Proposal For Another Existence.

by

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proposal for another existence.
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“She says to herself if she were able to write she could continue to live. She says to herself if she would write without ceasing. To herself if by writing she could abolish real time. She would live. If she could display it before her and become its voyeur.”

—Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictee,*
Dear Friend,

Here before you is the work of a four-year-old academic. At time of writing, my body is twenty-one years old and I feel eagerly naïve at the same time as I feel unbelievably jaded. I get the sense from my predecessors and elders that I am running the natural course of things, but I have some ideas as to what has brought me to this moment.

Matthew Shepard was the first person I can remember learning to have been killed for being gay. A white boy of handsome countenance from Casper, Wyoming. What did I really know then, other than that I wanted to be just like him? To be handsome, gay, white, twenty-one and making a difference. But not dead.

Since learning of Matthew Shepard, growing up queer and with an awareness of my world has felt like a game of tallies, counting up how much violence could be done to queer bodies. I lost count; I forgot their names. And I became very jaded.

Mark Aguhar is everything I never thought I would want to be. Queer. Femme. Fat. Of Color. Beautiful. Dead. I found her blog on the Internet the day of her suicide. From her I discovered there was something other than memory, and something beyond mourning. Beyond the search for redemption, I found a grasp for power. Mark pointed out possibility where I was taught impossibility. This work is my first step in that direction. And it makes me feel young and stupid.

As I have mentioned, this is the product of a four-year-old member of the Academy. And as much as I would resist having to say, there is much of my mind and position that I owe to the Academy and its members, to whom I intend extensive gratitude. This work, however, is as much, if not vastly more, a product of the
Academy as it is a product of institutions and communities not yet named or recognized.

My gratitude is owed, also, to my power circle, “people I have loved, laughed with and fought beside.”¹ Alongside gratitude, there is love, respect and admiration, sometimes unspoken but forever unconditional.

But beyond any person or body or institution, I owe this one to Mark. I never knew you, but I never doubted that you knew me. So much of my voice, I now owe to you. This is for you, Goddess. Rest in power.

My reader, also, has been a countless influence towards the realization of this moment. But to my reader, along with my gratitude I would like to offer a single proclamation as a tool for the unrest that is this text: This is a quest for immortality.

Humbly yours,
Nelson Yang

The human
Mark Aguhar is born on May 16th, 1987.

“Was I my best?”
— Dollhouse, ep. 1.13, “Epitaph One”

The human lives. In all its bloody fleshiness, it lives. There is a bloody life of veins and arteries and nervous systems that remind me of circuitry, of electricity. The body reminds me of a circuitry that does not remind me of the bloody body. With consideration for all his physiological complexity, his body is called *homo sapien*, human. And as his body is named “human,” human becomes his name, his sole identifier.

The embodiment of the human is wholly dependent upon his biology, thusly revealing the confines of his own ideological existence. The human defines his existence in bodily terms, and he has done so historically, bit by bit building the paradigm of embodiment. Imagination of the human always beckons, at the very least, the images of his body in sagittal and coronal planes, standing naked and tall, with neutral face and open palms. The human looks like this, a picture of his skeleton. A little later, when the human becomes the person, he will still look like this. Maybe more decorated, less uniform, more *cultured*. When he becomes his self, he will still look like this.²

He lives a conflation of his body and his self. He lives as his body lives,

² Here, I am trying to make allusion to the idea of the body before culture. It’s a little “chicken or the egg,” I admit, but it is an ideological step that I think needs to be made in drawing up the dependency upon embodiment that happens in processes of person-making. This body can also be understood as the human devoid of Marcel Mauss’s “body techniques.”
faithfully linked to his biology. His body informs him of his needs, and he obliges. It tells him when to eat and when to sleep. The obligations become his habits, and from his habits he conceives of time, a clock. The body does not absorb the clock; the body is the clock. It counts time for him in heartbeats and circadian rhythms and the way it gains weight in wintertime. It moves him to urinate or defecate. He does his best to be responsible to his body’s dictations. He does his best to do as he is told.

His heartbeats are counted, with utmost importance subsequently assigned, until their very last. Upon his death, his peers will recount his life in the sum of his heartbeats. The human heart beats 42 million times a year, roughly. The first leading cause of death in humans is heart disease.³

The Sphynx asked Oedipus, “Which creature walks on four legs in the morning, two legs in the afternoon, and three in the evening?”

