

APPROPRIATION (“NORTH” AND “SOUTH”)

Graduate Seminar in Art History and Critical Theory

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Description

“Appropriation” is a capacious term equally indexical of cultural, power, and proprietary relations. In the South African art-historical context, appropriation can refer to the ongoing forms of displacement, marginalization, and primitivization of the continent’s artistic production. Within North American art-historical discourse, appropriation often refers to a brand of photo-based practice associated with the work of white women artists such as Cindy Sherman who emerged in the New York art world of the late 1970s. In this exploratory graduate research seminar, we will aim to historicize, contest, and crosswire these mobilizations of the term by considering how various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences have differentially conceived of appropriation as well as how forms of “borrowing” and theft—whether of images, artifacts, bodies, or lands—continue to shape the politics of cross-cultural encounter in the Americas and beyond, whether “North” or “South.”

All readings will be available for free via Canvas.

Assignments and Evaluation

1. The seminar requires mandatory attendance at, robust participation in, and careful preparation of assigned materials for all class meetings *by all course members*.
2. Each week one or two students will give brief presentation(s)—no more than 10 minutes—on a work of art identified on the syllabus as key to the week’s readings. In selecting and researching a cultural object, students should aim to historicize the work and to articulate its relationship to relevant lines of argumentation encountered in the readings. Students are strongly encouraged to consult the instructor and are required to send along any relevant materials—PowerPoints, handouts, etc.—to him by 8PM the day before seminar or to post them to the course slide file by that time.
3. Except when presenting, every week students will be required to frame and articulate a response that critically explores a problem, thematic, or thread encountered in *the majority* of that week’s readings. This paper should be no more than 3 double-spaced pages and must be posted to the appropriately labeled Canvas “Discussions” thread for that week by 8PM the day before each seminar. Students should be sure to consult each other’s responses before class begins.
4. For their final papers students are required to submit a 12-15-page fully illustrated and documented research paper using a recognized citational system (Chicago Style footnotes are preferred). Students may write on any topic of their choosing that speaks to the concerns of the course.
5. By the middle of the term, students will also need to provide the instructor with a one-page research proposal outlining their topic and plan along with a preliminary bibliography and set of images. These materials should also be posted to the “Discussions” thread of the Canvas site.

6. During the last class, each student will give a brief illustrated PowerPoint presentation that lays out the thesis of their final paper. The PowerPoint file—with a clearly articulated thesis statement on the 1st slide—must be emailed to the instructor by 8PM on the day before class presentations and the revised abstract should be posted to the “Discussions” thread for review by your peers at that same time. On the last day of class, each student will have 10 minutes to engage questions, comments, and criticisms on their final paper.

All papers should be double-spaced and typed in 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides of each page. As goes without saying, plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated.

Course Schedule

*In the schedule below, Joja’s contributions are italicized and marked with an #; recommended—not required—materials are listed at the end of each week and marked with an *. While these texts are optional for the group, students presenting should make sure to engage these materials.*

Week 1: As Art-Historical Consideration

Presentation: Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger*, 1907

Dale Kinney, “Introduction,” in *Reuse Value: Spolia and Appropriation in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Sherrie Levine*, ed. Richard Brilliant and Dale Kinney (New York: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 1-11.

David Evans, ed., *Appropriation (Whitechapel: Documents of Contemporary Art)* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 12-47.

Robert Nelson, “Appropriation,” in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 116-128.

Yve-Alain Bois, “On the Uses and Abuses of Look-alikes,” *October* 154 (Fall 2015): 127-149.

W. J. T. Mitchell, “Imperial Landscape,” in *Landscape and Power*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 5-34.

Hal Foster, “The ‘Primitive’ Unconscious of Modern Art,” *October* 34 (Autumn 1985): 45-70.

Anne M. Wagner, “(De) Generation,” in *Mother Stone: The Vitality of Modern British Sculpture*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 193-243; 286-293.

#Colin Richards, “Desperately Seeking ‘Africa’,” in *Art from South Africa, Museum of Modern Art, Oxford Catalogue* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990), 35-44.

Art historian and critic Colin Richards treats the assumptions that underwrite the concept of “transitional art.” This term refers to artistic objects of so-called primitive cultures transitioning from tribal to modern practices. Or, put differently, the in-between sphere between “primitive” and modern expressions, to which the former is eventually set to arrive. Richards points to how this conception iterates impulses of Eurocentrism, where “the Other” not only needs to play a catch up game, but also where “the West” is the standard by which the other must be judged. Richards helps us understand the dynamics of appropriation by naming and the racist nomenclatures of western art discourse.

*Simon Gikandi, “Picasso, Africa, and the Schemata of Difference,” *Modernism/Modernity* 10.3 (September 2003): 455-480.

