

## **IDEOLOGIES AND PRACTICES OF CREATIVITY: A PRACTICUM**

Anthropology 351D -- Winter 2020

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“Making is thinking” – Richard Sennett, Pallasmaa, Heidegger, and others.

**We are accustomed to think of creativity as involving a kind of freedom, and of being by definition a positive and desirable thing.** But as a powerful ideological apparatus based on possessive, acquisitive, and competitive individualisms, it drives us to value and to aspire to creativity as that personal attribute that makes us “unique” and “different”. In this sense, it operates like the concept of “intelligence” and is experienced by most of us (in the university, the art world, and many other social fields) as an extremely high-stakes issue. It is a key source of often intense self-doubt, fear, embarrassment/shame, and guilt. To be judged merely “ordinary” or “competent” – or “*the same*” as “everyone else” – is a damning verdict; and the ever-present possibility that one is oneself “not creative enough” is one of our most intensely persistent and *disabling* fears. (Marie-Louise von Franz, an associate of Carl Jung’s, has written that “creativity is the absence of subconscious doubt”.) The debates over whether creativity is (“either”) “inborn”, “a trait”, “a gift”, (“or”) something that can be, and is, learned and taught, are thus understandably charged. Social and psychic investment in the latter drives an enormous, competitive “global marketplace” of strategies of work on the self (self-help, self-improvement, self-discipline) and training by employers. Capitalism thrives on this. This seminar is a critical anthropological exploration of the cultural and political logics underwriting such dominant conceptions of creativity, and asks, among other things: How can this idea of creativity have been so long been interwoven with debilitating racist imaginaries and practices, as well as “class racisms” (Balibar) and sexisms/misogynies? What sort of person is thought entitled and capable of making “Art” as a form of spiritual (Klee), intellectual, political, creative work, and who does manual work? What space should/could manual work have in intellectual work, and in the academy? The course asks, most broadly, *how is the Cartesian mind/body separation manifested in mainstream or culturally dominant ideas of creativity? And in anthropology?*

### **COURSE KEYNOTES**

#### **Individualism and the Idea of the Creative Genius**

The ideas of creativity and “creative genius” so ardently embraced and famously popularized by the Romantics in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century are still surprisingly robust – and continually being, not only reaffirmed and reproduced, but glorified and supercharged – in our historical moment, and in our living environment, Silicon Valley. In the Romantic imaginary, creativity was the special attribute or “trait” of a special, unusual, “gifted” individual. This “special gift” was sometimes described (and socially experienced) in mystical, or religious, terms, so that creativity became a divine “gift of grace” akin to “charisma” (Weber; Tambiah) or of transcendent “inspiration” from a “muse” (often feminine), or from the sublime in nature (Kant). Often it was also framed in crude genetic terms as the inborn “trait” of the unique, autonomous, bounded individual. Embedded in this are, first, the idea of a “trait” typical of the kinds of essentialism and species-thinking familiar

to anthropologists both from 19-20<sup>th</sup> century race thinking and early disciplinary ancestors, as also from very contemporary, workaday forms, practices, and processes of racism, sexism/misogyny, classism, nationalism, xenophobia, and white supremacy and its angry eugenic aspirations; and, second, a conception of personhood in terms of a thoroughly naturalized, normalized individualism that pretends to universality (Locke; Mauss; Caldeira). This possessive, acquisitive, and competitive individualism underwrites the “practical reason” (Sahlins) and fearsome moralizing energy of capitalism, making it appear not only necessary for “growth” and “progress”, but indeed for a healthy and natural psyche and body (Weber; Marx). (“Healthy competition builds character.”) Thus, social conduct that seeks to maximize one’s “competitive edge” or “advantage”, and to be primarily motivated by seeking profit, “getting a leg up on someone else” in the “race”, or “making a killing”, attracts little to no censure on ethical or moral grounds.

This is not, of course, simply a phenomenon of “the marketplace” or “crass commercialism”, as much as the contemporary university and the art worlds might wish it were. A comparable possessive, acquisitive, competitive individualism and (profoundly anxious) competitiveness operates in these “ideological apparatuses” (Althusser), but in terms of moral, social, cultural, and aesthetic capital, as many have pointed out, and as many of us in these worlds know all too well. Here, star systems and “merit” reviews abound, and we are ready to make sacrifices to the point of self-immolation to stay and “be counted” (or, more accurately, “to count”) in these worlds. It seems to many people that it would indeed be “the end of the world” to be sidelined, marginalized, exiled, or to somehow “not count” as artists and scholars, or as students of these worlds. Incredibly, it almost amounts to not counting as *persons*, as *people*. If one’s “worth” as a person, and just a living being in the world, is always implicitly at stake when one’s intellectual and creative “worth” are being assessed or evaluated, little wonder that anxiety and fear seem to be knitted into our very spines. Despite our invaluable intellectual freedoms, our socializations make us risk-averse and, in some important ways, conservative. Ironically, the artist and the intellectual (among others, of course) are supposed to “blaze new trails”, to be “pioneers”, to “break conventions”, to innovate and invent, to be “original”, to be “different” and not like “everyone else”, to “stand out”, to be on “the cutting edge”, to be “edgy”, “visionary”, “geniuses”, etc. etc., and yet these very things can be immobilizing. They are institutional and cultural expectations, but also among our deepest aspirations. Cruel paradoxes, cultural contradictions, logical inconsistencies, and “exceptions” constitute the foundations of these worlds as they currently stand. A key paradox is that fear kills creativity.

Thus far, I have discussed artists, scholars, intellectuals, and “creatives” (to use an ugly new term) as if these figures were not differentiated by such things as gender, class, race, regional background, family history, educational experiences, or “accidents of history”. But of course they are, and of course they can compound and amplify, or diminish and adulterate, along many dimensions. And of course astonishing numbers of people have experienced various kinds of trauma in their lives, trauma that makes them react to the expectations of creativity, intelligence, etc. differently.

IN SUM, the “genius” and “the individual”, the gifted and the creative: it is an article of faith that these figures are “real”, that they “matter” – and, indeed, just like race, they are *all too real* as social constructs. They are in evidence as cultural figures – and, in a way, as Althusserian “ideological apparatuses” nested within larger institutional ideological apparatuses like the school, the university, the family, etc. in dominant social imaginaries, practices, processes, and institutions, especially in the global North, and most especially in the US – and, with new hyper-ideological power/vigor, in Silicon Valley, and even at Stanford University (*Creativity Inc.*). These ideological apparatuses (Althusser) shape and discipline conduct, aspirations, ideals, and subjectivities.

This course is a critical anthropological critical exploration of how and why a deep, naturalized individualism is foundational both to the ideals and the practices of creativity. How is it raced and gendered? How do we think further about relational, collaborative creative practices? (See Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces* and *The One and the Many*, on “dialogical art”). How do we historicize it? What are the stakes in and effects of the social hope that creativity can be learned/taught?

### **“Disqualified Knowledges”**

There are whole, vast categories of books/texts that tend not to be on the radar of social researchers, except as historical or cultural artifacts, or as evidence of something outside them: how-to books, handbooks, manuals, etc. that teach you how to *make* things, i.e., skills of the hand, handwork. That they are so far from the regular academic textbook/course book at the campus bookstore is not something we should take for granted, but rather make strange.

*Anything* at all, really, can be a subject of anthropological/scholarly inquiry, be it dust (Steedman), or wedding cakes (Charsley), or boredom (O’Neill), or trash/discards (Jacob Doherty; Brenda Chalfin; *Journal of Worldwide Waste*) or the inner structures of newts’ eyeballs. The sense of wildness and scope, wide-openness and creative possibility, in what we as scholars can study is why many of us were drawn to this business in the first place, and choose to stay in it despite the toll it takes in other ways. The toll (among students and more mature scholars) often exacts itself in the currency of stress and fear: the chronic stresses of anticipated/actual evaluation; often ruthless and disabling self-evaluation and self-critique; the fears of not “measuring up”, or of not being “cutting-edge” or “original” enough, or just not “smart” enough. Fears about one’s “quality of mind”, one’s intellect, are at the quick of it. Among anthropology students I have worked with over many years, this fear is often raised as a question: “Is my research/fieldwork “theoretical enough”? Self-doubt, perhaps inevitable, can be “productive”, but it is also disabling. It is self-doubt that keeps many people looking for the “cutting edge” in ways that ironically end up in intellectual conformism, in looking for the next new thing that “Everyone” is talking about – the very last thing we wanted! If we are excessively attentive to who or what is currently “in”, we throw obstacles in our own intellectual/imaginative/emotional pathways to connectivity and serendipity, and unlearn our habits of independence of mind and trust in our own judgement. Just as Aristotle and many Islamic thinkers defined “virtue” as a muscle that needs to be constantly exercised, so too do independence of mind and self-trust need to be exercised.