There is a certain narrative to being a human person. Certain habits of his self, that have always only been habits, have been absorbed, naturalized into a story of his person. It is a legacial story, that is, of the legacy of person-making.

The person is born. He lives. He dies. And as it happens with the invention of his name, “human,” the narrative of humankind naturalizes his very selfhood as, reflexively, his very self naturalizes this narrative, this story of the habit of living.

When I am four years old, I sleep in a cradle next to the bed of my parents. One night, I find that my heart is an anchor, and I weep instead of sleep. When my

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mother scoops me up in consultation, I tell her that I am afraid of dying.

My parents make nighttime chuckles in the dark.

They do not tell me that my soul will live forever. They do not tell me that my body is a shell. Instead, my mother tells me that I should not be afraid because that day, the day of my death, is a long time from now.

When I am seven years old, my mother's body ceases function. Her heartbeats are recounted in sum.

The trouble with embodiment is that it is an ideological debt. Though the body is only a conduit, only a container, only the column atop which is propped the mind, the human person owes it for its function. In exchange for containing his spirit, the body insists upon its own importance through injury and pain and pleasure and orgasm. “You need me,” the body maintains, “You depend on me.” From bodily habits and dictations, the human person, in an attempt to conserve his self, internalizes in his self his responsibilities to the body. “The collapsing of morality into health is an old rhetorical strategy.”

He tells himself that this exchange is moral, that this is a debt he owes. The confession of debt furthermore encourages him towards the collapse between the body and his self.

In early November, the night after a night of cigarettes instead of sleep, sitting on the front steps embracing the freezing cold, I lay in my bed debilitated and sobbing. My roommate attacks my migraine with her fingertips pressing into the

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back of my neck.

Through tears and blankets and the dark I say, “It always feels like I’m being punished. Migraines always feel like I’m being punished, struck down where I stand.” My bed, luckily. My car, I had to pull over. A café. I have spent one, a total of four hours, on the floor of a bathroom stall in Madrid.

It feels like dying. I want Emma with me not because there is fleeting relief in her hands but because I don’t want to be alone if I bleed from the ears and died.

“I hope I’m not loosening a clot,” she says.

I hope so too, I think. Her fingers press into the base of my skull, where my neck ends. There is relief there, like a key in a lock.

There is the tumultuous impact of my mobile phone, vibrating against my desk. Only two buzzes at a time. I avoid picking it up until I convince myself that it is potentially important. The electric glow hurts my eyes and my brain clamps down on itself. I wonder why I insisted on this background, electric white. I am angry with myself.

I read the messages, but I can’t bring myself to answer them. I can’t get a grasp on affinity, and I feel alone; my body has claimed me for itself. All I can do is count my breaths until the crushing stops, or, with luck, I fall asleep in spite of it.

This cannot be what agency feels like. Or maybe it is. In the dull glow after the fact, still in the clothes I had on since morning, I cannot decide if I want to believe that I had brought this on myself. Maybe this is what agency feels like. I haven’t eaten since the sun was in the sky. Through the dull thud of the remnants of the migraine, I make eggs in a basket. I eat. I drink milk from a one dollar wine glass. I wander the house.
Eventually, with reluctance, I return to bed. I flip through books before I settle on Yusef Komunyakaa’s collection of poetry, *Pleasure Dome*. I stick small blue post-its to some of the pages. The occasional pang still comes at the right side of my head.

As I brush my teeth, I think about how I want to cry some more.

Debt is his legacy. He owes his father for his name, for his body, and for his ideology. His imagination of himself stands rooted in biology, and “biology tells tales about origins, about genesis, and about nature.” His biology is his inheritance, succeeded through the “patriarchal voice,” “the paternal line.” “Biology is the science of life, conceived and authored by a word from the father… The word was Aristotle’s, Galileo’s, Bacon’s, Newton’s, Linnaeus’s, Darwin’s…,”5 and not his own. The legacy of human selfhood is the obligation to the biology of his body. And these debts to the body, now internalized by habit, make the bars of his imprisonment. He pays his obligations like bail, anything to keep his self from rotting in his prison cell.