#Week 2: As Imperial Shadow and Precarious Concept

This section considers the enduring legacies of colonial and imperial power in societies and in knowledge production processes in particular. Such endurance is like a shadow, cast over every

sphere of thought production (be it deliberately or not) that reinforces or subverts what can be known, said, or thought. Accordingly, this week's readings raise the question of coloniality (understood discursively) as a problematic that cannot be easily dismissed by cosmetic or symbolic shifts, but one that must be understood as a structuring episteme. At the same time, this section attempts to situate and think about the prospect of circulation and translation of theories and their vulnerability, under the broad theme of appropriation, to suggest or signal the open availability of colonized subjects. This long shadow of coloniality can then be considered as one that continually repositions itself under different contexts for further extraction from and dispossession of its supposed subjects.

Presentation: Dumile Feni, African Guernica, 1967

This is one of the most well known works by South African anti-apartheid artist, Dumile Feni, that is part of his extensive pre-exile (1968) repertoire; the piece is entitled African Guernica, after Picasso's mural painting (1937). As part of this section about traveling concepts, translation and appropriation, Dumile's work is one of the more fitting examples for an interesting contemplation of the itinerancy of ideas, and sometimes, the unthought or unthinkable presupposition behind such works. Why replicate Picasso? What is Dumile doing or thinking when he cites one of the world's most famous artists' work in order to place emphasis on black suffering? What does this particular citation tell us, not just as analogy for but also as an instantiation of the plight of blacks?

Edward Said, "Traveling Theory Reconsidered," in *Reflections in Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 436-452.

In this article, literary scholar and author of the seminal text Orientalism, Edward Said, revisits his earlier article "Traveling Theory" (1982), which had set out to show the itinerancy and translatability of ideas and theories beyond their original contexts, authors, and intended meanings. In the earlier piece and in its reconsideration, Said theorizes this movement by way of a demonstrative retrospection, showing how Hungarian critic and philosopher György Lukács's notion of reification, from his well-known History and Class Consciousness (1923), has not only re-articulated Hegelian dialectics in its own right, but has also, somewhat like a true theoretical term, remained constantly unfixed or always in flight. This rearticulation via Lukács's several interlocutors brought fresher and disparate tributaries as it "voyaged elsewhere." To truly express this elsewhere, Said looks to Frantz Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth, as another moment where reification seems differently instantiated, i.e. in a colonial set-up. Tracing the parallels between Lukács and Fanon, Said points to the moments of convergence and of separation in their theoretical dispositions but also of theory as well — that is, as a restless, traveling and constantly reconfigured enterprise.

Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization* 1.1

(September 2012): 1-40; <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630>.

This text explores the conceptual abuses and appropriations of the term decolonization in academic forums and related discursive spaces. Tuck and Wang, as thinkers largely situated in ethnic studies scholarship, consider decolonization as a political undoing or praxis, inclusive of theory, that sets out to dislodge and ultimately to properly usurp the colonial relations of power. Turning to decolonization in the era where the term has lost both its political agency and effectiveness—the academic fetishization of decolonization as a discursive, or better, metaphoric instantiation—Tuck and Wang argue that these faddish interests proceed by gestures of evisceration, as all metaphors do. Following on Frantz Fanon's notion of decolonization, the authors contest how such radical terms are reduced to empty and fashionable signifiers that

basically could stand in for anything, except what they truly intend to contest. From this text, we learn that such generalization is part of the very strategic dilutions that constantly derail and divert anti-colonial and anti-imperial agendas, which, in the final analysis, seek to take back what colonialists have stolen from colonized and oppressed peoples.

Ndumiso Dladla, "Towards an African Critical Philosophy of Race: Ubuntu as a Philo-Praxis of Liberation," *Filosofia Theoretica* 6.1 (June 2017): 39-68.

Thinking from the position of African philosophical hermeneutics, Ndumiso Dladla's article is a critical and generous exposition of the limited and limiting discourse on Ubuntu that largely sutures the unjust solidarity of the post-1994 dispensation in South Africa. Taking from the explanatory analytic of Ubuntu as inherently justice orientated in Mogobe Ramose's work, Dladla's essay considers how pervading theories of Ubuntu seem to acquiesce to the colonial/apartheid constitutional logic and paradigm. The mobilization of Ubuntu within the neoliberal and neocolonial condition, in many ways, shows us how the racist imperatives of capitalism have absolutely no boundaries and that black cultural ideas have no sovereign integrity in the face of white supremacy. As an extension of early pillaging and distortions of black bodies and histories, contemporary white supremacist discourses proceed by the same methods. For Dladla, however, an explanatory intervention is needed to debunk, and also provide, a truly Africanist perspective on Ubuntu as liberation's expressive philo-praxis.

Robert Nichols, "Theft is Property!: The Recursive Logic of Dispossession," *Political Theory* 46.1 (April 2017): 3-28.

