

# THE GRAMSCI MONUMENT.

# NEWSPAPER



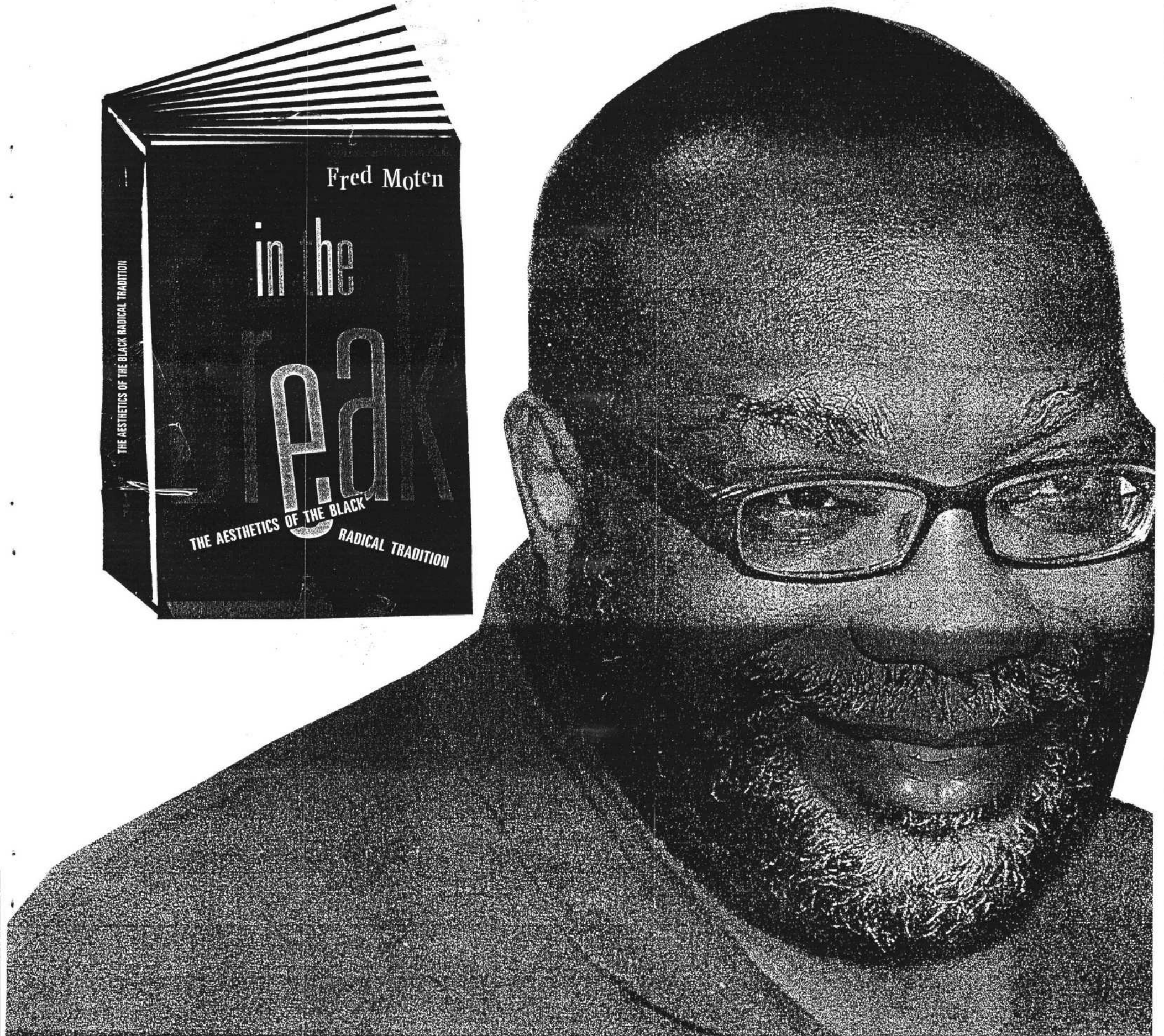
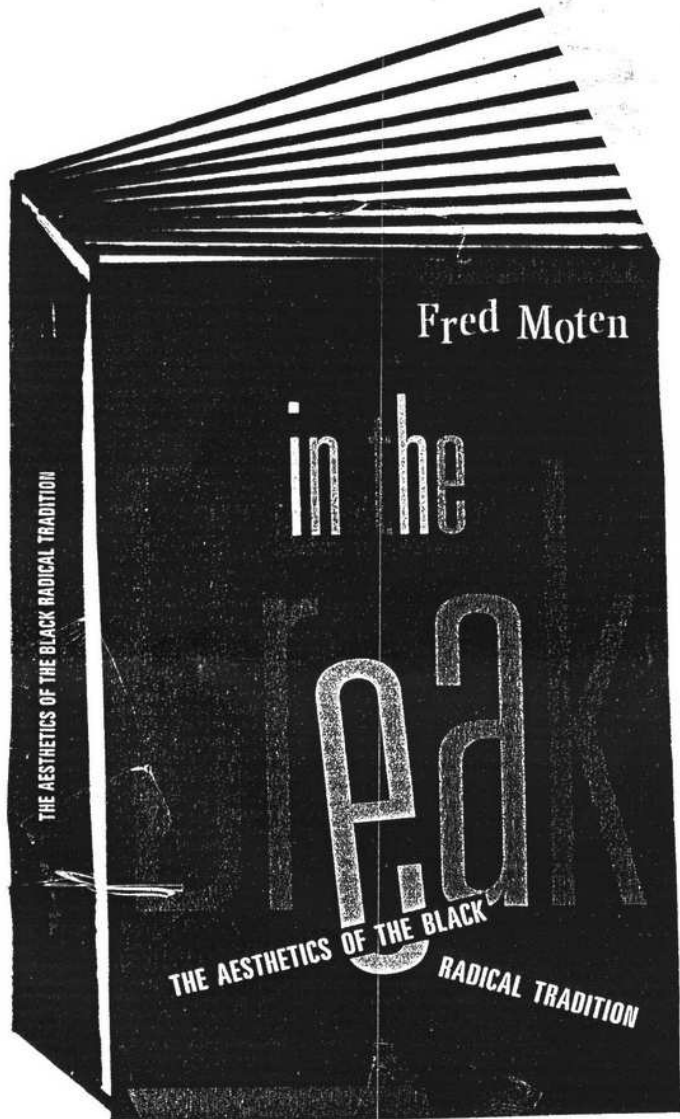
"A periodical, like a newspaper, a book, or any other medium of didactic expression that is aimed at a certain level of the reading or listening public, cannot satisfy everyone equally; not everyone will find it useful to the same degree. The important thing is that it serve as a stimulus for everyone; after all, no publication can replace the thinking mind."  
Antonio Gramsci  
(Prison Notebook 8)



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August 14th, 2013 - Forest Houses, Bronx, NY

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# FRED MOTEN



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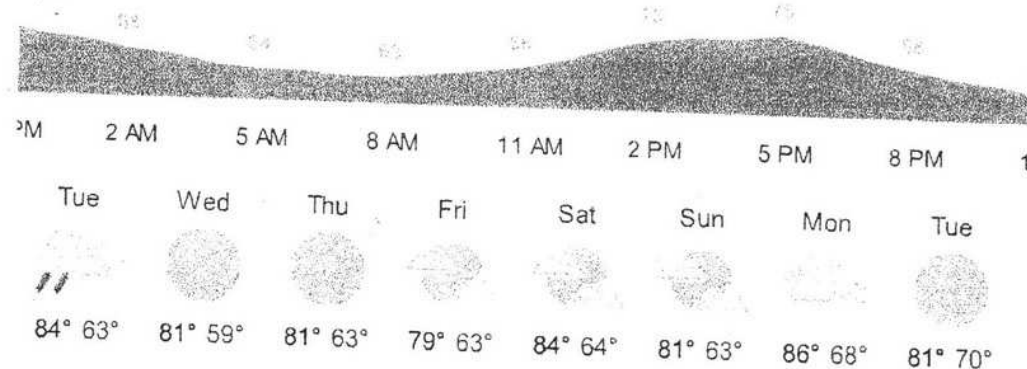
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Bronx, NY 10456  
Wednesday  
Clear

 **81** °F | °C

Precipitation: 10%  
Humidity: 49%  
Wind: 11 mph

Temperature	Precipitation	Wind
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## Visible Music

EXCERPT FROM FRED MOTEN'S IN THE  
BREAK (THE AESTHETICS OF THE BLACK  
RADICAL TRADITION)Baldwin's *Baraka*, His Mirror Stage, the Sound of His Gaze

"Look," he said. Jimmy's eyes had already followed Beauford [Delaney]'s anyway, but he just saw water. "Look again," Beauford said. Then he noticed the oil on the surface of the water and the way it transformed the buildings it reflected. . . . it had to do with the fact that what one can and cannot see "says something about you."<sup>1</sup>

Look.