¡Ay, qué larga es esta vida!  
¡Qué duros estos destierros!  
¡Esta cárcel, estos hierros  
En que el alma está metida!  
Sólo esperar la salida  
Me causa dolor tan fiero,  
Que muero porque no muero.  
—Santa Teresa de Ávila

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The full sentence reads: “The word was Aristotle’s, Galileo’s, Bacon’s, Newton’s, Linnaeus’s, Darwin’s; the flesh was woman’s.” Note here the dualism to which Haraway draws attention and which she, and I, later confront. What is important to note now is the emergence of dualisms and their alleged cruciality to the process of modern person-making. Word/flesh and man/woman are only two among many that run parallel to each other and in support of genealogical paradigms.
The trouble with embodiment, also, is that the person cannot be two places at once; the person is bound. He and his selfhood ends where and when his body ends. This is the crux of human singularity. The human self’s obligation to the body, and the mutual absorption between them, will always boil down to a condition of solitary individualism. This is not due to the symbolism of bodily singularity, necessarily, but because of a modern ideological anchor to the body as integral to the constitution of the person enforces an illusion of wholeness and cohesion, and a containment of the self.  

Further, in the subject-making of the individual person, he is defined by where he is not, by the negative space around the body, and the limits of his self. The

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narrative of humanness relies on its imminent end. Humankind depends on his deathday to qualify his humanity. Beyond the matter of his imminent end, the human person also has no say regarding his self in the matter of his death. He will end when his body ends, no questions asked. Like habit, the body falls and the anchor of his single mortality drags the person close behind.

Despite his stubborn anchor to his old narrative, the person owes itself, also, to a past of transformation. Just as the construction of modernity was not an arbitrary compilation, the human person did not conceive of himself overnight. Rather, the person is a compilation of ideological shifts. In being so, the conditions of personhood have always been transient and susceptible to the influences of discourse. The matter, then, is the potentiality he wagers when his ideologies are reluctant to shift. The person risks his own transformation when he depends too heavily on the too familiar stories that he has written into his own bones, his anchors.

*Prior:* I... can’t.
   I still want... My blessing. Even sick. I want to be alive.

*Angel:*
   You only think you do. 
   Life is a habit with you. 
   You have not seen what is to come:

   —*Angels in America: Perestroika*, Tony Kushner
dies;
Mark Aguhar dies on March 12th, 2012.

“Death is your gift.”
—Buffy, *The Vampire Slayer*, ep. 5.18

In linear concepts of time, there are three temporal specificities to the construction of any moment: before the moment, the moment itself, and after the moment. Death, like life, contains its own trilogical narrative. Specific to the event of death, these temporal generalizations can be loosely referred to as anticipation, death, and lack/negation/absence, respectively.

In the construction of anticipation, something key to condition of anticipation is that, especially in the case of death, the event is imminent. This sets death apart from, for example, events of crisis, emergency or trauma. Death carries within itself, always, the certain fact of it eventual occurrence. Even in accepting the eventual occurrence of death, the human person lacks the ability to know the specific temporal moment at which death will occur. To the human person, death is temporally unhinged, and his only grasp of it is his imagination of it. With plans and caution, the person makes a futile attempt to ground death in a single temporal moment in the face of death’s constant potential and intangibility. Along with any “defense” the person might erect against death, he also constructs an anxiety. Anxiety can be similarly found in the “planning” of death, in the imagination of future death.
“Imagining the future is a kind of nostalgia.”7 Imagination of futurity is a nostalgia that fuels anxiety, a worry for the unknown, the temporally nonspecific; the person makes a haunting out of future death, a ghost of moments yet to come.8 The rhetoric of suicide prevention functions on this very anxiety.

The rhetoric of suicide prevention functions as a buffer against the haunting of potentially imminent death. The classic list of suicidal “warning signs” is an example of moments in which a subject engages “too much” with death. Suicide prevention resists all engagements with death whether intellectual, artistic, but most obviously, physiological. Consider, for example, anxieties often expressed in response to conversations regarding death, anxieties towards occupations such as those of morticians, or the cultural fascination with fictionalized death. These engagements are cause for human anxiety because they make the haunting of death “too” salient. The notion of personhood is not sustainable in the face of an ever more materializing death. The rule that the anxieties dictate is that a person cannot simultaneously be a person that experiences, imagines, or deals in death and still properly “function” and “live.” The more his finitude dictates his existence, the less the person can live.