*Nichols helps think through the concepts of property and theft, how they have been debated and deployed by various thinkers in the course of European political philosophy, history, and economics. Resonating with famous thinkers such as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, with his classic slogan "Property is theft!" and Karl Marx's seemingly dated response to the anarchists, Nichols follows the *longue durée* of these variegated concepts in exploring how they have come to define contemporary questions of dispossession and expropriation in colonial and settler-colonial discourse. For Nichols, Proudhon's durable expression, instead of eliminating the fundamentals, tends to recuperate the core aspects of the originary sins of proprietary claims. If anything, this essay goes to the heart of not just land tenure and legalistic imperatives that govern the land question, but also speaks to a linguistic determinism that regenerates the problems that we think have been overcome. Here, appropriation emerges not only in terms of the manner of how concepts "travel" in history, but more potently, the endurance of what they invisibly presuppose—the recursive logics of proprietary discourse—in spite of the differing contexts or ideologies behind them.*

Pierre Macherey, "Figures of Interpellation in Althusser and Fanon," *Radical Philosophy* 173 (May/June 2012): 9-20.

Pierre Macherey, one of Louis Althusser's lesser-known students, brings his "master" and a fellow Frenchman of Martinican descent, Frantz Fanon, into discursive relation via the concept of interpellation. Interpellation, for Althusser, is the process of subjectivization by the "ideological state apparatus" in which an individual becomes a subject. According to Macherey, Fanon's famous hail, "Look, a nigger!" constitutes the other side of this process, designating not so much a "turning into," but a "fixing" into an already established singularity and overdetermined entity. Here Macherey attempts to consider how the process of interpellation finds ways of subjectivizing by recourse to different means. In a sense, he delineates incompatible ways in which power "shows" itself to different people. Interpellation is one of the many ways in which appropriation is not only licensed/visible/operative but also imperative. So,

we need to think not just of cultural appropriation, but also of appropriation itself as a means of calling individuals into being or non-being as subjects and/or objects.

Week 3: As Feminist Practice

Presentation: Sherrie Levine, After Walker Evans, 1981

Douglas Crimp, "Pictures," *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 75-88.

Craig Owens, "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism," in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), 57-83.

David Evans, ed., *Appropriation (Whitechapel: Documents of Contemporary Art)* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 81; 106-124.

Jean Baudrillard, "The Ecstasy of Communication," in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), 145-154.

Benjamin Buchloh, "Allegorical Procedures: Appropriation and Montage in Contemporary Art," *Artforum*, September 1982, 43-56.

Douglas Crimp, "Appropriating Appropriation," in *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 126-136.

Johanna Burton, "Cultural Interference: The Reunion of Appropriation and Institutional Critique" and Anne Ellegood, "Mourning in America," in *Take It or Leave It: Image, Institution, Ideology* (Los Angeles: Hammer Museum, UCLA, 2014), 15-38.

#Oyeronke Oyewumi, "Visualizing the Body: Western Theories and African Subjects," in *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 1-30.

This is one of the most important texts that, generally speaking, debunks gender and its consequent struggles as contingent on a peculiarly European historical situation. As the opening chapter to The Invention of Women, Oyeronke interrogates how the European social and philosophical outlook's investment in ocularity is fundamental to its conquering attitude (that is, seeing as and through a biological lens). "Biology is destiny," she says. She then argues that as a foundation of that very metaphysical disposition, the concept of gender and its consequent feminisms is particular to, and a result of Eurocentrism. Treating gender as an invention and imposition of Euro-imperialism, Oyeronke considers how its biological determinist inquiry is discontinuous with most African societies, particularly those of the Yoruba. In a sense, this article plays a role in adding an odd sociological emphasis to the unaccounted for anterior assumptions, and later naturalizations, of gender as an existential and conceptual category in Western feminist discourse.

Scott Rothkopf, "Glenn Ligon: AMERICA," in *Glenn Ligon: AMERICA* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art; New Haven, Yale University Press, 2011), 15-49.

José Esteban Muñoz, "'The White to Be Angry': Vaginal Davis's Terrorist Drag," *Social Text* 52/53 (Autumn and Winter 1997): 80-103.

*Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text" and "The Death of the Author," in *Image Music Text*, ed. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 142-148; 155-164.

Week 4: As Racial Non/Event

Presentation: Eleanor Antin, Being Antinova, 1983

Huey Copeland, "Some Ways of Playing Antinova," in *Multiple Occupancy: Eleanor Antin's "Selves"*, ed. Emily Liebert (New York: Columbia University, The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Gallery, 2013), 30-40.

- Brenda Dixon Gottschild, "Stripping the Emperor: George Balanchine and the Americanization of Ballet," in *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 59-79.
- E. Patrick Johnson, "'Blackness' and Authenticity: What's Performance Got to Do with It," in *Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 1-16; 315-318.
- Saidiya V. Hartman, "Innocent Amusements: The Stage of Sufferance," in *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 17-48; 208-215.
- Stephen M. Best, "Fugitive Sound: Fungible Personhood, Evanescent Property," in *The Fugitive's Properties: Law and the Poetics of Possession* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 29-98; 280-306.
- Frank B. Wilderson, III, "The Ruse of Analogy," in *Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 36-53; 345-346.
- Athi Mongezeleli Joja, "Critical Reflections on 'Exhibit B' and the South African Art World," *Art South Africa* 13.2 (December 2014): 86-88.
- *Eleanor Antin, *Being Antinova* (Los Angeles: Astro Artz, 1983).