“Originality”: how do you get that? There are familiar formulas: you have to “push the boundaries”, “push the envelope”, take chances/risks, think outside the box, not color within the lines, etc. One way of pushing boundaries in the academy is to pursue inter-disciplinary work. Scholars doing deeply inter- or cross-disciplinary work are often richly rewarded at the grant application stage and in their actual research, and yet they can still find themselves professionally vulnerable precisely because of their taxonomic ambiguity. Knowledge production remains disciplinarily located, and is never just about “knowledge” as an inert thing, but also about sensibilities and emotions, traditions and conventions. Inter-disciplinarity itself is conventionalized; in anthropology, boundary crossings with history, the law, and medicine, for example, are recognized as valuable and productive. Crossings with the arts and humanities have been more uncertain in many ways. Judgements are rendered, often on scant evidence, on what is “serious” and what is not. By “serious” we often mean, not just rigorous research or good work, but morally and socially serious research/work. To call scholarly work frivolous or unserious is akin to saying of an artwork that “it looks nice”.

So what kind of work “counts” as “an original contribution to knowledge”, the university’s benchmark of excellence? And what is “legitimate” and “serious” intellectual, scholarly work? What is recognized/recognizable as “knowledge”? These are, of course, historically, politically, socially situated questions that do not necessarily have universal, generalizable answers (Kuhn, Popper, Martin, Haraway).

A few of the readings for this seminar are the kinds of texts that are surprising and unconventional to find on an academic syllabus. They include popular “self-help” – or, one might say, psychic “how-to” books – a genre widely ironized and ridiculed, but nevertheless practically ubiquitous and widely read in most of the world, often discreetly. Much social hope is invested in these texts. They are often intended to be and written, or at least they are marketed as, transformational. (See Foucault, “On Experience” in *Remarks on Marx*; he talks in two interviews about how he wants all of his writing projects to be transformational, to allow him to escape his old self. See also Jung on *metanoia*). They are cultural and historical evidence of significant self-care and aspirational practices (and of other social practices), and should, just as such, be taken seriously as objects of study. (It is important to point out that this course does not in itself presume to stand in for any form of psychotherapy. Its goal is to delineate and explore expressive therapies as a phenomenon requiring imaginative, open, and critical anthropological thought.

## COURSE STRUCTURE

### **The practicum format:**

Every week, we work/make/think multimodally, that is, in both a verbal/textual/conversational mode, and in a visual/sensorial/manual mode. The guiding premise here, and in the course as a whole, is that “making is thinking” (Sennett, Heidegger, Pallasmaa, Frankenthaler; etc. as discussed in Malkki 2019). This approach is intended to systematically call into question the Cartesian mind/body separation that is still shaping knowledge production, critical imaginations, and fundamental disciplinary habits and sensibilities in many fields, including anthropology. The intent here is to teach/learn about textual, theoretical work and also to learn manual/handwork skills and ideas. **See end of syllabus for recommended materials and resources.**

### **The syllabus as an in-process, open document:**

The syllabus will be an open document to which all seminar members can and *should* add material that they have found useful or interesting in the course of their independent research or other work in the course. This can take any form, be it a scholarly or other text, a research method, a non-textual skill or technique, an idea, a question for the collectivity to consider, or other.

## WEEK 1

### **Introduction: Some Questions and Openings**

- ❖ Aims and guiding questions in the course; the purpose of the practicum component
- ❖ Email/phone list
- ❖ Start finding out about “artists’ books” (see, e.g., by Johanna Drucker), and start developing the book you got in class today into an altered material/aesthetic object.

### Reading in common:

- ❖ Malkki. 2019. Westermarck Memorial Lecture.

### Some opening questions:

- ❖ Why is it that when we think about “creativity”, we so readily think first about “art”?
- ❖ Why has the term, “creative” (n./adj.), come to be so heavily used in Silicon Valley (often via such mediating terms as “design” and “innovation”)?
- ❖ Why does it go without saying that “domestic work”, or “housework”, are not just not-creative and not-art, but mindless drudgery, or even “like torture” (Simone de Beauvoir)? (And, relatedly, why does this necessary and important human activity not just fall within the unmarked category, “work”, but is rather marked apart and diminished as specifically “domestic” work? (Note that this unlovely category has historically included bringing up children).
- ❖ An alien anthropologist might ask more broadly: how does it come to be that only some occupational practices and social fields -- and “types”/ “kinds” of people -- are conventionally associated with the construct, creativity?

- ❖ And isn't it strange that the vast majority of jobs in capitalist societies like this one are *not expected* to offer human beings the opportunity for meaningfully creative or mindful work, even though most people spend most of their daylight hours in those jobs?
- ❖ What is the difference between the concepts of "theory" and "practical knowledge?" Is this a timeless and universal difference, or is it historically and culturally situated? Why does this binary opposition seem self-evident? How has it been naturalized? Why is "theory" "higher" than "practical knowledge" in many disciplines in the university? Is this related to such other oppositions as:
  - soul, spirit/flesh
  - mind/body
  - intellectual work/physical work
  - the conceptual/the manual
  - art/craft
  - male/female

## **WEEK 2**

### **"I'm not an artist, but..."**

#### In-class work:

- ❖ Paper-making with acrylics and other media

#### Making projects:

- ❖ ORAL HISTORY: It is also remarkable how often people will say of themselves, "I am not an artist", as if announcing an essential fact or defining caveat about themselves. (I have said it often enough myself). People will also protest, "Oh I'm not creative at all!" Even people for whom making things is very important, and who do it all the time, will often begin a sentence with, "I'm not artist, but ...". These disclaimers seem straightforward enough at first glance, and could often be appropriately interpreted as modesty, but they really are remarkable in the frequency and ubiquity of their occurrence. How has this sociocultural phenomenon come to be so common, and so ordinary/naturalized? Could it be interpreted as evidence of a kind of interiorized essentialism or species-thinking? Or a form of "class racism" in some cases (Balibar)? Or evidence of self-perceptions in a sexist society? In what ways should it be understood as an effect of mainstream public educational systems that rank some subjects as essential and others as more optional, or even frivolous (e.g., math and reading vs. art and music)? And, finally, a paradox that needs cultural analysis: if it is axiomatic that "all kids are creative", how can it be that so many adults in the same society are not, or self-identify as not-creative? Does something happen in people's upbringing or childhood/early experience to cause such a pronounced disjunction?
  - Many analytical threads could be pulled on here. For next week, I would like you to address some of these questions with friends, colleagues, and/or people you

come across. Please try to report on at least 2-3 conversations at next week's meeting.

- ❖ BOOKS AS AESTHETIC AND MATERIAL OBJECTS, AND AS RAW MATERIALS: In class we will begin working with old books (Palo Alto libraries' "discards") as cultural products that might be relevant as texts to be deciphered and read, or as material and aesthetic objects that can teach us something about graphic design, layout, typography, bookbinding, etc., or as both at once. They could also be considered as raw materials for art/craft/making projects.
  - Each person will select a book, start working/playing with it in class, and continue working with it throughout the seminar, or until it is full/empty/cut up/sewn up/glued shut/etc., and you find another for volume II.

## WEEK 3

### Boas, Fieldwork Methods, and Making

It is curious, when you think about it, that the methodological and pre-fieldwork training that Anthropology graduate students get today is so heavily language-based. After all, the "ancestor" figure of American cultural anthropology is Boas, who made a point of not only talking/writing "about" "primitive art", but actually learning in great detail about making techniques – and expecting that of his students. How does this approach intersect with the politics of "salvage anthropology", and of contemporary conservation practices? We will conceptually superpose recent theorizations of "waste" (Doherty), recycling, salvage onto ideas of "cultural salvage". (The latter is obviously not only a feature of Boasian and other early North American anthropology, but takes a wide variety of contemporary forms).

#### Making projects:

- ❖ Experiments in fabric dyeing (safflower, indigo, madder, and other materials)

#### Reading in common:

- ❖ Boas. 1927. *Primitive Art*.
- ❖ Vancouver Museum of Anthropology (MOA) website: research resources.

#### Resources:

- ❖ Aldona Jonaitis (ed.). 1995. *A Wealth of Thought: Franz Boas on Native American Art*. Univ. of Washington Press. (Very detailed, informative "Introduction" on Boas's intellectual development as an art historian).
- ❖ Ira Jacknis. 1992. "The Artist Himself[sic]", in *The Early Years*
  - on Boas's uses of photography in fieldwork, see Ira Jacknis. 1984. "[FB] and Photography", *Studies in Visual Communication* 10:2-60.
- ❖ Whitney Davis. 2018 (Fall). "Reading-In: Franz Boas's Theory of the Beholder's Share", *Representations* 144(1):1-33.
- ❖ for further thinking about creativity and anthropological field research, see *Improvising Theory* by Cerwonka and Malkki. (In the concluding essay, I describe why fieldwork is

always, simultaneously, an improvisational practice, a situated ethical practice, and a critical theoretical practice.)

