

HALF-BREED EXISTENTIALISM

“Neither Hot nor Cold, I Spit You Out”<sup>1</sup>—Towards a Half-Breed Existentialism

by

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<sup>1</sup> Mout, 2013, 8:35.

**Abstract**

in this quasi-postmodern stream of consciousness, this mock, avant-garde document, the author waddles through the labyrinth of the paradigmatic parameters for the sake of onto-epistemological clarity (post-Truth) only to end up in an abstract position of cognitive dissonance with unending questions about what it means to exist.

an aporia-ridden, pseudointellectual, philosophic melodrama. “Can one live it?”

**keywords:** performative autoethnography; creative analytical practices; literary research stories; [pro]vocative autoethnography; evocative autoethnography; (indigenous) existentialism; expressionistic autofiction; anti-psychoanalysis; ‘the masculine condition’; (indigenous) masculinities; onto-epistemological uncertainty; epistolary novels; anti-positivism; slapstick; an aide-mémoire; “la fin des haricots”; c’est la vie

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And, to anyone I missed, please forgive...the deadline came quick.

Special thanks to the people (mostly women) of strength I met along the way—I am nothing without you.

NOW NOW | BLINKERED BOMBAST | “I SPIT YOU OUT”

**Dedication**

Tyra—fate [no longer] unknown; now to find her remains

**TOC**

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Dedication	iv
TOC	v
Exegesis	vi
<i>The Thesis</i>	2

## Exegesis

It’s all in *The Thesis*.

But, as an Indian, I twinge with the suspicion of a guilty conscience (from a downtrodden consciousness) that you do not believe what I say or know what I mean; so allow me, if you please, to introduce my mediator, a sort of ally who’ll justify my position before we get into it—whatever *it* is: a sort of whimsical, metafictional, expressionistic, slapstick screed about existence—à la indigenous....

“Performance autoethnography’s emphasis on the politics of resistance connects it to critical [paradigms and theories]. [Paradigms and t]heories that enable social criticism and sanction nonviolent forms of civil disobedience” (Denzin, 2003, p. 17).

Writing through my own experiences, I am seeking a representational form that invokes [a thoughtful] consciousness, an autoethnographic fiction that exposes the social circumstances that reproduce [predictable subjectivities]. This performance-based writing ... uses the techniques of a dialogic minimalist fiction ... It bends back and forth in time while exhibiting emotional credibility, vulnerability, and honesty. It does not parade its theoretical underpinnings, but it is saturated with theory, thoroughly conversant with the principles and assumptions of critical pedagogy, poststructuralism, performance ethnography, critical race theory, pragmatism, and symbolic interactionism....

I seek a writing form that is part memoir, part essay, part autoethnography. I write from the scenes of memory, rearranging, suppressing, even inventing scenes, forgoing claims to exact truth or factual accuracy, searching instead for emotional truth, for deep meaning [for impact, resonance, and verisimilitude] .... As Stegner has noted, translating experience and memory into ‘fictional truth ... is not a transcription at all, but a remaking.’ By participating in such a remaking, I am creating writing that falls within the “boundaries of creative nonfiction,” which ‘will always be as fluid as water.’ In this writing I claim ownership of my past, changing it as I write about it (Denzin, 2003, p. 133).

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NOW NOW | BLINKERED BOMBAST | “I SPIT YOU OUT”

THE THESIS

by Douglas James Bear Jr.

FRIGHTEN THE HORSES

STEAL THE HORSES

COUNT COUP<sup>2</sup>

a sort of epistolary psychoanalysis of an existentialist<sup>3</sup>

or

Towards a Half-Breed Existentialism

via the “Negative Capability” of a Quixotic Tesla

an aporia-ridden, pseudointellectual, philosophic melodrama

or, as Todd prefers to call it

—and me too for that matter—

THE BLINKERED BOMBAST OF A MASCULINE HALF-BREED

by

[*student number—omitted*]<sup>4</sup>

A bastardized Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

The University of Manitoba

in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

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<sup>2</sup> Stealing horses and counting coup were, historically, the sports of the Plains Indians that not only frightened the horses but likewise relied on the higher-order ‘intuitive-experiential’ system; *google it; revisit the history of...bring yourself up to speed.*

<sup>3</sup> An \*attempted\* existentialist—in degenerescence. (Nevertheless, this thesis is an attempt on ‘essence’: a cyber-text.)

<sup>4</sup> “I am nobody; I have nothing to do with explosions

I have given my name and my day-clothes up to the nurses

And my history to the anesthetist and my body to [the] surgeons (Plath, 1981, p. 160).

Obscurity is dark, ample, and free; obscurity lets the mind take its way unimpeded. Over the obscure man is poured the merciful suffusion of darkness. None knows where he goes or comes. He may seek the truth and speak it; he alone is free; he alone is truthful; he alone is at peace. And so he sank into a quiet mood, under the oak tree, the hardness of whose roots, exposed above the ground, seemed to him rather comfortable than otherwise.

Sunk for a long time in profound thoughts as to the value of obscurity, and the delight of having no name, but being like a wave which returns to the deep body of the sea (Woolf, 2011, p. 72).

She is spitting a mouthful of stars  
She is laughing more than the men who beat her  
She is ten horses breaking open the day  
She is new to her bones  
She is holy in the dust

She is spitting a mouthful of stars  
She is singing louder than the men who raped her  
...  
She is laughing more than those who shamed her  
She is new to these bones  
She is holy in their dust  
—Gregory Scofield<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Yes ‘she is.’ All the same, why does this insertion feel like ‘virtue signalling’?  
*accept it man no amount of bellyaching’ll bring ‘er back*

[W]omen are interesting ... without women capable of giving birth, human populations will die out. That is why the mass rape and murder of women, girls, and children has long been a feature of genocidal wars, and of other campaigns meant to subdue and exploit a population. Kill their babies and replace their babies with yours, as cats do; make women have babies they can't afford to raise, or babies you will then remove from them for your own purposes, steal babies—it's been a widespread, age-old motif. The control of women and babies has been a feature of every repressive regime on the planet. Napoleon and his “canon fodder,” slavery and its ever-renewed human merchandise—they both fit in here. Of those promoting enforced childbirth: *Cui bono?* Who profits by it? Sometimes this sector, sometimes that. Never no one (Atwood, 2017, pp. XVI–XVII).

In [the TV] series I have a small cameo. The scene is the one in which the newly conscripted Handmaids are being brainwashed in a sort of Red Guard re-education facility known as the Red Centre. They must learn to renounce their previous identities, to know their place and their duties, to understand that they have no real rights but will be protected up to a point if they conform, and to think so poorly of themselves that they will accept their assigned fate and not rebel or run away.

The Handmaids sit in a circle, with the Taser-equipped Aunts forcing them to join in what is now called (but was not, in 1984) the “slut-shaming” of one of their number, Jeanine, who is being made to recount how she was gang-raped as a teenager. *Her fault, she led them on*—that is the chant of the other Handmaids (Atwood, 2017, pp. XV–XVI).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Again, didn't Peterson warn you about this? didn't he call her a witch or something? wouldn't it follow, then, that a real man omits it?

Neil Hertz, who has recently commented very interestingly upon the hysteria such images [of the female body] were capable of eliciting from contemporary male figures who were either ambivalent or downright hostile to radical[ism], quotes a passage from [Victor] Hugo's *Choses Vues* [*Things Seen*] which I would like to include in the present discussion, a passage which mediates elegantly between an overtly political painting like *Liberty Guiding the People* and the seemingly apolitical *Origin of the World*. On 23 June 1848, Hugo witnessed the following exchange between the revolutionary forces, who had set up a barricade at the Porte St Denis, and the National Guard, who were in the process of charging that barricade:

a woman appeared on the crest of the barricade, a young woman, beautiful, dishevelled, terrifying. This woman, who was a public whore, pulled her dress up to the waist and cried to the guardsmen, in that dreadful brothel language that one is always obliged to translate: 'Cowards! Fire, if you dare, at the belly of a woman!'

Here things took an awful turn. The National Guard did not hesitate. A fusillade toppled the miserable creature. She fell with a great cry....

Suddenly a second woman appeared. This one was younger and still more beautiful; she was practically a child, barely seventeen. What profound misery! She, too, was a public whore. She raised her dress, showed her belly, and cried: 'Fire, you bandits!' They fired. She fell, pierced with bullets, on top of the other's body.

That was how this war began.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Silverman, 1988, p. 81.

Where to begin

“a beautiful paradox [the necessity of clumsiness, imperfection]; Lacan mentioned somewhere that ‘our subjective expression is always a failed one,’ in the sense that: *You want to say something; you fail ... and only thru this failure, you do it.* That’s progress” (Zizek, 2019, June 3, 22:40).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Is it really though? I mean...seems like a convenient copout, no? a pre-emptive alibi perhaps? for even Himmler could’ve used this sentence...as a defence...: *I never meant it! I never meant what I said! I meant to tell Hitler No! not yes!*

[picture—circa 2000—omitted...given the headache of copyright restrictions. A description of it: me (as a little Indian) and a German kid (a friend), one of whom is hella dark and the other of whom isn't, especially by comparison; one of whom looks malnourished, the other of whom looks resilient, sparky, and strong in composition; the juxtaposition startles the author every time he looks at it; for it puts him in his place/knocks him back into it: that experience he felt ridiculous in as a kid—shame-ridden about his skin, and his quote-unquote malnourished condition]

never forget who you are: a dark-skinned, malnourished NDN

a by-product of experimentalism

*state-sponsored* experimentalism

*state-sponsored* experimentalism

*state-sponsored* experimentalism

*state-sponsored* experimentalism

*state-sponsored* experimentalism

*state-sponsored* experimentalism

*state-sponsored* experimentalism

*state-sponsored* experimentalism

which almost killed the indian—  
which struggled to kill the indian—  
which might’ve even ignited him—

“An indigenous existentialism will recognize that the power of the body is still unknown”

—Hokowhitu, 2009, p. 116.

[another picture—this one from November 2020—omitted]

“There is nothing more immediate and everyday than the body [and its performances]”

—Hokowhitu, 2009, p. 108.

perhaps, then, the power of the body lies in the fact that we can skip the Prozac & run track instead?  
but in nature? because fuck the gym? the stigma of an indigenous affliction as mental illness is  
heavy enough as it is?<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> A pro-existential prefatory note:

Despite the underlying psychoanalytic sentiment, this scrapbook is an anti-psychiatric testament—a movement away from a politics of resentment and towards an instantiation of indigenous-based methods (as frames of reference for meta-existentialism).

Alison Bechdel: “I have a sort of disturbance of the self, which makes me want to do things like write endlessly about my own life, because I keep trying to sort it out—and as a child, the answer to that problem seemed to be physical strength and power [seeing as I felt disempowered]. It's become much more complicated as I've gotten older—I see that it's not nearly that simple" (as cited in Wachtel, 2021, 6:10).

