

Shaka McGlotten

Racial Chain of Being:  
The More Things Change,  
The More Things Change

Ejecta  
*Ari Larissa Heinrich*

“This is not the correct history”:  
Lacunae, Contested Narratives,  
and Evidentiary Images from Sri  
Lanka’s Civil War  
*M. Neelika Jayawardane*

He Brought a Swastika  
to the Summer of Love  
*William E. Jones*

The Fern Rose Bibliography  
*Tan Lin*

Racial Chain of Being:  
The More Things Change,  
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Shaka McGlotten

Cookie Jar 1

The Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant



For Dad



## Preface

This essay began as another essay. Zach Blas asked me to respond to a line item from feminist scholar of science and technology studies Donna Haraway's "chart of transitions," which appears in her 1985 essay "The Cyborg Manifesto." Haraway's chart details the shifts that have informed our understanding of technology and the human subject. These shifts are temporal and epistemological: to be human is no longer to be a stable, unified entity but rather the hybridized posthuman of technoscience, the cyborg. Her manifesto theorizes:

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In this attempt at an epistemological and political position, I would like to sketch a picture of possible unity, a picture indebted to socialist and feminist principles of design. The frame for my sketch is set by the extent and importance of rearrangements in world-wide social relations tied to science and technology. I argue for a politics rooted in claims about fundamental changes in the nature of class, race, and gender in an emerging system of world order analogous in its novelty and scope to that created by industrial capitalism; we are living through a movement from an organic, industrial society to a polymorphous, information system—from all work to all play, a deadly game. Simultaneously material and ideological, the dichotomies may be expressed in the following chart of transitions from the comfortable old hierarchical dominations to the scary new networks I have called the informatics of domination.<sup>1</sup>

1. Haraway 1991, 161.

Representation	Simulation
Bourgeois novel, realism	Science fiction, postmodernism
Organism	Biotic Component
Depth, integrity	Surface, boundary
Heat	Noise
Biology as clinical practice	Biology as inscription
Physiology	Communications engineering
Small group	Subsystem
Perfection	Optimization
Eugenics	Population Control
Decadence, <i>Magic Mountain</i>	Obsolescence, <i>Future Shock</i>
Hygiene	Stress Management
Microbiology, tuberculosis	Immunology, AIDS
Organic division of labour	Ergonomics/cybernetics of labour
Functional specialization	Modular construction
Reproduction	Replication
Organic sex role specialization	Optimal genetic strategies
Biological determinism	Evolutionary inertia, constraints
Community ecology	Ecosystem
Racial chain of being	Neo-imperialism, United Nations humanism
Scientific management in home/factory	Global factory/ Electronic cottage
Family/Market/Factory	Women in the Integrated Circuit
Family wage	Comparable worth
Public/Private	Cyborg citizenship
Nature/Culture	fields of difference
Co-operation	Communications enhancement
Freud	Lacan
Sex	Genetic engineering
labour	Robotics
Mind	Artificial Intelligence
Second World War	Star Wars
White Capitalist Patriarchy	Informatics of Domination



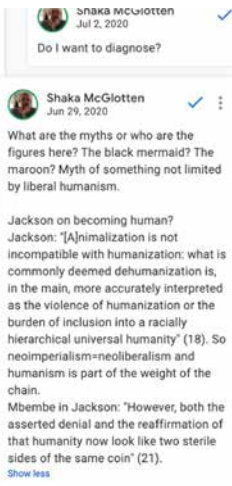
Aiming at using non-essentialized language to write about the affinities, other than identity, that may unify political coalitions between us, Haraway organizes each period using semio-technical or natural-cultural assemblages: “representation” is coupled with, and recast as, “simulation”; “reproduction” with “replication”; and finally, “white capitalist patriarchy” with her new term “informatics of domination.” I was asked to respond to the row that couples “Racial chain of being” to “Neo-imperialism, United Nations humanism,” and to reflect on whether our contemporary moment exceeds the bounds of the original chart by considering the contemporary resonances of the two words in an entry or by adding a new, third term. I added a third term, the more things change. And then a fourth: the more things change.

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\*Right away, we think it's important to flag here that we are not asking you to directly engage Haraway. In fact, this may come as a surprise, but we are asking all writers to not cite Haraway. Imagine reading 30+ essays that cite the exact same Haraway quotations/concepts—you would likely lose interest from the repetition! **We see Haraway's chart as an architecture that contains a plethora of characters and myths, given the specific space-time one looks at this chart; thus, we're asking you to identify the characters, myths, etc. that you find active in your chart entry today—and not evoke the cyborg as a shorthand, or other Haraway-isms.** Thus, there is no need to contextualize Haraway, informatics of domination, or cyborg manifesto in your text (we'll do this in our intro). So we are challenging all authors to excise any direct Haraway references, and instead know that they are still in dialogue with her through the collection's formal engagement with the chart, and the editor's introduction. **Through this liberation from the authorial text, we hope to cultivate each entry's unique voice and contribution. Basically, we care all about your voice here, not Haraway's.**

\*Your 3rd term **"the more things change, the more things change": quite provocative!** We just think the richness of meaning here could be more articulated throughout your text. **And perhaps even more meaning and clarity would emerge here if we understand its relation to Haraway's 2nd term?**

\*Your engagement with students: We found these sections to be both moving and meandering, but we imagine this material could be more effective once there is re-structuring and a clearer understanding of how you are engaging your chart line - and what the stakes of that engagement are for you - around periodization, blackness, etc. We were less compelled by the mentioning of specific student work but again, perhaps this will work better when your intentions around periodization are more clear. We would be very happy to read more foregrounding on how students comprise links in the chain as you theorize it, as well as how this relates specifically to periodizing the informatics of domination. **And maybe a way to engage the students is to**



Shaka McGlotten  
Jul 2, 2020  
Do I want to diagnose?

Shaka McGlotten  
Jun 29, 2020

What are the myths or who are the figures here? The black mermaid? The maroon? Myth of something not limited by liberal humanism.

Jackson on becoming human?  
Jackson: "[A]nimalization is not incompatible with humanization: what is commonly deemed dehumanization is, in the main, more accurately interpreted as the violence of humanization or the burden of inclusion into a racially hierarchical universal humanity" (18). So neoliberalism-neoliberalism and humanism is part of the weight of the chain.

Mbembe in Jackson: "However, both the asserted denial and the reaffirmation of that humanity now look like two sterile sides of the same coin" (21).

[Show less](#)

Screenshot of author's Google Doc

*“an architecture that contains a plethora of characters and myths”*

I.