#Week 5: As Racialized License

This section provides texts that speak to the gratuitous violation and unrelenting commodification of, as theorist Jared Sexton has put it, "all black everything," especially the body, and to various problematic representations and appropriations. The week's readings consider appropriation as a metonym for the re-conquest of and license over black bodies of thought and practice, particularly as they enable the advancement of non-black others. The essays assembled here range across different periods and disciplines, subjects and ideologies. Africa is geographically represented as the central location of appropriation for millennia, a site of wanton extraction and drainage without any consequences.

Presentation: Beezy Bailey, Joyce Ntombi Saga (1992) and Ticket to the Other Side (2001; collaboration with Zwelethu Mthethwa)

These works by controversial South African artist Beezy Bailey help us think through the problematic of race and representation that is part of the South African artistic discourse. Joyce Ntombi Saga (Bailey's alter ego) is about how the white artist entered a local art competition in a black woman's name and won. The second work is a collaboration between Bailey and Mthethwa, with Bailey, in blackface, appearing in various scenes as a black woman.

Archie Mafeje, "Who Are the Makers and Objects of Anthropology?: A Critical Comment on Sally Falk Moore's 'Anthropology and Africa,'" *African Sociological Review* 1.1 (1997): 1-15.

Mafeje questions the historical methods of Anthropology in Africa (1994) through a rather polemical review of Sally Moore's work. He centralizes unethical modes of knowledge production and the consequent relations they reestablish between anthropology and Africa, where the continent is fixed as an object—immobile, floating—with and without a past. Mafeje argues that under imperial imposition, anthropologists reproduce the similar traits of their colonial predecessors in spite of pontificated reforms. He situates this persistent/peculiar interest in Africa as part of the trajectory of interest in alterity. Mafeje asks us to read this as a paradigmatic constant that afflicts anthropological studies of Africa and its peoples as an extension of the proprietary relations that undergird numerous strains of European modernism.

Nicholas Thomas, "The European Appropriation of Indigenous Things," in *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 125-184.

Thomas introduces us to the colonial habits of collection of cultural items and objects in the Pacific. Through this text we are made aware of how various Europeans, whether as missionaries, explorers, soldiers, etc., acquired and accumulated objects of "curiosity." Collection, as Walter Benjamin argued, is the attempt at displacing and repositioning the acquired item. Thomas points us to that colonial impulse of seizure and greed, of objects fraught with or mired within larger questions of displacement. This itself, we learn, is born out of a perverse interest in collections of objects/souvenirs, not only as proof of European itinerancy and expansion but also as signs of difference. From this view, the capture of outsiders is methodically necessary, coextensive, dependent, and correlative with appropriation of their cultural paraphernalia as corroborative material. Within the concept of appropriation, this essay helps us understand the insatiable acquisition, interest, and consumption of strange objects that today fill colonial museums and living spaces.

Okwui Enwezor, "Reframing the Black Subject: Ideology and Fantasy in Contemporary South African Representation," *Third Text* 11.40 (Autumn 1997): 21-40.

*This article remains one of the key texts in studying contemporary representational traditions in South Africa and their lasting legacy. Enwezor explores how representation of the black body by white artists in the wake of democracy is indexical of the refusal of "change" by the white possessive spirit, which continues to regard the black body as available property. Published in 1997, the essay created an uproar in the South African intellectual world, especially amongst white historians and anthropologists. As a result, a book edited by Brenda Atkinson and Candice Breitz entitled *Grey Areas: Representation, Identity and Politics in Contemporary South African Art* (1999) was prepared as a response to it. This particular essay helps us think through the tendencies, traditions, and habits in contemporary artistic theory and practice in which blackness remains circumscribed by racism. Enwezor interrogates this phenomenon and its supposed claim to criticality, connecting it to the historical processes by which the black body was not only subject and object but also the material basis for white discursive stimulation.*

Nkiru Nzegwu, "Crossing Boundaries: Gender Transmogrification in African Art History," UCLA: James S. Coleman African Studies Center (2000), 1-38;
<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9c62v33t>.

*Nkiru Nzegwu, following the exhibition *The Poetics of Line* by the notable anthropologist Simon Ottenberg, interrogates the discursive discrepancies and imperial occlusions that inform and operate in the ongoing curation of African artistic objects and Euro-American experts' continually unexamined access to them. She discusses how this discrepancy, often omitted, creates conditions of gendered discrimination, and in the end, displaces the contexts from which these objects emerged. Relying on the example of Ottenberg's show, on the Igbo visual system called Uli, originally made by women, Nzegwu brings us close to the kinds of research and curatorial interventions contemporary imperial approaches have to African art. Thus, appropriation also becomes an index to forms of systematic deletion, especially of African women's roles and agencies in social formations.*

Olu Oguibe, "Art, Identity and Boundaries: Postmodernism and Contemporary African Art," in *The Culture Game* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2004), 10-17.