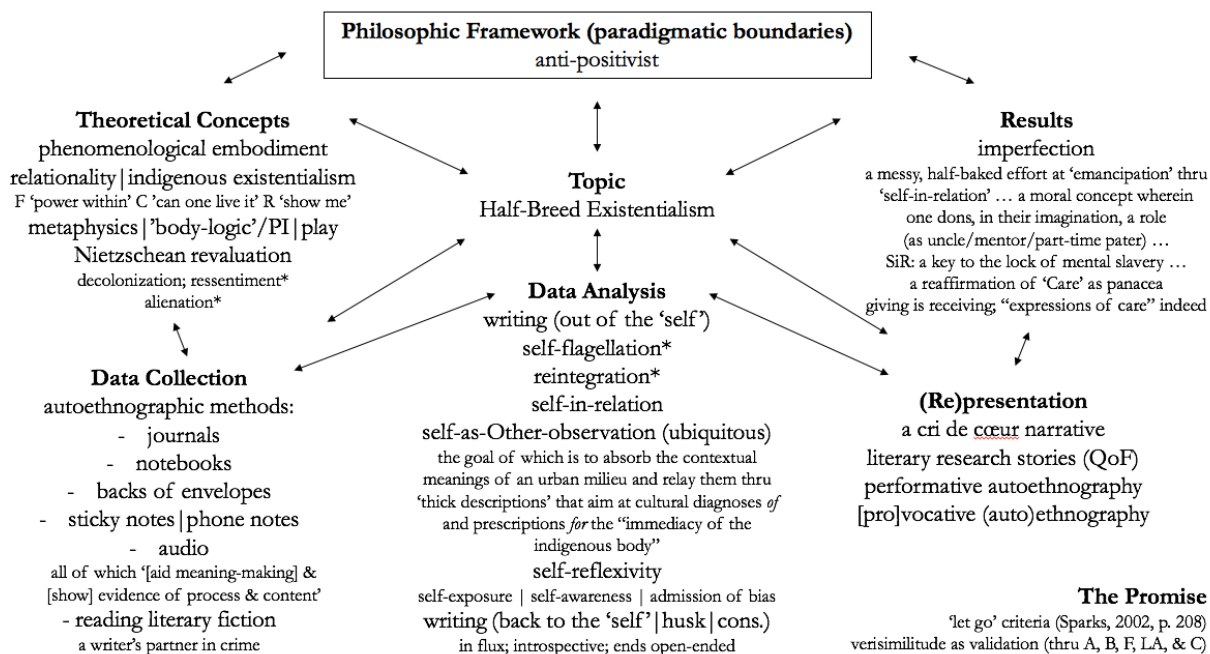
For he who is stuck: “if you [do not] jump, your parachute will never open”

—Steve Harvey (as cited in Acuna, 2016, January 26, para. 11).

[this quote—which is banal enough to make me smh—comes into play in the end]

Figure 1  
a skeleton

Adapted from Markula & Silk (2011) p. 61:



Note.

F (freedom) to reframe ideas of power—to move (as Scott Lash insists) from “power over” to “power within”

C (choice) of position: ontological position. Ask yourself: “Can one live it?”

R (responsibility) an epistemic responsibility: in the existential sense, not the conservative sense

PI: physical intelligence

SiR: self-in-relation

Husk: essence

Cons.: construction

QoF: Qualities of Fiction

A: authenticity [as clumsiness, imperfection; not in the BS traditional sense]

B: believability

F: fidelity

LA: literary aesthetics [e.g., stream of consciousness, etc.]

C: contribution [potential]

Nota bene: the section entitled ‘Data Analysis’ functions as a ‘he[roguish] journey’—like a circle, cyclic, wherein one dives in (stoops below the surface), then returns as is—either fragmented or fixed.<sup>10</sup>

ressentiment\* | alienation\*: for the sake of ‘Nietzschean revaluation,’ I draw your attn. to Rilke (1986): “*if your everyday life seems poor, don’t blame it; blame yourself [problematic but what the hell]; admit to yourself that you are not enough of a poet to call forth its riches; because for the creator there is no poverty and no poor, indifferent place. And even if you find yourself in some prison, whose walls let in none of the world’s sounds, wouldn’t you still have your childhood, that jewel beyond all price, that treasure house of memories?*” (pp. 7–8).<sup>11</sup>

self-flagellation\* | reintegration\*: “*you know, a seed has to totally destroy itself to become a flower. That’s a violent act, honey boy*” [problematic, seeing as the bastard who wrote this ish is an abuser of women];<sup>12</sup> nevertheless, it speaks to the Nietzschean phrase: “*you must be ready to burn yourself in your own flame; how could you rise anew if you have not first become ashes?*” Now, cue the master: “*Forget safety. Live where you fear to live. Destroy your reputation, be notorious. I have tried prudent planning long enough. From now on I’ll be mad*”<sup>13</sup>—all of which speaks to the necessity of self-critical analysis (a sort of self-destruction) before identity reclamation (during the metaphysical adjustment of personality change): a difficult transition, like growing pains; like childbirth; like the growth of a muscle—transformation hurts.

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<sup>10</sup> I only realized this cyclic nature and its skeezy similarity to the ‘he[roguish] journey’ upon completion of this project: ie during revisions/after my defense. Upon inspection, everything kind of clicked, checked out: especially the he-roguish idea of submersion into the unconscious: like the drive thru pure darkness, the help along the way, etc. (Nota bene: though the above clearly sort of conforms to the androcentric monomyth, it also rejects it.)

<sup>11</sup> “Emotion resulting from a work of art is only of value when it is not obtained by sentimental blackmail,” J. Cocteau.

<sup>12</sup> Additionally: at a prayer-ridden dinner-with-attachments tonight, I discovered that this quote is but an allusion to the bible—which means, in effect, it is laden with sexism—via its connection to the bible *and* Shia. I’d omit it if not for my ban on self-censorship—which we’ll get to, after these messages.

<sup>13</sup> Rumi—

It is now the fall of my second [month] in [Ontario] ... I have no money, no resources, no hopes. I am the happiest man alive. A year ago, six months ago, I thought I was an artist. I no longer think about it. I am. There are no more books to be written, thank God (Miller, 1934/1961, p. 2).

We could do without nine-tenths of our millions and millions of books about books...if we could get people back to the primary shock, the great wing stroke and blaze of light, of coming up yourself, against a great major text or a new artistic experience; that's why I always quote a true story which puts it so much better than any abstract words I can use...this, to me, is a very, very important story: the way an artist explains is to enact, possibly to repeat...play it once...and then again; I think that is a major pedagogic idea to say: Look, it is difficult; look, it is new, I'm going to explain it to you by letting you hear it again. Which is in no other other way of putting it: When you face a difficult poem or a great play or a great text, try it again, reread it...and—there are, god knows, magnificent critical acts and commentaries and explanations; I was overstating my case, just to get people to think about the overwhelming presence in our intellectual lives of the parasitic: of that which feeds on, feeds on, feeds on; and it's become almost ridiculous (Steiner, as cited in Wachtel, 2020, 7:10).

To regard literature as a kind of happy excuse for the analytic, the explanation, the monograph that will be written on it, is, of course, to put the cart before the horse—in a quite insane way; deep down in every critic [teacher, academic], there's a hatred of writers, deep deep down; you never know what those crazy people might do next...and that fear and hatred infects some of the principle—alas—teachers, critics, in our time; more people are turned off literature, far more, by the techniques of analytic pedagogy, than are brought home to it (Steiner, as cited in Wachtel, 2020, 11:40).

This then? This is not a book. This is libel, slander, defamation of character. This is not a book, in the ordinary sense of the word. No, this is a prolonged insult, a gob of spit in the face of Art, a kick in the pants to God, Man, Destiny, Time, Love, Beauty...what you will. I am going to sing for you, a little off key perhaps, but I will sing. I will sing while you croak, I will dance over your dirty corpse. ...” (Miller, 1934/1961, p. 2).

**Directions**

audience: skip the footnotes, read the text; feel more, think less; & good luck w the cryptic messages

author: *“never explain, never retract, never apologize. Just get the thing done and let them howl”*—Nellie McLung

audience: CP: take it all with a grain of salt and not at face value, kid

audience: apologies for the distracting amount of cringe lyricism within

author: murder this white elephant already; enough is enough; it is what it is; and our time is limited

author: just admit it; and be okay with it; submit

audience: please know this: note it: the noble instinct within

is to deface the whole thing here and now

and to write it off, myself included, as a lost cause

myself included—I submit

I am beyond redemption

—& that’s it

## Setting the Stage

Episode Negative: Abstract and Preambles

Episode 0: A Note from the Condonable

0.1: Introduction and Co.

Episode 1: On Colonization: To Infinity and Fanon

Episode 2: *Letters to a Little Indian*

2.1: a distorted self-portrait: a skein of images

Episode 3: The Proof of the Pudding is in the Eating: “*Can one live it?*”<sup>14</sup>

3.1: a meditation on neo-vision-quests and existential attempts at *Living Life Like a Story*

Episode 4: Position Statement: “*We are what we remember*”<sup>15</sup>

4.1: “The deepest form of publication [is] the publication of the human soul”<sup>16</sup>

appendi[citis]: Seeing Red “Sick nations make for sick storytellers”<sup>17</sup>—Ben

a post-game note on methods

appendix next:

an excerpt

appendix X:

the section

appendix friendship:

on ‘love’ and tenderness

appendix...evidence of process and content:

*a set of doleful notes from the road—predestined? Fatum, op. 77; a free determinism: la hectic*

appendix M:

a question for (if not a harangue towards) our late friend Memmi

appendix Remembrance:

an email to an editor

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<sup>14</sup> Nietzsche (as cited in May, 2004, p. 29).

<sup>15</sup> Steiner, 2020, October 27, 0:01.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 6:26.

<sup>17</sup> Ben Okri (as cited in Sium & Ritskes, 2013, p. V).

**Part I**  
**CHAOS**  
**“subscribing”**

### Abstract

Welcome back. The time has come, once again, to make a nuisance of myself. So before we bid ourselves adieu, allow me to express my gratitude—and respect, and esteem, and—

As of November 2020 (i.e. the 1<sup>st</sup>), I have written 150,000 words—  
149,047 to be precise.

All of which must be dispensed with at once.

A sexless five-star freak show it was—and so it is—

In order to break through the analysis paralysis, I have decided to make this thesis as craftless, artless, and unadorned as possible. There will be no *playing with the text*; there will be no fussy, anal-retentive edits; there will be none of it—absolutely none of it—for I have been incorrectly preoccupied with indigeneity long enough.

From here on out, it is put up or shut up.

In other words, what if I were to get out of my way? What if I were to believe in my ideas? What if I were to write with radical honesty and drastic self-confidence? What if the ole stream of consciousness were to undo the “unceasing self-consciousness”?<sup>18</sup> “Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right-doing, there is a field. [Of tallgrass.] I’ll meet you there.”<sup>19</sup> In kanata—

our home and native land. And so much for all that.

Or rather—

What if I were to take a chance? What if I were to take myself to task? What if I were to take a stance and be diaphanous—in my actions, thrashing after and slaughtering the inferiority complex? kind of like a dominant who breaks a horse and then walks off with it? *Be a monster*. An artist—someone who is honest—and, insofar as it is possible, someone who writes with no holds barred. *Do honour*—

What if I were to take the advice of Dr. Johnson and write without jargon? What if I were to cater to novices?

Nonsense?

Not wise?

What if I were to flout the constraints of your advice?

What if I were ‘tell, not show,’ not lie?

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<sup>18</sup> Hokowhitu, 2016, p. 88.

<sup>19</sup> Rumi (as cited in Timm-Bottos, 2016, p. 162).

### Things to keep in mind

*...it is reasonable to assume in practically every human being...there is an active will toward health, an impulse toward growth, or toward the actualization of human potentialities. But at once we are confronted with the saddening realization that so few people make it. Only a small proportion of the human population gets to the point of identity...of selfhood, full humanness, self-actualization* (Maslow, 1971, p. 25–26).