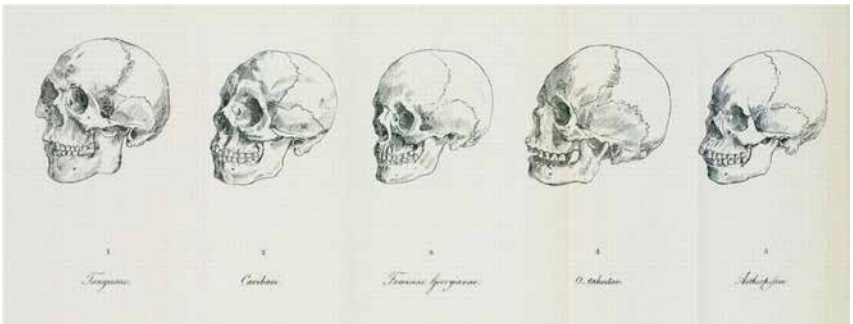
I'm chained and I'm chaining—bound to pasts and linking up with those with whom I learn. As by scientific racism, and the deep code of anti-Black OS; and by relying on a neoimperial supply chain, which is just colonialism by another name; and by my right to claim sovereignty, i.e. have the right to work, as a kind of universal humanism that's conditioned by neoliberal subjugation; and by pedagogy, which is a link I construct with love.

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Fish, mud crawler, ape, Man, mobile device (a devolutionary pressure); ape, Neanderthal, Man; ape, Negroid, Mongoloid, Caucasoid.

While these chains appear as serial compositions, they are anything but. Rather, they are temporally promiscuous compactions of fantasy and violence; they've been around the block.

A neoimperial supply chain serves as an example, a neoimperial supply chain that relies on the vulnerable who haven't made it into the frame, but who still frame it, such as the children who mine precious metals, women who polish iPads, and apex predators (that's you and me), serial purchasers of consumer



From Johann Friedrich Blumenbach's treatise on  
"De generis humani varietate nativa," c. 1775

electronics bought on credit, upgraded, and thrown away before they're paid off.

10 As the supply chain loops back around, brown and Black men sit in clouds of toxic smoke in e-wastelands, prying out the last precious bits of electronics still worth anything, hardening their already calloused fingers.

Supply chains are debt chains; some debts get paid, others remain unpayable.

But there's another chain, a pedagogical one, that connects me to my dad and my students to Blackness, a chain that links us all to the Black quantum futurities to which we are attached, Black feminist futurities, the "grammar[s] of possibility,"<sup>2</sup> that offers hope for our retreat, and refuge, and for our rest. A reminder that the chains that prevent our flourishing can be collectively warped or blowtorched, that they can be broken, and that we can be unchained.

When I wrote this earlier, I typed the word "home" when I meant to write "hope."

2. Camp 2017, 17. See also Phillips 2015.

The racial chain of being has always been an informatics of domination. Derived from the medieval Christian hierarchical concept known as the Great Chain of Being, the racial chain of being refers to the white supremacist pseudoscience developed in part to justify enslavement and colonization. For Haraway, the racial chain of being metamorphoses into neoimperialism and United Nations humanism during the global rearrangements of power after World War II, particularly as tied to science and technology. Neoimperialism updated imperialism and colonialism: national flags and mercantile logos endured, as did conquest, albeit largely by other means and names—like the “free” trade espoused by neoliberal ideologies, and the not-so-secret efforts to destabilize democratically elected governments in the name of universal democratic freedoms. The UN’s mission to advance national and individual sovereignties claims to serve as a check on state power, although in truth the UN seems to operate as one arm of neoimperialism. It does even less to curtail the rapaciousness of transnational conglomerates. United Nations humanisms make clear that the human is an unevenly distributed category, in which many humans are not recognized as such.

The serial form of racialized blackness is reverberatory. You hear it in *black mo'nin*, in the train whistle, and in the moans precipitated by Black death back then and now. You hear it in Black vernacular: if you're white, you're right, if you're brown, stick around, and if you're Black, get back. You hear it in swinging bodies and in the insistent call-and-response of “Say Their Names!” and as an echo in the printed lists of martyrs on the front and back sides of black hoodies.

The racialized chain of being is a surround sound, and it is a

silencing, such as the silencing away of the rights of young Black males with the acronym N.H.I., and in the “abnormalities” of Black physiology that are used to justify our deaths.

In a 1994 open letter, Sylvia Wynter writes:

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You may have heard a radio news report which aired briefly during the days after the jury’s acquittal of the policemen in the Rodney King beating case. The report stated that public officials of the judicial system of Los Angeles routinely used the acronym N.H.I. to refer to any case involving a breach of the rights of young Black males who belong to the jobless category of inner-city ghettos. N.H.I. means “no humans involved.” [ . . . ]

You may remember too that in the earlier case of numerous deaths of young Black males caused by a specific chokehold used by Los Angeles police officers to arrest young Black males, the police chief Daryl Gates explained away these judicial murders by arguing that Black males had something abnormal with their windpipes.<sup>3</sup>

American Artist (b. 1989) works across various media—from installation to text—to explore Blackness and its past and present imbrications with technology. Many of their works focus on computation, big tech, surveillance, and policing. In their 2018 exhibition of sculpture and photography, *Black Gooey Universe*, and in an essay with the same title, Artist considers, among other things, how Graphical User Interfaces (GUI) began with

3. Wynter 1994, 42.



American Artist, *My Blue Window*, installation view,  
Queens Museum, New York, 2019

blackness—the blackness of the standard black screen—before they shifted to a more “user-friendly” white default beginning with Apple’s Lisa in 1983, the white screen mimicking the blankness of white paper.<sup>4</sup> As Artist writes, “the transition of the computer interface from a *black screen*, to the *white screen* of the 70s, is an apt metaphor for the theft and erasure of Blackness, as well as a literal instance of a white ideological mechanism created with the intent of universal application.”<sup>5</sup>

American Artist’s video *2015* (2019), part of their solo exhibition *My Blue Window* at the Queens Museum in 2019, is set in a fictional 2015 that occurs in the recent past, i.e. in 2019. Artist’s video is reminiscent of Steven Spielberg’s 2002 dystopian

4. See Wu 2018.

5. American Artist 2018. Emphasis in original.

science-fiction thriller *Minority Report*, in which the police rely on vegetative precognitive psychics to predict and thereby prevent crimes before they happen. The video positions the viewer in the driver's seat of a police car roving through New York City. A screen with an augmented reality display is affixed to the car's windshield and projects the fictional 2015's future, which occurs in our present, on the road ahead. A history of surveillance on Black bodies from the present-past and the past-future appears as pixelated fugitive slave posters, COMPSTAT, PredPol, and targeted advertising. The viewer looks at the streets of the city through the interface—turn signals, a map with hotspots, and crime data. The car's siren blares, quieting as it arrives to the site of a predicted crime. Nothing happens, nothing has to. The mere presence of law enforcement cues an update: "crime averted" appears onscreen. The car continues to move, in the room the siren echoes again: WEE WOO WEE WOO whup whup whup whup WEE WOO WEE WOO.