In conceiving death only as an eventuality, the human builds himself around a law of finitude. All things in life suddenly become a race against an illusive timer. The anxiety of his own death within the context of his bodily singularity constructs a sort of centrism. Consider, for example, the peculiarity of the social commendation for one human to have “outlived” another. I suggest that in devotion to this law of finitude, this ideology of “timed life,” humankind also makes finite possibilities of

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relationality.

The ideology of a “timed life” is the same that fuels any rhetoric with its roots in the notion of *carpe diem*. That is to say, while the notion of imminent death endorses seizing the day and taking advantage of what you’ve got, it proposes also the idea that you haven’t got very much. To clarify, most rhetorics of life or living or, better yet, thriving depend on a sort of rule of living for living’s sake; “live because you are alive.” These rhetorics, however, function on the law of imminent death. What I mean to point out is the contradiction inherent to this notion of “living.” *Carpe diem* is simultaneously an embrace of life and death. “Live because you are alive” can very well be re-articulated as “live because you are dying.” This prompts the question: can you live and die at the same time? What I mean to suggest, here, is that this discrepancy reveals the ideological collision between rhetorics of living and dying and that the rules of “living” are dependent upon the rules of “dying.” So, if this is the kind of life that we decide to ideologically lead, why do we bother?

There is a particularity to the moment of death. The human person is counted to the sum of his heartbeats, down to the minute. “Time of death, three-sixteen.” The moment itself, the moment in which a person dies is fleeting, momentous at best.⁹

As mentioned, human personhood functions on laws of physiologically

⁹ Obviously there are narratives that counter this perspective such as in persons dying of chronic disease, comatose persons, or persons to which others refer to as “wasting away.” Consider, however, that even these narratives of prolonged death are in themselves still punctuated by the death moment, thus revealing previous descriptions to be distortions of prolonged life rather than the extension of the moment of death.
embodied presence, thereby asserting death in opposition as functioning on principles of negation and lack. In death, the body is removed. Once aligned with the principles of biological embodiment that dictate the individuality of experience, the person cannot actually experience the event of death. Rather, the experience of death, even at the most intimate, is only ever the body’s encounter with the death of another, not the living of one’s own.

Mark Aguhar dies, by way of suicide, on March 12th, 2012.

March 13th, 2012. I do not remember the day or the words very well at all. I do not remember hearing the news but I remember experiencing it.

My friend Jes sends me a link to a piece of art via Facebook instant messaging. They say that it was done by a queer fat Asian trans femme artist who killed herself.
yesterday. They tell me that it might mean something to me.  

The moment feels familiar. Repetitious. Before even, “Not another one,” I have already thought, “Another one.” Another one down. “Dropping like flies,” as the saying goes.

I remember I do not slow down. I move on. “We are in it for the long haul,” as they say, and I do not have time to mourn every suicide of every queer brown person that happens in a culture that produces these deaths, that makes these moments familiar. In the moment, I think she has been taken completely by sadness, consumed by pain, like the stories with which we are so familiar. Suicide is just a thing that happens to sad people. Out of habit, I calculate her death as negation. Somewhere, Mark Aguhar’s body has been carted away, and it no longer is.

But I think of the piece again and again. Eventually I find out it is titled Not You (Power Circle). I find myself repeating it to myself under the showerhead. I find myself repeating it to myself in bed. Eventually I have the image tattooed atop my right shoulder blade.

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10 In the case that my reader is unfamiliar, the pronoun “they” is often used in regards to persons who prefer the usage of gender-neutral pronouns. Such is the case of Jes. Mark most often preferred female gendered pronouns, but was also known to use “they.”
Principles of the body dictate that the experience of death cannot be felt for oneself. “Whether he lives or dies, Man cannot immediately know death.”11 The experience of death is always one’s own body encountering the death of the body of another. The experience of death is never the experience of one’s own death. That is to say, humankind experiences death after the fact, often through grief.

Grief can never be arbitrary because grief is grounded in principles of negation, of absence. In turn, absence requires context and contexts must be created, like a room must be build before a room can be considered empty. What specifically are you absent from?