*...it is also reasonable to assume that this text is a pomo text*<sup>20</sup>—indirectly influenced by *Coyote and Raven Go Canoeing*, and directly by Brendan Hokowhitu (and thus Foucault, whose emancipatory agenda aligns with Marxism—despite its positivism—and draws from Nietzsche). I used to write neat, perfect documents as a *docile, obedient body* (during my undergrad), which led to a SSHRC grant; but then of course Encuentro happened; or rather the magic happened; when I took a gander at the aforementioned story by Peter Cole; and reread a chapter in Markula and Silk...re the *problematization* of judgement criteria by postmodernists, whose paradigm, after all, seemed a perfect fit for the purposes and the problems herein. Suffice it to say, I now look upon ‘proper’ documents and laugh, and so sit back and relax and immerse yourself in what will surely make you panic and gaslight He who wrote this blather—i.e., Chief Pigeon Dick; an alter ego, an alias.

It is what it is.

### Things that give me pause

*There is nothing more immediate and everyday than the body* (Hokowhitu, 2009, p. 108).

*An indigenous existentialism will recognize that the power of the body is still unknown* (Hokowhitu, 2009, p. 116).

*It's damn difficult to get a computer to see the world; and it turns out you have to put the bloody things inside bodies before they can even do it; because you really can't perceive the world without a body, because perception is for bodily action* (Peterson, 2015, February 26, 1:06:56). [See Weigmann, 2012.]

*I realized that the [Indian] is not so much a person as a form of behaviour; a sort of obverse reflection of the white people he lives among* (Faulkner, 1984, p. 55).<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> It plays hopscotch within the anti-positivist boxes (the interpretive|critical|postmodern/poststructural paradigms); it seeks to trouble all and to “implode[the] controlling codes” (Markula & Silk, 2011, p. 221). It seeks emancipation from institutionalization; it seeks to make way for indigeneity—but in the existential vein, not the traditional vein.

<sup>21</sup> This quote speaks to the Cooley quote about how identity is a *self-adjusting feedback loop*. Basically, either you *adapt and overcome* the imposition of inscriptions, myths, and images (which affect our self-definitions and our relatedness), or else.

*[I]n my case everything takes on a new guise. I am given no chance. I am overdetermined from without. I am the slave not of the ‘idea’ that others have of me but of my own appearance (Fanon, 1967, p. 87).*

*The importance of the visible appearance of indigeneity...cannot be underestimated to the conception of the Indigenous body today. The Western conception of what it means to be Indigenous is in great part a visual phenomenon...‘[a] cultural training that quite literally teaches the eye not only how but what to see’ [Robyn Wiegman, 1994]. Allegorically, it is crucial to make the connection of the rationality of the European with the body of the colonized (Hokowhitu, 2009, p. 109–110).*

*The status of “native” is a neurosis—Jean-Paul Sartre (as cited in Fanon, 2004, p. liv)*

*There are some natures too noble to curb and too lofty to bend—Louisa May Alcott’s ma*

*I won't undertake war until I have tried all the arts and means of peace—Rabelais*

*Science without conscience is the death of the soul—Rabelais*

*As scholars in Indigenous studies, we must ask ourselves whether we too are fools on [the] SS Western Academy, within which the ‘fortress of order has now become the castle of our conscience’ (Hokowhitu, 2016, p. 94)*

*Embedding the beauty and the horror of Indigenous knowledge should be an aspiration of critical Indigenous studies (Hokowhitu, 2016, p. 95)*

*Beauty is truth; truth beauty—Keats*

*At once it struck me what quality went to form a Man of Achievement, especially in Literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously—I mean Negative Capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason—Keats*

*[W]ith a [radical] poet the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration—Keats*

*[O]ne doesn't become an artist overnight. First you have to be crushed, to have your conflicting points of view annihilated. You have to be wiped out as a human being in order to be born again an individual—Miller, 1939, p. 35. In other words:*

*Burn yourself in your own flame—Nietzsche*

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(I should also mention that this quote and the next two quotes were critical to my proposal. But of course that was then and this is now: the time of my life, whereby I, a free radical, brainwash myself and transmogrify into a ridiculous goose: in other words, an acolyte, an idiot, an implacable nitwit.

*Destroy your reputation...*—Rumi

*A seed has to totally destroy itself to become a flower...*—~~LaBeouf~~<sup>22</sup>

*One must have chaos in oneself to give birth to a dancing star...*—Nietzsche

*Chaos is rejecting all you have learned. Chaos is being yourself...*—Cioran

*I am not what happened to me, I am what I choose to become...*—Jung

*Insolence—Hutspe—bravery in bravado—gall—bolster self-confidence—a mishmash of thoughts*

*[Compared to, say, medicine] we in the arts ask less and less—and how deeply we should be ashamed.*

*Because as Spinoza said ‘All things excellent are difficult.’ And the way you honour a human being—is to ask of him an effort; that’s how you honour a human being (Steiner, 2019, June 13, 39:38).*

*If you want to improve, be content to be thought foolish and stupid—Epictetus*

*My main virtue in life is a lack of tact (Steiner, 2019, June 13, 7:54)*

*The fool is a precursor to the [doer]—Jung*

*If you do not listen to the thing that beacons you forward, you will pay for it like you cannot possibly imagine; you’ll have everything that’s terrible about life in your life and nothing about it that’s good—and worse: you’ll know that it was your fault and that you squandered what you could have had (Peterson, 2017, August 2, 6:39).*

*“PROVACARE! A provocation is what teaching is. To call you out—a good Anglo-Saxon expression. I shall call you out—have at you, sir! [Be on guard]. PROVOCATION” (Steiner, 2003).*

*You must always pitch above the head of your students—until [their] fingers ache with reaching” (Steiner, 2003).*

*If they don’t know, they’ll have a go (Robinson, 2007, 5:38).*

*It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is [truth-like] is invisible to the eye—sEx*

*‘Intelligence is found in the core of our body system—in our viscera, the na’au’ (Hokowhitu, 2016, p. 99)*

*No one can advise or help you—no one. There is only one thing you should do. Go into yourself (Rilke, 1986, p. 6).*

*If your everyday life seems poor, don’t blame it; blame yourself; (Rilke, 1986, p. 7–8).*

*But it is clear that we must trust in what is difficult (Rilke, 1986, p. 67);*

*it is also good to love: because love is difficult?” (Rilke, 1986, p. 68).*

*Almost everything serious is difficult, and everything is serious (Rilke, 1986, p. 35).*

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<sup>22</sup> Again, the ban on self-censorship... that said, as a sort of cultural omnivore, I now cringe at the thought of him. Hence the strikethrough—“I *cancel* you.” (Nevertheless, I hope you get help and I wish you well.)

*Out of love of humankind, out of despair over my awkward predicament of having achieved nothing and of being unable to make anything easier than it had already been made, out of genuine interest in those who make everything easy, I comprehended that it was my task: to make difficulties—everywhere (Kierkegaard, 2000, p. 189).*

*Do not be bewildered by the surfaces; in the depths all becomes law. And those who live the mystery falsely and badly (and they are very many), lose it only for themselves and nevertheless hand it on like a sealed letter, without knowing it (Rilke, 1986, p. 38).*

*I consider it very difficult and very exacting.... [Y]our solitude will be a bold and home for you even amid very unfamiliar conditions and from there you will find all your ways (Rilke, 1986, p. 40).*

*[D]ear sir, love your solitude and try to sing out with the pain it causes you (Rilke, 1986, p. 41).*

*[and b]e happy about your growth...and be gentle with those who stay behind; be confident and calm in front of them and don't torment them with your doubts and don't frighten them with your faith or joy, which they wouldn't be able to comprehend (Rilke, 1986, p. 42).*

*[George Steiner] credited his mother with instilling in him the fortitude to overcome a birth defect that made his right arm 9 inches shorter than the left.*

*‘From her came the conviction that if it's difficult, it must be fun and worth doing,’ he told the London Guardian. ‘Today the rule of benevolent therapy is to buy shoes with zippers. I could have had them. It took 10 months for me to learn to tie a lace; I must have howled with rage and frustration. But one day I could tie my laces. That no one can take from you. I profoundly distrust the pedagogy of ease (Langer, 2020).*

*Can one live it? ... All truths are bloody truths for me!—Nietzsche (as cited in May, 2004, p. 29).*

*In filth it will be found—Jung*

*When everything is easy one quickly gets stupid—Maxim Gorky*

*Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened—Dr. Seuss*

*What seems to us as bitter trials are often blessings in disguise—Oscar Wilde*

*The impediment to action advances action. What stands in the way becomes the way—Marcus Aurelius*

*Essentialist and reductive thinking lies at the core of many hateful and xenophobic ideologies. Especially older social theories were guilty of essentialism—wiki (think sexism—transphobia, monism, colonization, etc.)*

*He [the common reader] reads for his own pleasure rather than to impart knowledge or correct the opinions of others (Virginia Woolf, 1925/1938)*

*The impetus that makes you fly is our great human possession. Everybody has it. It is the feeling of being linked with the roots of power, but one soon becomes afraid of this feeling. . . . That is why most people shed their wings and prefer to walk and obey the law* (Hermann Hesse, *Demian*)

*The art of storytelling is reaching its end because the epic side of truth, wisdom, is dying out* (Benjamin, 1936/1968, p. 86).

*The storyteller: [someone] who could let the wick of [their] life be consumed completely by the gentle flame of [their] story”* (Benjamin, 1936/1968, p. 97).

*Every morning brings us the news of the globe, and yet we are poor in noteworthy stories. This is because no event any longer comes to us without already being shot through with explanation. In other words, by now almost nothing that happens benefits storytelling; almost everything benefits information. Actually, it is half the art of storytelling to keep a story free from explanation as one reproduces it. (...) The most extraordinary things, marvelous things, are related with the greatest accuracy, but the psychological connection of the events is not forced on the reader. It is left up to him to interpret things the way he understands them, and thus the narrative achieves an amplitude that information lacks* (Benjamin, 1968, p. 89).