Ne imperialism and United Nations humanism aren't terrifying networks because they are historically new, but because they have always been predicated on, and continue to be animated by, an anti-Black operating system.<sup>6</sup> Black folx have long been subject to datafication, to quantification, or what Katherine McKittrick calls the "mathematics of black life."<sup>7</sup>

Ship registries, *The Book of Negroes*;<sup>8</sup> insurance policies (recall M. Norbese Philips' *Zong*), redlining, disease vectors.<sup>9</sup>

6. See Keeling 2014.

7. See McKittrick 2014.

8. See Browne 2015. The references to the *Zong*, 2008, branding, and phrenology are also drawn from her book.

9. See McGlotten 2016.



Branding, meet corporate branding.  
Phrenology, meet biometrics.  
Jim Crow, Jim Code.<sup>10</sup>

The more things change, the more they chain.

10. See Benjamin 2020.

My mom went along with my dad's desire to name me Shaka. When I was a child, there was a row of prints that leaned against the wall in my parents' bedroom. They were part of a series called "Great Kings and Queens of Africa," Black is Beautiful memorabilia created by the American brewing company Anheuser-Busch. In one of the images, King Shaka Zulu, who ruled the Zulu Kingdom from 1816 to 1828, appears among the featured kings, and like them, he is meant to inspire Afrocentric pride; he holds a spear and shield in a foregrounded portrait, while behind him tribesmen gather in what resembles an ethnographic illustration from anthropology's past—carefully rendered scenes of village life, of clothing and other adornments, and expository portraits highlighting the morphological features of an African. Like other ethnographic data, past and present, the painting imagines scenes of encounters, and then, in a temporal sleight of hand, it remembers the scenes as having always been that way.

I was named after a corporate marketing effort, and that's ok!<sup>11</sup> My dad used the prints as mnemonics to help bind me to Blackness and its real myths. By age five, I knew I was descended from kings and queens, just as I knew about the one-drop rule that meant I would never not be Black in America.

The TV series *Roots* taught more painful lessons. First airing on ABC in 1977 (when I was two), my family and I watched it

11. I am ok with it. But recently I did learn that the series was more than marketing. In 1975, Anheuser-Busch commissioned thirty paintings by twenty-three African American artists, many of whom went on to have successful careers in the arts. Pioneering historian Dr. Henrik Clarke conducted the research and wrote the text for the project. In 2012, Anheuser-Busch donated the collection, now valued at more than one million dollars, to the United Negro College Fund (UNCF). The paintings were distributed across member institutions.



### Vintage 1981 Budweiser Great Kings Of Africa Shaka King Of The Zulus Mirror Sign

Condition: Used  
"Very Good Condition"

Price: US \$99.96

Buy It Now

Add to cart

Add to list

**Ships from United States**

Shipping: \$21.79 Standard Shipping | See details

Item location: Graham, North Carolina, United States

Ships to: United States and many other countries | See details

Delivery: Estimated between Wed, Mar 03 and Thu, Mar 04 to 10577

Payments:

Returns: Seller does not accept returns | See details

Screenshot of Shaka Zulu collectible mirror with original drawing by Paul Collins

*“It’s easy to find the prints. The etched mirrors are rarer.”*

together whenever episodes of the show were rebroadcast. *Roots* reminded me of the stock from which I derived, and the stocks to which some of my ancestors were bound, the ancestors that were not plantation owners like Roswell King or the slave-holding Confederate officer James Urquhart Jackson, who founded North Augusta, South Carolina. This was a different chain. I learned about these men from my mom's family on a rare visit to Florida, and from Ancestry.com, the popular genealogy site that allows users to piece together their family trees using their own immediate family histories, the family histories of others, and historical records.

Then there were the Black Panthers and the real myths they drew on, and the real myths they left in their wake. In the late 1960s, after a few years of military service in Berlin, Germany, where he translated intercepted East German communications, my dad landed in Portland, Oregon, to attend Reed College on the GI Bill. There, he helped found the Black Student Union and became Minister of Education in the local Panthers chapter. In that role, he taught Black Studies and economics at the Panthers' educational department on what is now MLK Way in Albina, the Portland neighborhood where over 80% of all Blacks in the city once lived. My dad dipped the day he went to the chapter house after receiving a tip-off: "Get rid of the guns and girls. The police are coming." He loved to teach the kids, but that was it for him.

After several years, my dad re-enlisted in the Army after dropping out of a PhD program in sociology at UC Berkeley. He said he hated the Army, but that it was less virulently racist than other parts of American life—a less, of course, that is always relative to a more. A then, to a now.

My dad re-enlisted because he could not get the high school and college-level teaching gigs he was really after, and there were

too few other professional opportunities available to him, as a Black man in the early 1970s, that would provide the material security needed with me, my parents' first child, on the way. He shuttled between Oregon and California for a couple years, and then, in 1974, returned to the East Coast, where he completed his second basic training at Fort Dix, New Jersey, less than an hour from where he'd grown up in Riverside.

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Now he lives in a house he and my stepmom built on a few acres outside of San Antonio, Texas. It's comfortable, though when I visit I find that the house is always a few degrees too cold, and that I tire of listening to CNN, which blares from the TVs they have installed in every room. He does the yard work, assisted by his motorized scooter, and sits outside on the porch, where he smokes weed and watches the birds. When he can, he goes fishing with a dwindling friend group. My dad's Black rage has tempered into a mellow progressivism. At seventy-five, he possesses an enviable optimism. "I'm so blessed, son."

I sent my dad an early draft of this essay. I didn't hear back, so I reached out a week or so later.

"It's taking you a little while. Are you still going to give me some feedback?"

"Well, I had to read the 'Cyborg Manifesto' first."

"Wow, you read the 'Cyborg Manifesto'?"

"Yeppers," he replied, using a signature expression of his mom, adopted by our surviving clan.

"So? What did you think?"

Here it comes, I thought.

"Let me send it to you as an email," he said.