This article by Olu Oguibe is, in the final instance, an examination of the relational discrepancy that racial difference creates socially and discursively. Following an interview between white

American art critic Thomas McEvilley and black Ivorian artist Outtara Watts, Oguibe dramatizes the tension that unfolds in their exchange. In so doing, Oguibe makes us aware of how racial discrepancy determines the particular hierarchies that exist between white critics, researchers, and thinkers and black African artists, the objects of study. Central to this critique is a fleshing out of the domineering approach in which the African artist is reduced to an anthropological specimen, rather than a maker of his works. Simply reading from the temperaments in the interview, Oguibe builds a case against the problematic methodologies and approaches used by many Western researchers and thinkers on Africa, Africans and African art to construct judgment. Appropriation, in this case, can be seen as an instance of existential displacement, a necessity for the obliterating sensibility that overdetermines racial relations. T.J. Demos, "The Haunting: Renzo Martens' *Enjoy Poverty*," in *Return to the Postcolony: Spectres of Colonialism in Contemporary Art* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2013), 97-126. *Enjoy Poverty: Episode 3*, directed by Renzo Martens, (Amsterdam, Gallerie Fons Welters, 2008) DVD.

Demos interrogates the ethical motivations behind Dutch artist Renzo Martens's 2008 video, *Enjoy Poverty*, which shows the artist in a Conradian way, as he crisscrosses the Congo on a crusade to encourage the poor peasants to make financial sense of their "natural resource," poverty. In a somewhat self-ironizing tone, Martens encourages the locals to take after the various industries—largely pursued by various cultural, political, and humanitarian entities with messianic ambitions—to exploit themselves, albeit under his leadership. Demos connects this project's savior complex and hidden mimetic iterations of the colonial burden to practices among contemporary NGOs. In the process, he helps us to understand the specter of colonial paternalism and the latent violence of liberalism that animates Martens's parody.

Delinda Collier, "Introduction," in *Repainting the Walls of Lunda: Information Colonialism and Angolan Art*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2016), 1-28.

In this comprehensive introduction, Delinda Collier examines the trajectory of the Chokwe's iconographic tradition and the succeeding forms of remediation that defined it from the 1950s to the 2000s, what she calls "information colonialism." To do so, she explores how anthropologist José Redinha's Painted Walls of Lunda, and subsequently, artist Manuel Teixeira and curator Fernando Alvim instrumentalized and appropriated Chokwe people's analog techniques. She thus brings our attention to this process of remediation as a way to highlight the cyclical forms in which colonialism re-appropriates and articulates itself.

Week 6: And Settler Societies

Presentation: Jimmie Durham, Self-Portrait, 1986

Coco Fusco, "The Other History of Intercultural Performance," *TDR* 38.1 (Spring 1994): 143-167.

Scott Lauria Morgensen, "Conversations on Berdache: Anthropology, Counterculturalism, Two-Spirit Organizing," in *Spaces between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 55-87; 241-44.

Diana Taylor, "Acts of Transfer," in *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 16-33; 280-85.

Serge Gruzinski, "Introduction" and "Mélange, Chaos, and Westernization" in *The Mestizo Mind: The Intellectual Dynamics of Colonization and Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 1-78; 209-219.

Carolyn Dean and Diana Leibsohn, "Hybridity and its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture

in Colonial Spanish America,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 12.1 (2003): 5-35.

*Philip J. Deloria, “Countercultural Indians and the New Age,” in *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 154-180; 236-241.

Week 7: And Critical Anthropology

Presentation: Trinh T. Minh-Ha, *Reassemblage*, 1982

Johannes Fabian, “Time and the Emerging Other” in *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 1-36; 187-191.

Jacques Derrida, “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,” in *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man*, ed. Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1970), 1-13.

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, “Anthropology and the Savage Slot: The Poetics and Politics of Otherness,” in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, ed. Richard G. Fox (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1991), 17-44.

William Pietz, “The Problem of the Fetish, I,” *RES Anthropology and Aesthetics* 9 (Spring 1985): 5-17.

James Clifford, “On Collecting Art and Culture,” in *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 215-251.

Hal Foster, “The Artist as Ethnographer,” in *The Return of the Real: Art and Theory at the End of the Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 171-203; 274-283.

*Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Reassemblage: From the Firelight to the Screen*, 40 min, 16mm, Jean-Paul Bourdier, 1982.

Week 8: And Postcolonial Critique

Presentation: Kader Attia, *Untitled (Ghardaïa)*, 2009

Frantz Fanon, “On National Culture,” in *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 145-180.

Homi Bhabha, “The Postcolonial and the Postmodern: The Question of Agency,” in *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge Press, 2004), 171-197; 269-271.

Edward Said, “Overlapping Territories, Intertwined Histories,” in *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 1-61; 335-340.

Sarah Nuttall, “Introduction” and “Entanglement,” in *Entanglement: Literary and Cultural Reflections on Post-Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2009), 1-32; 161-164.

Kader Attia, “Signs of Reappropriation,” in *Colonial Modern: Aesthetics of the Past, Rebellions of the Future*, ed. Tom Avermaete (London: Black Dog Architecture, 2010), 50-58.

#Frank B. Wilderson, “Grammar and Ghosts: The Performative Limits of African Freedom,” *Theatre Survey* 50.1 (May 2009): 119-125.