*I am not what I think I am. I am not what you think I am. I am what I think you think I am* (Cooley, c. 1890–1930); *I used to look up to you; now I can't even look at you*—Sam

*You can't just come in here and write whatever you want and think you can get away with it*—Jesus

*You can't just sit there and say that to an Oji-Cree in his territory and expect him not to try*—Judas

*You just can't imagine the pleasure I derive from the fact that I did just that, and got away with it*—CPD

*Man's maturity: to have regained the seriousness that he had as a child at play*—Nietzsche

*There's no one with intelligence in this town except that man over there playing with the children, the one riding the stick horse. He has keen, fiery insight and vast dignity like the night sky, but he conceals it in the madness of child's play*—Rumi

*You are at your best when you are [clumsy and in]authentic to your core, and you have to be what you are, not what they call you. Sometimes. . . . sometimes people will call you a name and you start living up to the name and it limits you from what else [you] want to do in your life*—T.D. Jakes

*The value of things is not in the duration, but in the intensity in which they occur. This is why there are unforgettable moments, inexplicable things and incomparable people*—Fernando Pessoa

*I have just now come from a party where I was its life and soul; witticisms streamed from my lips, everyone laughed and admired me, but I went away — yes, the dash should be as long as the radius of the earth's orbit ————— and wanted to shoot myself*—Kierkegaard

*Dearest, I feel certain I am going mad again—Virginia Woolf (as cited in Oyebode, 2010, p. 280)*  
*They think me mad—Starbuck does; but I’m demoniac, I am madness maddened! That wild madness that’s*  
*only calm to comprehend itself!” (Melville, 1851/2009, p. 313).*

DEAN

*You know, the Greeks*  
*didn't write obituaries.*

*They only asked one question*  
*after a man died:*

*‘Did he have passion?’ (Chelsom, 2001).<sup>23</sup>*

*Yes, my consuming desire is to mingle with road crews, sailors and soldiers, barroom regulars—to be a part*  
*of a scene, anonymous, listening, recording—all this is spoiled by the fact that I am a girl, a female always*  
*supposedly in danger of assault and battery. My consuming interest in men and their lives is often*  
*misconstrued as a desire to seduce them, or as an invitation to intimacy. Yes, God, I want to talk to*  
*everybody as deeply as I can. I want to be able to sleep in an open field, to travel west, to walk freely at*  
*night...—Sylvia Plath*

*Yes, I was infatuated with you: I am still. No one has ever heightened such a keen capacity of physical*  
*sensation in me. I cut you out because I couldn't stand being a passing fancy. Before I give my body, I must*  
*give my thoughts, my mind, my dreams. And you weren't having any of those—Sylvia Plath*

*Genealogy is a way of playing local, discontinuous, disqualified, or non legitimized knowledges off against the*  
*unitary theoretical instance that claims to be able to filter them, organize them into a hierarchy, organize them*  
*in the name of a true body of knowledge, in the name of the rights of a science that is in the hands of the few.*  
*Genealogies are not positivistic returns to a form of science that is more attentive and more accurate.*  
*Genealogies are quite specifically, antisciences ... the insurrections of knowledges (Foucault, 2003, p. 9).*

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<sup>23</sup> N.B.: passion is problematic—it certain contexts it can function as an adjective for zealotry; ye been warned, CP.

### ground zero

an unwieldy story short: the following investigation into Indigenous existentialism chronicles an actual existential crisis wherein a dyspeptic, neurasthenic protagonist depicts what it means to exist as an urban half-breed Indian whose condition...an urban Indian whose performance...an Indian who considers, at length, the obliteration of consciousness like Quentin Compson. But because the protagonist is an Indian<sup>24</sup> and Quentin is not, the Indian survives whereas Quentin....

Such is the toughness of the Indian—fiction or otherwise  
examples of our refusal to die are legion  
yeehaw, leeches

### Preamble 1

This thesis is the direct result of a fantastic panic attack. About 5000 words shot out of me on the first night, 7000 the next day, and 2000 after that. All of which came about as if by magic—and in a state of dissociation, no less; *just keep up the momentum*, I said, the while I packed my books and dreamed up edits (both conceptually and per section).

But, of course, life, as we know it, is a lesson.

In essence, the dam broke and the ideas poured;<sup>25</sup>  
and the final product was as rotten as it was proper  
and as wholehearted as efficient discipline.

I shall call it a Will to Health through innocence—ignorance, and solipsistic playfulness—  
For instance:

Maybe I should write about how therapy is inefficient—

Maybe I should write about how I couldn't—probably because of some inner  
resistance to systems, whether to schools, the state, or religions—submit to another system  
and fall victim to learned helplessness (and then mention how a moratorium on  
institutionalization expanded your consciousness)...and so it is: write about how it had to be  
about self-reliance and assertiveness—not pre-paid baby steps, not categorical  
preconceptions, not CBT nor deficit-based sentiments, nor any form of dependence, unless  
self-dependence: for I, in essence, had lost my identity—whatever that may be—an identity

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<sup>24</sup> Which is to say, I am (or we are) long habituated to the negatives of a non-identity and a lack of privilege, a facticity of which (our marginal existence) poor little Quentin could never see himself living thru or with—

<sup>25</sup> I know, I know, the ole clichéd 'pouring out on the page'...turns out it's a thing....

crisis indeed, a crisis wherein my ability to resonate with the human condition (the condition of being) had fallen by the wayside, unlike my ability to recognize the suddenly recognizable Guy I eyed in the mirror<sup>26</sup>—and so it is, you see, that what I needed more than anything was to regain, reclaim, and reframe a little trust, and perhaps a little faith, in the self—I needed to “relearn...what it [meant] to be [not a] man [but a person].”<sup>27</sup> Then, and only then, upon this necessary earning, I would assure the bastards—assure them surely—that what I needed, and quite certainly, was as vital as water and air—i.e., indispensable—paramount, essential; for this reason alone, the quest herein is ethical.

### Preamble 2

A careless psychotherapist or a misinformed friend might say You are pathological because of a woeful past and a chemical imbalance; an existentialist would say *Hold up, not so fast:*

while chemical imbalances may be present in [depressed] people...imbalances are not necessarily the cause of their suffering; [the imbalance] is rather a symptom; the cause being their inability to deal with the existential dilemmas of human life. [This feckless state of mind is a reminder that weighs on you (and all), the while it drains you and makes you melancholic, a state of which the novelists, the storytellers, and the griots refer to as the human condition; a condition of which is layered, difficult, and ubiquitous]” (Academy of Ideas, 2016, 0:31).<sup>28</sup>

### Preamble 3

I had a sort of fall during this project and thus the final product is substandard, but because I am such a painfully hopeless romantic, I no longer regard this matter as tragic

*I remember standing in the hallway and thinking—water; water; I wanna be like water; strong enough to hold up a ship but able to slip thru your fingers* (M. Williams)

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<sup>26</sup> Guy is the name of my father [and FTR: a damn good father he is—*despite any assumptions or State-based myths*].

<sup>27</sup> Anderson et al., 2012; Bidwewidam, 2013.

<sup>28</sup> None of which is to say that therapy and/or meds are ineffective; meaning, if you have a lot of good going for you in your life—like, for instance, a decent job, a mediocre education, a semi-functional family, some friends, possibilities, and/or a relationship—and you *still* find yourself deeply ill-fated, then it may very well be that medicine and therapy are the missing ingredients. I believe it; I have seen it. I am it—minus the medicine. But maybe I need the medicine? *Traditional* medicine. Like some good old-fashioned vision questing—

### Preamble 3.1

*The missing ingredient, the lost puzzle piece, the sine qua non of this thesis, trip, vision & quest  
... a future prereq—*

*Cue the spooky theme music—and the voiceover of that guy from Unsolved Mysteries:*

Immediately after his thesis defense, the free and savage Indian who wrote this gibberish landed in a kibbutz of christians and thereby suffered a major loss of time set aside for his revisions—mostly in an effort to dodge the fundamentalists, and their daily attempts to baptize him | reprogram him.

Needless to say, Preamble 3.1 seconds what Preamble 3 says re *substandard quality*—

*Funny how the word of god can make one feel like they're in hell*, notes the Indian, as he huddles by the wood stove in the barn—his present home, his part-time kitchen, complete with endless fields and no pots to piss in

*Oy! he thinks, What a coincidence!*

to end up in this positon

of metaphysical imprisonment

—the embodiment of his ancestral limits

—a sort of gift

a sort of vision into what it means (or meant) to exist

as an Indian

*What century am I in!*

### Preamble 4

The abovementioned panic attack was kick-started by an email from a friend:

From: CP

To: [me]

Subject: Thesis

Date: October 15, 2020, 11:12 p.m.

Ay send me your thesis! I wanna take a read.

Hope all is well brother.

### Preamble 5

Many of the following riffs and snippets can be read as existential musings on Indians in institutions.

They can also be read as unconscious and somewhat lawless abuses.

But no matter. In reality, the new purpose of this project is to map: to lay a few tracks—however janky—over a keen body of defensive reactions (nowadays referred to as *reaction formations*, namely against grief and shame...as an urban indigenous male from the North End; in other words, in the following autoethnography, I attempt to personally and jerkily map a way out of the urban indigenous masculine condition—

toxic and volatile as it is.

How the purpose of the project changed? Well, I felt social critique was static and useless given my limited prowess as an analyst; and, well, more to the point, I thought prescription over description would be more pertinent to the one and only person (outside of academia) who would read what I finished: i.e., the kid. [See “Preamble 3”: the email—the day I committed, and shortly thereafter finished, in an act of pouring out and flushing the system].

### **Preamble 6**

Speaking of systems, my advisor—noble apparatus that he is (Ideological State Apparatus, that is)—requests a prefatory note on the so-called “double consciousness” (Du Bois, 2009, p. 8); on the ‘split self[f]’; twoness; the liminal position; the in-between condition; the “two-culture tightrope” (Schnarch, 2004, p. 18); the misfit; the zeitgeist of indigenous; the performance of the dissident; the rise of dissonance:

Foucault’s conception of biopower, where individuals become aware of themselves and their place in the world through the disciplined nature of their own body, speaks to the material depth of colonisation and, as referred to above, the forlorn nature of a decolonial project. That is, to a large degree Indigenous people cannot deny the embodiment of colonisation. Many try, many delude themselves into thinking this is possible, many develop a schizophrenic envisioning of an authentic Indigenous self, divorced from a self located in the here and now and even their material genealogical reality. Inevitably, such schizophrenia detracts from an Indigenous existentialism that embraces the here and now (Hokowhitu, 2009, p. 112).

Indeed. Hokowhitu expands on this contradiction (of a *schizo vision within indigenous subjectivities*) throughout his entire body of work—for instance, “[t]he current preoccupation of Indigenous theorists with the idea of ‘decolonization’ has developed a schizophrenic envisioning of an authentic Indigenous self located in a precolonial past and, thus, divorced from the materiality of the present”

(2016, p. 89-90). In essence, he critically points out what some of us think, but most of us suppress: that “such a dialectic is not a healthy state of mind” (Hokowhitu, 2009, p. 105). Which is why, throughout this screed, you might perceive a sort of discourse between two beings<sup>29</sup>—a slipshod game of ping pong between the world and me, an absurdist, mind-bending powwow on the road to freedom; which hurtles headlong, as if by counter-phobic means, through the hell of dissonance, only to land in a derisive pit of conflicted, maladjusted industriousness, in which the two-tone vision of *we/they* becomes *both/and* in one; “[t]he bond between colonizer and colonized is thus [creatively] destructive” (Memmi, 1991, p. 133).

In other words, “I shall be derelict.”<sup>30</sup>

Oh yes, be warned:

It is good form to introduce a work in psychology with a statement of its methodological point of view. I shall be derelict. I leave methods to the botanists and the mathematicians. There is a point at which methods devour themselves. I should like to start from there. I shall try to discover the various attitudes that the [half-breed] adopts in contact with [the parasitic] (Fanon, 1967, p. 12).

For instance, I jump between experimental playfulness and academic tenseness, between stream of consciousness and electronic messages, between thoughtlessness and deference, innocence and resentment—hence the references and the notreferences. This is an epistolary sentiment; an elliptical effort in contentiousness; my last will and testament. I am unfortunately invested...lived it, breathed it, ingested it.

potential | benefits:

1. If this wretched project *transmogrifies* into something phenomenological (or something novel, like a novel), then the benefits are theoretically mutual—seeing as, first and foremost, this project contains no interviews; in other words, this radical invention, this dilettantish

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<sup>29</sup> between a civilized asshole and a savage freak. “Intrinsic in storytelling is a focus on dialogue and conversations amongst ourselves as Indigenous peoples, to ourselves, and for ourselves” (Smith, 2012, p. 146). Furthermore, I posit that the theoretical spilt in consciousness (which I harp on throughout this *oeuvre*) runs deeper than ‘code-switching’—thus I hope to effect a radical, existential, Fanonian perspective; one of which is not restricted to professional settings—i.e., changes in tone, mien, or ways of being...i.e., the dark arts of white-passing—for shrewder minds than these have already achieved such analyses. Indeed, ‘between two beings’ could easily be ‘*by* two beings.’ Imagine, if you please, a nervous actor; now imagine that she is directed to appear as if she is in two places at once—action, cut, scene: that’s me. A sort of she-she who lives at once *between* and “*in* two extremes: joyous positive and despairing negative.” Believe it.