The email that came was long, with lots of comments and corrections. He didn't want me to write about him smoking



Clifford McGlotten

SHAKA MCGLOTTEN

weed. And he corrected me: the tip-off he got years ago about the cops in Portland did not say that he needed to “get rid of the girls” but that he needed to get rid of the incendiaries. Which he then requested I also omit.

I ignored him for a couple of weeks. I didn’t call and neither did he. I gave in first.

“I’m still licensed in Texas as a social worker, I do veterans activism, and I’m involved in my church, and weed ain’t legal yet here in Texas,” he said, chuckling at the end.

“So, are you saying you want me to take all of this stuff out or what? I mean, this essay is going to be published in a venue with limited readership. I just don’t get it.”

At this point, I gave in a little further. “I’m not hurt,” I continued, although I was, “I’m just . . . resigned, I guess. Like, you’ve made this about you. And, in a way, it is, because I’ve dedicated it to you.”

I could hear him exhale. He relaxed and said, “Son, son, go ahead, son. It’s ok. It’s ok!”

In early 2021, I began working with the gifted young Black filmmaker, screenwriter, and playwright Gerard Myles, a student at Purchase College–SUNY, where I teach. I felt Gerard’s experience could help me find a visual language for this essay. We went through a prototype I’d made—a media-rich PowerPoint presentation, to which I added a voice-over. He was excited by the prototype; he understood that this is a story about Blackness, time, family, and learning.

We agreed that we needed to include my father, given his story and the impact it has on the political and pedagogical chains I explore in this essay. I asked my dad if he could have his wife film him sitting quietly on the porch where he watches the birds,

smokes pot, and spends his afternoons thinking. Instead, he sent me two versions, saying he wanted me to have some options, leaving me to choose which. Liz, my stepmother, recorded the footage with a cell phone camera. I can tell, as it is a vertically oriented video (rather than the horizontal one we had asked for). My dad is shown standing outside in their backyard, behind a small metal table he uses as a display for three books and three hats, each of which he picks up, shows, and sets back down.

He's neither quiet nor contemplative; instead, he's animated, and he talks directly to the camera, charming and confident in his pedagogical mode. In both takes, he begins by addressing me directly: "Well, son."

*Take 1: Well, son, you can see my caps. [He gestures to the Army cap with a Master Sergeant insignia he is wearing.] You know I take a lot of pride in being a military vet, uh, twenty years, one month, one day—but who's counting, right? I also take a lot of pride in my Jamaican ancestry [he touches another cap; this one has the word "Jamaica" in neon-green capital letters], as well as my Anglo ancestry, but really I was raised as a little New Jersey hoodlum [he touches a black fedora, also on the table in front of him], in Burlington, New Jersey. Riverside. And there, those are the 50s, 60s, I was trying to be a little hood before I became a Black German. And this is a very interesting book I've been reading called Moral Politics, it's fascinating. This is about Black Geniuses like yourself, I thought you might find entertaining. But now this [he picks up the third book, Homo Deus], this is the book that has really made me think. I really finished it this morning. It has a lot of material on data, the new religion, replacing*



*humanism, replacing communism, replacing socialism. Data. And you're writing a book on Black data, right? Hey, I recommend this to you, especially the last chapter. [Francis, an elderly dog, walks into frame.] And of course, you see my buddy, Francis. [He pets him.] This is my partner. Love you, son, I hope you have a good day. Peace out. [He puts his hand to his chest, as if to give a Black Power salute, but when he extends his arm out, his fingers make a peace sign.] I've started using the peace sign.*

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*Take 2: Well, son, you can see some of the literature that I've been reading lately. This one especially, Moral Politics, I find fascinating. And this one is really in your field. It's by an anthropologist. Homo Deus. And really, it's like 1984 but written about 2050. It's really about, uh, forecasting, and it talks a lot about data, and it'll go right along with that material, with that book you're still writing, Black Data. Because he's all about the new religion: data, Google, Facebook, Amazon, and how they use your . . . [laughs] . . . data. Well, son, it's good talking to you for this video. I love you, and I hope you're doing well.*

\*

Once or twice a year, my dad will send me and my brother (sometimes not only us, but my cousins and others too) a long, unsolicited email that includes his professional accomplishments and his living and marital histories. I have never quite understood why he does this, especially with such frequency. Here is an email from August 2019:

“Cliff’s BioPsychSocial.”

Clifford McGlotten [REDACTED] Mon,  
Aug 12, 2019 at 1:34 PM

To: James aka Mac aka JimmieMac [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED], Shaka [REDACTED], [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Cliff’s BioPsychSocial  
LCSW/ACSW/BCD  
Where I have lived?

Riverside NJ O-17. 1963  
Ft Devens Ma. 17-18. 19  
Frankfurt GY. 1964 18  
Berlin GY. 1964-8 (?) 18-22)  
Portland Or. 1968-73 (23-28)  
Berkeley, Ca. 1972-74) 27  
Portland, Or. 1974  
Presidio, Ca. 1974  
Ft Dix, NJ. 1974-76 27-29  
Nurenburg GY 1976-79. 29-34  
FSH TX. 1980-84 35-39  
Berlin, GY. 1984 39-  
Frankfurt, GY 1984-88 39-43

Ft Lewis, Wa. 1988-90 43-45  
San Antonio Tx. 1990-2003. 45-58  
La Vernia Tx 2003-2018 58-72

Mil HX: 9/17/1963-10/1/1990 (7 year break: 1967-1974)  
State Civ SVC : 1990-2  
Civil SVC HX: 1992-2010  
Volunteer HX:  
Nami TX Board. 2009-12  
Nami SAT Consumer ED Director 2010-11  
Nami SAT Board. 2012  
NAMI SATX Past Board President  
BSU Reed College. 1968-70  
BPP (drafted). 1968-70  
NAACP. NJ 1963 (A&P) integration  
NAACP Life Member  
Antioch Church Health Fair Chair (10 years)

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Job HX:  
Mil HX: crypto analyst; German linguist; 91 G/social  
work psych spec/(1974-82); med admin (82-90), Expert  
Field Medical First SGT (2)  
Ed Job HX:  
HS teacher: 1968; Title I evaluator 1973; College  
Instructor-  
UMD/City Colleges Chicago/CTC/ OLLU/ Fayetteville  
/DOD MSW program

Education Presenter:  
NASW TX state conferences and NAMI TX state

conferences-Genomics, military trauma, ethics, veterans  
mental and physical health to include PTSD and trau-  
matic brain injuries

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Clinical and Medical Social Work HX:  
Social Work/Psychology US ARMY  
BAMC and Audie Murphy VAMC  
San Antonio State School

Private Practice: San Antonio Anxiety and Phobia Clinic

Marital HX:

1967-74. Olivia Scheffler

1974-1988 Joan Ogilvie

1996(?) -1998 Deborah Murdock

1999- Liz Goff

3 sons; 3 granddaughters, 1 grandson due Oct 27, 2018

Student HX:

Riverside HS. 1963

U MD. 1965-7

PSU 1967-8

Reed College. 1968-71

Berkeley 1971-3

Our Lady of Lake U 1982

Degrees:

BS, MAT/MSW

-----Education/social work/sociology

Careers:

Soldier/Clinical Social Worker/Educator

Passions:

Mental health & human rights & civil rights advocate....  
the sociology of religion...“joking and talking trash”...  
trying to learn something new everyday...