- Positivists often like to describe “qualitative” research, and specifically anthropological fieldwork, as “just hanging out”, or as having “no methods”. Sociocultural anthropologists often have a hard time explaining what fieldwork *is* and why it is so incredibly valuable – and, actually, anthropologists *themselves* often brag that fieldwork is too complex, too subtle, and too long a process to be captured in a “methods book”, a standard field manual, or the like. I used to airily throw out that brag, too. A lot of unsaid understandings and sensibilities in the discipline are involved in this impulse to reject standardized “methods”. Positivism and competitive, even aggressive, scientific performances in the academy make that reaction understandable. Yet, one could ask: “To what extent is this rejection of “methods” also a rejection of “**how-to books**” as a “lower” form of knowledge, in general? (See Yanagisako, *Unwrapping the Sacred Bundle*; the concept of “recipe knowledge” suggested by an anthropologist decades ago). In what sense would it be, perhaps, eye-opening or analytically clarifying to think of this classification as parallel to the other classification we’ve already discussed a lot: that between the category of art hypostatized as “Art” and “mere” craft (Malkki, on the mere in *The Need to Help* “Conclusion”).



Fabric dyeing experiments; photos by Isabel Salovaara

## WEEK 4

### Craft Theory and Textile Politics

Reading in common:

- ❖ Julia Bryan-Wilson. 2017. *Fray: Art, Textile, Politics*. Chicago, IL: Univ. of Chicago Press (selections).
- ❖ *Slow Stitch*.
- ❖ Glenn Adamson. 2010. *The Craft Reader*. New York, NY: Berg [selections].
- ❖ Glenn Adamson. *Thinking Through Craft*.
- ❖ Petiot & Kriegel. 2018. *Crafts: Today's Anthology for Tomorrow's Crafts*. Paris: Editions Norma

#### Resources:

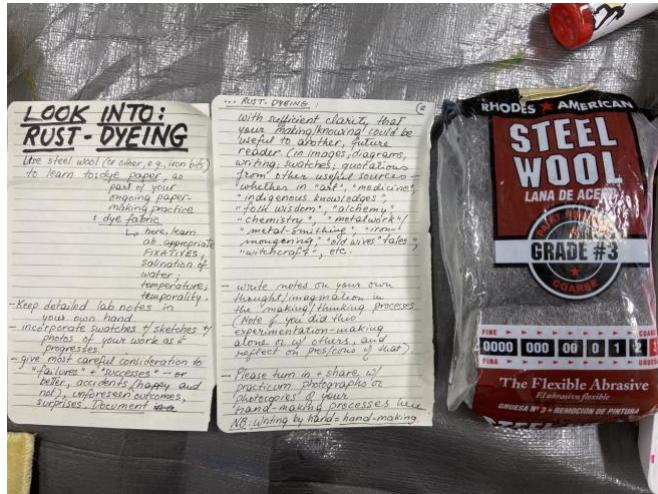
- ❖ Pallasmaa, Juhani. 2009. *The Thinking Hand: Existential and Embodied Wisdom in Architecture*. Wiley. [selections].
- ❖ Fabien Petiot and Chloe Braunstein-Kriegel. 2018. *Crafts: Today's Anthology for Tomorrow's Crafts*. Paris: Editions Norma.

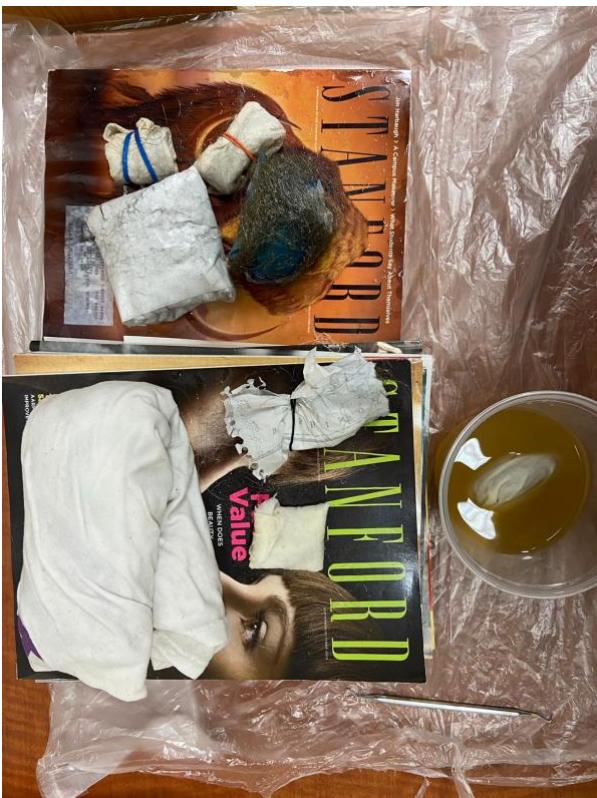
#### Making project:

- ❖ Rust dyeing

#### In-class work:

- ❖ The basics of hand-sewing; textile work including embroidery, applique, textile printing
  - Bring: sashiko needle, scissors. (Sashiko thread, fabric, etc. provided).





Rust dyeing; photos by Jaime Landinez Aceros

## WEEK 5

### Textilework and Transformation

#### Readings in common:

- ❖ Ann Jones & Peter Stallybrass. *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*.
- ❖ Slow Stitch. (Canvas).
- ❖ Alabama Chanin (online).

#### Resources:

- ❖ Peter Stallybrass. *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*.
- ❖ “Filth and Social Theory” syllabus.
- ❖ Jessica Marquez. 2018. *Make and Mend: Sashiko-Inspired Embroidery Projects to Customize and Repair Textiles and Decorate Your Home*. Watson-Guptill (Penguin Random House). (Canvas).
- ❖ Alabama Chanin books.
- ❖ Julia Bryan-Wilson. 2017. *Fray: Art, Textile, Politics*. Chicago, IL: Univ. of Chicago Press.

#### Making projects:

Altered clothing: As much as there is (and has always been) incredible creative skill, imagination, knowledge about the human body at rest and in motion, deep historicity, and often wonderful wildness in clothing, there are certain parameters within which even “edgy” clothing usually stays, at least when it is to be seen and worn in public. The parameters are not all about moral “prescriptions and proscriptions”, of course (Tambiah), and some of them are so subtle and unstated/unmarked that they easily escape notice. Your assignment is to find a piece of clothing you like but don’t mind cutting up or otherwise altering, and then begin to alter it in some way that seems to transgress the boundaries of the thinkable/seeable/wearable. (Consider the potential differences in political/emotional stakes, technical challenges, social “wearability” challenges, and aesthetic possibilities as you decide whether you want to work on adults’ or children’s clothing, night or daywear, streetwear or “homewear”, and so on. (Note that Stallybrass whom you are reading for this week also wrote a classic book about the *Politics and Poetics of Transgression*).

- ❖ Pick one of the following:
  - Transform/alter the gendering of a piece of clothing, using, for example, the running stitch that we learned in class or/and other elements. In other words, transform it in some way that changes its gendering or other identity marks you can think of.
  - Transform an old photograph and alter the gendered (or other identity marks) faces/objects/clothes they portray. Please keep a record of how that makes you feel. For example, we can use photos like this one to alter/transform it:
- ❖ Look for babies' clothes and get one piece (Goodwill Palo Alto. Savers also recommended). Look at the gendering presented in baby clothes. Write notes on that

and then transform one piece in some imaginative way that also re-genders it somehow. Take notes on how you feel about it and try to think on how your re-gendering speaks about our cultural categories (those that you are subverting). Think about this in relation to your own childhood and your own reinvention of yourself. Can you think of transformational moments when something changed in your own gendered experience? Write about it if you want (you don't have to share it in class if you don't want).

## WEEK 6

### **Metanoia and the “active alchemical imagination”: “Experience” and self-transformation for Jung, Foucault, and Dewey**

Carl Jung (1875-1961), founder of analytic psychology, is a key ancestor/"originator" figure in the field of art therapy, and his clinical practices and concepts (e.g., "the active alchemical imagination") continue in use today. It is worth trying to examine why Freud has long been a "fixture" of social theory, and even of anthropological theory, while Jung has not. The conventional wisdom is that Jung was into mysticism and alchemy, etc., that he is not as important/"serious" as Freud, and is therefore not read in medicine or the social sciences. There is not a sense of "need-to-know" around him. It is curious that most anthropologists/scholars (like me) who have "inherited" this vague sense of disreputability in the course of their graduate education just accept the conventional wisdom without much thinking about it, and move on.