<sup>30</sup> In the same way that Steiner’s *main virtue in life is a lack of tact*, mine is a lack of tack: there is no method to my [analysis].

insurrection, however insignificant or petty, could, *potentially*, supply a space for reflection—without the catch-22, the cliché: i.e., the kindly investigator who burdens and extracts information from urban natives for the sake of self-improvement (i.e., a degree, some social capital, or general amusement).

Noninterference—an ethic | most beautiful.

2. Whichever way I choose, I add nuance.
3. Nowhere in the manifestos on Indigenous masculinities (by Anderson, Innes, McKegney, Hokowhitu, etc.) is there a single mention of half-breed, or Metis (albeit there is a single mention of the book *Half-Breed* by Maria Campbell, but it is purely as an aside as opposed to a launch pad for conversation). The point I fail to make is that the Indigenous project lacks variety and representation, and thus rides roughshod towards pan-Indigeneity. Which is to say (perhaps wrongly): How can I get on with a project that further rives me apart when what I need is to suture up the double-consciousness? How can *any* such project coax an indigenous audience into its political arms when the audience can clearly see the mark of ‘Indigenous’ as an extension of the Jewish star? (The yellow version.) On top of that: not only do I need my master, I *am* my master. And so it is: I have to reconcile this unremitting cognitive dissonance or else my future as a scholar of Indigenous studies is conditional, tragic, limited—

Absences |

It is what it is.

I speak from a place of absences

Gaps and absences

And so it is: a note on absences; the apparatus of the state demands it: an explanation of the hangry madness—an explanation for the audience to fathom why (and in what way) this project is

*less inspiration, more operation: a demented objective to surgically extract a mass of somatic shame.* Initially, I was decolonizing and deinstitutionalizing myself through the destruction of my occupied writing; I was reading thru my stream of consciousness and picking through the scum of it—for some evidence: a truth, a pattern, anything relevant. And it was through this sifting of frothy matter that the pattern revealed itself as absence. The truth was in the gaps...all decaying matter in the manuscript was in need of being scrapped. Thereafter I went gangbusters on the process of removal like the Children’s Aid Society went gangbusters on the process of removal

What choice did I have? A history of erasure had fermented our idleness; and thus my only option was to swim against my being | the tide of my nihilism.

*A precious thing. A precious little thing it would be. Ab*—soon a seesaw of statistics and sentiments is yours. [...] the more the bastard grew, the harder I had to work my analytical muscles to shrink it. My precious creation was turning into an enfant terrible before my eyes like a slap in the face. The idea of a stressed single mother working two jobs got me thru: *if she can do it, so can you.* I started to eat more books to gain more weight and to sink the seesaw in my favor. I sacrificed detail for sleekness—felt as though, maybe, just maybe, this thesis wanted to be a streamlined story for meek people to scream aloud with a liberating glee during a brouhaha to resuscitate their sense of bleakness. I excised and stopped short of explication to make the story fit the world I was familiar with, the world of absence, the world of gaps, the world where children look for answers and get none—where little girls ask about their history and get raped, where little boys receive the weight of shame and a neighbourhood of gangs instead of ancestral legacies and aids. History, none, legacy, none, family, none, daddies, none, the list goes on. Gaps and absences—a reality for far too many these days. And I understand *well* that such displacements affect & taint our agency in insidious ways. It’s an inheritance like a cleft lip and not a pair blue eyes; it’s a form of pain that’s achromatic like generational suffering.

Inspiration? *Masochism, unmitigated*.... No matter. “What matters is how affected I was by this idea of absence—and not just in Canada but worldwide—with an especial interest in absent men, the neglected variable in the equation of MMIW here in Canada. *Absence.* There is was,

a clear no-brainer. A revelation. An idea that was ripe with resentment from the get-go, an idea that expressed itself through dissidence and em dashes and endnotes—endnotes of which were either lyrical digressions or genetic unspoolings, endnotes of which first went AWOL and then went missing...srsly, I can't find them...the undertow of my Mac's anonymous documents swallowed them up the way the Red River swallows our discardable women. Absence. Excision. Omission. A zealous mission to slenderize indigent long-windedness”

No single stimulus, just lived inexperience; a life of lies...theft; the dead—the broken spirits, together; not to mention that long-ago quest; a miscarriage and a ton of pressure; dread; a vision, a quest; a near-death experience; an intimacy with death; the death instinct; the life instinct; an acceptance of death; the need to confess like a man possessed. Who knows. I dunno. My immediate reaction to questions of inspiration is dissimulation...afraid to reveal my roots as a Canadian | Azorean | First Nations. Overall—if I'm being honest—if that's even possible—I think I just wanted to do what I wanted to do and what I wanted to do was write. It feels like a vocation. I have one of those Azorean compulsions to work; and one of those Indian compulsions to escape—as one can probably tell from anything that I name. Combine these sickening compulsions and voila: words on a page. Hyperfocus—a sort of cocaine; my middle name; an alias.

1. Look. The fact of the matter is that I walked too far into the goddamn bush and lost myself in the wild of an Indigenous mind. And, well, it is a known fact that there ain't no turning back when you bushwhack: nowhere to look but up; nothing to be but found.
2. I live in the North End of Winnipeg, Manitoba—the homicidal heartland of Canada. I reside in a 2005 wagon that barely works and smells of poison and I rip around on a stolen red ten-speed that my father paid for with a six-pack of OV back in the late eighties. I am North End to the core.
3. Any messages? Yeah, Dear Winnipeg Public Library, please call off collections.
4. Connections? Other than a few mobsters across this melting pot of a continent, I (again) am North End to the core—a despised animal, a lost cause, a 'Peg City' zombie of a holocaust. (The Scoop...erased...potential...connections—if that's what you meant by connections.)
5. Yeah, *Turnstone Press* requested a full manuscript. That said, I am holding out for *Anansi*.

6. Advice? Nah, but why not: Dear Idiotically Aspiring Mongrels: Read whatever you want, but read it closely and not for fun. Fun is a red herring. Read mostly to hoe, prosper, blossom. And goddammit how I hate to sound awful, but read mostly with a glossary, despite the dominance. Da literary gatekeepers are da literary gatekeepers for a reason. To be accepted among this gang, you have to speak their language.<sup>31</sup> Unless you’re Michael Ondaatje or Miriam Toews—two of the realist Canlit gangsters in the game.
7. More advice? Yeah, get bent. And, snub tips like a snoot and intuit instead.

### **Preamble 6.1? A Postgame Preamble from The Farm? Preamble 7? A Preface?**

#### *a note for aspiring north enders and not academics*

dear traumatized, abused, abandoned, neglected, welcome to the amoral heaven of optimistic pessimism. Where fractured narratives make room for self-acceptance, *carnavalesque tendentiousness*, and, better yet, “experiential identification”<sup>32</sup> (thru the mess of crude conceptions). Yes, within this sexless invention, the ‘intuitive-experiential system’ resonates—with verisimilitude. Ah, what a term. In other words, if you happen to *feel* a little disturbed during your perusal, then it is likely because I have written something forbidden or taboo, something of which I probably shouldn’t’ve written (whether erotic or ridiculous), and you, being the scoundrel that you is, have taken pleasure in it. That said, there will be no censorship; for to write without restraint is to effect an aesthetic, and thus an effectiveness; it is a timelessness akin to a hit of opium, or even ketamine—which is nowadays a therapy for MDD. Indeed, an inexpensive remedy for suicidality. (Writing, that is, not the ketamine. Or maybe both?) Indeed, “[Cioran] explained that writing had been an alternative to shooting himself” (Cioran, 2017, 1:29). And I like that, “[for] it is not worth the bother of killing yourself, since you always kill yourself too late”<sup>33</sup>—

So put the pen to page and say what you need to say!

And maybe, just maybe

“live like a man who is dead already”<sup>34</sup>—X, 2011, 0:06.

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<sup>31</sup> To wit: hide your feather & play white for a bit; learn the system, then demolish it. I.e., *pass as white; play nice; code switch*. Professionalism with a token grin.

<sup>32</sup> Coined by philosopher Alessandro Giovannelli; illustrated by videographer Chuck Puschak.

<sup>33</sup> Cioran, 2017, 1:48.

<sup>34</sup> Malcom X. Yes, for “only an idiot could think there is any point to any of this” (Cioran, 2017, 4:05).

## Episode 0

I am a healthy man!

No, correct that—I am a healthy Indian! not a man. For Indian is not a man but a savage. Plus, to be a healthy Indian is simple, seeing as it is already written and underwritten, like graffiti on the church bricks of western consciousness, that the problematic state of the prenatal native is but a negative—and so it is, because of this, all you have to do is add a positive; put different, if you, dear Indian, simply abstain from drink (I know, I know, but just consider it; that is, hypothetically; as in, for instance), then you, dearest Indian, immediately uplift yourself to at least a halfwit—given the absolute that you, an Indian, must still contend with your inscriptions (those epigenetic impressions of which are now a neurosis).<sup>35</sup> Such a condition (reverberatory as it is) is interstitial, *so get used to it*. That’s right: *you*, my dearest Indian, are born fucked. Even the poorest of POCs are bigger, better, tougher. But no matter—or rather so what, eh? I mean, look on the bright side: Jesus wasn’t sacrificed in our name, so we have no reason to submit and prostrate to manufactured guilt and institutionalized shame. And yet, go figure: we are still Faulkner’s nigger, wrapped up in a conceptual apparatus that differs, that befits an idiot, that belongs to Him, like the sinful lovechildren of Quentin-Quentin: burdened, ashamed, and neurotic, as if the state of our existence, our shameful existence, were archaic and prefigured.

Oh wait! no shit! it was! and has been! even since—

## Introduction

“Just begin,” said Craig—the patron saint of the qualitative lab—advice of which missed its mark; for to begin was a hurdle of which I (at the time, and until now) refused to overcome (given a sort of shitlist of intersectional incidents and ridiculous phobias). For instance, I told myself over and over that I could not (would not) begin until everything was just right, until everything was perfect—but of course things just kept on getting worse—2020, as it were, kept on trending, in all directions, but mostly downwards—and inversely with the curve. You’ve heard it, seen it, peddled it, contributed to it, laughed at it, bemoaned it, sidled up to it, ignored it, decried it, disregarded it, configured it, reconfigured it, imagined it, reimagined it, fallen back on it, and then, once again, laughed at it, as if manic because god just shattered your existence, only to leave you, palms up, to stand amid it—“four months into 2020, and only eight more months to go...”—the discourse of

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<sup>35</sup> “The status of ‘native’ is a neurosis” says Jean-Paul Sartre (as cited in Fanon, 2004, p. liv).

the times. But no matter; what matters is my sudden lack of laughter, for I cannot wait any longer, nor procrastinate any further. In other words, the blockage, whatever it is, is to be bombed and stumbled through with coughs and hacks and brutishness.

And so here it is.