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Outdoors:

FISHN. OCEAN.... Traveling..... Nature.... FAMILY....  
Noticing.....

\*Significant Developmental Heroes for Good-  
Mom, Mom Sophie, 1st Baptist Church Riverside NJ,  
Jesus, MLK JR., Frederick Douglass, Charles Glock,  
Paul Nassar, OW, Ron Herndon, Elijah Cummings,  
Rosa Parks, Barack Obama, Michelle Obama, Liz Goff,  
Johnnie Davis, Buddha, Clarence Newton

Honors:

“McGlotten vs Connally” class action lawsuit; President  
BSU Reed College; Minister of Education Portland OR  
Black Panther Party; Audie Murphy VAMC nominee  
as VA Social Worker of the Year; National DAV  
VA Psychiatric Practitioner of 2009 for work as VA  
Veterans Liaison for returning OEF/OIF injured vets  
@ BAMC; Military Honors/ Duties MSM(2); EFMB;  
Expert Field Medical 1st SGT (2); EMT; 3AD IG Team  
(medical Inspector); FSH AHS Instructor of the Cycle;  
Congressional Intern Cal in the Capitol Program (1972);  
NIMH Fellowship Berkeley

### Current Activities:

NAMI-SATX Executive Board (Past Board President)  
 Vets Serving Vets (VSV) Executive Board (Education Outreach)  
 NAMI Texas State Trainer- IOOV, Connections, P2P  
 Fishing, Noticing, Nature, Chilling.... 🕶️

### Personal Beliefs:

Do the right thing  
 The cosmos is evolving & so am I  
 Always continue to learn  
 Again go back to 1 & strive to do it  
 Recover & be Resilient  
 When knocked down as U will be get back up! Recover, strengthen, be Resilient!  
 GROW DAILY

The road to success is always under construction. Live by the Hal Slater dictum as relayed by his dying father to him: I'm not all good and I'm not all bad... but I'm mostly good... (when I'm not playing a prank on someone)..... 😂

Purchase College–SUNY, where I teach media studies and anthropology, is a public liberal arts college about thirty miles from New York City. As one of a handful of Black faculty in the Liberal Arts and Sciences, I teach courses that become refuges for queer, Black, and brown students; they're one of the few educational spaces where Black and brown students comprise the majority. In recent years, I find my students are increasingly frustrated by their exclusion from, and by their potential inclusion in, toxic predominantly white spaces, like college.

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In the class *New Black Ethnographies*, my students and I read writing by the anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston and the feminist scholar and literary critic Hortense Spillers, and we read the Combahee River Collective Statement from 1977, all before turning our attention toward contemporary ethnographic scholarship. These Black feminist texts teach us about how, among the sins of slavery, Black women were un/gendered by their transformation into thingified flesh and then again by their being forced to reproduce as laboring flesh. From Hurston, we learn about the “last cargo,” Cudjo Lewis, among the last kidnapped stolen Africans, and his lifelong longing for his homeland in what is now Benin, even as he built a life for himself in Africatown, Alabama. We learn about Black women who arrange and rearrange their identities by gathering stories from the past that help them chart routes toward necessary futures.

Then we read Octavia Butler's *Dawn*.<sup>12</sup>

Lilith Iyapo is rescued by an alien species, the Oankali, after humanity's destruction of the earth. The Oankali are a space-faring race capable of interstellar travel and sophisticated

12. Butler 1987. *Dawn* is part of a trilogy, *Lilith's Brood*.

genetic engineering that they hope to use to assist humans move up a few rungs on the evolutionary ladder. They possess an acquisitive curiosity that drives them to make contact with other life-forms and they trade genes with other species to insure their health and extend their life. What do the few remaining humans have that the Oankali want? What can they give the Oankali in exchange? Cancer. Cancer, whose capacities for growth and adaptation-power the Oankali plan to use in their own species-becomings; the future humanity is thus chained to the Oankali, who condition their “trade” on the intermingling of genetic material. Hybridization and mutation bind change-in-motion to the past and the present; they change, and they chain, like parenthood.

They are as much captors as rescuers.

With great difficulty, Lilith navigates her relationship with the Oankali, who, depending on her willingness to cede to their demands for “trade,” will determine whether she will sleep in suspension for eternity, or will experience a future in which she raises their hybrid offspring. The analogy to slavery is clear. The Oankali determine the conditions of her life, including her capacity to reproduce, and with whom.

Lilith accepts the bargain with resentment, entering into an involuntary symbiosis with an ooloi—a mediating third sex among the Oankali—named Nikanj, who becomes her companion and future co-parent.

Before the novel ends, Lilith must complete another task; she must Awaken other humans who have remained in suspended animation and convince them to accept the same bargain. Things do not go well—the Oankali’s diagnosis of humanity is confirmed: that we possess hierarchical thinking and are



simultaneously intelligent makes us dangerous to each other, to other species, and to other worlds.

I have students create speculative ethnographies in which they imagine themselves as anthropologists in future worlds they have created. I want them to consider Black pasts and presents in the construction of Black worlds that matter to them, that their writing can matter into existence. Some of my Black students' visions of Black flourishing (re)turn them toward the separatisms my dad was attached to in the 1960s and 1970s. Some lean into a fantastical optimism, worlding Black spaces with horizontal forms of governance that echo anarchist-led autonomous zones. Others are mystical. They imagine matriarchal spiritual leaders who are repositories of wisdom, but not enforcers of rules, as in Wandalis Jimenez's *Tropicus Liberatum*, a queer, femme beach-world in which everyone does their own thing with magic and trauma-healing crystals, at least when they aren't loving on one another.