The first take like a start before the just rhythm; the second and the oil on water is music. The florescent music of St. Mark's Place, the music 'round the Five Spot, is a lover's complaint. Move in some more second looks.

Here's a passage from Lee Edelman's essay "The Part for the (W)hole":

Yet as black men already burdened by the "double-consciousness" that reflects their historical determination by the demand *be* the part, the "tool," that white men alone can *have*, Arthur and Crunch [characters in James Baldwin's *Just above My Head*], at the moment of their erotic and emotional involvement with one another, risk psychic annihilation through the double dismemberment of synecdochic logic; violently

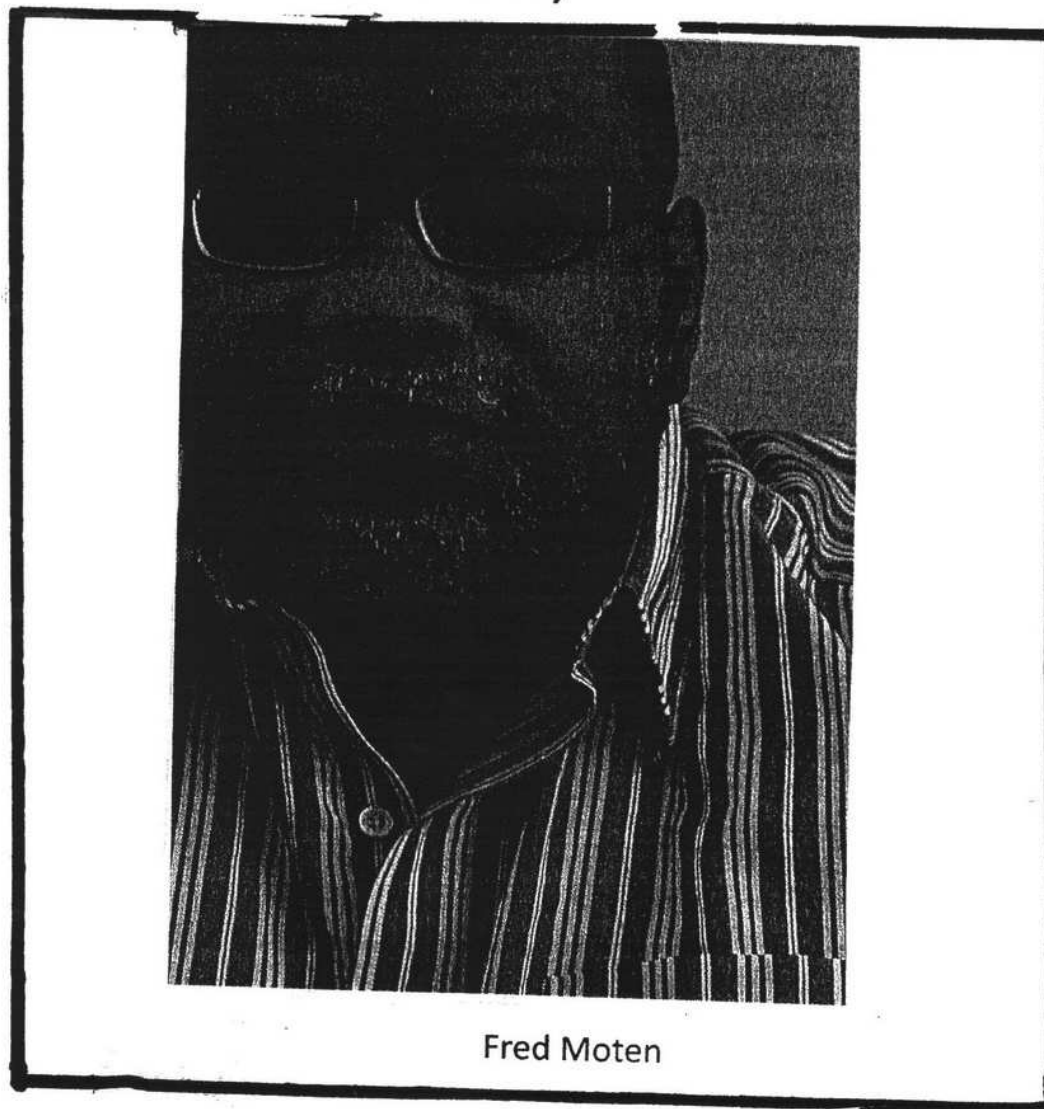
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reduced by the racist synecdoche that takes genital part for the whole, they are subject as well to the distinctively homophobic rewriting of synecdoche that polices "masculinity" by decreeing that the (male) "part" can *only* properly "stand" for the (female) "hole." Given its ominous doubling of the "double-consciousness" that splits black identity, it is appropriate that this moment of sexual discovery—mixing as it does both terror and liberation—should take place while Arthur and Crunch are performing in a gospel quartet on a tour of the South. This juxtaposition of a repressive political geography against "the vast and unmapped geography of himself" that Arthur first dares to negotiate in his sexual relation with Crunch reinforces the novel's analysis of racism as congruent with homophobia rather than homosexuality, and it links the "racial" paranoia instilled in the gospel quartet by their consciousness in the South of "the eyes which endlessly watch them" with the homographic anxiety that Arthur will feel when, after his intimacy with Crunch, he starts to wonder "if his change was visible." Crunch will go mad and Arthur die young as a consequence of internalizing the abjectifying judgments, both racist and homophobic, of the culture around them: internalized judgments that condemned them for engaging in other acts of "internalization"—acts in which their bodies open up to take in the phallic signifier to which they will thereby be viewed as having ceded any legitimate claim.<sup>2</sup>

Edelman gets us to a couple of problems that Baldwin helps us with, if we ask for his blessing.

First: If the sensual dominant of a performance is visual (if you're there, live, at the club), then the aural emerges as that which is given in its fullest possibility by the visual: you hear Blackwell most clearly in seeing him—the small kit, the softness and slow grace of his movement; or Cecil most clearly in the blur of his hands. Similarly, if the sensual dominant of the performance is aural (if you're at home, in your room, with the recording), then the visual emerges as that which is given in its fullest possibility by the aural: you see Blackwell most clearly in hearing the space and silence, the density and sound, that indicate



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and are generated by his movement; or Cecil most clearly in sound's anticipation of dance at, to, and away from the instrument. These are questions of memory, descent, and projection. The visual and the aural are before one another. Blackwell gone, Cecil up ahead.

Second: Repression and amplification. The repression of the knowledge of the hole in the signifier is shadowed by another, not so easily sensed repression of the knowledge of the whole in the signifier.<sup>3</sup> This is a repression of amplification, of sound and, most especially, of *abounding*, in the sense that Derrida employs, where the whole expands beyond itself in the manner of an ensemble that pushes conventional ontological formulation over the edge. The hole speaks of lack, division, incompleteness; the whole speaks of an extremity, an incommensurability of excess, the going past of the signifier, neither its falling short, nor some simple equivalence. This understanding of the whole is not formed in relation to an impenetrable and exclusionary integrity but is, as Derrida puts it, "a principle of contamination, a law of impurity, a parasitical economy" that raises the most severe and difficult concerns regarding the question of its own representation.<sup>4</sup> We'll return to the question of the relations between the part and the whole, the hole and the whole. For now it's enough to try to think the whole—as it has been formulated and identified, in a certain kind of poststructuralist thought, as a necessarily fictive, problematically restrictive, completeness—in its relation to and difference from the whole whose incompleteness is always also a *more than completeness*.

These problems lie at the intersection of totality and the *materiality* of sound, where Guattari's "a-signifying economy of language"<sup>5</sup> encounters Derrida's "parasitical economy" of "the law of the law of genre." Baldwin is *The Economist*.