Back in April, my jumping-off place was race and gender, but I have since done away with both (as per Steiner’s influence—whose DWMness renders my preordained politics inconsistent; whose influence is pitch-perfect and persistent; whose influence forces me to accept the truth of my existence—my mixed existence—for instance: the politics of every scholar I like or find insightful contradicts what it means to be an Indian (whose “every breath is political”—whose preordainment is conflictual). Yes, along with this: another fact of my existence (or rather a newfangled fact of my politics): that is, politics and scholarship ought not to mix<sup>36</sup> (which is a value judgement, to be sure, but one of which concerns the foundation of my onto-epistemological position, a position of which I continue to struggle with; I mean, I distrust categorical thinking, yet I love taxonomic systems—I just prefer the bigger picture); in other words, I have, as a result of newfound influences, come to think of politics and scholarship like this: that is, the two ought to be mutually exclusive—another fact of which I glean from Steiner, whose hunted whiteness has done nothing but confirm my biases (those prejudices of which are autonomic and have long since distrusted the manufactured outrage

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<sup>36</sup> (A post-game revision: i.e., back to politics): the above utterance is the most ridiculous utterance ever written—because scholarship and politics, no matter what anyone insists, always mix. And so it is: I include YouTube vid/timestamp references throughout this long-windedness because I cannot imagine a pack of street urchins with access to expensive-ass university documents, whereas most of the urchins I come across have (at some point in the day) access to the internet, and thus YouTube. *One ought to bootleg ideas instead of music*—and by ideas I mean lectures, and by music I mean muzak, for “[i]f the very nature of neutrality [like the very idea that *politics and scholarship ought not to mix*] replicates inequality” (Díaz, 2015, 53:49), a nod to the politics of interpretivists and positivists. (But these are just assumptions, stated as assertions—which should give you pause and cause you to ask: Although contentious, perhaps not ridiculous?) also this: I know damn well how easy it is to fall prey and victim to the ideologically driven BS on the net, and so I suggest you supplement and subject everything you see and come across with readings; and if I may be so foolish as to suggest a few channels whose content creators present and offer counter-arguments to right-wing interlocutors who are responsible for the spread of that BS on the net...content creators who lean a little left and who present counter-arguments that subject these tory shitheads to topical questions that attempt to keep them honest or at least in dialogue with philosophy, then I suggest CCK Philosophy, or even Academy of Ideas—or ContraPoints and Philosophy Tube, for a more theatrical take on it all. But for god’s sake beware of pop philosophers / psychologists / fictionists—do not take their word for it (nor anyone’s word for it!); research it for yourself; use peer-reviewed sources—get a grip! And then suss out the ridiculous with some good-quality literary fiction. And then eat. And then piss and moan and bitch. Self-expression is as healthy as kids are full of bliss.

(Consider this: everything that applies to Him also applies to the Bread Tube kids—but at least this way you’ll have counterbalanced the opinions, the assumptions, the subjective interpretations that order (totalize) our consciousness, our thought mechanisms; but maybe that is what mostly interests: an authority figure who simplifies what is difficult: who establishes our opinions and positions; who frees us from the tyranny of drawing inferences—from the tyranny of self-creation...insistence. Beyond the surfaces—at bottom, that is—is self-interest, on both sides of it. For instance, consider this...)

of the parasitic, regardless of their rationally perceived insights into real-world consequences); but perhaps this nonsense is common for the dissident; or perhaps I am getting old and simply tired of resistance, burning out like a roman candle alive dying in the distance; if so, fuck it—it is what it is; I mean, if only this were 2006—when things (for me, at least) were imbued, however naively, with meaning—indeed, if only it were 2006, I’d say, in an act of forward-thinking faith (or rather from a place of Pollyanna-based strength), that, in fact, *It was meant to be* or that *Everything happens for a reason* (the opposite of meaninglessness—i.e.: *everything* is meaningful...); nowadays, I hear the theorist in me say, *It’s not me, it’s the system!* a sentiment of which I find conspicuous (quantifiably and perceptibly, that is), for it negates my existence (for instance, see my grades—my *recent* grades...my poor performances—and the bags under my eyes, not to mention my inability to be civil in a world of whiteness); a fact of which prepossesses post-colonialists and leads to nihilism, the while it manifests as a sort of self-directed violence.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, thanks to the recent outrage around race, I (a former strategic essentialist with a ‘contrarian nature’) have—despite earnest persuasions—predictably turned the other way (like a deaf dumb dog on a rabbit’s tail). Admittedly, race and gender only seemed interesting to me when it appeared as if no one else was doing it; but *now* (seeing as it is fad again, combined with the fact that I ain’t no token—nor soapbox spokesman) my presence seems useless (my half-breed presence, that is: as someone who “belong[s] to everyone and no one,” the Memmian condition).<sup>38</sup> And so, in response to this, I have since turned my attention to the European existentialists—or rather European existentialism, which I regard as the least compartmentalized of all philosophical systems, whose fundamental presuppositions bring together sages and scholars of various backgrounds and interests, the most prime and cited examples of which are (outside of Kierkegaard) Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky, one of whom was an orthodox Christian, the other of whom was the Antichrist. Yes—indigenous, half-breed existentialism, where we left off—*the immediacy of being*—which, in a sense, leans on phenomenology—the Dasein—the all-encompassing: the present, the future, and the past, as opposed to just the past: the “pure pre-colonial past” (Hokowhitu, 2009, p. 113).

But yeah-yeah, whatever, no matter.

—dispense with laughter.

And so what follows is a series of glued-together letters and tangents, which attempt to explain to a little Indian what it means to be a little Indian, and especially one from the North End,

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<sup>37</sup> See Appendix M for more on this—

<sup>38</sup> Memmi, 1991, p. xvi.

not to mention the particular dimensions of *how* I attempt to trump such a complexion through the lens of phenomenology and existentialism. I draw my influences from Brendan Hokowhitu and the European existentialists (which, to me, includes Fanon, the phenomenologists, the novelists, and, last but not least, the la-di-da phenom George Steiner, whose commitment to thinking is above what I could accomplish in nine lives; whose encyclopedic mind inspires; whose behemoth message transcends heady, whose essence is iconoclastic and representative of a dying sentiment)...yes, influences of which are nowadays so much apart of my being that I (no bullshit) recite them in my dreams—indeed, a Steiner pleading:

“*there is no assurance that [the humanities] humanize!*”<sup>39</sup>

“*A culture decays in precise proportion to its neglect or suppression of memorization!*”<sup>40</sup>

—a bow to Pasternak, the Russian woman; the Brezhnev years (post-Stalin)—“*relatively less hellish—relatively*”<sup>41</sup>

“*When I summon up remembrance of things past! ...*

*THAT CULTURE WAS NEVER IN ULTIMATE DANGER!*

*OURS IS EVERY DAY!*”<sup>42</sup>

“*Remember, I belong to a people, where, in modern times, it was said: Nothing will remain of you, not even ash...the memories of memories will be gone. So, the answer is No, you almost did it, but not quite*” (Steiner, 2020, 6:40).

“*There is no pressure! Except of that of one’s own integrity!*” (Steiner, 2003).

“*We don’t honour the student—we condescend him! And that is a hideous, hideous contempt!*” (Steiner, 2019, 39:38).

How I became familiar with the work of these giants was, of course, thru digital media (YouTube, mostly)—given the intense scope of the content that lay open to our phalanges; *indeed*, use it, do not be used by it; know your limits; know *thyself*: for instance, I learn better audibly; so fuck the literature. Indubitably, you bet: via Steiner’s pedagogical message (via his “try it again” methods), I obsessed. I obsessed with difficult lectures and primary texts. And, when I failed to understand, I did not seek explanation (neither through the web, nor secondary text); instead, I *tried it again*—(“the powers of memory are *infinite!*—once you *wake* them!”<sup>43</sup>)—and again—*she said...and I acquiesced*—and

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<sup>39</sup> Steiner, 2013, 0:59.

<sup>40</sup> Steiner, 2019, 14:38.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 12:58.

<sup>42</sup> Steiner, 2003.

<sup>43</sup> Steiner 2019, 38:57. [I should point out that I now beg to differ re the above line “fuck the literature.”]

then I reached back into my toolkit (from the yesteryear of Intro to Drama, and from my recent thespian practices) and I committed to it; listened to it—their work, over and over again—took notes, extensive notes—*ingested it*, the meaningful bits of their lectures—the bits that *shined forth*, like auras—of human essences; yes, I chronicled the most meaningful of messages (*phainesthai*), I obsessed—on the histories that bolstered these messages—I went on Wikibenders and chased after whatever lighted my essence—“*light out after it with a club.*” Meaning became my beacon, and curiosity the fuel—*yeab-yeab, she said, laughing*—

I realized—once again, and perhaps too late—that I had to stand on the shoulders of giants if I was going to make it; that I had to, in the thick of it all, grasp the meaning of this saying:

“*Don’t loaf and invite inspiration; light out after it with a club*”—Jack London (as cited in Reeve, 1917, p. 141).

What kicked this whole thing off was a recurring nightmare, which I connected to existential guilt—which, inversely, connects to the Nietzschean idea of self-creation, or will to power, not to mention the idea of self-actualization (or full-humanness) by Maslow—which “*refers specifically to the concept that each of us has the (challenging if not impossible) task of [crafting] a life, a life that is unique to us [and us alone]. A life that only we could have lived. And we need to and aspire to live this unique life to it’s fullest potential*” (Brietbart, 2017, p. 3). Furthermore, existential guilt, fear, and neuroses often “[announce themselves as a debt to possibility], *a debt to existence—and, according to the phenomenologists, that’s built right into the sense of your being—failure to shoulder existential burden results in neurotic guilt and fear. It’s a remarkable conceptualization*” (Peterson, 2017, February 21, 46:05).

I also connected these existential nightmares to epigenetic trauma: for I could not escape the certainty that such a biopolitical reality weighed so heavily (and unconsciously) given the pressure, the burden, and the reverberations of death and genocide, both in my veins and on my mind, the latter of which, like a blood-filled tick, rested inelegantly on my shoulders, engendered a soreness, and elicited a sort of vigilance in the night—like distorted reveries *of time, of possibility, of authenticity and inauthenticity, of unintelligible knowledges, of insurrections and dishonest-ness, of anti-science and the monstrous, of balked-at politics, of loses, of potential, of procrastination as detrimental, of etc., etc.*, all of which coalesced into a vicious narrative that saturated my head with vivid, unwelcome images, to the point that I felt overexposed—or at least close to overexposure; and so I figured, the while these ideas bubbled over in me, and

recurrently, that the process of “data gathering” was complete—especially seeing as I had reached a sort of saturation, filled my pail, and exhausted what seemed inexhaustible. And so, you see, the only thing left for me to do was to allow myself to be seen. Which means I had to get out of my way; which means I had to pull myself together, I had to remember “[that] to be nobody but yourself, in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else, means to fight the hardest battle anyone can ever fight, and to keep on fighting” (cummings, 1972, p. 75). I’d lost sight of that; the noise pollution of the aforesaid titans occupied—*rent-free*—the sanctified space of my butthurt mind, so much so that it felt as if these giants had stepped into the pool of my stream of consciousness and flooded it, and, in the process, drown out my voice and consciousness.