Yet, for 5 years, 1907-1912, Jung actually worked closely and collaborated with Freud as a fellow psychoanalyst. Then there was a dramatic parting of ways. Jung, having been elected as President of the International Psychoanalytic Society, resigned from that post in 1914. In that year, a psychically and socially difficult time in his life, he started writing/making what he came to call *The Red Book*. He worked on it privately for many years (1914-1930), and was to say subsequently that this process enabled him to arrive at his most important insights. Yet, remarkably, *The Red Book* sat in a Swiss bank vault for decades, and was not published until quite recently (2009). (His family was reportedly protective of the book and of Jung's reputation as a scholar/theorist). The work is of interest for us in the present context, not for what it has to contribute to our understanding of psychology or psychiatry, but, rather, as a *making*, as a remarkable record of a long creative-intellectual-psychic-emotional-bodily practice and process in which Jung wrote (made with words) and also drew and painted images (made with paints and many other materials) which he liked to liken to illuminations.

Jill Mellick's *The Red Book Hours* (2018), a tome that, like Jung's, weighs many pounds, is a painstakingly detailed and precise historical, chemical, etc. analysis and interpretation of the actual materials and tools that Jung used in his makings. A question to examine: why might Mellick have chosen to undertake *this* enormous project of research? Why were his "mere" materials, and "the mere" pictures, for that matter, worthy of such careful analysis? Would it not have made more sense, been more worthwhile, to analyze *what he actually wrote*? Why not leave the images to art historians? But are the images art?

Note that “But is it art?” is a strikingly common reaction, especially in the West, to images and things people have made. Why is this taxonomic question so meaningful, and not just in art history? Is answering it going to yield valuable analytical insights? Does taxonomy (classification) in itself produce “original contributions to knowledge”? Is taxonomy *sui generis* valuable? When is classification actually a means of differential normative valuation, or hierarchization (e.g., primacy of word over image, of art over not-art)?

As it happens, Jill Mellick is a scholar of Jung and an “eclectically Jungian” therapist who has devoted many years to building on some of Jung’s contributions (see, e.g., *The Natural Artistry of Dreams*).

In reflecting on the potency of transformational aspirations, we might also consider:

- ❖ the fantasy of transforming *others* according to one’s own vision/desire: the Pygmalion myth à My Fair Lady à Pretty Woman à ...
- ❖ “make-overs” as a cultural phenomenon; playing on people’s fantasies of self-transformation and exit options,
- ❖ “self-improvement”
- ❖ ideas of crafting the superior man, the *Übermensch* (Nietzsche); Hitler saw a connection between his own plans for a “master race” and Nietzsche’s work. (See Nietzsche scholars’ views).

#### Reading in common:

- ❖ Carl Jung. 2009. (Edited by Sonu Shamdasani). *The Red Book, Liber Novus*. A Reader’s Edition. New York, NY: W.W. Norton, Philemon Series.
- ❖ John Dewey. 2005. *Art as Experience*. Tarcher Perigree. Read: “The Live Creature” [2.1], and “The Live Creature and Ethereal Things” [2.2].
- ❖ O’Leary. *Foucault and Fiction: The Experience Book*.

#### Resources:

- ❖ Michel Foucault. “Changing One’s Mind”; and “How ‘an Experience-Book’ Is Born”. In: *Remarks on Marx*. NY, NY: Semiotext(e), 1-24, 25-42.
- ❖ Crafting Selves (selections).
- ❖ Caroline Walker Bynum. *Metamorphosis; Fragmentation and Redemption*.
- ❖ Tjeu van den Berk. 2012. *Jung on Art: The Autonomy of the Creative Drive*. New York, NY: Routledge [selections].

#### Making project:

Alter/subvert/transform human faces and bodies in old art books by means of drawing, painting, collage, cutting away, etc. Choose one (or more) large-ish art books, and start using them as (a) coloring books, and (b) as sources of faces and bodies that perhaps bothered you, and that you can now subvert/transform into something you like better

Project rationale: Most/all of us have come into contact with (or studied) Art History in some form -- whether in univ. classes, museum tours, visits to famous cultural sites, tourist or museum brochures, etc. -- and have a general sense of its (up until relatively recently) quite Euro-and US-centric versions of the history of Mankind's creative achievements. So its universalism in its implicit claim to be the world's or Humanity's art history needs to be further challenged, NOT ONLY by the additive strategy of saying, "ah, but you need to consider that in Indian traditions xyz, in Indonesian art xyz, in Melanesian, Congolese, Maori, Australian aboriginal, northwest coast Native American, Latin American ... traditions, xyz is the case". The additive strategy doesn't really destabilize the western hegemonic version of art history. As anthropologists, we also need to zero in on the hegemonic "center" of this Art History and the colonial/imperial metropole. What does the hegemonic art-historical lens make the world be? ("Making be": see Castoriadis). How has it helped train our own "ways of seeing" (John Berger). (Berger is great! See his groundbreaking book and TV series of that title). How has each of us interiorized, or been troubled by, Art Historical uses of the body? What kind of facial expressiveness are we used to seeing in portraiture, or art with the human form? Has it all influenced how we see our own bodies?

## WEEK 7

### **"Mere Decoration": Decoration, Ornament, Adornment**

The category of "decoration" has long been an object of undisguised contempt and derision, and, as a value judgement on a piece of artwork, damning: "It's not art; it's mere decoration". We might also consider jewelry as a *miniature form* and the visible and the invisible in jewelry.

#### Readings in common:

- ❖ Adolf Loos. "Ornament and Crime". In: Isabelle Frank (ed.). *Theory of Decorative Art* (online)
- ❖ Ananda Coomaraswamy. "Ornament", in: *Selected Papers, vol. 1: Traditional Art and Symbolism*. Ed. Roger Lipsey. Bollingen Series LXXXIX. Princeton, NJ: PUP.
- ❖ *Modernist Jewelry 1930-1960: The Wearable Art Movement*

#### Resources:

- ❖ *Foul Perfection: Essays and Criticism by Mike Kelley*
- ❖ Susan Stewart. *On Longing: On the Miniature, the Gigantic, and the Collection*
- ❖ Stewart. *The Open Studio*, chapter on the Renaissance miniaturist

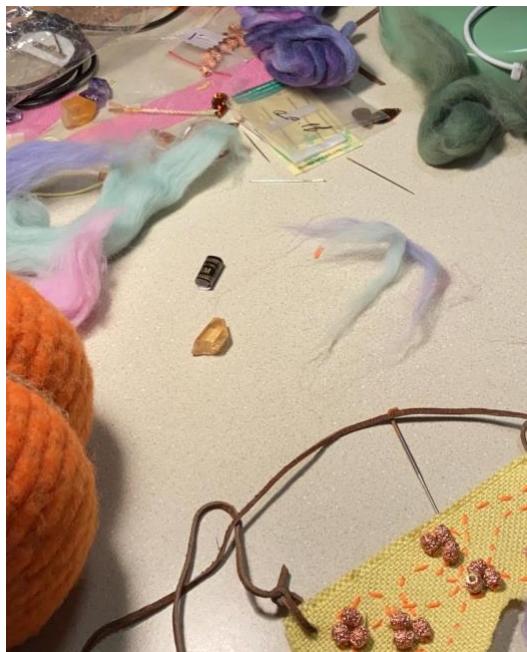
#### In-class work:

- ❖ Felting skills, embroidery work

#### Making project:

Bling project: Make the shiny bags (provided) into something you like (or something one of your loved ones would like). Write about the worries you hold with regard to what other people might say about it if you carried it around. If you don't like this kind of "bling", think/write about why that is. Use this exercise to reflect on other things we like but don't use or wear because of its

appearance. We might think through these objects and our experience of them through the interrelated lenses of: 'colors out of place' (cf. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*), situated stigma (cf. Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*), aesthetic fear, cultural loathing, class racism (Balibar), fetishism (Marx, Wyatt MacGaffey, William Pietz), eroticism (Linda Williams, Laura Mulvey), the objectification of charisma (Tambiah), and the "more-ing" of personality through talismans and jewelry (Ananda Coomaraswamy).