20TH JAN 2011 | 2 NOTES

CONTEXT

I feel in my stomach, my gut, an obsession for the physicality of things and bodies. The binary of presence and absence. The mourning circulates around her death and the movements of her body. The mourning haunts me more than her death does, like flies to a carcass, obsessing over the inanimate, speaking for the dead. They use her corpse as a soapbox. That troubles me.

When I speak of her, persons ask me “How did she die?” as though the condition of her now-still body are vital to her person. I think they might as well be

asking, “Was there blood? Where did the blood spill from?” So eager to grow arguments from corpses, discussions on suicide run afire. Desperately, in mourning and obsession, human persons stitch together lessons to be learned, things that should have been, things that should not have. Worst yet, they glorify the things that “could have been,” forgetting entirely that bodily death has always been stuck at the top of that list. Forgetting that all bucket lists, all the things to do before you die, begin with death itself. How keen we are to speak for dead persons.

*I suppose, in a lot of ways, this was how it was meant to end. The water tried to take me once and I’m drawn back to this day. Especially a day like today.*

—Trey Malone, suicide note

Suicide letters are eruptions of consciousness. The dead speak to the living. But the living do not listen very well, too obsessed with their narrations. And too full of stories of sorrow, sadness and victimhood. The living do not take the words of the dead very well. They do not take them at face value. Out of Trey Malone’s suicide note, they make a headline: “Lead a Good Life, Everyone.”[^12] Agency, personhood, and speech entirely revoked because persons are supposed to want their bodies and heartbeats are supposed to matter. Meanwhile, words only qualify when attached to our living bodies. Suicide letters are a technology of death. They are productions by agents that conceptualize life and death at the same time, bodies that simultaneously conceptualize their presence and their absence.

Soon after Mark commits suicide, suicide prevention rhetoric erupts from the incident. I find one in particular that gets it all wrong and I feel sick. The blogger refers to her by male pronouns. He calls her “a transgender. Most likely bullied to his death.” He takes her words, her truths, her poetry and extrapolates pathology. It sickens and angers me.13

On May 2nd, 2012 at 8:53 pm, a blogger identifiable only by his title “pull!”14 publishes an entry:

He writes: “i am a male-bodied, male-identified queer who could never speak to the lived experience of any other person, let alone the incomparable life and style of someone i esteem as a true goddess” and “for me, interpreting markie’s death means recognizing her agency, means contemplating her suicide as a defiant, freeing act, and not solely the result of desperation and depression.”

When I am alone and I think of Mark, I find myself almost praying, “Death is your gift.” I feel gifted to know her, yet I know her because she died. From her

13 http://cazeyn.tumblr.com/post/19281969496/rip-mark-aguhar
14 http://skeetshoot.tumblr.com/post/22290868501/i-was-asked-to-talk-about-markie-for-an-event-on
suicide, and the technologies of death that she now employs, I hope to extrapolate the most meticulous intent and the most fervent agency that I observe to be combatants against paradigms of pathology and death.

Body cells replace themselves every month. Even at this very moment. Most everything you think you know about me is nothing more than memories.

—Haruki Murakami
the cyborg

Mark Aguhar erupts into my consciousness. The notification of her death spreads across the Internet. Photos of her blossom as memoriam. Her words spark as quotations across the Tumblr-sphere. In death, she is launched across cyberspace. Most photos, words, and videos are just fragments, beautiful debris floating in an ocean of grief. “This came from somewhere,” I think to myself. So, follow the pieces. Following the pieces will likely bring you here:

BLOGGING FOR BROWN GURLS

I’m starting a new blog and it’s all about self acceptance.

MARK/24/CHICAGO

At first I think she is ugly. I feel an itch of repulsion when I see images of her, images that she herself launched into cyber-space, inadvertently towards me. Despite the spark of resonance I find in her art, her drawings, her writings, she feels ugly to me. Her fatness, her strange hair, her bizarre self-made gowns, her brownness. All of it in tandem, I am not sure how to swallow. She looks sad, her face made up, in a self-taken photograph full of intent.
There is no memory of transition, of swallowing, of gradation or getting used to. Only the eruptions of consciousness grow stronger, louder, livelier. Scrolling garners more revelations of intent, more art, more photos, more beauty until I think them and imagine them even from a distance, even when I am away from her. I begin to wonder to myself, how can someone so dead be so alive at the same time?