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Magical realist tropes also take on grimmer tones within their fictional worlds that feel Afro-realist rather than Afro-pessimist. In the ongoing wake of slavery, traumas have become epigenetic, DNA chains mutated by loss.<sup>13</sup> In one student's project, a Black community's social life is organized around an orchard that grows out of the corpses of their dead, whose bodies the community brings back to their new settlement from an ancient battlefield. Once buried, there's growth: trees grow afros and their branches extend out and develop long, manicured nails.

Rather than fight to inch forward, many of my students instead imagine ways to get out—they go underground or dive deep, to live under the sea. Maroon societies keep it on the DL in repurposed caves built inside the forgotten infrastructures left

13. See Hartman 2007 and Sharpe 2016.

by the Underground Railroad and in improvised societies built in the burnt-out remnants of housing projects.

Get out: fuck reform or inclusion, much less conquest.

Get out: escape, retreat, and make refuge for kith and kin.

*The discovery and subsequent capture of the Hydronoir—hybrids of slaves thrown overboard during the Middle Passage and deep-sea aquatic life—precipitates a Black queer collective to rescue them from the Trump-created Bio-Defense Agency, which had interned and experimented on their bodies. After staging a dramatic rescue, the collective brings the Black mermaids to live with them in another maroon society, where they create new more-than-human queer kinships, loving across genders, sexualities, and diverse embodiments.*

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## Introduction

August 23, 2050

Will be doing ethnographic work on the newly discovered ethnic group, The Hydronoir starting in August 2050. I will be

staying in the Black Queer Coalition's (BQC) Headquarters

Hydro - noir  
water black

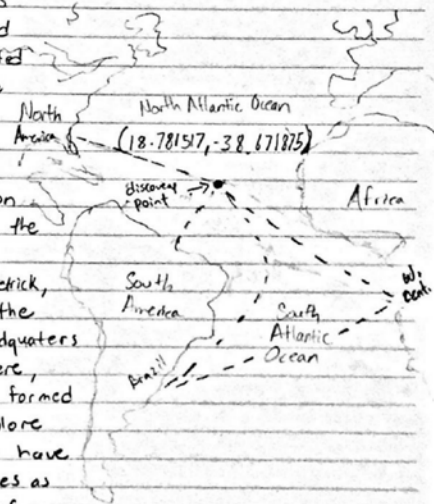
name only  
created  
by English  
speakers

located in the South Bronx, NY.

Last year, August 20<sup>th</sup> 2049, the Hydronoir were discovered by the U.S. government in the Atlantic Ocean, along the paths of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

They were taken to U.S. labs and put under surveillance and observation. It has been reported that three of them have died

while in the labs because of unsuitable positions. After this information was released to the public, The Black Queer Coalition based in New York City, infiltrated the National Biodefense Analysis and Countermeasures Center in Fort Detrick, Maryland. They took members of the Hydronoir back to the BQC Headquarters and put them in hiding. From there, the BQC and Hydronoir have formed an intimate bond. I aim to explore these relations as the Hydronoir have transcended American gender binaries as well as our fixed imaginations of human biological anatomy.



Student work for New Black Ethnographies,  
Purchase College—SUNY, 2017

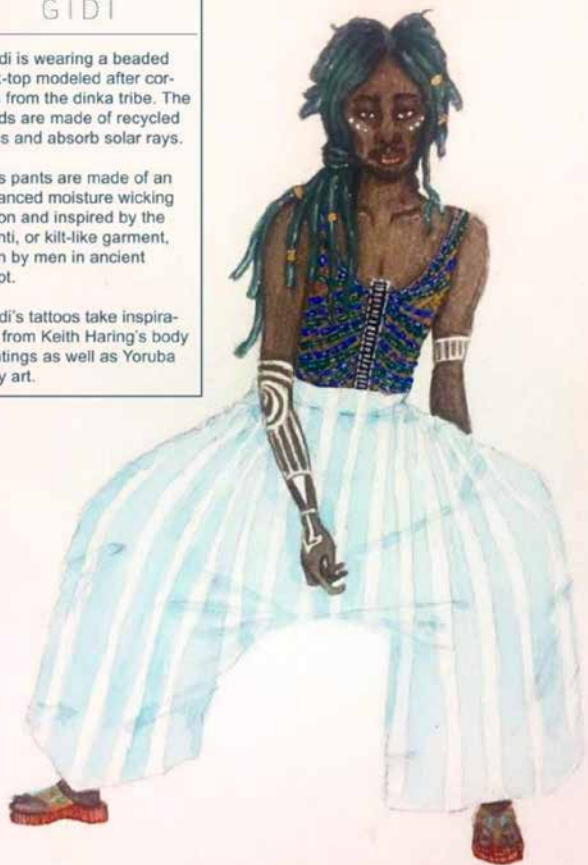
SHAKA MCGLOTTEN

## GIDI

Gidi is wearing a beaded tank-top modeled after corsets from the dinka tribe. The beads are made of recycled glass and absorb solar rays.

His pants are made of an advanced moisture wicking cotton and inspired by the shenti, or kilt-like garment, worn by men in ancient Egypt.

Gidi's tattoos take inspiration from Keith Haring's body paintings as well as Yoruba body art.