What adds to the pressure of this [non]creative analytical thesis, this auto-ethnography, is the idea of *showing and not telling*—which is an oft-quoted metaphorical sentiment of the creative process that makes me wonder what in the world I signed myself up for (never end a sentence in a preposition; stay away from first person and avoid colloquialisms; master syntax and polish diction; grapple grammar and then—*and only then*—diminish it). Indeed, *show, don’t tell*. Every time I heard this ish, I thought *Who the hell do you think I am? Chekov? Virginia? Well, I am not, because they is god. So to hell with her and him and all*. For is it not the case that the best way forwards is often backwards? Or rather, as Diaz dishes it, “*the only way out is in*”?<sup>44</sup> In other words, is it not more important to lead as opposed to follow? And not with a so-called authentic and thus close-minded essence, but with a fresh perspective, an open-minded frame of reference—one of which you get (or acquire) after a few months of standing on the shoulders of giants, where lowbrow cretins as Indian as I can taste the rarified air of soaring minds (but, of course, only after a sort of convalescence—yes). And so it is, in essence: this thesis is—wait for it—both/and; one and the same and then some: two-spirited plus: a shapeshifter of the descriptive and the prescriptive. Which—given my love of letters—is written as a homosocial letter to a little Indian. One of whom I care for à la Mister Rogers: the sincerest of all existentialists. ‘*Won’t you be my neighbour?*’ Care—as Heidegger pointed out (Cestari et al., 2017)—is (or ought to be) fundamental to our ways of being (our onto-epistemologies). Care indeed, a panacea—for a lot of things, not just MDD or navel-gazing—for it alone curbs solipsistic self-defeat; not to mention the fact that it dispenses with resentment and nullifies pessimism.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Diaz, 2007, p. 198. “No one can advise or help you—*no one*. There is only one thing you should do. Go into yourself” (Rilke, 1986, p. 6).

<sup>45</sup> Care, like relationality, shifts us away from *resentment*, and dated conceptions like subject-object interdependence, the master-slave dialectic—*yes, indeed, good sir, I pay attention*.

Nihilism, you see, diseased my intellectual polity; coloured my lifeblood unbelieving—like a portrait with the white balance out of sync. I became an uber-skeptic, in a sense, nihilistic and demented; with a capacity for Doubt par excellence—until, that is, *Care*, the only sentiment, liberated me, detached and uplifted me, lifted me high enough to see that it was me, *always me*, in the way of everything that *potentially* awaited me.<sup>46</sup> A once squandered potential indeed; existential guilt beyond belief, embodied. Here I stop—for it is here, more often than not, that I feel an instinct to attribution—cognitively: *because how can you fault me? when the murder of all of me—or at least a half of me—is a living memory!* That said, such instincts for attribution are now less intense, less all-consuming, and more re-embodied in belief: a belief in human decency—autonomy, respect for being; I mean, is it not the case that such instincts for externalizations, for finger-pointings and blame games, at bottom, mean nothing to the faceless bureaucracy that owns me, that charges me eleven hundred a semester to think and breathe; that threatens me with policy, that offers, coldly but honestly, to take me out back and finish me, do me in, knock me off, like Josef K., for some vague, unknowable, inhuman unreason, some sort of dispassionate, paper-pushing treason? “*The agencies of the inhuman*” indeed.<sup>47</sup> The problem of bureaucracy—which socialism must solve before it swallows me. Convinces me. Converts me. Until then, all I have and all I know relates to the immediacy of being; for all I have and all I know is what has and has not worked for me; and, well, as sad as it is, what *has* worked for me is a sort of relativism—individualistic and neoliberal as it is; yes, to me, along with the majority of the existential punditry: the individual is the right unit of analysis—inward self-critical analysis, with a dash of *me-first* selfishness; correct that: *self-regard*, not selfishness—a bit more considerate; consider it: like oxygen masks—on airplanes: the mother first, the child second: the *self* first, *then* the domestic, then the local, then the social, then, if you are Musk or Gates or Bezos, the

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<sup>46</sup> What about residential schools and sixties scoops and asthma and a lack of supervision and that endless list of concussions given the masculine condition? What about the dynamics of a family of immigrants steeped in catholicism versus a daughter who loved an Indian? What about growing up in the north end where christmas meant a kicked in door and a bunch of stolen VHSs? *How did u feel ... ur favourite movie ... what were u 2 or 3? Then four, then five...* What about the accumulation of self-abasement from race-based intergenerational traumas and the reverberations of rape and nonsense by lowercase christians and authority figures on a mission to make an ‘honest’ savage out him? What about the visceral distrust of these survivors and their kids towards white male authority figures?

*a phenomenon of which your guidance counsellors could just never figure out—until a Jewish lady stepped in and made four when she put two and two together and said he works better with women than men and changed your life forever.*

*And so it is: given these and the other socially determined cons, I have to stay positive, for I was indeed extremely fortunate to have a teacher who was willing to show me the meaning of self-efficacy. So tell me:*

*Was it just you in the way of you? or was both you and then some—“two-spirited plus”?*

*maybe look back on your life and realize that individualism is nuts.*

*the symbolic violence...the tragic buy in...of Boxer...the workhorse, the normie, with no brains...just guts.*

<sup>47</sup> Steiner, 2013, 0:07.

global. “*We don’t honour the student—we condescend him. And that is a hideous, hideous contempt!*”<sup>48</sup> Outward-looking philosophies (which offer important historical permutations) are akin to slavish externalizations: projections and attributions of which read like cognitive distortions and lead to a sort of dissonance...and such resistances do not contribute to ideas about how to live—and (as I contend herein, and wildly insist) what matters is the truth of our everyday existence: because, as it were, *for a truth to be true, one must be able to live it.*<sup>49</sup> “*Can one live it?*”<sup>50</sup> This is what the existentialists refer to as an *actional* existence; whereas all else is but the sad equivalent of a *reactional* existence—whether through the relinquishment of autonomy, the development of learned helplessness, or the subordination of the self—to the social; *like a disciple to the Joke*. What ought to take precedence is *not* reactional inferences but responsiveness. Self-reliance, not self-consciousness; autonomy, not partisan, preordained politics, wherein the *devolvement* of self, and the creation of distance from the reality of our existence, quickly moving as it is, is seen as progress. Politics should *not* be a pre-ordainment if you are indigenous—to such sentiments, I spit. As I do to the idea that *everything is politics*. Everything is complex, rather, not simplistic. Compartmentalized, reactional existences are, if you take them seriously enough, totalitarian—they totalize your condition, they saturate your thought mechanisms. They produce good, rational criticisms, no doubt about it, but shit: good, rational criticisms do not fill the stomach, they take from it. They negate existence. I used to be an A+ student, but now I’m just a dipshit, a notorious dipshit, whose own faculty, upon application for a position, outright dismisses; an ‘authentic’ hypocrite; a noisy little prick; inauthentic and disingenuous, much like a slick depressive in his subatomic dimensions. And so, given this, I shall have no more of it. I shall instead “*fight the hardest battle anyone can ever fight and...keep on fighting it*”—I love education, but loathe the present state of it, especially in the qualitative sciences, despite my debt to it; yes, as a late bloomer it seems as if I prefer numerical analysis—the quantitative sciences (and especially the sham neutrality within); and so it is: as someone with a deeply personal stake in politics, I must, for the sake of stableness, dismiss it, and stick to the common thread of nature—mathematics, that is—*how much you willing to dish?*; the weight of indigeneity alone (never mind its politics) weighs too heavily on this—and thus renders me inconsistent, leaves me poverty-stricken, restricts the all-important feeling (in this ever-growing technocracy) that anything is possible, the while it compromises, incorrectly, with the perception (in all its rottenness) of the “inevitable”—

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<sup>48</sup> Steiner, 2019, 39:38.

<sup>49</sup> Google Camus—on “livable” truths.

<sup>50</sup> Nietzsche (as cited in May, 2004, p. 29).

*Death to the inevitable!* There shall be no compromise—for “*all truths are bloody truths for me!*”<sup>51</sup>—indeed—“*there is no pressure, except that of one’s own integrity!*”<sup>52</sup> For what is perceived as inevitable is metaphysical—personal, local. For all that is profound (at the end of our rope) is, unfortunately, the Logos.<sup>53</sup> Without it, *we are broke*,<sup>54</sup> meaningless, stuck in the absurd, Dionysian, hedonistic world of vanity—interested, disinterested, uninterested, in women. Missing and Murdered Indigenous.<sup>55</sup> And so it is, the truth of my existence: like Kierkegaard in the final phase of his development—into a man, a christian, a believer in truisms—a little faith (in being) bolters the conviction | the opinion that the Everyday is significant—

not monstrous, pointless, nor insignificant

but joyous—even if only conditional, even if only dependent upon whether or not you can uplift your vision and direct it towards some little Indian

or any little marginalized ‘idiot’ other than your sorry self, you prick  
for self if nothing unless in relation. Can you dig it?

Look at me go, running off at the lip.

From this point forth, I shall transcribe only stories, snippets.

To be sure—given a fundamental switch in my analysis, and a stylistic switch from aesthetics to stream of consciousness, which I imagine you see as frivolous—I take these issues quite serious;<sup>56</sup> *seriously*, that is; scholars, you see, often look at the real-world consequences of social constructions like hypermasculinity and race, but they rarely point the lens back in their direction and ask, What consequences do my actions have? for what consequences am I epistemologically responsible? sending students into the world with a penchant for the dishonourable—

then again, what’s ‘dishonourable’ in a world full of imperial awfulness?

I too seek revenge like an assaulted woman turned novelist.

Again, as for scholarship; I can no longer swallow it.

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<sup>51</sup> Nietzsche (as cited in May, 2004, p. 29).

<sup>52</sup> Steiner, 2003.

<sup>53</sup> lol

<sup>54</sup> Steiner, 2013, 6:30.

<sup>55</sup> A false note, which ought to be revised; however, in the name of clumsiness, imperfection, & nocensorship, it stays in.

<sup>56</sup> Even if I seem facetious—it’s how I cope: I jest.

*Le Consentement*—let us honour it.<sup>57</sup>

### **An Unscientific Postscript to the Above Introduction**

From the above, one can see where I was, and why I needed a change—why I needed to experience novelty, why I need to have life throttle me, why I needed to live dangerously—optimistically—and why I needed to see if I could turn a thought into a thing...why I needed to pursue meaning—curiosity—why I need to follow that which *shined forth*—phenomenologically—the literal essence and root meaning of phenomenology: *Phainesthai*. An existential, phenomenological quest—in, however, the tradition of intuition and vision: “CAN ONE LIVE IT?”

All truths are bloody truths for me!”<sup>58</sup>

Truthfully.

As for coherence, I will have none of it; for I want this text to be an experience—a *provocation*, as Steiner suggests: *I shall call you out! Have at you! A good Anglo-Saxon expression*. “The Judgment”—by Kafka—in one night written. Commit to it! Throw your whole being into it! Like Faulkner! Like

Put different (however uncharacteristic), from a place of cornered conviction: Death to perfectionism!

—and so it is: the following disconnected dots read like, or ought to read like, an ecosystem: whose realities are synaptic as opposed to linear, like a brain and not a script; like the elliptical nature of consciousness—

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<sup>57</sup> As for revenge ‘like an assaulted women turned novelist’...if only I had the balls (even then, though, I’d probably concede defeat and think Why bother?). As for scholarship, I can indeed swallow it; and, in all honesty, actually prefer it these days (the theory side of it, that is).

<sup>58</sup> Nietzsche (as cited in May, 2004, p. 29).