The cyborg exists in a state of irony. “Ironic is about contradictions that do not resolve into larger wholes, even dialectically, about the tension of holding incompatible things together because both or all are necessary and true.” She is both dead and alive. And in being both, she is being neither. That is, she owes nothing to the rules of either. The cyborg thrives on contradiction and contradiction necessitates ideological collision. The most vital collision to the cyborg is that of machine and organism. She is neither of the two parts but the interaction between the two; she exists as synapses.

The trouble in telling the story of the cyborg is that she has no birthday. There is no genesis to her story. This is so because the cyborg is the spark of collision and contradiction; she is the blur of boundaries. She thrives from the collision of dichotomies. “The dichotomies between mind and body, animal and human, organism and machine, public and private, nature and culture, men and women, primitive and civilized are all in question ideologically.” She is neither side of dichotomy, but the instability of dichotomy itself. What genesis can there be in a

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16 Haraway, “Cyborg Manifesto,” 130.
creature not birthed from legacy? There is no genesis without genealogy, and there is no valid genealogy for chimeras. The cyborg is a creature that births itself from accident.

Humankind, in his attachment to his machinery, never intended on the production of the cyborg. The cyborg, in her state of accident, is an illegitimate offspring. Illegitimacy is corrosive to legacy. Illegitimacy reveals that legacy and lineage is prone to accident and imperfection. There is no shining truth of pure humanity, the cyborg reveals, thus shaking all dichotomies running parallel to humanity. Borders grow weak, tired, and blurry. “Chief among these troubling dualisms are self/other, mind/body, culture/nature, male/female, civilized/primitive, reality/appearance, whole/part, agent/resource, maker/made, active/passive, right/wrong, truth/illusion, total/partial, God/man.”

Under the weight of illegitimacy, of destabilized dualisms, individuation cannot stand; singularity and individuality cannot stand. The cyborg reveals herself as not only a being of interaction, of ironic collision, but of multiplicity. To destabilize legacy is to destabilize sequence, lineage, the rule of “one at a time.” The genealogy of humanness, if there ever was such a legacy, is fractured from the perspective of the cyborg. The same goes for the genealogy of machines. The cyborg demonstrates intersections between humankind and his machines; information is not transferred in singular linearity and knowledge is not genealogical. The cyborg demonstrates the third thing of dichotomies, of dualisms because she is all the intersections between them. She is the monster that contradictions make. And

17 Haraway, “Cyborg Manifesto,” 143.
monsters have never needed genealogy to be monsters. But humanness and technology have both respectively required genealogies to stand as respective singularities. But she is the being of convolution.

“To be One is to be autonomous, to be powerful, to be God; but to be One is to be an illusion, and so to be involved in a dialectic of apocalypse with the other. Yet to be other is to be multiple, without clear boundary, frayed, insubstantial.”¹⁸ So, knowledge frays for no reason but that she exists to fray it. Oppositions seem weak and as contradictions become possible, knowledge becomes accessible. That is to say, the cyborg, as an idea, pervades all persons. “Communications sciences and biology are constructions of natural-technical objects of knowledge in which the difference between machine and organism is thoroughly blurred; mind, body, and tool are on very intimate terms.”¹⁹

MY LIFE IS OPEN SOURCE

She is the network that creates her, and the network that she creates. She functions along lines of affinity and relationality because she is not protagonistic. There is no such thing as protagonistic monsters. She frays legacial knowledge for the very sake of its dismantling. “A cyborg body is not innocent; it was not born in a garden; it does not seek unitary identity and so generate antagonistic dualisms without

¹⁸ Haraway, “Cyborg Manifesto,” 143.
²⁰ open-source: adj. Computing, denoting software for which the original source code is made freely available and may be redistributed and modified at will.
end (or until the world ends); it takes irony for granted” because she is irony itself. Irony is her semblance of a heart, and inconstancy her heartbeat. She finds ideological irony, points out contradiction, and calls for critical revision.