Let us hold him in our hearts and minds. Let us make him part of our invincible black souls, the intelligence of our transcendence. Let our black hearts grow big world absorbing eyes like his, never closed. Let us one day be able to celebrate him like he must be celebrated if we are ever to be truly self determining. For Jimmy was God's black revolutionary



mouth. If there is a God, and revolution his righteous natural expression. And elegant song the deepest and most fundamental commonplace of being alive.<sup>6</sup>

In the eulogy he read at Baldwin's funeral, Amiri Baraka speaks of Baldwin's "world absorbing eyes." This text is supposed to be something like a preface to an engagement with those eyes, with Baldwin's gaze and the sound of that gaze as it is manifest in and as his very substance. That gaze's sound and content, which carries with it all of the negative weight of our history, also holds a blessing, a *baraka*, something all bound up with Baldwin's being what Baraka called "God's black revolutionary mouth" *and more*, and something all bound up with Baldwin being what Lee Edelman might call a homographer *and more*.<sup>7</sup> This chapter begins with an appreciation of the *and more* in Baldwin, an extra substance or content held in the generative, appositional, copresent nonconvergence of the ensemble of the senses and the ensemble of the social. This meeting is manifest, in one way, as a critique of what in Baraka all too easily becomes homophobic phonocentrism and of what in Edelman's text "The Part for the (W)hole" (in part a reading of Baldwin's *Just above My Head*) threatens to become an ocularcentric textualism that is not but nothing other than Eurocentric. This section's title would reflect such meeting and resound the echo of two compositions and of two directions: their (non-)hybridity or, again, their generative (non-)convergence. That's what happens, for instance, in Anthony Braxton's recent quartet music or in a duet he recorded with David Rosenboom called "Transference," which I was trying to listen to when I first started to work on this: (the sound of [the]) ensemble in and as (the) ensemble's internal space.

This is after what Guattari would call a "graft of transference"<sup>8</sup> (and it's important here to recall that transference is a kind of resistance; it's that mode of being of the psychoanalytic encounter that is determined by a syncopative interruption of interpretation):<sup>9</sup> of the music in black literature, of the black aesthetic and philosophical tradition in the discourse of psychoanalysis, of all of these in the text of western

anticipation—and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic—and, lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development. Thus to break out of the circle of the *Innenwelt* into the *Umwelt* generates the inexhaustible quadrature of the ego's verifications.<sup>13</sup>

I'm interested in what appears to be a kind of black anticipatory doubling of some of the fundamental conceptual apparatuses of psychoanalysis: of the primal scene and of the mirror stage that might—via Baldwin—be seen to operate at the level of a *racial* as well as sexual determination that is marked in the black tradition though largely unmarked or occluded in psychoanalysis. One other thing that becomes clear is that black mirror stages and/or primal scenes operate on different registers, at the level of what might be called an extended infantilism despite the fact that in another way there are no children here. A question of childhood, then—more vexed than ever when, in a black context, it is filtered through a conceptual apparatus constructed out of terms like "primitivity," "pre-history," and "phylogenetic heritage"—is what I would address. One of the things I'd like to think about is how these terms operate within a sort of love/hate relationship with childishness and with the childlike. What I'm talking about, though, is not some valorization of what might be called an arrested or deferred development but a radically critical previousness vis-à-vis natality, a sexual cut that disrupts the familiar constellation of formulations constructed around primitivity and infantilism as racial and sexual attributes.

This question of natality and of a catastrophic break that could not but be disruptive and augmentative of (dominant understandings or formulations of) identity and that would certainly be played out upon a field shaped, if not determined, by the scopoc leads us to the issue of castration and its doubling. That question could be thought in terms of wounded kinships or phantom limbs and it would, therefore, seem to lend itself to the kind of interpretation that either a Freudian

philosophy. These grafts are neither purely oppositional and impossible nor some more or less possible hybridity or intersection. I also want to think about sound and its occlusion and, therefore, to think about how certain earlier versions of these grafts, both unconscious and conscious, operate with regard to sound, voice, their occlusion and exclusion and in light of attempts to remedy that occlusion or at least to mark it. In the end I want to talk about music, not as that which cannot be talked about but as that which is transferred and reproduced in literature as a function of the enabling disability of the literary representation of aurality. I want to linger in the cut between word and sound, between meaning and content, build me a willow cabin, so to speak, improvise, in a way that Lacan sounds but then talks, which is to say interprets his way out of via what he calls "reducing the non-meaning."<sup>10</sup> Again, I would move with Baldwin in an attempt to reverse what Guattari calls that "grave error on the part of the structuralist school to try to put everything connected with the psyche under the control of the linguistic signifier."<sup>11</sup> I would do much. I've got to augment in the ways of an appositional encounter, of what Nathaniel Mackey might call a "discrepant engagement."

Recall Mackey's formulations of "wounded kinship" and "sexual cut" and, along with the following passages from Lacan, let them stand in for the terms and/or subjects of this encounter:

[A] certain dehiscence at the heart of the organism, a primordial discord betrayed by the signs of uneasiness and motor unco-ordination of the neo-natal months. The objective notion of the anatomical incompleteness of the pyramidal system and likewise the presence of certain humoral residues of the maternal organism confirm the view that I have formulated as the fact of a real *specific prematurity of birth* in man.<sup>12</sup>

This development is experienced as a temporal dialectic that decisively projects the formation of the individual into history. The *mirror stage* is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to

hermeneutic or a feminist, post-Freudian anti-hermeneutic might provide.<sup>14</sup> But this black castration is, in a fundamental sense, *ante-hermeneutic*, which is to say before (in every sense of the word) the psychoanalytic, not only in the sense of a kind of anticipation of its insights but before the natal occasion, namely castration, out of which the psychoanalytic understandings of identification and desire emerge. It is important to note in this regard that black castration is not just to be seen as *prospective* figure and *symbolic* inability, since for the black tradition, castration is not just phantasmic possibility or introjection based on a fleeting glance at that which is read as sexual difference, but is also the proper name of an oft-repeated literal, historical, material event. Similarly the question of castration, in a way that is not only to be indexed to the psychoanalytic chain of disavowal and fetishization, leads back to the question of the blessing, the *baraka* as Lacan terms it, a possibility of augmentation, abounding, or of a dynamic whole that operates in a complex relation with loss or lack or incompleteness or static hole. Here, the *baraka* is an aurally infused gaze that manifests a beneficence improvised through the opposition of prophylaxis and evil. It is also a transfer of substance that *jazz* implies and performs. It is not the prematurity (of ejaculation) that Adorno critiques—though there is nothing here if not ejaculation (and here one thinks of Hall Montana's slow awakening from a dream in *Just above My Head*, about which more later). And it is not quite that "dehiscence at the heart of the organism, a primal discord" that marks for Lacan the "fact of a real *specific prematurity of birth* in man," though in the end there is nothing here if not the individual's projection into the augmentative atonality of a history in and of resistance/transference, nothing if not the individual's bearing some "residues of the maternal."

I want, though, not to deny (the mark of) castration—as a constitutive and fundamental theoretical element of psychoanalysis and of the psyche—but to think castration as the condition of possibility of an engagement that calls castration radically and, I think, irrevocably into an abounding or improvisational question. I want to listen to what sound does to interpretation and note how insurgent, anti- and ante-interpretive



song, correspondent to "neither time nor tune" bears the repressed, resistant, transferred content of the piercing sound—"the heart-rending shriek"—of the black improvisation of the primal scene. Our passage(s) raise the question of castration's relation to the problematics of reading and of meaning and the possibility of significance at the level of what abounds or augments meaning, the way in which nonmeaning renders meaning more significant and the way this demands a critique of (psychoanalytic) interpretation. The way such a critique is embedded in the black radical aesthetic tradition, in the way it anticipates both a Freudian-phallic as well as a post-Freudian-anti-phallic reading and outstrips them both—to the extent that he is shaped by the complexity of his identifications as much as it is determined by the force of its representations and to the extent that it knows (or, at least, shows) how sound both shapes and cuts interpretive circles or communities—is crucial here and is what is implied in this notion of the ante-, the before, another interanimation of "insufficiency and anticipation" that not only cuts mirror stages and primal scenes, but destabilizes the very idea of—need or desire for—suture.

