles, as my reader
and I don't knowwww if I'm supposed to share
what I write for them with others.
So far, they've never said a thing
about who else should read my thoughts.
But then I don't know if the others are, actually real.
Or if the angles are not [real].
I just don't know. So I walk because I don't know.
And I don't know if I want to know that the angles are not real.

My grandmother used to search for angels in her neighbourhood in Bucharest. Sometimes she would take the bus and stop by at all the cemeteries and churches from along the way (which, if you are in Bucharest, there are many... almost too many, perhaps as many as the number of Starbucks coffee shops we might encounter in our walks in downtown Calgary https://www.google.ca/#q=starbucks+calgary&rlfq=1&rlha=0&rlag=51053292,-114065990,802&tbm=lcl&tbs=lf:1,lf_ui:4).

Perhaps as a way to map out the material and spiritual experience of walking in her city, she would collect small things that made their way into her life along this invisible pilgrimage. Sometimes through these trips, she would meet others that were also in search of angels, and then they would exchange information, the coordinates of specific walking trails and other phenomenological sites and stories that they needed to be aware of. Looking back, I always thought of this way of walking, which in a sense is a performative interpretation of the city as a site for shared, unorganized spiritual experience, as a kind of portal for making an exit from reality without actually abandoning it - something that is close to a survival mode that perhaps is related to how my grandmother's generation of women had to think about their day-to-day life, as they searched for ways to subvert and soften the rigid regime that communism had imposed on them throughout their lives. And this ritual of simultaneous withdrawal from, while also being present in reality, is something that I have come to develop and then put to use many times throughout my own life as I transitioned from one form of the then-extreme East-European communism to its chaotic interpretation of democracy and capitalism and then later, to the not-so-radically-different & institutionally disguised North American infrastructures designed to recycle present-day versions of democracy and its utopian ideologies into the self-destructive and never-ending expansions of the neoliberal metanarrative that, and much like a different kind of subversive ritual, also seeks to direct its own stylized stagings of reality — as if the condition of consciousness today was a sculptural and malleable surface that is attached to, to, to interchangeable price-tags and profit-driven values. It is at this collapsing point, between what things once were and the way they remain

(re)animate themselves through our realization that history is itself a material practice that embodies simultaneous temporalities and spaces whose agency is coded directly and invisibly in the lived present, where I place my experience of “[Portal](#)”, a recent project by [Sandra Vida](#) that showed this summer at [Emmedia](#) in Calgary. Set in a black-box environment, and from a formal perspective, Portal was an immersive experience that is both an installation and a performance, as it asked the viewer to use their own imagination to move through, with, and inside a roving bricolage of projected images and sound samplings. Conceptually, the project directed attention to the metaphoric potential one might gain through movement as their own body penetrated the projection screen to, to, to in a sense, individually choreograph the image (or its psychological state) — a collaborative, dance-like performance that in a way transformed the viewer's

role in, in, in the installation from that of being a passive witness to a hands-on collaborator. Complementing this thought that a work of art is never really finished as it continues to mutate through the individual experience of each viewer, the video in turn, presented organic abstractions of shapes and forms that were reminiscent of self-spreading virus formations and sites of infection, perhaps also to reinforce the idea that art, within a culture of domination (as Bell Hooks pointed in this summer's issue of Artforum "at this particular point in time when our political struggles risk commodification in ways that diffuse their radical intent"// <https://artforum.com/inprint/>) art cannot, itself, risk being appropriated (or infected) by the things that undermine its radical potential to highlight what we usually take for granted.

But, unlike other activism-inspired projects that we so often see and experience today, either in person or over the internet, what Portal offered differently, is a quieter and softer call to action; a plea that doesn't prescribe us with it's own, often-aesthetized-and-later-commodified set of ethical guidelines for what we should do and then how to do this, but it rather gently reminded us that as individuals, despite living in a globally-unconnected-but-connected-multicultural-and-multinational-chaos still have the agency to cause positive changes in the immediate visible or invisible world(s) from around us, and perhaps this is more effective and empowering when we perform our agencies [as individuals that can push themselves to have an outside perspective on what's going on from the inside of our own lives](#). Thinking alone in ways that are optimistic, at a time when we're always together is perhaps the most radical thing we can do today... and yes, there is definitely an unarguable strength in acting and working together towards a shared cause (I'm thinking of Wafaa Bilal's 168:01 project that showed recently this summer at the Esker Foundation in Calgary, which proposed the reconstruction of the Bayt al-Hikma in Baghdad - <http://eskerfoundation.com/exhibition/wafaa-bilal-16801/>), but I think that on a different scale, small, almost-invisible and disorganized gestures that come from individual impulses to better the world are as effective, and we should not forget that there are also positive aspects to individual forms of agency, which at some point could, in a sense, collapse and spread virally (going back to Vida's performative video-projection) to form an yet to be articulated starting-point for a new kind of shared activism that happens unannounced and from within the inside of multiple struggles

rather than from an overarching political meta-narrative that is easily catalogued and interpreted (to borrow from Susan Sontag's famous essay "*Against Interpretation*", 1966) within an already established canon that interprets what is, and how activism should be organized.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54889e73e4b0a2c1f9891289/t/564b6702e4b022509140783b/1447782146111/Sontag-Against+Interpretation.pdf>

12)

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With transferring the lines from Sandra Vida's *Portal* to a "living" text-based format that is more interested in the experiential and material side of the labour used in writing about art than in the final textual packaging of criticism, I'm wondering if spending time to think about a work of art without trying to pin it in concrete terms, is, in a sense, a way of writing that on the one hand is unproductive within a conventional publishing context, but then productive as an artistic form where the idea of criticism itself, is not just a "backdrop" for other ideas, but also a kind of aesthetic that can be related to the everyday, and then practiced daily, as a way of life.

// <http://astronomy.nmsu.edu/aklypin/AST506/Violent.pdf>)