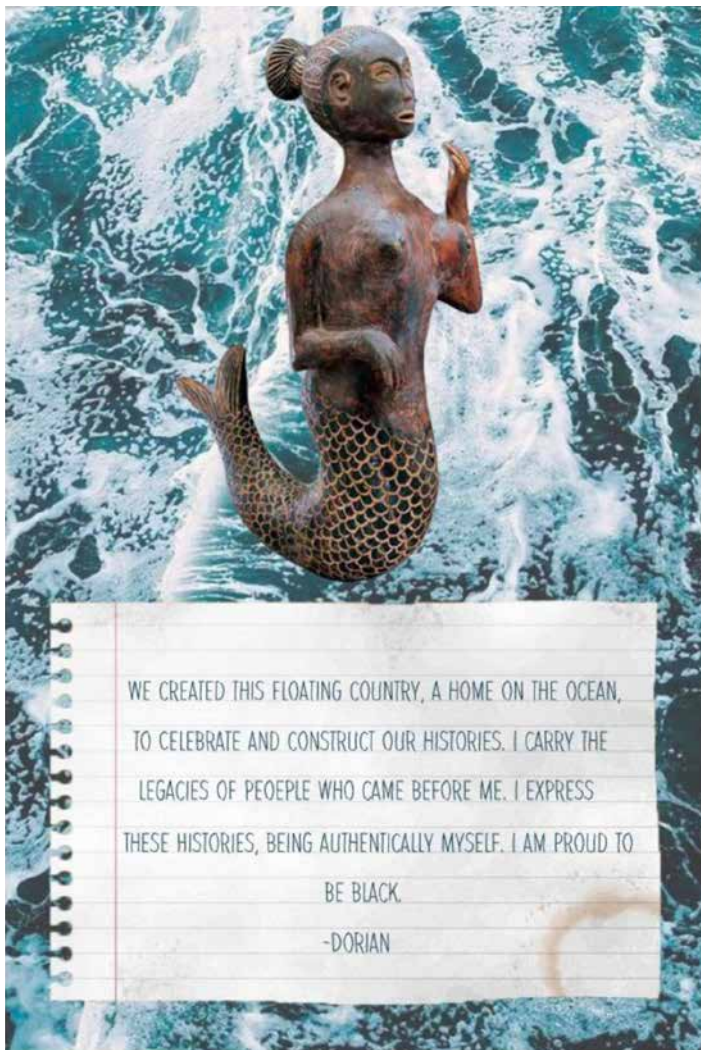


Student work for New Black Ethnographies,  
Purchase College—SUNY, 2017

36 *The Afro-Indigenous Wars destabilize worldwide governments and corporations rooted in colonial power, imperial exploitation, and white supremacy. A Jamaican maroon community, Nanston, helps foment these transformations. The maroons fight to continue living in their isolated community, where they have transformed the spiritual system of obeah into technologies of healing and protection that help them win the war, prevent subsequent ones, and keep their homes.*

*The manifesto by the liberation front La Mano NegraX, or LMNX, causes turmoil between people of color, white nationalists, and pacifists alike. Reddit becomes a flashpoint, where racist trolls circulate memes of missing black girls in the DC area with the caption, "See, Niggers Don't Belong Here." Viral videos of Karens threatening Black and brown people circulate at a fevered pace, pushing things over the edge. A race war breaks out. Descendants of the revolutionaries create an autonomous state in the territory of what was once New York State, renaming the area La Republica Choco-Cafuzo.*

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Student work for New Black Ethnographies,  
Purchase College—SUNY, 2017

SHAKA MCGLOTTEN



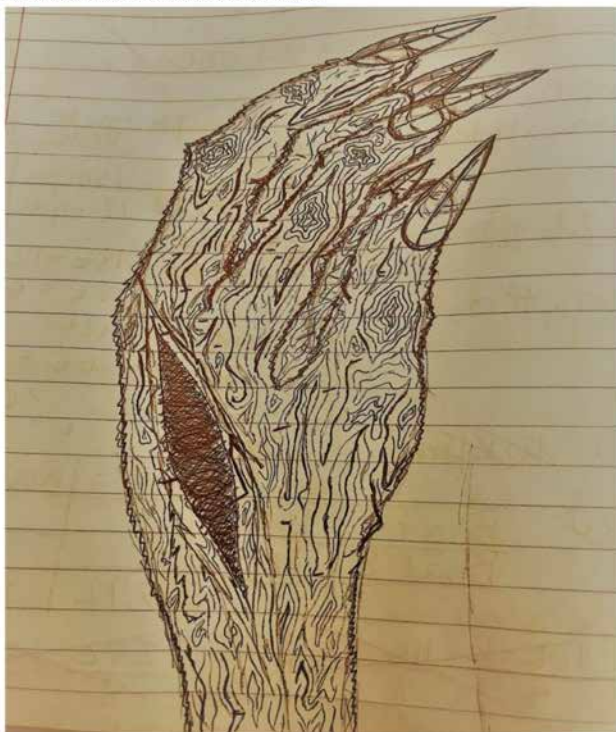
## Field Notes and Interviews

I had to apply to enter Ravenwood. It took an entire month for me to be granted admission.

March 19, 2050

- I arrived at Ravenwood at 10:54 this morning, but now it's nearing 8pm.
- The trees here are so abnormally tall...and terrifying. The hair and hands and nails of the trees were not a myth. It is unsettling, but also beautiful.
- They wood is so textured, unlike any wood I've seen before.
- I sketched one out when I first arrived:

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Student work for New Black Ethnographies,  
Purchase College—SUNY, 2018

6.

At an anti-racist protest, a sign reads, “We haven’t come this far to come this far.”

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When I challenged some of my Black and brown students to rethink their exclusion of white people from their worlds, they narrowed their eyes, sucked their teeth, and shrugged. “They have *their* worlds. We need our own.” The white students in the class kept quiet and listened.

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When Black worlds thrive in my students’ work, they thrive because they are *Black worlds*.

I wonder if I would learn anything at all but for my students.

(“Then, a small confused Awakening,”<sup>14</sup> like the wrenching clarity of getting “woke.”)

My dad’s chimerical choice of my name activated my political attentiveness from an early age, an attentiveness that has always informed my teaching. As in Butler’s *Dawn*, in which humans and Oankali come to depend on one another for their survival, symbiosis is at work, and so is what I think of as a retro-causality. The future weighs on the present as much as the past conditions it. We—my father, myself, and my students—shape one other lovingly, furiously, awkwardly, and often with deep need. Butler’s Lilith Iyapo is the already living future of those she must Awaken, having navigated a world they have never known, anticipating their hurts and pleasures like a Mother would. Or like a lowercase father might. Maybe even a teacher. I’m chained to my father, as my students are to me, at least for now. They are the future my father imagined and fought for; they are the future immanent to that past. Symbiosis and pedagogy. People learn, they link up, and they love. Even so, grief can span centuries.

14. Butler, *Dawn*.

Tuskegee	<a href="http://ancestry.com">ancestry.com</a>
<i>Book of Negroes</i>	Gerrymandering, Census
Swastikas on dorm walls	"Continuing the Conversation: A Five Part Dialogue Series"
Primitive accumulation	#BlackLivesMatter
<i>Django Unchained</i>	White fragility
<i>Star Wars VII-IX</i>	Trolls, bots, review aggregators
Zombies	Trolls, bots
Pipeline problems	Tenure, burnout
Drums	Black Twitter
<i>Birth of a Nation</i>	<del><i>Lala Land</i></del> <i>Moonlight</i>
Cyborg	<i>Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman</i>
"Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book"	MAGA
Plantation	School
Plantation	Prison Industrial Complex
Plantation	Redlining, affordable housing
Plantation	PTSS (Post-traumatic Slave Syndrome)
Settler colonialism	Involuntary settlers with nowhere to go
Voodoo, possession	Algorithm
<a href="http://BlackGodz.com">BlackGodz.com</a>	SEO
Black Codes	"Black Code," A Special Issue of The Black Scholar
Middle Passage	Middle Passage (c.f. plantation above)
"Mathematics of the Unliving"	Algorithmic Risk Assessment Scores
Africatown	<a href="http://BlackPlanet.com">BlackPlanet.com</a>
Sorrow songs	Streaming Beyoncé's <i>Homecoming</i> on Netflix
Racial Chain of Being	Human error