And all of this is tied to those problematics of meaning in relation to the originary separation from the object that are themselves called into question vis-à-vis this doubling such that the entry into language, that entry into the symbolic order that takes away what it gives and is the condition of possibility and impossibility of the subject's relation to the object, is doubled by an entry into *another's* language, and the concomitant theft and loss—in Amiri Baraka's words—of one's "oom boom ba boom"<sup>15</sup> that, just as it is seen as a cut or break that is easily reconfigured as a loss, is also reconfigured as an augmentation—something brought to the language one enters, by way of the language one has lost—that bears the lineaments not only of the most abhorrent and horrific deprivations and violations but also of the most glorious modes of freedom and justice, like the anarchic and anarchonic modes of expression and organization that are played, which is to say played out, in *The Music* (wherein, Ellison says, if we linger, we might commit an action).

account those transferences of the servant girl's scream in the black musical and literary traditions, the "afro-horn[s]," say, of Henry Dumas or of Albert Ayler, phallic instruments infused and reconfigured by the materiality (content-substance-objectivity) of the maternal and by the knowledge of freedom the experience of bondage affords.<sup>17</sup>

So that I want to trace a movement from the reduction of the phonic substance (of whose workings in texts from Descartes to Saussure Derrida writes in *Of Grammatology* and whose critical effects Edelman assumes in his essay on Baldwin) to the denial of the mark/inscription of castration on the maternal body to the absenting or exclusion of the maternal, the body and the mark<sup>18</sup> to "the inscription of 'the homosexual' within a topology that produces him in a determining relation to inscription itself" (that topology being what Edelman refers to as "homographesis").<sup>19</sup> I want to think about the way that writing's description of sound (the literary representation of aurality) is also a de-scription of sound, a writing *out* of sound, that corresponds both with the "unconscious denial that the maternal body is inscribed with the mark of castration [that] is . . . the precondition, at the level of the subject, for the philosophical exclusion or suppression of the maternal, the body, and the signifying mark"<sup>20</sup> and with a denial, both conscious and unconscious, of the very idea of the whole. This requires that I establish an equivalence between the denial of writing or inscription—which is also a denial of castration—and the denial of the aural in writing—an aurality that augments and redoubles castration, destabilizing its determinations: of meaning, disavowal, fetishization, alienation. Note, again, that this would be not a denial of castration but an invaginative cut, a "sexual cut" of castration by way of aurality, one that carries with it the transferential mark of the anoriginal but insistently previous materiality and maternity of otherwise occluded sensuality, otherwise occluded sound, otherwise occluded *content*, in logocentric traditions and in their grammatological supplements.

Some of you may recall that this conception originated in a feature of human behavior illuminated by a fact of comparative psychology. The

And this, in turn, leads to the question of the relation between castration and alienation, between castration, on the one hand, and disavowal and fetishization, on the other hand, in the Freudian and Marxian registers. Here we can begin to examine how a particular line of psychoanalytically influenced inquiry—say, from Adorno to Silverman—operates against the backdrop of these racial-historical determinations of language and the background of a reduction of the phonic substance of language that bends their analytics of aurality in the direction of an overwhelming ocularcentrism. For Adorno, black aural culture is defined by its fetish character in a way similar to the definition of female body/voice that Silverman sees in classic cinema. After all, according to Adorno, "[p]sychologically, the primal structure of jazz may most closely suggest the spontaneous singing of servant girls . . . [,] the domesticated body in bondage."<sup>16</sup> But I'm interested, here, in the insight Adorno's deafness carries: for what is borne in work of the black radical aesthetic tradition—and not only at the site of its recitations of terror and violation but also in the critical and metacritical discourse it produces on its own productions—is nothing other than the cries of a servant girl, the material-phonic substance that is transferable but not interpretable from either inside or outside the circle, the aural content that infuses and transforms (our dominant understandings of) primality, extremity, or extension out from inside or outside. Here I want to establish black aurality as the site of an improvisation through the structures both Silverman and Adorno talk about. Ultimately, I want to show how Baldwin's *baraka*, his blessing, moves in the tradition of the servant girl and in the encounter with psychoanalysis and in light not just of castration but of augmentation, of a beneficial and song-producing prosthesis—the augmentation of vision with the sound that it has excluded, the augmentation of reason with the ecstasy it has dismissed—that improvises through the determinations of lack and alienation, not via some direct adequation between word and object, but through the object's transferential reproduction in and as the (re)production of sound and of an ensemblic, dynamic totality. What I'm trying to talk about is another address of Lacan's "question of a horn," about which more in a minute. That address takes into

child, at an age when he is for a time, however short, outdone by the chimpanzee in instrumental intelligence, can nevertheless already recognize as such his own image in a mirror. This recognition is indicated in the illuminative mimicry of the *Aha-Erlebnis*, which Köhler sees as the expression of situational apperception, an essential stage of the act of intelligence.

This act, far from exhausting itself, as in the case of the monkey, once the image has been mastered and found empty, immediately rebounds in the case of the child in a series of gestures in which he experiences in play the relation between movements assumed in the image and the reflected environment, and between this virtual complex and the reality it reduplicates—the child's own body, and the persons and things, around him.

This event can take place, as we have known since Baldwin, from the age of six months, and its repetition has often made me reflect upon the startling spectacle of the infant in front of the mirror. Unable as yet to walk, or even to stand up, and held tightly as he is by some support, human or artificial (what in France we call a *'trotte-bébé'*), he nevertheless overcomes, in a flutter of jubilant activity, the obstructions of his support and, fixing his attitude in a slightly leaning-forward position, in order to hold it in his gaze, brings back an instantaneous aspect of the image<sup>21</sup>

*Since every stick and stone was white and since you have not yet seen a mirror you assume you are too until around the age of 5 or 6 or 7 . . .*<sup>22</sup>

*I was determined to be served or die; I wanted to kill her but wasn't close enough so I threw a glass into the mirror, and when it shattered, when the glass hit the mirror, I woke up.*<sup>23</sup>

TORT: *No, I wanted you to say more about that temporality to which you already referred once, and which presupposes, it seems to me, references that you have made elsewhere to logical time.*

LACAN: *Look, what I noticed there was the suture, the pseudo-identification, that exists between what I called the terminal time of the*



arrest of the gesture and what, in another dialectic that I called the dialectic of identificatory haste, I put as the first time, namely, the moment of seeing. The two overlap, but they are certainly not identical, since one is initial and the other is terminal.

I would like to say more about something which I was not able, for lack of time, to give you the necessary indications.

This terminal time of the gaze, which completes the gesture, I place strictly in relation to what I later say about the evil eye. The gaze in itself not only terminates the movement, it freezes it. Take those dances I mentioned—they are not always punctuated by a series of times of arrest in which the actors pause in a frozen attitude. What is that thrust, that time of arrest of the movement? Is it simply the fascinator effect, in that it is a question of dispossessing the evil eye of the gaze in order to ward it off? The evil eye is the *fascinum*, it is that which has the effect of arresting movement and, literally, of killing life. At the moment the subject stops, suspending his gesture, he is mortified. The anti-life, anti-movement function of this terminal point is the *fascinum*, and it is precisely one of the dimensions in which the power of the gaze is exercised directly. The moment of seeing can intervene here only as a suture, a conjunction of the imaginary and the symbolic, and it is taken up again in a dialectic, that sort of temporal progress that is called haste, thrust, forward movement, which is concluded in the *fascinum*.

What I wish to emphasize is the total distinction between the scopic register and the invocatory, vocatory, vocational field. In the scopic field, the subject is not essentially indeterminate. The subject is strictly speaking determined by the very separation that determines the break of the *a*, that is to say, the fascinator element introduced by the gaze.<sup>24</sup>

F. WAHL: *You have left to one side a phenomenon that is situated, like the evil eye, in the Mediterranean civilizations, and which is the prophylactic eye. It has a protective function that lasts for the duration of a journey, and which is linked, not to an arrest, but to a movement.*

LACAN: What is prophylactic about such things is, one might say, allopathic, whether it is a question of a horn, whether or not made of

coral, or innumerable other things whose appearance is clearer, like the *turpicula res*, described by Varro, I think, which is quite simply a phallus. For it is in so far as all human desire is based on the castration that the eye assumes its virulent, aggressive function, and not simply its luring function as in nature. One can find among these amulets forms in which a counter-eye emerges—this is homeopathic. Thus, obliquely, the so-called prophylactic function is introduced.

I was thinking that in the Bible, for example, there must be passages in which the eye confers the *baraka* or blessing. There are a few small places where I hesitated—but no. The eye may be prophylactic but it cannot be beneficent—it is maleficent. In the Bible and even in the New Testament, there is no good eye, but there are evil eyes all over the place.<sup>25</sup>

I'm after a way of rethinking the relation between the mirror stage and the *fascinum/baraka* of the gaze, to think the gaze as something other than necessarily maleficent, but not by way of a simple reversal or inclusion within the agencies of looking; rather within another formulation of the sensual, within a holoesthetic nonexclusionarity that improvises the gaze by way of sound, the horn, that accompanies the blessing, that has effects Lacan cannot anticipate<sup>26</sup> in part because of his oculocentrism, because of the way his attention to language is always through an implicit and powerful *visualization* of the sign, a visualization never not connected to the hegemony or law of the signifier that Guattari decries and would break. So I'm talking about something like the possibility or trace of aurality in Baldwin's gaze, conferred upon himself and others, the nonexclusion of the gaze's aurality as the condition of possibility of its blessing. But what's the relationship between these representations of the mirror stage? How is the process of identification constituted in black culture? Is there a black mirror stage? Is the plenitude of Lacan's mirror stage always already an illusion, one that always already demands compensation for or an impossible reconstitution of that which it would constitute? Is this not all part of a process of deconstruction of the absolute singularity or alterity, the unitary trait, of the

individual or group? Is Lacan's mirror stage simply the constitution of a phantom or phantasmatic singularity, an illusory plenitude or fullness? Doesn't Baldwin's mirror stage divest us even of the possibility of that illusion by bringing into the mix, precisely at the moment of its constitution, *race* such that the moment of the constitution of an originary differentiation or singularization is interminably deferred?