Wilderson’s article interrogates the recuperative logics of postcolonial/diasporic identity formations and the notions of cultural integrity always mobilized to address and redress the Black’s paradigmatic displacement. In this case, a conference on African and Afro-Caribbean performance hosted at the University of California Irvine is the object of his study. Thinking through and with a number of the conference’s performative and discursive gestures aimed at self-actualization, Wilderson beckons us to consider the “grammar and ghosts” of the paradigm

as beyond the reach of black enunciation. Additionally, in the final instance, his intervention is an attempt to question the recuperative gesture's inexplicable incapacity to "deniggrize." For Wilderson, the difficulty is that the world denies the Black, from the jump, the interiority, coherence, and sovereignty of any kind of black selfhood as well as the integrity of the self's engendered discursive accouterments. Here, appropriation is not an outcome or feature of antiblackness or colonialism, but the very constitutive source of it.

*Gayatri Spivak, "Poststructuralism, Marginality, Postcoloniality and Value," in *Literary Theory Today*, eds. Peter Collier and Helga Geyer-Ryan (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1990), 239-244.

#Week 9: As Politico-Epistemological Dissonance

The aim of this particular week is to think through appropriation, in the political and epistemological senses, in the global south, as a mode of dispossessing the conquered for the colonizer's benefit.

Presentation: Sammy Baloji, *Mémoire*, 2006

*Baloji's *Mémoire* series of photomontages brings together images of Lubumbashi's colonial past and present within a single frame. Historical black-and-white figures exploited by Belgian colonial firms are superimposed on the current architectural structures of the mining dumps. Marking temporal continuity or stasis between past and present, Baloji's images interrogate the narratives of occidental progress that independence discourse espoused. These images, with their haunting anachronism, help us understand both the non-event of postcolonial futurity as they also remind us of the perpetual lurking of the ghost of the past in contemporary African societies.*

Walter D. Mignolo, "Introduction: Coloniality: The Darker Side of Western Modernity," in *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 1-26.

*In this chapter, Walter Mignolo conceptually maps the project of modernity as a singular event or structure that recomposes itself in various ways and contexts. The term "coloniality" presupposes an epistemological as well as ontological dimension to Western metaphysics. From this view, Western modernity is always already a colonial project, so that colonialism cannot be considered one that begins in the 19th century "after" slavery. Mignolo tries to situate coloniality in the historical *longue durée* of European conquest that extends throughout modernity's very sense of being, not as an aberration but as its structural necessity. From this perspective, the article helps us to historically contextualize, if not properly situate, appropriation as the constitutive feature in the unfolding of the modern world. Decoloniality therefore, as a responsive inevitability towards liberation, is a means of delinking and debunking the colonial situation.*

Max Weber, "Author's Introduction," in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Routledge, 2001), xxviii-xxx.

*This extract represents a concise and clear summation of Max Weber's preface to his much-celebrated book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. We simply reproduce the author's remarks to point out a tendentious view, typical and shared by a number of Euro-American thinkers; Weber categorically argues, without any sense of irony, for the West's "right" to appropriate from "other" cultures, not only for the Western world's own benefit but also to enhance these cultures' potentiality.*

Bernard Magubane, "Some Methodical and Theoretical Questions," in *Race and the Construction of the Dispensable Other* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2007), 1-39.

This introduction to Magubane's seminal Race and the Construction of the Dispensable Other, highlights the author's concern with the proper location of and the conditions of possibility for racism in Western critical discourse. Considering a range of key sociological and historical writings, Magubane shows us that racism isn't actually an aberration by a few indecent thinkers from Christian, humanist or Enlightenment discourses. Rather, racism, according to Magubane, in his elaborate exposition of the methodological and theoretical genealogy of the social sciences, lies at the heart of Western thought. Though not speaking about appropriation, Magubane's article usefully explains the racist bases of disciplinary formations and the justificatory construction of colonial discourse.

Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 2007), 110-113.

This is perhaps one of the most famous articles concerning patriarchal and racial ideologies and their impact, particularly on black women's lives; "difference" in a racist, sexist and homophobic world is the primary mode of oppression used not only to control women, but also, eventually, to silence and manipulate them. However, Lorde does not succumb to this reduction; by her lights, differences between or amongst women are usable beyond the narrative strictures of those in power. Lorde therefore insists that there's a need to overcome these trappings and to look for new ways that will totally "dismantle" what she calls "the master's house." After all, she says, survival is not an academic skill. By asking "us" to look beyond the categories and toolkits that reify practices of oppression, Lorde's piece implicitly cautions us about the uncritical reception of ruling ideas, practices, and ways.

Lewis Gordon and Jane Gordon, "Introduction: On Working through a Most Difficult Terrain," in *A Companion to African-American Studies*, ed. Lewis Gordon and Jane Gordon (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), ix-xi.