Felting materials and "bling" project; photos and works by Jaime Landinez Aceros and Isabel Salovaara

## WEEK 8

### Paperwork, or Making with Words

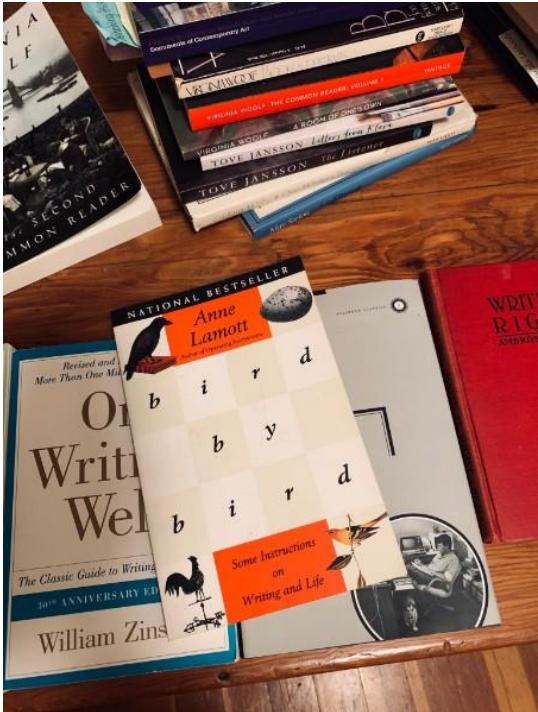
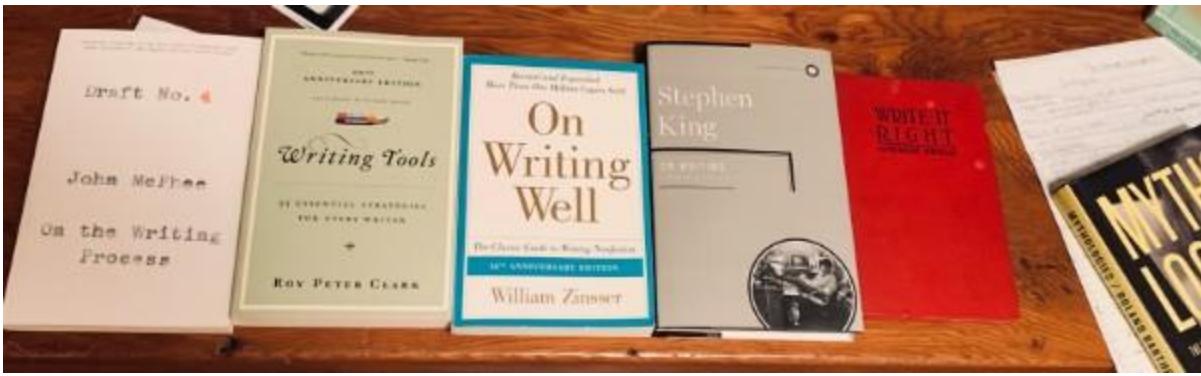
In the course of my research over the last five years, I have made something with my hands every day that I have been able. I am in the process of trying to identify and analyze the far-reaching effects of this practice on my teaching, research, and life. One of the many changes is that I have found myself thinking newly about writing. It is, to me, useful to think about as a form of making with words. It is a skill that requires regular, life-long artisanal practice, which includes reading good writing, in whatever register.

Questions for discussion:

- ❖ Is writing a matter of “creativity” or a “special aptitude” (“creative writing”) and/or is it a skill that can be learned?
- ❖ What is the proper place of “creative writing” in the university?
- ❖ Should not *all* writing be creative? If not, why not?
- ❖ If all writing is *not* creative, is it therefore “un/non/anti/creative”, or is it just “regular writing”?
- ❖ How should we think critically, responsibly, anthropologically, about the “fiction” v. “nonfiction” binary? Does it indicate a simply practical distinction, or is it in fact an ideological one? What are the stakes?
  - Is fiction to nonfiction as imagination is to reality, or as “artifice” is to artlessness? (Malkki 2015) Is creative writing by definition the opposite of scientific, or social-scientific writing?
  - What is the status of this binary in anthropology today? Writing is, of course, a very large part of what anthropologists do. Yet we generally shrink away (or even recoil) from any suggestion that we are “writers”. Anthropological practice requires writing. (See *Practice*. 2018. [Docs of Contemp. Art series], esp. “Intro”, and Althusser; Won Yin Wong; Bourdieu; de Certeau; and Sloterdijk). What, then, would be a constructive way of thinking about this question?
  - People readily think in terms of binary oppositions, and some of these -- black/white, hot/cold, night/day, male/female, mind/body—seem so fundamental as to be natural building blocks of “our” whole world. I.e., they seem epistemologically (ontologically) and cosmologically foundational and necessary. And yet, of course, to insist on these dualisms is to leave oneself clueless about immense areas of life. The same is true of the fiction.
- ❖ What is the status of “alternative” genres of writing in anthropology (i.e., alternative to the ethnographic monograph)? (Consider: commonplace readers, waste books, correspondences, diaries, hours, breviaries, biographies and life histories, autobiographies and “autoethnographies”, graphic novels [Joe Sacco], essays...)

Reading in common:

- ❖ Choose one of the following books on writing and share what you learn from it with the practicum:



### Resources:

- ❖ Malkki. "News and Culture", in: *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*. (On journalistic vs/and anthropological modes of knowledge production)
- ❖ Virginia Woolf, *Common Reader*. Vols. I-II. (See also E.M. Forster's Commonplace Reader).
- ❖ Uses of the Bible: *St. John's Bible*, the Brick Testament (LEGO) (Stallybrass again)
- ❖ Jeffrey Hamburger. 2014. *Script as Image*. Peeters Publishers. (selections)

### Making project:

- ❖ Jewelry making with leather and other media



## WEEK 9

### Pleasure and Pleasure Activism; Making Practice as Self-Help, Self-Care, Art Therapy

Engaging the body-mind and its senses in the making of images, objects, performances, and all kinds of creative practices has long been considered to be of significant therapeutic benefit. People with trauma of all kinds (for example, war veterans, prisoners, refugees, migrants, and survivors of abuse and assault) have engaged in art/expressive therapies. This section is intended as a close, anthropological examination of making as a form of therapy, a form of communication, a form of thinking, and a practice of pleasure.

The premise in much of art therapy has been that drawing, painting, and other kinds of making are useful therapeutic techniques because they facilitate non-verbal *communicativity/communication* and “self-expression” for children and other people who have

undergone (or are undergoing) very difficult things (“trauma”). What I want to get at this week is the growing sense (mine, and that of some neuroscientists, artists, anthropologists, and others) that “self-expression” (a concept that assumes the autonomous bounded individual, also also needs to be “made strange”) is only one dimension of the powerful effects of making; another vital therapeutic dimension derives from the **tactility and haptic perception**, and the general sensuality/sensoriality, involved in handwork and other forms of making (dance, theatre, etc.). That is, we are possibly on the right track in thinking that, as neuroscientist Bernd Seilheimer writes, “haptic perception directly translates into the forming of new synapses in the brain” (in Cornelia Elbrecht. 2014. *Trauma Healing at the Clay Field: a Sensorimotor Art Therapy Approach*. See also Bessel van der Kolk. 2019. *The Body Keeps the Score*; Betty Edwards. 2012 [1979]. *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*, monograph and Workbook). In addition to the two dimensions mentioned above, it would be useful to study *the pleasure* and satisfaction of seeing and sharing the tangible results of one’s work. The emergent practice of “pleasure activism” is particularly helpful for critically thinking about how puritanical some of our social theory, our practices of self (self-discipline, conduct of self, self-care), child-rearing, education, and other social institutions and practices actually are (Foucault). A historical perspective on these interrelated themes and questions is also important.

#### Reading in common:

- ❖ Adrienne Maree Brown, *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good* (2019)

#### Resources:

- ❖ Nora Swan-Foster. *Jungian Art Therapy: Images, Dreams, and Analytical Psychology* 1st Edition
- ❖ Cornelia Elbrecht. *Trauma Healing at the Clay Field: A Sensorimotor Art Therapy Approach*.
- ❖ Fanon, “The Fact of Blackness”. In: *Black Skin, White Masks*. (important in thinking about the traumatic interiorization of racism, misogyny, xenophobia, classism). For the trauma of classism, see also Carolyn Steedman’s 1987 classic, *Landscape for a Good Woman*.
- ❖ Michael J Hanes MAT, ATR-BC, LPC. “Behind Steel Doors: Images From the Walls of a County Jail”, pp. 44-48; Published online: 22 Apr 2011
- ❖ David Gussak. 2016. “The Continuing Emergence of Art Therapy in Prisons”. [online]
- ❖ Prison Arts Coalition, (Conference: “Arts in Corrections: Reframing the Landscape of Justice,” Santa Clara University and the Justice Arts Coalition, June 24-28, 2019.)
- ❖ Linda Montano. 1977. “Art as Therapy”. In: *Practice*. Documents of Contemporary Art Series. [She rather thoughtlessly, and unaccountably, argued that “artists don’t need therapy”, and then had to rethink everything].
- ❖ Julia Cameron. 2016. *The Artist’s Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*. New York, NY: Tarcher Perigee. (This one strikes me as a bit pretentious, but it has been in print a long time).
- ❖ Marion Milner. 1950. *On Not Being Able to Paint*. New York, NY: Routledge.

## WEEK 10

### Additional Topics for Reading and Research

Students select their own topics for further reading from the list below.