Listening to Lacan and interlocutor on the gaze, at the occlusion of sound, when the horn is dismissed or bracketed within the oscillational economy of phallus/castration (the virtual or symbolic economy of a reified sexual difference and a reified relation of subject and object), one hears that what that bracketing forecloses remains foreclosed only until the before of Baldwin removes or redoubles or returns to open sound's opening back up again. All this happens in the Mediterranean, as if—in the name of the Sheik and the Trojan—prophylaxis (or something uncontrollable that requires it) had this site as its natural home; deeper still, as if that which would be prophylactic or protective is merely phallic and aggressive, an aggression that is assured in and by a prior interpretive racialization of human desire's basis in castration. The horn is dismissed as phallic, thought only in its immaterial, if forceful, absence. Yet a kind of gap occurs due to the improvisational orality and aurality of the seminar, the unequal exchange of question and answer. This gap occurs when Lacan refers to those forms, those amulets,<sup>27</sup> as potentially in excess of an understood or assumed economy of visually and spatially determined meaning and difference. If the horn—by way of the specter of an organized sound, a music—brings to bear on the sign's visual/spatial regime a system of differences that does not signify, as Kristeva would say (though here, that this system would not signify does not mean that it would not communicate or effect, produce or induce affect, protect or ensure, endanger in the interest of some saving power), then we can understand why Lacan would attempt to bracket it just as his readers, either for the sake of his readability or his unreadability, bracket the noise he must have made, a noise connected not only to aurality but to aurality in improvisation. This bracketing allows the requisite conclusion: there can be no beneficent eye, that no

eye can convey a blessing, that the horn, reduced to a sign, a substitute for the lost object, can only reveal the anxiety and aggression of a desire born in castration. But the horn is what conveys the *baraka*, and this blessing, bound up in the nonexclusion of sound from the holoesthetic field, is what allows the possibility of a more than prophylactic gaze, that beneficent and world-encompassing gaze, the *baraka* of which Baraka speaks and sings. What is held and carried in that gaze is the eruptive content of a transferred history; the material substance of a music that is more than aural: anticipatory, premature, insistently previous, jazz.<sup>28</sup> We have known this since Baldwin, since the man referred to in the index of the English translation of *Écrits* as "Baldwin, J." Since him. J. Baldwin knew something about the way sound works, something about the work of sound. Between or outside of or improvising through protection and arrest, what did Baldwin confer upon us when he looked at us and what did he confer upon himself when he first looked into his own eyes?

Edelman operates within an occlusion of sound similar to that of Lacan's, an occlusion that occurs sometimes in the name of a deconstruction of phonocentrism and always within a tradition of logocentrism, which has at its heart a paradoxically phonocentric deafness. And so, in spite of the value of his work, we're still left with the question, how will we receive (a term of great importance to Edelman and to his valorization of a kind of ethics of mutual penetrability) or celebrate (as Baraka would have it) Baldwin? Now I am not advocating a reading that would be a simple return or (re)capitulation to a metaphysics of meaningful voice, one that would parallel the rendering of homosexuality and blackness as secondary/sterile/parasitic that Edelman describes. Nevertheless, the primal scene must be heard; one must be attuned to its sound and perhaps, then, even to a real reformulation of, rather than dismissal of, spirit. Hear, for instance, recorded, if you will, in Leeming's biography, the devastating aurality of a Baldwinian primal scene that one would invoke in order to justify the search for a homographic aurality in the text, one that augments Edelman's critique with sonic interruptions.



Baldwin remembered as one of the "most tragically absurd" moments of his life lying in bed with a lover in Saint-Paul-de-Vence . . . both of them crying as they listened to the sounds of Lucien [Happersberger, the man Baldwin described as the love of his life] making love with the lover's supposed girlfriend in the room above.<sup>29</sup>

Now I'm not trying to say that Edelman is wholly unattuned to sound; indeed part of what I want to pay special, though brief, attention to here is his reading of sound and music in *Just above My Head*. I am trying to say that Baldwin, at least with regard to the question of politics and also with regard to the importance of sound, in light of a desire to move beyond the oscillation between resistance and domination, would have at least been wary about anything like a kind of homographesis or negrographesis that didn't give the *phonê* its due. At any rate, what I want to argue is that the nonexclusion of sound, the nonreduction of nonmeaning, is tied to another understanding of literary resistance, one that moves within and without the black tradition, activating the sound in a way that opens the possibility of a nonexclusion of sexual difference whose exclusion has otherwise marked that tradition and that has been an inescapable part of that tradition's own scopophilia. His writing is pierced with screams and songs and prayers and cries and groans, their materiality, their maternity, and that's important.

More importantly, these elements are not to be read, are not to be thought in relation to a formalism that reduces (phonic) substance in the construction of a sound-image that is itself integrated into the semiotic ground of the science of grammatology. As Derrida writes, "[W]ithout this reduction of phonic matter, the distinction between language and speech, decisive for Saussure, would have no rigor."<sup>30</sup> And it is this particular mode of rigor that is decisive for Edelman to the extent that his homographesis is an extension, via Derrida, of Saussure's scientific project. And shortly we'll note in Edelman's reading how the reduction of the phonic matter to a sound-image that is readable, meaningful, and therefore held within the very visual economy he attempts to disturb marks the reinscription of a phonocentrism—a

The bottom of his throat was sore, his lips were weary. Every time he swallowed, from here on, he would think of Crunch, and this thought made him smile as, slowly, now, and in a peculiar joy and panic, he allowed Crunch to pull him up, upward, into his arms.

He dared to look into Crunch's eyes. Crunch's eyes were wet and deep *deep like a river*, and Arthur found that he was smiling *peace like a river*.<sup>33</sup>

That field is remarked by Edelman. We must remark the insistent inter-articulation of "reading" and "seeing" in Edelman's remarks.

Fittingly, in light of this last remark, Arthur and Crunch confirm their new understanding of "identity" by performing gospel songs and hymns identical to those they sang before they began their erotic involvement. Now, however, what is patently the same is also, and at the same time, different; as Arthur and Crunch contain each other, so, too, do the various "meanings" of their apparently identical songs. Like the homographic sameness of two signifiers, visually indistinguishable from one another—signifiers that are actually products of different histories and etymologies—the "same" text now exhibits discontinuous, potentially contradictory meanings that reflect its determination through contiguity to different parts of the context that contains it. Thus the spiritual devotion implicit in "*So high, you can't get over him*" cohabits with the homoerotic specificity of the song's performance by Arthur and Crunch. And just as Arthur, contemplating the aftertaste of Crunch's ejaculation into his mouth, is "frightened, but triumphant" and wants, as Baldwin declares, "to sing," so the experience of singing in the novel comes to figure the erotic exchange of inside and outside, the taking in and giving back of a language seen as the prototype of the "foreign" substance that penetrates, and constitutes, identity.

To the extent, then, that Arthur and Crunch reinterpret "manhood" and thus, in Western terms, subjectivity in its paradigmatic form, as the ability to incorporate what is "foreign" without experiencing a loss of integrity, and without being constrained (hetero)sexist either/or logic of

central reemergence of the metaphysics of voice into the homographesis Edelman performs and sees Baldwin performing—that paradoxically renders the text silent. Or, more precisely, substanceless, both with regard to the text's materiality and its (immaterial, semantic) content. The reduction of the phonic substance that determines Edelman's reading of Baldwinian aurality in its relation to the homographic disturbance of "manhood" and the "ego" is important not simply because it might serve to suppress what Houston Baker would call the text's "racial poetry,"<sup>31</sup> a poetry he all too quickly aligns with an understanding of the "meaning" and "identity" of blackness that never escapes the very scopopic determinations that, as Edelman rightly points out, connect Baker's work to homophobic and racist regimes he would surely have intended to resist. *Rather, the reduction of phonic substance must be thought precisely because it iconically represents the exclusion of materiality in general wherein the liberatory force of an invaginative racial poetry lies.* In *Of Grammatology* Derrida quotes Hjelmslev's interpellation and extension of Saussure: "[s]ince language is a form and not a substance (Saussure), the glossemes are by definition independent of substance, immaterial (semantic, psychological and logical) and material (phonic, graphic, etc.)."<sup>32</sup> If Edelman's mode of reading is a further variation on Saussure's formalism, and I think it is, how can it be adequate to Baldwin if Baldwin is, and I think he is, substantial? Please note that this question is meant to initiate an augmentation, not a rejection, of the homographic project—a substantial augmentation that will, in turn, make possible another kind of encounter with Baldwin's substance, with his im/materiality—both sensual and social. And note, too, that it would be wrong to suggest that Edelman is unaware of the substance of Baldwin's text that escapes the visual-aural binary. Check the holosensual field that is created in the following passage from *Just above My Head*:

Curious, the taste, as it came, leaping, to the surface: of Crunch's prick, of Arthur's tongue, into Arthur's mouth and throat. He was frightened, but triumphant. He wanted to sing. The taste was volcanic. This taste, the aftertaste, this anguish, and this joy had changed all tastes forever.

active and passive, they point to the partial understanding of "manhood" that passes in dominant culture for the whole, and they disarticulate the coercive "wholeness" of an identity based on fantasmic identification with a part. They thus make visible to the novel's reader the invisible operation of *différance* that destabilizes every signifier, offering a glimpse of the process through which a signifier like "manhood" can communicate the singularity of a fixed identity only where a community of "readers" has learned how *not* to see the differences within that identity and its signifier both. "Perhaps history," as Baldwin suggests, "is not to be found in our mirrors, but in our repudiations: perhaps the other is ourselves"; and as if generalizing from the mutual containment of Arthur in Crunch and Crunch in Arthur, Baldwin expands on this supposition by declaring: "Our history is each other. That is our only guide. One thing is absolutely certain: one can repudiate, or despise, no one's history without repudiating and despising one's own. Perhaps that is what the gospel singer is singing."<sup>34</sup>

An initial reading reveals that Edelman subordinates taste and touch to aurality. More precisely, Edelman submits the tactile materiality that infuses Baldwin's passage to a *reading*—which is to say, for Edelman, a seeing or visualization—of aurality that is already stripped of its particular materiality precisely because the holism of the sensual ensemble is broken. That holism is collateral damage incurred in the assault on the illusory totality of a synecdochically derived identity. What is herein visualized—that which displaces both the phonic and semantic substance of language with a semiotic formalization and is, for Edelman, the making visible of the workings of *différance*—is described succinctly by Derrida:

*Différance* is therefore the formation of form. But it is *on the other hand* the being-imprinted of the imprint. It is well-known that Saussure distinguishes between the "sound-image" and the objective sound. He thus gives himself the right to "reduce," in the phenomenological sense, the sciences of acoustics and physiology at the moment that he institutes the



science of language. The sound-image is the structure of the appearing of the sound which is anything but the sound appearing. It is the sound-image that he calls *signifier*, reserving the name *signified* not for the thing, to be sure (it is reduced by the act and the very ideality of language), but for the "concept . . ." The sound-image is what is *heard*; not the *sound* heard but the being-heard of the sound. Being-heard is structurally phenomenal and belongs to an order radically dissimilar to that of the real sound in the world.<sup>35</sup>

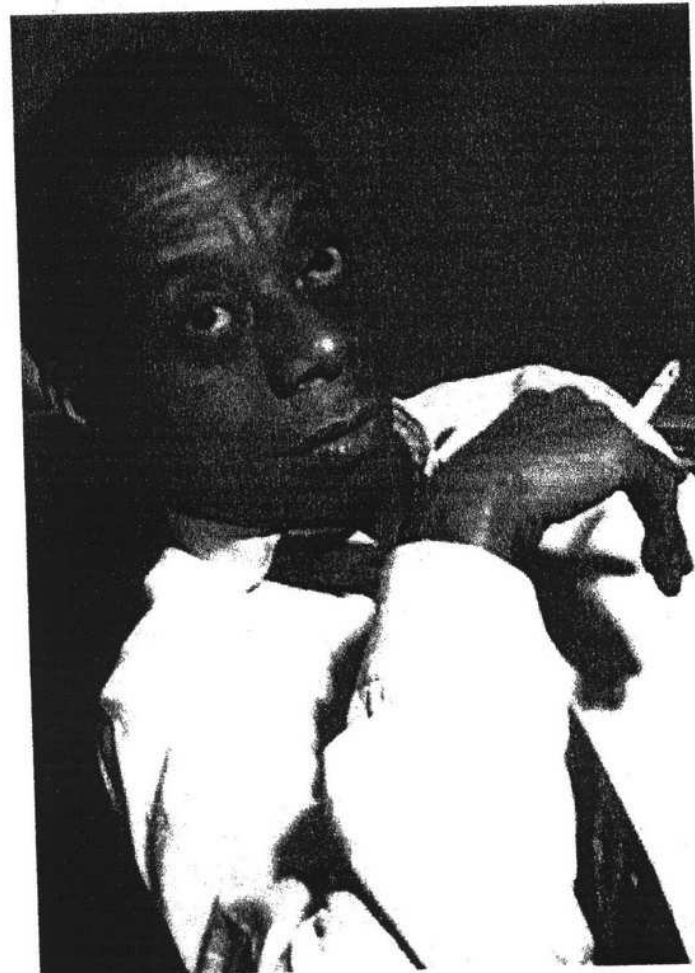
Derrida's description is telling because it allows us to understand what is a fundamental contradiction in Edelman's work, namely, *the valorization of language as prototypical substance from within a tradition of linguistic analysis that thinks language as pure form. The attunement to sound is here revealed as the literary experience of a psychic imprint*; the substance of language is metaphorical and the substance of Baldwin only apparent. This is also to say that Edelman's critique of an identity whose "coercive 'wholeness' . . . [is] based on fantasmic identification with a part" is itself based on the phantasmic identification of the wholeness of the material substance of Baldwin's text with a part of that substance, namely the representation of song. This identification is operative in the reading—which is to say visualization—of that singing and that reading's necessary reduction of that singing's phonic substance.

There is that in the phonic substance of Baldwin's text that does much more than "make visible to the novel's reader the invisible operation of *différance*." Indeed, Edelman's text carries, or more precisely transfers, something whose substance is not merely formal. In order to get to that something it's helpful to follow a certain clue embedded in Guattari's move toward the indetermination of the "necessary" relation between the psyche and the signifier and in his attention to those sonic extremities that infuse the signifier, disturbing the reader's visualization of it—disturbing the sound-image—with a reemergent *substance* that marks not only its own irruptive penetration but that of other modes of sensuality and desire as well.<sup>36</sup> "Deep River" in the sound of Arthur's gaze, in the wetness and depth of Crunch's eyes, in the taste

of Crunch's prick and cum, is tactile. Attention to the sound—and not merely to the sound-image—of the gaze he represents gives us access to the *whole substance* of Baldwin's materiality; so we start, but do not finish, there, where before us it remains to recall in our experience of him the shock of a blessing, a substantive transfer, from which homographesis bars us unless it is augmented. What this requires is neither a reduced emphasis on writing nor some new or more elaborately justified inattention to sound. Rather, an augmentation of reading's attention to the sound-image as Saussure thinks it, which would in turn lead to an augmentation of the experience of the audio-visual in its substantive im/materiality, which would in turn allow a fuller experience of the ensemble of the senses as it is experienced in Baldwin's writing. Improvising through the space between Baldwin's texts and his audio-visual projection in/on film, one is held within the very distillate of aesthetic experience: an erotics of distant receptivity where, in this particular case, phonic materiality opens to us its own invagination, a libidinal drive toward ever greater unities of the sensual where materiality in its most general—which is to say substantive—sense is transmitted in the interstice between text and all it represents and can't represent and the audio-visual and all that it bears and cannot bear. When in this space a *material* tactility is transferred, the affective encounter of the ensemble of the senses and the ensemble of the social is given as a possibility of this erotic drive that now can be theorized in its most intense relation to the drive for, and the knowledge of, freedom.

At one point in Karen Thorsen's film *James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket*, Baldwin says, "I really do believe in the New Jerusalem." This faith—the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen but heard (things therefore operating in the interruption of an ocular-centric order, a visual code or overdetermined politics of looking that locks in a certain oppositional encounter that Baldwin sang against)—is manifest as an ongoing concern with how you sound, where the critique of sound's occlusion is all bound up with being, as Baraka says, in the tradition, the tradition where the development of society is the focus

of art, the tradition where The Music disrupts and reorganizes the forms of sensual expression in the interest of that development. But it is also the evidence of things unheard, something transferred not only in the sound but in the ensemblic materiality of that world-encompassing gaze that sound only indicates. This something is not in the audio-visual experience of Baldwin or in the literary experience of his texts but in something that is really even before and in improvisation of Baldwin and of these formal projections of Baldwin, something upon which he improvises, something transferred to him from the way back and way before wounded kinship, forced and stolen labor, forced and stolen sexuality. At the risk of being misleading, I would think the more acute attention to what is transferred, to sound + more (not lyric but song + more) in writing and/or film *and what it opens up in them*, as another and more intense encounter with the music, where music is understood as content that irrupts into generic form, enacting a radical disorganization of that form.<sup>37</sup> To sustain the music would be to hold on to another understanding of organization, to improvise another form in extension and in the interest of augmentative musical content. Sustenance, encountering. As Baldwin knows, as Edelman knows both because and in spite of the analytic he employs and to which he is given, to receive the blessing of this substance—to see and hear and touch and smell and taste it; to receive the gift that does not cohere but exists in its abounding of its own internal space; to receive and in so doing to acknowledge the fact of the whole as a kind of distance: this is what it is to linger in the music.