As a way of framing their anthology, Lewis and Jane Gordon argue about the complex and heterogeneous genealogy of African American thought. Taking up Audre Lorde's imperative to abandon the "master's tools," they eventually turn her thesis on its head in a two-pronged response. On the one hand, they contest Lorde's quick and wholesale surrendering of the master's toolbox, suggesting that in many instances such tools are either not wholly problematic or, in fact, stolen property. On the other hand, they argue, Lorde's gesture discounts how oppressed people have found creative ways to reconfigure, reorient, and ultimately subvert ideas or practices intended to harm them, opening a space between expropriation and subversive appropriation.

*Denise Ferreira da Silva, "Unpayable Debt: Reading Scenes of Value against the Arrow of Time," in *The Documenta 14 Reader*, ed. Quinn Latimer et. al. (Munich: Prestel, 2017), 81-112.

In this article Denise da Silva considers non-European status and value vis-à-vis the logics of colonial power and capital. Da Silva sees the impoverishment of non-white communities since the 2007/8 financial meltdown due to pernicious lending practices as racially motivated, which is to say, as part of a cyclical problem endemic to racial capitalism's modes of extracting value. Using the concept of unpayable debt, Da Silva helps us think about the traps of raciality and the inability of non-Europeans to untangle themselves from them. Ultimately, she interprets the logic

of racial violence and its thirst for the non-white as part of a larger system based on an appropriative impulse intrinsic to Western discourse and inseparable from capitalism.

#Week 10: As Nationalist Imperative: Some Discords

Forms of appropriation remain pervasive in modern African artistic discourse. This section is interested in appropriation as an imperative or problem within nationalist discourse in African modern art. By sitting with past and present debates on modern artistic representation in Africa, this week's readings interrogate how we continue to think of cultural authenticity, translation, nationality, and agency.

Presentation: Kemang Wa Lehulere, *History Will Break Your Heart* (2015), and Edson Chagas, *Tipo Passe* (2015)

Artists Kemang Wa Lehulere (South Africa) and Edson Chagas (Angola) raise questions about the elision and marginalization of the artistic practices of African people in their respective national contexts. By citing and using works by other artists in their own practices, they help to highlight the paradoxes of visibility and erasure in art-historical writing.

V. Y. Mudimbe, "Reprendre: Enunciations and Strategies in Contemporary African Arts," in *Reading the Contemporary: African Art from Theory to the Market*, ed. Olu Oguibe and Okwui Enwezor (London: Institute of International Visual Arts, 1999), 30-47.

Mudimbe's article is concerned with how "Contemporary African Art" struggles with the colonial legacy in moving toward self-making. The philosopher develops the concept of "reprendre"—loosely translated, "to take up again"—to interrogate how the African artist finds herself constantly interrupted by the strictures of the colonial encounter in spite of her attempts to subvert or overcome them. Mudimbe comes close to suggesting that popular arts operate differently or with different registers that give them an advantage to undermine or ignore these traps. The concept of reprendre in this case anticipates appropriation as a strategic or tactical recourse and means in a society whose cultural campus is ravaged by colonialism.

Olu Oguibe, "Nationalism, Modernity, Modernism," in *The Culture Game* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2004), 47-59.

Olu Oguibe's text traces the nationalist imperative and its discontents in early modern African art. The focus of the article is on how artists like Aina Onabulu, Gerard Sekoto, Ernest Mancoba and others made use of modern forms of expression—both "Western" and "traditional"—to reinterpret their realities. Through comparative analysis, Oguibe equally studies these artists' limitations as well as breakthroughs. He distinguishes between earlier modernists' mimetic and reifying strategies and those of practitioners like Mancoba who have arguably subverted such formal principles. Relying on Mancoba's complex and prescient negotiation of modern forms, Oguibe shows how the artist paved the way toward a new sensibility that not only charts a unique line for African modernity, but also modern art broadly construed.

Michael Taussig, "In Some Way or Another One Can Protect Oneself from Evil Spirits by Portraying Them," in *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 1-18.

Revisiting ethnographic studies published in the 1930s, Michael Taussig's article explores the Peruvian Cuna people's healing figurines—both their origins and the potency they derive due to mimesis or replication. Taussig points us to a central contradiction: if the Cuna figurines do not embody the actual physical appearance of themselves but their supposed colonizers, what curative capacities do these ritual sculptures have or embody? Instead of taking a critical

position against mimesis or replication, this article helps us to think differently about how it can be of use, and, indeed, be subversive.

Martina Köppel-Yang, “75% Red, 20% Black and 5% White: Pop Aesthetics in Post-Revolutionary China,” in *Pop Art and Vernacular Cultures*, ed. Kobena Mercer (London: Institute of International Visual Arts, 2007), 198-217.

Martina Köppel-Yang reflects on the 1980s and '90s styles of “cynical realism” and “political pop” that came to typify the contemporary Chinese art scene. Following the cultural revolution, and its populist iconography built around peasant struggle—with Mao as the leading figure—Köppel-Yang takes us through the subsequent shifts, either towards subversion or cynicism, in the meanings of revolutionary iconography. Here again, we see appropriation considered differently or for a purpose that isn't properly associated with hegemonic art-historical understandings of the term.