#### The Fallacy of the Cartesian Mind-Body separation

- ❖ *The Mind-Body Problem.*
- ❖ Bessel van der Kolk. 2015. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. New York, NY: Penguin. And note esp. his more recent work exploring the therapeutic possibilities of making.
- ❖ Linda Malchiodi. 2005. "Introduction". In: *Expressive Therapies*
- ❖ View: YouTube videos of Jane Dunnewold discussing "Creative Strength-Training"

#### Art and Fear: The Existential Dread of not Being "Creative" Enough

- ❖ *Art and Fear*. (Selections).
- ❖ James Elkins. *Why Art Cannot Be Taught*. (Selections).
- ❖ *How Art Can Be Thought*. (Chapter on the social institution of "the crit" in art classes).
- ❖ Pierre Bourdieu; Carolyn Steedman; and Balibar on classism; shame and self-doubt

#### Visuality and the Senses in Political Activism

- ❖ Genevieve Hyacinthe. *Radical Virtuosity: Ana Mendieta and the Black Atlantic*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- ❖ Ranciere. *Aisthesis; The Politics of Aesthetics; Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*.
- ❖ Joe Sacco. *Journalism; The Fixer*; and other works (graphic novels)
- ❖ Maura Reilly. 2018. *Curatorial Activism: Towards an Ethics of Curating*. London, UK: Thames & Hudson.
- ❖ Didi-Huberman. *Confronting the Image*.
- ❖ Dorfman and Mattelart. *How to Read Donald Duck*.
- ❖ David Freedberg. *The Power of the Image* (selections).
- ❖ Hans Belting. *Likeness and Presence*
- ❖ Miriam Clavir

#### Making: Some Contemporary Classics

- ❖ *Why We Make Things and Why It Matters*
- ❖ *Shop Class as Soulcraft*.
- ❖ Tim Ingold. *Making, Lines*, and other work
- ❖ Langlands. *Craeft*.
- ❖ Richard Sennett. *The Craftsman*. (Sennett opens his book with the statement that if he had to say what his "guiding intuition" was, he would say, "making is thinking".)

#### "The Mere"; Mere Copies, Repetition, and Painting by Numbers

- ❖ Malkki. 2015. "Introduction" and "Conclusion"; and Ch. 5 "Homemade Humanitarianism: Knitting and Loneliness", in: *The Need to Help*. Durham, NC: Duke UP.
- ❖ Winnie Wong. *Van Gogh on Demand*.
- ❖ Michael Taussig. *Mimesis and Alterity*.
- ❖ Potolsky. *Mimesis*
- ❖ Kant and Castoriadis on re/creative and re/productive imaginations
- ❖ Heidegger. "The Origin of the Work of Art"
- ❖ Walter Benjamin. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (germinal essay)
- ❖ *The Happy Little Tree*
- ❖ <https://medium.com/@BeautyInLonely/unravelled-women-b5f0fc90163f>
- ❖ Film: "In and Out of Africa"

### **Ethnographic Methods and Making-Skills for Research Use**

"Why study drawing if I'm not going to be an artist?" Drawing, sewing, carpentry, bricklaying, singing, playing an instrument, and other making skills can be practices of conviviality/sociality in ethnographic fieldwork. Sharing specific making-skills can also be a social contribution the anthropologist in the field can make. (I.e., we should perhaps think more about making ourselves useful while doing fieldwork). Drawing, in particular, can also be a means to more perceptive, careful seeing and a form of ethnographic description and documentation in fieldwork.

- ❖ John Berger. *Ways of Seeing*; and *About Looking*.
- ❖ Maurice Merleau-Ponty. *Nature: Course Notes from the Collège de France*
- ❖ Nature writing is a powerful teacher (Annie Dillard; Mathiessen; many others)
- ❖ W.J.T. Mitchell
- ❖ Martin Jay. *Downcast Eyes*.
- ❖ Betty Edwards. 2012 [1979]. *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*, monograph and Workbook.
- ❖ Jonathan Crary. *Techniques of the Observer*.
- ❖ Useful tool for practicing close observation: the macrolens (x21 magnification is great); the Xenvo macrolens is relatively economical and clips onto the cellphone, but there are others.

### **"True" Creativity vs. "Mere Skill"; The Conceptual vs. the Manual**

- ❖ Christopher Frayling. "Skill – a Word to Start an Argument", in: *On Craftsmanship*. (And whole book)
- ❖ Sennett. *The Craftsman*. (selections).
- ❖ John Roberts. *Immaterialities of Form: Skilling and Deskilling in Conceptual Art* (selections)
- ❖ Kandinsky. *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*.
- ❖ Marx, Engels, E.P. Thompson, etc. on labor and the category of the proletariat

- ❖ Studs Terkel. *Working* (and others)
- ❖ *Art School: Propositions for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Selections)
- ❖ Christopher Frayling. *On Craftsmanship* (Selections)
- ❖ Research the gendered idea of “the muse”

### **The Bauhaus and Black Mountain College**

When the Nazis forced the Bauhaus school to close in Germany and many of its faculty to begin lives of exile in the U.S. and elsewhere, Anni Albers and Josef Albers were among those who helped to found the famous, short-lived Black Mountain College, an astonishing experiment in creative making, and creative pedagogy (and courageous “self-teaching”). Find out as much as possible about this moment and consider how it might help us to rethink making and creative work.

- ❖ Walter Gropius. “The Bauhaus Manifesto” (online)
- ❖ T'ai Smith. Bauhaus Weaving Theory (selections)
- ❖ www.blackmountaincollege.org
- ❖ Leap Before You Look! (selections)
- ❖ Anni Albers, “On Material”

### **The Nude and the Gendering and Raceing of Art**

- ❖ Thomas Kren. *The Renaissance Nude*
- ❖ Jill Burke. *The Italian Renaissance Nude*
- ❖ Kenneth Clark. *The Nude*. (A cultural artefact. This is here to give you a well known example of mainstream, “respectable” art discourse about “the nude”).
- ❖ Examine paintings and drawings of women by women, e.g., by Ellen Thesleff.
- ❖ Malek Alloula. *The Colonial Harem* (selections).
- ❖ Linda Williams, scholar of pornography

### **Madness and Creativity: Beliefs, Ideologies, Experiences**

Consider: the “madman” as visionary and seer in history; the “eccentric” with means and cultural capital; the Modernists’ belief that children, “primitives” and “madmen” had the most direct to unspoiled, pure creativity – unspoiled, that is, by too much [western] training.

- ❖ Emily Martin. 2009. *Bipolar Expeditions: Mania and Depression in American Culture*. Princeton UP. (Selections)
  - ❖ Kay Jameson. *The Unquiet Mind*, and others (romanticizes artists and writers who have suffered mental illnesses and breakdowns)
  - ❖ G.K. Chesterton. *William Blake*; see also Northrop Frye on Blake in *Fearful Symmetry*. (Chesterton is very witty and thoughtful)
  - ❖ Alice Flaherty. 2005. *The Midnight Disease: The Drive to Write, Writer's Block, and the Creative Brain*. New York, NY: Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt (selections)
-

## COURSE MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

### Materials List (evolving throughout the course):

- ❖ old hardcover books in any field (for your logs), available at library sales, thrift stores, and Bell's Book's and Feldman's and others.
- ❖ inks, acrylic inks and paints, fabric dyes (the synthetic dyes should be Procion MX fiber-reactive dyes), natural dyes and fabric paints (provided).
- ❖ Steel wool for rust-dyeing.
- ❖ "PITT" pens (recommended: "big brush" PITT pen in black, white, and a colour)
- ❖ sashiko needle
- ❖ sashiko thread (provided). Kimonomomo (on Etsy) is a good source for these. (But note that you should experiment with many different kinds of fibers).
- ❖ fabric (provided by FabMo, or garments from thrift stores)
- ❖ good scissors that suit your dominant hand (grip, size and shape of finger openings, weight, length), e.g., Gingher, Fiskars, Kai. Don't throw well-made scissors away; have them sharpened at a hardware store. As with tools in any field, buy the best you can afford for right now, and keep it simple. *Poco ma bene*. Care for them, and most will last throughout your life. This is both an ethic and an aesthetic that is central in craftsmanship.
- ❖ rotary cutters (Olfa is good). Pay attention to the angle your wrist assumes with different models; some fatigue your wrists more than others. And caution: these can cut off your fingertips pretty easily.
- ❖ macrolens: a useful tool for practicing very close observation of tiny things. (x21 magnification is great); the Xenvo macrolens is *relatively* economical and clips onto the cellphone, but there are others.

### Note regarding tools and handwork skills in ethnographic fieldwork:

Over-elaborate, -advanced, or -expensive equipment will likely make you feel less entitled/qualified to work with it than you might otherwise, and is therefore, in fact, an impediment to your work. My own preference is for very basic, "classical", analogue tools that don't depend on access to electricity or digital technology. For example, I find it important and pleasing that my most essential metalwork tools will fit in small backpack or even shoebox, and that smiths practically anywhere in the world will have essentially the same set. This means, in anthropological fieldwork terms, that you can ask to join smiths in their workshops ("benches") and talk with them while each of you works on something. This avoids the awkward situation of the ethnographer hanging around and asking questions while others around them are making/doing something. You can think of metalwork as one of your fieldwork skills. Especially if you plan to do fieldwork with metalworkers/smiths, it is essential that you understand what they are "**doing and undergoing**" as they work (Dewey, *Art as Experience?*).