Racial Chain of Being: The More Things Change, The More Things Change

The original prompt for this project asked me to consider the contemporary resonances of Haraway’s chart, or to consider adding a new term. I thought of a few third terms:

- the more things change
- Afrotopias
- United States of Africa Space Agency<sup>15</sup>

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I settle on the first term, the more things change, but as I do a fourth term emerges, a repetition: the more things change. The more things change, the more things stay the same: both “benign” and virulent expressions of anti-Blackness remain everywhere present and are re-normalizing at an accelerated rate. And yet, too, the more things change, the more things change. Taking a single step can amplify (through fury, desperation, or love) the desire to take other ever yet more ambitious steps, like the renewed effort to enact ambitious and absolutely necessary structural change. Or, to create spaces to heal, and recharge the resiliencies we need to keep fighting to protect what is hard to carve out, the fragile outsides of white supremacy.

CNN and a boat. Teaching. Marronage.

15. I have long been inspired by both. Saidiya Hartman’s discussion of Afrotopias in *Lose Your Mother* (2007) and Kapwani Kiwanga’s project *Afrogalactica* (begun 2011), in which she imagines herself as an anthropologist from the future who must educate contemporary audiences about Afrofuturism. Importantly, Kapwani is not the only artist to work with Afrofuturism through anthropology. See, for example, Ayo Okunseinde’s *The Afronaut* (2015) and Elizabeth Chin’s *Laboratory of Speculative Ethnology* (2014).



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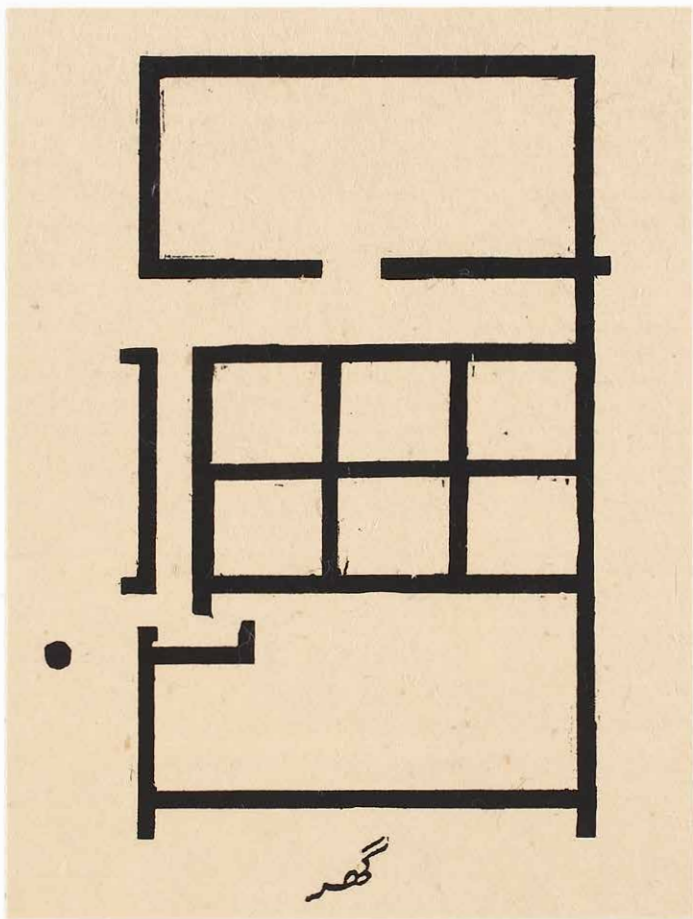
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Home

Zarina 99

Front cover: Zarina, *Home*

from the portfolio *Home is a Foreign Place*, 1999

Portfolio of 36 woodcuts with Urdu text printed in black on

Kozo paper and mounted on Somerset paper

Edition of 25 and 5 Roman Numeral sets

Image size: 8 x 6 inches (20.32 x 15.24 cm)

Sheet size: 16 x 13 inches (40.46 x 33.02 cm)

© Zarina; Courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York.

Photo: Farzad Owrang

*Cookie Jar*, a pamphlet series of the Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant, gathers five new pieces of writing by grantees that take on home as the unruly site of inheritance, memory, and imagination. In “Ejecta,” Ari Larissa Heinrich reflects on artist Jes Fan’s melanin sculptures and the geology of metaphoric language. Tan Lin’s “The Fern Rose Bibliography” is a meditation on the loss of his parents through an olfactory exploration of his family’s books. M. Neelika Jayawardane’s “This is not the correct history” questions the evidentiary nature of documentary photography foregrounding the slippery ethics of reading images of the decades-long civil war in Sri Lanka. In “He Brought a Swastika to the Summer of Love,” William E. Jones closely reads the fascist iconography in the films of Kenneth Anger for their prescient, unnerving connections to our contemporary political moment. In “Racial Chain of Being,” Shaka McGlotten updates the chart of representations that was Donna Haraway’s provocation in “A Cyborg Manifesto,” in the process forging connections between familial legacy, Black radicalism, and the classroom.

In her masterwork *Home is a Foreign Place* (1999)—from which we borrow the title for this volume and cover image for this volume—artist Zarina wrote, “The titles of my work always come to me before the image. Language ties my work together. Urdu is home.” Titled *Home*, this is the first of thirty-six woodblock prints that recall the artist’s childhood residence in Aligarh, India. Even a partial list of Zarina’s titles—*Threshold*, *Courtyard*, *Shadows*, *Fragrance*, *Despair*—reveal how the viewer is invited into the sensorium of Zarina’s elusive idea of home. The essays in this first volume of *Cookie Jar*, varied in scope and approach, illuminate the interior landscapes associated with home. Collectively, they demonstrate the fearlessness—and the tenderness—with which writing may yet encounter art.

—Pradeep Dalal and Shiv Kotecha



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Andy Warhol spent his weekends scouring flea markets, thrift stores, and estate sales for specific items like Navajo blankets, watches, and cookie jars. He collected 175 unique cookie jars in his lifetime, which depicted homes and animals, bodies and faces. When Claude Picasso asked Warhol in 1972 about his fascination with cookie jars, Warhol responded, “They’re time pieces.”

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