Everlyn Nicodemus, “The Center of Otherness,” in *Global Visions: Towards a New Internationalism in the Visual Arts*, ed. Jean Fisher (London: Kala Press, 1994), 91-104. *Here Everlyn Nicodemus interrogates the uneven ways in which non-European cultural practices are open and available for use, abuse, and distortion in the name of disciplinary practice. Placing imperialism and colonial relations at the heart of humanistic disciplines like art history and anthropology, Nicodemus examines the continuities between Western researchers and the colonial paradigm that informs their practices. Nicodemus argues that Western discourse, and the disciplines that uphold its assumptions, are constructed at the expense of non-western (especially African) peoples.*

Elizabeth Harney, “The École de Dakar: Pan-Africanism in Paint and Textile,” *African Arts* 35.3 (Autumn 2002): 12-31; 88-90.

This article considers the controversial legacy of Senegalese president Léopold Senghor's cultural policy in the form of the Négritude movement. Elizabeth Harney attempts a critical defense of the role Senghor's École de Dakar played in promoting artistic mimesis and self-primitivization, allowing us to think through the complexities of Négritude—its aesthetic branding and conceptualization—through close readings of paintings and textile reproductions.

Lewis Nkosi, “The Ideology of Reconciliation: Its Effects on South African Culture,” in *Writing Home: Lewis Nkosi on South African Writing*, eds. Michael Chapman and Lindy Stiebel (Pietermaritzburg: UKZN Press, 2016), 149-155.

The concept of reconciliation, central to the nation-building narrative of the early post-apartheid era, is currently under critical scrutiny in South African public discourse. Lewis Nkosi problematizes the presuppositions and agenda of this concept in order to consider how the ideology of reconciliation has shaped and continues to limit the post apartheid cultural imaginary.

*Nkiru Nzegwu, “The Africanized Queen: Metonymic Site Of Transformation,” *African Studies Quarterly* 1.4 (Winter 1998): 47-56.

Nkiru Nzegwu attempts a defense and contextualization of Nigerian artist Ben Enwonwu's Africanization of Queen Elizabeth in a portrait that caused a stir virtually tantamount to his art's rejection both by his contemporaries and much recent scholarship. The essay thus tries to lay out the strategic imperatives and the potential for nationalist subversion in Enwonwu's work. Nzegwu isn't here raising questions of appropriation or cultural borrowing, per se, but making a tactical gesture toward black artists like Enwonwu working within a colonial tradition to express ideas that arguably rework his own assumptions.

*Rasheed Araeen, “Modernity, Modernism, and Africa's Place in the History of Art of Our

Age,” *Third Text* 19.11 (July 2005): 411-417.

Rasheed Araeen is concerned with the limits of early modernist black expressions, from diasporic sensibilities in Harlem to African mimetic interpretations of European forms. Araeen turns to Mancoba's post-1938 work—that is, to his expressionistic work produced in exile—to underline Africa's role not simply as a passive receiver of modernity, but as an equal, participant, innovator, and sometimes precursor, of modern art as such.

Week 11: As and of the Present: Contemporary Contestations, Disciplinary Differences

Presentation: Theaster Gates, *An Overlapping Love*, 2014

Salome Asega, Homi K. Bhabha, Gregg Bordowitz, Joan Kee, Michelle Kuo, Ajay Kurian, and Jacolby Satterwhite, “Cultural Appropriation: A Roundtable,” *Artforum*, Summer 2017, 266-277.

#M. NourbeSe Philip, “The Disappearing Debate: or, How the Discussion of Racism has been Taken Over by the Censorship Issue,” in *Blank: Essays and Interviews* (Toronto: Book Thug, 2017), 198-242.

M. NourbeSe Philip explains, in regards to the appropriation and abuse of black people's cultures by white writers, how censorship has usurped racism in public interlocution in Canada. For Philip this usurpation relies on a denial and repression of racism as a living experience of oppressed people and their rightful demand to call into question unethical forms of representation. This article exhaustively explains how the appropriation of black and colored people's cultures is a zero-sum game, which lately, she claims, has reduced those cultures to a “collective commons.” The position that Philip takes is not necessarily an intervention at the level of disciplinarity, but a systematic tendency, or even a structure of feeling that cuts across various intellectual formations. This article critiques attempts at dismissing racist attitudes or circumspectly misnaming the violent arrogance of abuse and humiliation.

Huey Copeland and Hannah Feldman, eds., “Tactical Presents, Everyday Futures: Art and the Institutions of Public Space,” *The Brooklyn Rail*, May 3, 2016, 62-67.

John Berger, “Why Look at Animals?” in *The Animals Reader: The Essential Classic and Contemporary Writings*, ed. Linda Kalof and Amy Fitzgerald (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2007), 251-261.

D. W. Winnicott, “The Use of an Object and Relating through Identifications,” in *Playing and Reality* 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 115-127.

Karen Barad, “Agential Realism: How Material-Discursive Practices Matter,” in *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 132-185.

*Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” *Diacritics* 16.1 (Spring 1986): 22-27.

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