Textile or fiber work can be even more compactly transportable, and you can imagine that if you want to do ethnographic research with people working in these mediums, it helps a great deal if they right away see you pull out your own sewing/embroidery/knitting, etc. This instantly tells

them that (1) you are unlikely to trivialize their work/making/doing a priori (e.g., as mere “handicrafts”, mere “hobbies”, or mere “seamstressing” (as a physician put it to me); (2) that you will be likely to know what you are talking about when it comes to textile work, and that they can therefore get into the weeds with you; and that (3), and most fundamentally, that you are a fellow maker. It would be hard to overdraw what a difference this makes in the quality of your relationships with people. For you are able to recognize each other as *Mitmenschen* in at least this one key area of your lives. You share a *convivial sameness*. (All too often, one thinks of sameness and difference in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, class, etc., prioritizing these (even subconsciously) as the most relevant characteristics of a person – and somehow *leaving off-frame* things like shared skills, sensibilities, professional solidarities, vocations, pleasures, likes and dislikes, and so on.

### **Resources for Texts and Materials:**

BELL'S BOOKS, Emerson St., downtown Palo Alto: a very fine independent bookshop for used and new books. The owner, Faith Bell, and her colleague, Kevin (poet/writer), in particular, have participated in conversations about how to develop this course over many months, and are extremely well-read, imaginative thinkers, and deeply interested in thinking about genres of writing. (It is from them that I learned about commonplace readers, wastebooks, and other genres alternative to the ethnography and the novel.)

FELDMAN'S BOOKS, El Camino Real, Menlo Park: another fine, independent, and large used/old books. Very interesting collections in many fields.

FABMO, Mountain View ([fabmo.org](http://fabmo.org)): a small non-profit organization that weekly “salvages” fabric (and other materials such as leather, notions, embroidery thread, yarn, tiles, etc.) discarded by local Bay Area design firms and by the dozens of designers at the San Francisco Design Center. Their mandate is three-fold: (1) landfill diversion; (2) acting as a free/almost free source of materials for local artists/artisans, craftsmen, schools, other nonprofits, etc.; (3) providing a context for makers working in several different mediums to meet, and to teach each other skills (e.g., machine- and hand-sewing and paper-based work).

NEEDLES SEWING STUDIO, El Camino Real, Palo Alto: Machine- and hand-sewing lessons. Sashiko needles and threads can be found here or at [kimonomomo](http://kimonomomo.etsy.com) on Etsy.

OLD WORLD NEEDLEPOINT, Santa Cruz Ave, Menlo Park: Wide selection of embroidery floss.

PALO ALTO LIBRARIES ([www.fopal.org](http://www.fopal.org)): large monthly sales of books, maps, and paper ephemera for very low prices (50c–\$1 in the large “Bargain Room”, the source of the old books handed out in Week 1).

SAVERS, Redwood City: a large, relatively inexpensive, and always interesting thrift store selling clothes, linens, household items, books, etc. (See also, GOODWILL stores in Palo Alto, Mountain View, Sunnyvale, San Jose, etc., and other thrift stores in the Bay Area)

CALIFORNIA ART SUPPLY, San Mateo: a well stocked, serious art store, and a bit closer than the city. (UNIVERSITY ART, El Camino, Redwood City, gives a 20% student discount if you bring in your syllabus with the supply list/materials list).

DHARMA TRADING CO.: longtime online source for everything related to textile work (dyeing supplies, fabric paints, fabrics, books, instructional videos).

OTTO FREI, San Francisco: this brick and mortar store is the place people order jewelry-making tools from if they can; and the online RIOGRANDE.COM: both carry everything needed for metalwork, both tools and supplies. The latter has tutorials and good product reviews.

### **Interesting Websites:**

thisiscolossal.com (artists working in many, often surprising, media. Note that they have introduced quite a few artists doing **book art & artists' books**. This is noteworthy because **our main working vehicle/medium in the course** is older, printed books. To be distributed in Week 1), and our principal mode of writing will be by hand. The idea here is to denaturalize the cultural belief that *writing* and *drawing* are qualitatively, fundamentally different activities.

### **Brief List of Key Texts on Selected Techniques**

#### TEXTILE DYEING:

- ❖ Ann Johnston. *Color by Accident: Low-Water Immersion Dyeing*. (esp. pp. 7-27, 90-92).
- ❖ Jane Dunnewold. *Complex Cloth; Art Cloth*; online work, instructional videos, etc.
- ❖ India Flint. 2008. *Eco Colour: Botanical Dyes for Beautiful Textiles*. Loveland, CO: Interweave Press.
- ❖ Online: Dharma Trading Co.; and PRO Chemical and Dye: materials suppliers, but also offer instructional videos
- ❖ Maiwa (from India) really know their stuff: source for natural dye stuffs; Anne Georges on Etsy is another good source

#### METALWORK:

- ❖ Tim McCreight. *The Complete Metalsmith* (Student edition)., and many other works, all useful
- ❖ Oppi Untracht
- ❖ *Penland Book of Jewelry*.
- ❖ Online: Ganoksin (enormous research archive); metalsmithsociety; riogrande.com is a materials supplier, but also has instructional videos

## TYPOGRAPHY:

- ❖ Steven Heller; (Duchamp!)

## **Hands-On, Intensive Courses & Immersive Workshops:**

The Crucible, Oakland (*wonderful* [even transformational] place for metal, glass, wood, autowork, and other fields); makerspaces on campus; the Cranbrook Academy; Penland School; Mendocino Center (makers well known in their fields come to give intensive classes on a wide and always varying range of skills and techniques (and, de facto, of philosophies/sensibilities); Jane Dunnewold's week-long (+) residential classes; Palo Alto Art Center (clay, metalwork, textile work, paper/canvas work, etc.); journeyman-craftsmen [sic] giving classes (check with area guilds and societies, libraries, etc.); Needles Sewing Studio, Palo Alto (hand- and machine sewing, including sashiko and other techniques); FabMo offers social get-togethers and making opportunities that are (all/mostly) free of charge (Mt. View; moving soon).

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## **APPENDIX: SELECTED COURSE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

January 14, 2020

Re: Updates for tomorrow

Hi All,

A couple of updates on the creativity practicum: ...

SYLLABUS: I will be handing out a more finished syllabus tomorrow morning, but you should regard that draft, too, as a WORKING DOCUMENT. Throughout the length of the term, in fact, I will be adding new material as I read it, or learn about it. When the syllabus is ready to go up on Canvas (in about a week's time), it will become an interactive WORKING DOCUMENT OPEN TO ALL SEMINAR MEMBERS. My hope is that all of you will add to it as you learn new things throughout the term. This was the syllabus can also serve as a COLLECTIVE RESEARCH REPOSITORY for everyone's benefit. I see several potential scholarly benefits of this strategy: (1) learning/working becomes more meaningful and pleasurable, and is *remembered better*, when one is making proactive, independent decisions about one's own will to knowledge. This way, people can also more easily follow up on hunches developed earlier, (and run down their own rabbit holes with them). (2) The collective, collaborative nature of this practice means that everyone is simultaneously teaching others what they learn (the craftsman's ethic), and that there is more research being done than any one person could manage in a quarter's time. (3) When the learning is multimodal and multimedia, one's thought and imagination operate very laterally and connectively. (4) In terms of ethnographic fieldwork methodology, it is helpful to enter the field being a person with many skills of *various* kinds. That way, you are in a position to give/share things with your interlocutors, not just to ask/receive. Making things with people is a wonderful form of conviviality. But more soon!

January 20, 2020

Re: On Boas reading; handwriting and memory

Hi All,

In Primitive Art, both the Preface and Introduction merit careful reading. Please also read chs. 1-5. (The outline of Chapter 7 refers to writing and literary genres in a suggestive way. I haven't read it yet, but it looks promising. You might want to take a look at it for this week, or then for the week(s) on genres of writing.

Remember that I also asked you to research into the MOA site. (Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia). What specific topics you read about and look into more deeply is up to you, but please make sure that your work on the site substantial. That will make for a good discussion.

Aldona Jonaitis and others have written about Boas's thinking about art/making -- and the historical & political moment he and his students were living -- as you'll see on MOA's site. There are, of course, robust critiques of "salvage anthropology" when it comes to Boas' intellectual and political project. But just because the word, "critique" is linked with Boas's name obviously doesn't mean that he is therefore so "problematic" that his work/thought is without conceptual value, or that you can't use the parts/dimensions of his work that you like/respect.

(It is also worth looking up a comprehensive list of his students. We know about Mead & Benedict, naturally, but what about, say, Elsie Clews Parsons and all the other people who went on to become well known and well respected professional anthropologists? How intellectual traditions ("the canon") are curated, managed, organized, and what is excluded, or just falls away, is a fascinating question in anthropology, as in other disciplines.

#### Re: writing research notes

You are *not* expected to do weekly precis, but please write extensive and engaged research notes into the logs (making/thinking books) and also discussion questions that will both contribute to our conversation in the practicum. If possible, please try to write/draw by hand as often as possible. It will be interesting to explore the theory that writing by hand, on paper, helps you to remember things better. (You are not expected to turn in your writing, only to use it to help you/us think.