James Baldwin

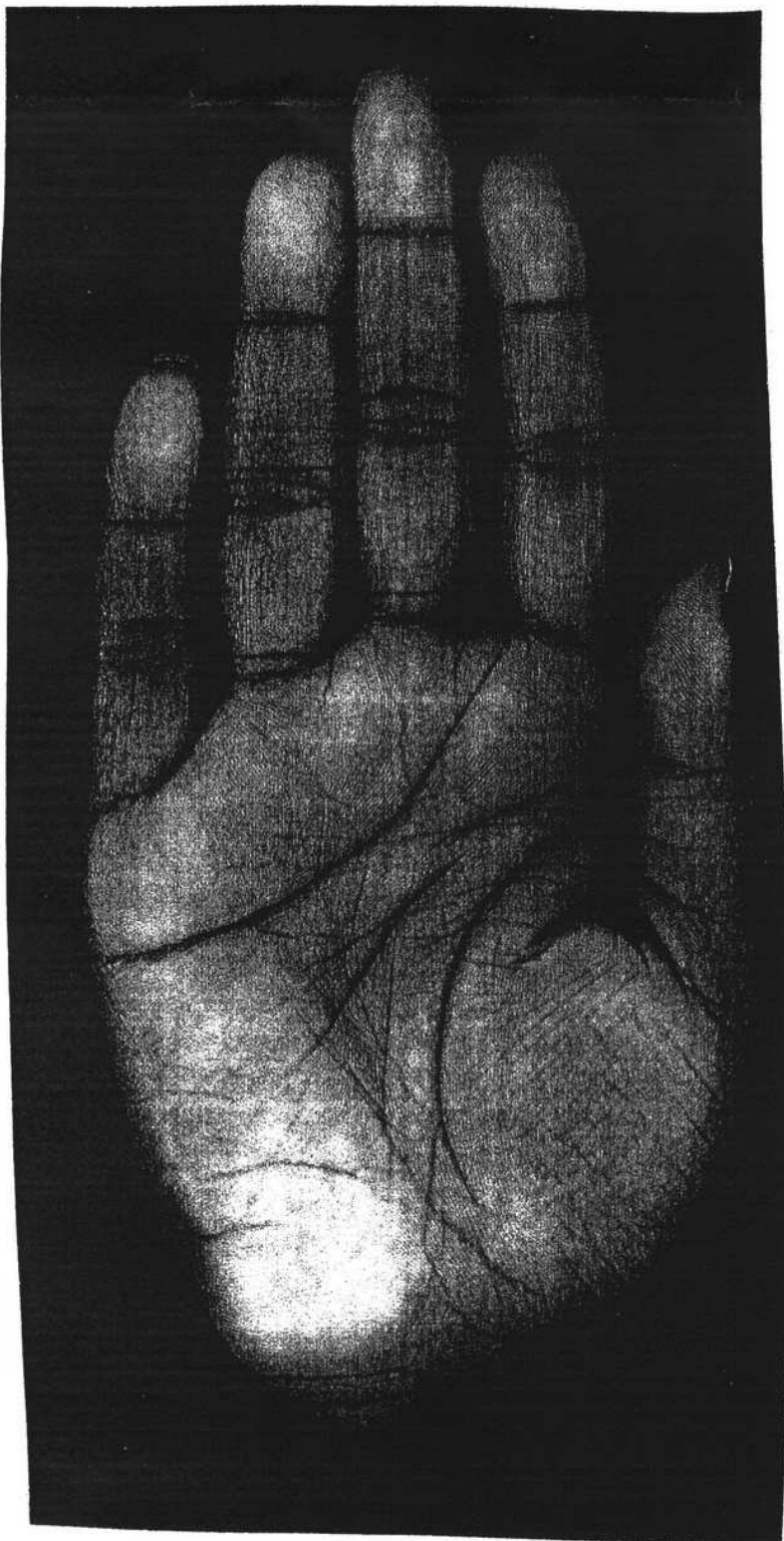
**Fred Moten** is a writer and scholar. Moten has most recently held an academic appointment as Helen L. Bevington Professor of Modern Poetry at Duke University. He is author of *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (coauthored with Stefano Harvey) (Minor Compositions, 2013), *B Jenkins* (Duke University Press, 2010), *Hughson's Tavern* (Leon Works, 2008), *I ran from it but was still in it* (Cusp, 2007), *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (University of Minnesota, 2003), *Poems* (with Jim Behrle) (Pressed Wafer, 2002), and *Arkansas* (Pressed Wafer, 2000). Moten was featured on the Poetry Society of America's 2009 list of best new American poets.



# Poems by Fred Moten from Hughson's Tavern

modern language day

The pressed traffic in gossip and event.                      waiters half-moon  
The civil hostility of Christmas dinner.                      movement got caught up  
The question of little negro education.                      in the optical system  
The tragedy of the common play date violation.                      but found a  
The civil butchery of dinner parties.                      corner. but also in  
The mean tourist smile and record collector.                      the operation but  
The brute civility of the prix fixe.                      slid but in the study but was  
The revolving interview on the edge of town.                      reading. the fire engines  
The very large array of sipping whiskey.                      were terrible. still prisoners  
The cold civics of the interstate.                      held on tight. firemen  
The extra-crazy thin black murderers.                      cut by the runaway Iversons  
The thin white murderers inside them.                      and their friends. flavors  
The civilization without friends.                      organized (curved fingernails) for the  
The abandoned corner of the afterparty.                      afterparty by caterers.



HAND OF KRYSTAI

We live after a river.

Toxic land makes pretty flowers. She overgrew the yard with painted bottles and whippoorwills so we could be different and have a flavorful sound. Unbearable cold makes pretty dresses and the rags are flayed by heat and fullness. The burning hole is hard to get a hold of whole so

this is for the ones who illuminate black suffering. They keep saying look what you did. They want them to say yes we did we sorry we sorry we sorry we sorry we sorry I'm sorry we sorry I'm sorry. They keep saying look. Look at them. Look at how they look at them. Look at how

they keep looking away from them. Simple motherfucker, let's take a step away from them. You are my fortune against killing with your scary ways. It's something to be down with how losing and being lost fill up

different kind of albums and run over cups. Dance in your head and

let go the sped-up real estate like it was in your collar. Tightly get ready to get ready for my love for you. We live after a river—don't you hear them seasoned pans? Me and baby brother found mama where the rain carried her down from the roof to the foot of her pear tree.



have no right to  
my private ear  
philosophically.  
broke down playing  
with others the  
infamous fred motet.  
  
rush ten minutes  
and cut for years  
and still stay here  
but threw away.  
if it was just more  
  
bread it would be  
one thing but it's  
too many more  
things in the head.  
eviscerate the  
rhythm demon

coming and picking, whining and string,  
on the hard row of old strangled song and  
claim. what about all them twang and fringe  
coming and picking in a band called drang

in the secret bookstore in luckenback in  
the room in the back for the two finger men?  
we came to arrange a critical view to savor  
and we started calling it the black reserve

escape the scape the scrape. we used to scrape  
that off the black reserve. the strained undeniable

whippoorwill landed on my broken frets. my old  
guitar is a skyline. I shoulda never left my home.

most of us can't afford the diaspora. coming  
and picking the air and strain release themselves  
in a ring shout and a square dance. the nimble  
discovery of a whole other thing in that tired

51

78

stration of the break  
elect but that's ok  
mr. morehead! even  
if you come up  
on the accident  
and just can't say,  
  
madrig compensate.  
the extraordinary  
rendition of all  
them black notes  
is our golden day.

breakfront. but I never found what I carried on  
my travels. distilled wandering in a furnished  
boxcar that I never shoulda left. not the price  
of the ticket but of coming from some place.

coming and picking what scattered from string,

I still don't know where it is but it came from  
a catalog, was still underneath the wagon frame,  
and never ever left the uncomfortable range.