The cyborg has no body. In denial of singularity, of oneness, she resists embodiment. “The cyborg would not recognize the Garden of Eden; it is not made of mud and cannot dream of returning to the dust.”21 The body screams the story of lineage, of birth, of growth, of legacies of biology, of legacies that the cyborg does not need. For the cyborg, to have neither genesis nor origin is not to have belonging. She owes nothing to place or time. She is not the brain cells that die always, but the synaptic spark that flashes when they happen across each other. She owes nothing to authenticity because authenticity requires an ultimatum of truth that one must protagonistically acquire. To be authentic is to be true of body as one is true to essence. She cannot dream of such because she is essence only, thus defiant of body.

LOL WHITE MEN BORE ME

The cyborg laughs in the face of death. There is no Eden to return to. If there is no Genesis then there is no emergence, then there is no return for the cyborg. She is only ever ethereal, and thus makes no claims to paradise; she needs not to. She does not fear death because she is born from the ideologies of death (and life).

Because death has been simultaneously denaturalized yet undeniably natural, she thrives in this contradiction.
lives.
The final post of calloutqueen.tumblr.com goes live March 10th, 2012. I come across it for the very first time two weeks later.

_Everybody knows that everybody dies._
_But not everyday. Not today. Some days are special. Some days are so, so blessed. Some days, nobody dies at all_
_**Doctor Who, ep 4.09, “The Forest of the Dead”**_

There is nothing as ordinary as living life. “Everyday life is a life lived on the level of surging affects, impacts suffered or barely avoided.”22 That is, ordinary life is made up of moments of affect, surges of happenings or almosts. Ordinariness is sustained in the time-space between surges. “The ordinary registers intensities—regularly, intermittently, urgently, or as a slight shudder.”23 The body’s heart beats in time, on time, as expected until it doesn’t. Heart rates shoot up with the surge, and consistency is only articulable in the contrast between intensity and banality. Moments of affect come with such constancy that humans develop a habit of seeing them, consuming them, and then passing them by. They “give everyday life the quality of a continual motion of relations, scenes, contingencies, and emergences.”24 They are simultaneously everyday life and disparate events. That goes to say that affects are the moments that emerge, that are full of life, that make stories and makes things count. The ordinary is just its material by-product. The ordinary is just the habits that form themselves around moments of surge. “The ordinary is a thing that

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24 Stewart, *Ordinary Affects*, 3.
has to be imagined and inhabited.”

The day I return, San Francisco strikes me as a creature of many habits. We make a habit out of visiting my mother’s grave. There is a habit to the ritual. Or a ritual to the habit. The practice is consumed by ordinary life. One more step in a series of ordinary activities. We drive to Home Depot. We buy potted flowers because they live longer than bouquets. And they are cheaper. We bring them to the grave. We wash off the headstone and the water steams, lightly, off it. We bow three times before heading home again. And Highway 101 that takes us from Milbrae to San Francisco, it flows like habit.

Earlier that morning I am being driven to Logan Airport by the mother of a friend. We drive on the John F. Fitzgerald Expressway, under and through the city. She calls it “the central artery,” as though cities could beat with such constancy, like hearts.

Affect is always ironic. They are the moments in which contradictions make sense and surprise. How can something so ugly seem so beautiful? How can the things most vulgar, morbid, twisted, or dispirited invoke the fullest laughter, connection, or understanding? How can someone so dead seem so alive?

I can see Mark feel in surges.

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PSEUDO-HAPPY BLOGGING
emotionally ambiguous blogging

LOL I STARTED CRYING JUST NOW HAHAHA I HATE THE WORLD GOD UGH

MANIFESTO AGAINST LIVING
godclub:
- BEAUTY
- AFFECT
- APATHY
- FAILURE

IM SMILING KIND OF UNCONTROLLABLY RIGHT NOW
And they come often, the surges, in the form of jokes, or stories, or confessions, or art, or simple facts. Now they always exist in a realm of surprise and shock and contradiction. Emotionality, emotional surge, is coded as a habit of life, of the living, thus completely insensible and contradictory when received from a person known to be dead. But the cyborg lives.

The cyborg runs on the circuits of affect, mediated by technology. I type and my thoughts appear past my fingers and through technology. My thoughts are no longer contained just within the body but elsewhere as well. And in turn I see my thoughts project back at me. The cyborg is this interchange, this irony of being myself but not quite myself at all because I see, elsewhere, before me, on the Internet, a self that seems like me. The cyborg is the transference of information that transgresses the dictations of body and life and death.