Please also write/draw "lab notes" about your experiments with the raw materials/substances you got in the last class.

Have a peaceful evening,

Liisa

January 28, 2020

Re: Tomorrow's Practicum

Dear All,

A few notes to about the first week of craft theory tomorrow:

READINGS: Please approach the readings for tomorrow with the scholarly seriousness, thoroughness, and critical imagination that you would bring to any graduate seminar worth your time. I issue this heads-up for the following reasons: (1) Despite our better judgement, habituated normative hierarchies will frequently creep into our (my) intellectual orientations toward, and differential valuation, of four specific conceptual/ontological categories of making/thinking that we have already discussed: art>craft and mind>body. These binary distinctions act *homologically* in structuralist terms (e.g., Levi-Strauss, Boon, Tambiah, Culler, Hawkes, etc.) , and can therefore be expressed thus: art:craft::mind:body. The cultural, political, social, affective reverberations of this homology are more constitutive, productive, and generative (and just ceaselessly *active*, like yeast on steroids) than they appear to be at first glance. In fact, what might be inelegantly termed a "homological stacking" occurs where these constitutive binaries act synergistically with other, socially related binaries: intellectual work > manual work, the concept/idea > thingness/materiality, the serious > the lightweight, "Important" > "just fun and games"; the academic > the popular/mass, and, finally, all too close for comfort, "Theory"> fieldwork and analysis > mere description. (Cf. L-S's "taxonomic operator") This stacking gets continually "reconfirmed"/"re-naturalized" by yet more kinds of stacking that are politically and epistemologically consequential: "hard science" > the "soft sciences", cognition/reason/logic > imagination/intuition/affect, text/writing/language > the image/the senses, nonfiction > fiction. (We will get into the politics of genres, in a few weeks).

That these last binaries are shot through with the bitter, distorting, destructive, and, indeed, *terroristic* powers of race/racism and colonialism/imperialism, class/classism/"class racism", involuntary/forcible gendering/sexism/misogyny, age/ageism, etc. is amply documented. (My very small and non-updated list would include Frantz Fanon, C.L.R. James, Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, Angela Davis, Etienne Balibar, Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, Angela Davis, Franz Boas, Pierre Bourdieu, Paul Willis, Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, Carolyn Steedman, Marilyn Strathern, Jean Comaroff, John Comaroff, Megan Vaughan, Nancy Rose Hunt, Harri Englund, Roedigger, etc.), Franz Boas, Pierre Bourdieu, Carolyn Steedman, Gayle Rubin, Marilyn Strathern, Jean Comaroff, John Comaroff, Megan Vaughan, Nancy Rose Hunt, Harri Englund, David Roedigger, etc.). (Please don't quote me on this rush job of a list!)

These mutually amplifying homologies end up, often in an unstated, institutional, infra/structural way, re/confirming each others' validity, and, indeed, realness. This could be thought of as (as I mentioned before) a "taxonomic regime of power". (Think here Foucault, *Disc. and Punish*, "power is productive" in relation to Levi-Strauss, *Totemism*, "totemism is 'relations among relations'" , and Durkheim and Mauss, *Primitive Classification*, with Linnaeus, Darwin, L.S. Morgan, and the legion of other classifiers we studied in school (Malkki, "National Geographic", *Cult. Anth.*, and "Citizens of Humanity" in *Diaspora*).

(to be cont'd).

Re: (cont'd) Taxonomic regimes of power = productive of experience

This (rant? long thought) really belongs in the syllabus/manifesto/research project/commonplace reader (Virginia Wolf; E.M. Forster, etc.), but I wanted to just finish this thought. When we/I (Anthr. & social researchers) think of terms like **taxonomy, typology, and classification**, Mary Douglas' s *Purity and Danger* readily comes to mind. The mixing of categories and crossing of boundaries (that is, risk/malfunction/subversion/pollution of the taxonomic regime of power) invoke her insights on categorical "danger" and "pollution". (See also Stallybrass and Whyte, *The Pol. and Poetics of Transgression*; Caroline Walker Bynum (*Fragmentation and Redemption*, & corpus; Rachel Carson, new bio.; "Filth and Social Theory" syl.); We have analyzed how the mixing, confusion, or subversion of categories usually presents itself as "a problem", as something that needs to be "cleaned up", organized, controlled, and disciplined. Without really noticing it, we have somehow concentrated a lot of our work on the classifiers, the taxonomists -- whether the state and its parts, the bureaucrats, the humanitarian workers or "the system"/"the order of things"/"order-making". (I have done so in some of my work).

These taxonomic regimes of power (the system of nation-states; racism systems [Paul Gilroy; Stuart Hall]; the classification of beings in nature; the disciplinary structure of the academy; or the "art world's" & art history's drive to sort people's makings into art and not-art) are, as Foucault and others have said, *productive*. Productive of what? Well, lived *experience*, and emotions, emotions like fear. Fear of transgressing, fear of not fitting in and seeming out of place/out of sync/abnormal, fear of not keeping up, fear of not being taken seriously; fear of being judged insufficient/ordinary/unoriginal/"untheoretical"/uncreative/dumb/dim/slow, and fear of harm to one's social personhood, life, intellectual project, career, etc. (See Goffman's classic work, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of a Spoiled Identity*). Fear is, in other words, a "social fact" (Durkheim) accessible to study and observation. One might expect that an anthropologist would study the observable manifestations/expressions/effects of fear (and trauma) in a place like a refugee camp. I didn't delve into affect/emotion in my early fieldwork in the refugee camp of Mishamo in Tanzania, in my work with survivors of a *genocide*. In my graduate program, the faculty thought of their discipline as social anthropology (i.e., more British than U.S, cultural anthropology). In this British-style system, research into affect/emotion was not highly regarded, or "high status". It was "ghettoized" in the sub-discipline of "psychological anthropology". I shared this intellectual sensibility to some extent. (Were I able to trace my early interlocutors today and to talk with them again, I'm not sure right now how I would change my project, but I would be much more aware of the ways in which these taxonomic regimes and normative rankings hem in what is an "acceptable" or "respectable" topic of research.)

Fear is like formaldehyde: it keeps one afloat, but it also immobilizes. In that sense it can be disabling to a scholar/artist/maker/thinker and their independence of mind, and their trust in their own judgement/taste/creativity. (Hence the first indep. project of this course: "I'm not an Artist, but \_\_\_\_".) Fear/worry/anxiety of the sort I've described here helps to create an academic/scholarly sensibility that expects a certain sobriety, critical distance, dispassionate rationality, etc. that then interdigitates quite tightly with robust traditions of puritanism,

monasticism, asceticism, and the deep interiorization of the spirit (and frantic work pace) of capitalism. All of this has the effect of modifying and even *de facto* proscribing (prohibiting/inhibiting) and/or different ways of being-in-the-world, and our expectations of and aspirations in our work lives. "*Problematic*" in this social context: "mindless" physical work, manual labour, handwork; "mindless" entertainment; enjoying "unimportant" things like shopping; "r&r"; doing nothing in particular, (i.e., idling one's body/mind for a while), "wasting" or not "keeping track" of time, hanging out, "spending" "too much" time with other people (*Mitmenschen*, e.g., in Weber); being thought to have "no clear goals", etc., etc. All of this ideological apparatus has the effect of linearizing and instrumentalizing one's being in the world, encouraging "effectiveness" over "sociability"/sociality/conviviality, etc. Nothing *absolutely* wrong with these things, except insofar as they inhibit creative, mindful (or "crazy" or "obsessive") making/thinking, and make one hesitate over "slowing down" enough so that one can find a good "mood"/state of mind for making/thinking without the company of one's ever-hyper-vigilant judge/time police/editor (Emily Martin calls it the gargoyle on her shoulder) and its second-guessing, doubting, underestimating, and even ruthless criticizing.

I think that the experiential fear, anxiety, and stress of all the taxonomic and other forms of social and psychic disciplining & policing in our social mundanities here effectively *blocks* the "flow" experience (the "high") of making/thinking without self-doubt -- i.e., making/thinking in a way that can enable intense creative pleasure, and self-healing. (See recent article about Bessel van der Kolk's pioneering research and writing in (*Brainpickings?*). (See esp. van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*). (Jung's associate, Marie-Louise von Franz, suggested this working definition: "Creativity is the absence of subconscious doubt").

At issue is not just self-care and "therapeutic making", vital as these are, but also the possibility of *transformational* experience (Dewey, *Art as Experience*; Jung, *The Red Book*; Foucault in interviews w Trombadori; Berliner on improvisation and music, *Thinking in Jazz*; Bynum; Cerwonka and Malkki, etc.).

"Announcements" on Canvas are an unusual venue for thinking aloud and writing at any length, I recognize that, so thank you for reading. Setting all this down means that I don't have to lecture about it during the practicum.

See you tomorrow!

Liisa