# TEXT BY THOMAS HIRSCHHORN

## "Energy: Yes! Quality: No!" Gramsci Monument Art School

1 to 3 pm

The workshop "Energy: Yes! Quality: No!" at Gramsci Monument is one of the weekly events led by me, the artist. The Art School will take place every Friday, from ~~2 to 3 pm~~ 1 to 3 pm. The workshop is intended for 30 participants. The input of every participant (work or contribution) shall be discussed with all participants. In order to divide time equally and make the best of the other's judgements, it is necessary that everyone who signed in for the workshop, be present the full time and attend every work presentations/judgements

### Everybody is welcome

Everybody is welcome to attend the art workshop: "Energy: Yes! Quality: No!". Everybody, not only art-students or those interested in art.

To participate, two things are necessary for everyone:

- it is necessary to engage in common work, discussions, exchange, thinking, judging.
- it is necessary to bring an input (work, contribution, something coming from oneself).

### Structure of the workshop

Each participant brings an input, a work, something coming from her/himself: a text, an original-painting, a drawing, a song, a collage, a sculpture, a video or anything else. The participant chooses this work - only one - with the idea that it will be discussed according to the criteria "Energy: Yes! Quality: No!". The participant can choose to make a preliminary presentation of the input or not. Each work is discussed together for 1/2 hour. It is important that each work be discussed in equality, therefore it is important that all participants attend all the discussions - even if ones' own input was already discussed.

### Why "Energy: Yes! Quality: No!" ?

I can only do a school-project about something I believe in. I know what has energy; I know where there is energy. "Energy: Yes! Quality: No!" is one of my guidelines as an artist. It is an affirmation, it is something constitutive for my work and I have always been faithful to it. "Energy: Yes!" is the assertion that things which have their own energy are important. Energy is what counts, Energy is what I can grasp, Energy is what I can share and Energy is what is Universal. "Energy: Yes!" is a statement for movement, for the dynamic, for invention, for activity, for the activity of thinking. I want to say "Yes" to Energy as such, Energy as the idea of a possible accumulation, as a battery. It is about saying "Yes" to something without establishing an exclusive criterion. I use the term 'energy' as a positive term because it includes the other, it is beyond good and bad - even bad energy is Energy - and Energy is situated beyond cultural, political, aesthetical habits.

"Energy: Yes!" is to oppose thinking in terms of 'quality' and the criteria of Quality.

I am against the label Quality, everywhere, and in Art also of course. Therefore I propose to follow the guideline "Quality: No!" and oppose it to: "Energy: Yes!". But, "Quality: No!" is the refusal to be neutralized by the exclusive criteria of Quality. Quality is the luxury reflex to keep a distance with everything which doesn't have Quality. I don't know what has Quality, nor where there is Quality. As an artist I refuse to adopt the term 'quality' for my work and I don't want to apply it to the work of others. Quality is always a try to establish a scale, to distinguish 'high quality' or 'low quality', but I don't know, myself - today - what kind of work has Quality. I use the term 'quality' as a negative term, because it excludes others, because it's only an 'international thing' and because it makes the distinction between good and bad. Quality is exclusive, luxurious and based on tradition, identity and particularism. I need another criterion - today. Therefore I propose to follow, as a guideline, "Energy: Yes! Quality: No!".

### Judgement Criteria

I expressly use the term 'judgement' and don't use the term 'evaluation'. Today, a lot is produced, in all fields, but few people accept a judgement on their production. If you have the power to produce something, you must be ready to accept being judged for this production. Besides - at the opposite of 'evaluation' - a judgement is an engagement, something absolute, something which comes from the heart, something you can think about and build upon. In order to resist evaluation and being subject to it, we need to work out our own judgement, towards our own work, and towards the work of others as well. Contributing to an evaluation is not important - but to have my own personal judgement is essential, as an artist, but also as a human being. To me, 'judgement' is a positive term, but I am aware that it is often used negatively. Judging the work is never judging the person. Judging a work (my work/the work of others) is one of the keys to giving form, facing this judgement is one of the keys to asserting form - asserting form is

~~the most important thing in art.~~ **the most important thing in art.**

My/our criteria of judgement is/are "Energy: Yes! Quality: No!". I want/we want to assert what has energy for me/ for us - I do not want/ we do not want to judge the Quality of something. I don't want/we don't want to tell the other what should have quality for her or for him. A person is never judged, the judgement is never personal, I/we only judge her/his work or her/his output. With this proposition I want to teach that, when you do something, you will be judged for what you are doing. And as part of the act of doing something, the judgement of this doing has to be held out - this is the grace. I am happy if my work is judged.

### About making "School"

This occasion to do "Art School" at the Gramsci Monument is the opportunity for me to state my idea of what I think "School" should be: egalitarian, open to others, a commitment in being present, producing something, always together, all together, sharing time together and sharing clearly, from the guidelines established at start, sharing an experience, being engaged toward the other participants, knowing that each participant is important equally, even more that the "professor". To me the workshop "Energy: Yes! Quality: No!" is a kind of model of what an 'ideal-school' should be.

The most important thing in art school is the other, the other - the students, the other - the family, the other - the friend. With "Energy: Yes! Quality: No!" the other is essential.

### The goals of my workshop are:

- to encourage doing a work **or something of your own.**
- to be ready to have it judged,
- to trust ones' own - very own - judgement.



# A DAILY LECTURE WRITTEN BY MARCUS STEINWEG

*45th Lecture at the Gramsci Monument, The Bronx, NYC: 14th August 2013*  
**ROMANTIC SHIT**  
*Marcus Steinweg*

1. Stendhal insists that every woman "starting with the first novel she clandestinely flips open at age fifteen, secretly waits for passionate love"<sup>1</sup> (which should not make us believe that a man is less receptive for romantic love).
2. Ulrich Beck has characterised (the addiction to) love, which he calls the "fundamentalism of modernity", as "religion after religion" and "applied reading of novels".<sup>2</sup>
3. In fact, real love goes hand in hand with a resistance to the romantic convention, which demands quasi-religious contempt of the world from the lovers.
4. This is why Alain Badiou insists that love - instead of being just the experience of the other - is the experience of the world under the conditions of the duality constituted by the encounter.<sup>3</sup>
5. To separate oneself from the "rest of the world" seems to be a constitutive need of the romantic feeling.<sup>4</sup>
6. In order not to indulge in narcissistic world-contempt, the lovers have to claim their singularity in the here and now of a reality, which incessantly endangers this very singularity.
7. Love is aporetic because it exposes the lovers to the conflict of singularity and universality, without the promise of resolvability.
8. Translated into a Baudrillard paraphrase this means: every love which deserves this name loses itself in the universal.<sup>5</sup>
9. As much as love can be defended in its singularity, it also has its share of structuring convention.
10. It articulates this conflict between convention and singularity.
11. The encounter of love is a creative act, because it cannot trust the overcome dispositives including the correlating phantasms.
12. In the conflict of reality and phantasm it is the manifestation of singular universality.

<sup>1</sup> Stendhal, *Love*, London: Penguin Classics 2010. Translation translator's own.

<sup>2</sup> Ulrich Beck & Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, *Das ganz normale Chaos der Liebe*, Frankfurt a. M. 1990, p. 21, 250.

<sup>3</sup> Alain Badiou, *Conditions*, trans. Steve Corcoran, New York: Continuum Books.

<sup>4</sup> Vgl. Eva Illouz, *Consuming the Romantic Utopia. Love and the Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1997.

<sup>5</sup> Jean Baudrillard, *Paroxysm. Interviews with Philippe Petit*, trans. Chris Turner, London: Verso Books 1998.

# AMBASSADOR'S NOTE #27 BY YASMIL RAYMOND



Photo by Moyra Davey, Rome.

“What is the story with the roses,” a visitor asked, speaking of the flowers in the exhibition space near the images of Gramsci’s grave. I explained that the rose is part of the monument and that we change it daily. However, I also admitted that the effort is not without contradiction and pointed to the second bucket of roses that lives in the Newspaper office. The culture of capitalism is unable to accommodate the modesty of desiring a single rose. If you want to buy a rose within walking distance from the monument, you need to buy an entire dozen. In sum, as we have been domesticated to buy excess, the theatrics of a “good bargain” leaves us with extra roses each week. Indeed, the gesture of counting the days with a fresh rose, paradoxically, speaks to the nature of the gift, the expenditure of time and effort required. What is a gift if not a rose? The artist Moyra Davey, who visited Gramsci’s grave when she was in Rome, shared with me a copy of a photograph she took during her walk through the Protestant/A-Catholic cemetery. The image shows a rosebush in bloom.



RESIDENT OF THE DAY



TANYA BUTLER