And Mark leaves behind an archive of emotional surges. Moment after moment of bodiless and immaterial feeling essentially made timeless in archives. She, Mark and the cyborg, both are feeling only, all emotions before the habits. The archive of calloutqueen alone is not productive or embodied or habitual. To encounter her, Mark and the cyborg, both, is to make nothing and do nothing. “The affective subject is a collection of trajectories and circuits.”26 The encounter is nothing but itself, and the affect, the transference of vague emotionality, is nothing but itself.

Perhaps a little later on, I become something and my behaviors change. Maybe my body begins to inhabit her words and grow habits around the moments of

26 Stewart, Ordinary Affects, 59.
encounter. “Ideologies happen. Power snaps into place. Structures grow entrenched. Identities take place. Ways of knowing become habitual at the drop of a hat.” But Mark will still be a cyborg, and the cyborg will always be somewhere else, thriving in every impossibility that technology makes possible, in the ironic circuitry of affect.

To speak crudely, though my experience of the cyborg happened in a context of interchange, the cyborg herself does not exist in a relation so reductive. Interchange, exchange, between are still words that belong to a language of linearity, belonging and possession. The cyborg does not work this way, nor does affect. Affect is “transpersonal or prepersonal—not about one person’s feelings becoming another’s but about bodies literally affecting one another and generating intensities: human bodies, discursive bodies, bodies of thought, bodies of water.”

To clarify further, Mark’s body, now dead, is not a cyborg. I, myself, am not a cyborg. I am an agent—contained within myself emotions, thoughts, intellect and affective responses—thus I am not a cyborg. The cyborg exists as the relationality of all information, contradictory or otherwise. She is multiplicitous and she is legion while I am only human, only a conduit. But that is not to say that the cyborg is inaccessible. I, myself, as conduit, can consume and contain contradictions within myself. “[T]hings like narrative and identity become tentative though forceful compositions of disparate and moving elements.” The cyborg demands, “Why should our bodies end at the skin, or include at best other beings encapsulated in the

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27 Stewart, *Ordinary Affects*, 16.
Rules of singularity and “human” “life” can be compromised. But being embodied, I can only transgress the laws of singularity to a limit. I am not collapsible with the modes of the cyborg. I would suggest that Mark, however, is.

Mark Aguhar’s body is dead. Her words and the emotional surges that they make now owe nothing to embodiment. “They can gather themselves into what we think of as stories and selves. But they can also remain, or become again, dispersed, float, recombining – regardless of what whole or what relay of rushing signs they might find themselves in for awhile.” Mark exists as ethereally as the cyborg, translated through technology as consumable affect or information.

It is easy, I think, to interpret life as an accumulation of information, as a system of informatics. Life and living is ordinary and habitual, thus it is easy to quantify in a list of mundane facts. Mark Aguhar is born on May 16th, 1987. Mark Aguhar dies on March 12th, 2012. She is queer, brown, fat and femme identified.

That is to say that the conceptualization of life is only a grandiose conceptualization of habit. And habits are only the by-products of surges, materializations built and justified around the ether of affect. The materials required to validate singular life are not the informatics that sustain the cyborg’s vitality. The cyborg does not live in any traditional sense. Rather, she is multiple lives; records upon records of personhoods

30 Haraway, “Cyborg Manifesto”, 144.
31 Stewart, Ordinary Affects, 6.
that stay, simultaneously remaining behind and continuing on, that interact, that contradict. The data that informs life and living (age, weight, eye-color, etc.) does not matter to the cyborg because the cyborg attempts a new system of data and understanding.

I do not mean to say, beyond all shadow of doubt that Mark Aguhar lives. Mark Aguhar is a cyborg because she survives herself by a novel system of informatics and affect. In calloutqueen.tumblr.com, she transgresses paradigms of time, space and body. “The cyborg is a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction, it is never an either-or but always both.”32 Mark points to the potential for criticality and revision. She embodies the cyborg and points to the potential for death in living, and the potential for living in death.

References

Aguhar, Mark, *BLOGGING FOR BROWN GURLS.* calloutqueen.tumblr.com.


Casey, “please take a minute to read this and reblog please.”


pull!, “I was asked to talk about markie for and even on trans/queer suicides.”

Additional Bibliography