## Episode 1

“Real courage is when you know you’re licked before you begin, but you begin anyways and see it through no matter what” —Harper Lee

“You gotta have the courage [one of six principles of academic integrity]. Do you have the courage—to act outwardly what you see inwardly? (Jakes, T. D., 2019, May 7, 0:01)

*you’re not supposed to know; you’re not supposed to know; life is a mystery—[and full of magic—*  
*“AND, WEIRDLY ENOUGH, THE MAGIC IS ACTUALLY REAL”<sup>59</sup>]*—*if you take away*  
*the mystery, and everything was certain, you wouldn’t need faith”* [which the pagan Rabelaisian in me  
would prefer to call optimism]—*“faith functions best when you don’t know—so* [I’ll admit, as a  
noncreative pagan, that it occasionally seems as if something creative, albeit vaguely creative]  
*often puts us in positions where we don’t know, to destabilize us from relying on what we know; like a*  
*trainer who starts you out—and he starts you out on a weight machine, and then he puts you on a bench and*  
*gives you free weights because now it’s less stable—[and] the less stable it is, the more muscles you build;*  
*finally he puts you on a ball; where everything’s unstable; and when he puts you on a ball, he’s building up*  
*your core—so the more unstable your life becomes, the more you have to go inside yourself to stabilize yourself*  
[which speaks to the necessity of necessity, an existential theme: *difficulty*, figuring it out  
alone, like an orphan, like all those nights alone, in the car, with no bed to curl up in, with no  
person to find comfort in]; *you’re strong enough to [with]stand instability;<sup>60</sup> and if you knew everything,*  
*you’d have no room for faith, for discovery, for innovation, because creativity comes in uncertainty—it comes*  
*in uncertainty—in the middle of chaos—because, after a while, anytime you know too much, you stop living*  
*your best self* [indeed, this passage galvanized me into action that fateful night, gave me the  
courage I needed in a time of uncertainty, and, ultimately, became the defining whim of The  
Trip...on the side of highway outside of Steinbach, MB.] (Jakes, T. D., 2019, June 29, 0:13).

When you have a black night, where you have—the ocean gets black! And that’s when you  
can’t navigate with your eyes anymore; then you have to go someplace else; and that  
discipline is something that’s very difficult for me to learn—it’s almost as if I have to wash

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<sup>59</sup> Peterson, 2015, February 26, 50:22.

<sup>60</sup> Like George in *Down and Out in Paris and London*— “You discover boredom and mean complications and the beginnings of hunger, but you also discover the great redeeming feature of poverty: the fact that it annihilates the future. Within certain limits, it is actually true that the less money you have, the less you worry” (Orwell, 1933/1961, p. 20).

away that dependence on what I can see and what I can believe, and...trust other senses. And that’s one level of this, what I say is, *knowing without knowing how you know* [emphasis added], um, and that, um—I’m not very good at it; I’m still a—still a virtual kindergartener; I mean, and I say that because I know the difference between myself and my teacher, where that deeper understanding of trusting other instincts [was] nurtured when he was a young child and...was dependent on it for survival—Nainoa Thompson (as cited in Davis, 2007, 18:30).

aloha emeritus frenemies; aloha parasitic; aloha loveable idiots<sup>61</sup>—in essence, you can say what you want about this trip, that, for instance, it is, all in all, regressive and toxic—but you would be remiss...for I was on death’s doorstep—and now I am uplifted. “*At bottom every man knows well enough that he is a unique being, only once on this earth; and by no extraordinary chance will such a marvelously picturesque piece of diversity in unity as he is, ever be put together a second time*”—Nietzsche..

“For what it's worth ... it's never too late...to be whoever you want to be”—Fitzgerald

“Your playing small doesn’t serve the world”—Nelson Mandela

“Never doubt your own significance”—Werner Herzog

Often what is stupid and foolish is absolutely necessary. For instance, I intuited that I had to show the little shit that I could still do it, that I could still live it (the perceived verities of my existence), and also this—that *if* I could still do it and live it, then he could still do it and live it. So here it is, you little shit: be notorious; be respectfully insolent: be a self-determining existentialist.

Indeed, “*Go, do, be.*”<sup>62</sup>

But listen, listen: it’s not ‘fuck the system’—rather, it’s get with it; even if only at a distance.

Let that be the difficulty of your existence. A hell indeed: walk through it.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> “Yeah, but who are the idiots? I didn’t mean so-called poor, uneducated, ordinary people. If anything, most of the idiots that I know are academics. That’s why I don’t have any interest in communicating too much with academics” Slavo Žižek (as cited in Wolters, 2013). Which echoes my interest in scholarship that is accessible and evocative as opposed to esoteric and objective. Hence my disinterest (however bogus it is) in the opinions of the parasitic—  
(A corollary—in case you haven’t already guessed: I am, epistemologically, quite subjective.)

<sup>62</sup> Semple, 2012, p. 66.

<sup>63</sup> To be sure: when I encourage you to be an existentialist, I do not mean it literally—

*Hutspe*, gall, acts of bravery—be mean, surly, nasty about your grades. You like competition, eh? Good, get an education. Scholastics is the ultimate in competitiveness. And don't you forget it, kid.

And we must also keep in mind that Existentialism not only encompasses philosophers, but also writers like Dostoevsky and Kafka who do not have a well-defined philosophical view of the world. Kaufmann writes ‘... it becomes plain that one essential feature shared by all these men is their perfervid individualism. The refusal to belong to any school of thought, the repudiation of the adequacy of any body of beliefs whatever, and especially of systems, and a marked dissatisfaction with traditional philosophy as superficial, academic; and remote from life - that is the heart of existentialism’ (Aftab, n.d., para. 1).<sup>64</sup>

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what I think I mean is “Be Yourself?”

<sup>64</sup> I ought to copy and paste this quote tenfold to drive the message home—just joshing; only a MCP would do that. What I should do, however, is point out that this statement, like many existential statements, is narcissistic: it stems from the ole ‘me against the world’ mentality; the ole “I am not a piano key!” which has historically driven a few pushers of the pen to their ballistic neurasthenic ends, like a shower of bolides over the Third Reich—o yes, infamous ‘individuals’ and existentialists who we now canonize and describe in terms of genius, greatness—shit, give an Indian a minute to do the same these days (ie contemplate existence), and we give that individual the side-eye and diminish their work and consider it bogus wisdom; I mean, goddammit, it's as if there isn't an expected stage or two in the evolution of the downtrodden mind, like our adolescent instinct to rebel against whites).

Anyways. Self-in-relation, kid.

Put different, just because you think, doesn't mean you are (an individual); I mean, the only reason you can think the way you do is because of what some might call The Historical Few (those of whom created everything you see and know; those of whom taught you everything you say and do)—indeed, the purview of history. (In essence, no past, no future, and thus no present—so be sure to stare death into whoever says: get over it, res schools were a blessing....)

Yes, “it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their *social* [emphasis added] being that determines their consciousness” (Marx, 2019, 17:36). Which is pretty much a rehash of Hegel and his relational theory of intersubjectivity and thus a reconceptualization of the ‘undeniable’ self by Descartes.

But then: what if the above statement about existentialism is representative of the artistic, not the narcissistic?

And yet... “I think writers and artists are the most narcissistic people...well, I mustn't say this...I like many of them—in fact, a great many of my friends happen to be writers....” (Plath, the writer, confirming my bias/perceptions).

that said, you need “the arrogance of creativity...” of an athlete...of somebody who sees creative people and says: I want to be that freak (that artist, that athlete). You need the arrogance to try, basically; which gets at the Sartrian meaning of freedom—of being free—which, in a sense, seems self-serving (which gets at the hip lingo that says “[such and such] doesn't serve me,” etc.), which I guess connects to the abovementioned ‘oxygen mask’ of self-in-relation....

But wait a minute: doesn't want (a desire) imply...an inessential condition of existence?

Who gets to decide...what is and isn't essential to existence?

Isn't everything we see and witness deeply socially constructed? Wouldn't that mean, then, that art is inessential—a social construction—like gender? Wouldn't that render all arguments *for* art as speculative? a mishmash of sentimental, biased justifications with no objective way to falsify their statements? no objective way to validate their claims? no objective, logical way to...how can we disentangle what is and isn't essential to existence?

and what is and isn't contentious because covetous and thus narcissistic? Can desire be an essential condition? Given the aesthetics we create & witness, art is arguably an essential condition of existence (for some)—

But what the fuck? what are we to believe? why shouldn't we swing towards ‘perfervid individualism’ when surely it's a condition of our existence that “we [in fact, according to Althusser, are ‘always-already subjects’ who were congenitally] sentenced to solitary confinement inside our own skins, for life” [‘determined from without,’ within]? Perhaps this existential blather is but a fiction, a historical case of neuroticism, not narcissism? Perhaps this ish is but a

“[O god! The] conscience does makes cowards of us all”—proverb; Shakespeare, 2003, 3.1.84.

“What a coward you are! Everyone who approaches a girl risks being laughed at; that’s what’s at stake. So take a risk, Harry, and if worst comes to worst just let yourself be laughed at”—Hesse, 1927/2010, p. 93.

“Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror. Just keep going. No feeling is final”—Rilke

“Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it”—Helen Keller

“I care for a philosopher only to the extent that he is able to be an example...”—Nietzsche

When a great thinker despises men, it is their laziness that he despises: for it is on account of this that they have the appearance of factory products and seem indifferent and unworthy of companionship or instruction. The human being who does not wish to belong to the mass must merely cease being comfortable with himself; let him follow his conscience, which shouts at him: 'Be yourself! What you are at present doing, opining, and desiring, that is not really you.' . . . —Nietzsche

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simulation and not an existence? a figment within the imagination of a native who holds a potent strain of cocoa leaves between her teeth on some beach in Polynesia?

I feel like dancing.

I need to move, think.

I have a bag of rice, and a box of sardines.

*Buenas noches y dulces sueños*

...

palm trees and an ocean breeze...a morning run along the beach...the Caribbean Sea...and this thought recurred to me...as I blew my knee: that is, the term narcissism is one of those slippery umbrella terms, catchall terms—categorical terms—that is hard to get out from under; hard to escape; *like binaries that sustain themselves thru their own negation*; hence the power of religious abnegation: renunciation: self-denial; an outdated morality of what over why....

### On Colonization: To Infinity and Fanon

Once more a howling mob of the best citizens in a foremost State of the Union has vindicated the self-evident superiority of the white race.... *Let the eagle scream!* [emphasis added]. ... But let every black American gird up his loins. The great day is coming. We have crawled and pleaded for justice, and we have been cheerfully spit upon and murdered and burned. We will not endure it forever. If we must die, in God's name lets us perish like men and not bales of hay (W.E.B. Du Bois, as cited in Denzin, 2003, p. 242).

I have yet to finish “ch. 4” but what the hell; I cannot restrain myself; reading Fanon is a shot in the arm like no other—and, just to be clear, I enclose “ch. 4” in quotation marks because I originally thought chapter four was “On the Pitfalls of National Consciousness”; a mistake of which I consider serendipitous, for there is no denying the high and mighty sound of a formidable analyst; the smooth, mean, methodical texture of *The Wretched* is a stern reminder that greatness (in the form of natives) exists. Which goes to show, in other words (against all mythologies of native barbarism), that anything is possible with a little industriousness (a fact of which combats the destructiveness of shameful images within); shameful images of which Fanon unpacks, analyzes, re-packages, crumples, steps on, and spits.

Indeed—we gather here today, folks, for the chapter “On National Culture.”

A bit dogmatic, occasionally tendentious, and yet undeniably legitimate in its essence, *The Wretched* ought to be required reading for all research ethicists.<sup>65</sup> Before Fanon, you see, I found myself locked in with the European stream of existentialism, a lengthy time of which my mind devoured my body and disbanded my perceptiveness—and consciousness, not to mention all the curiosities within.

But no more! For the eagle that is Fanon soars above the prey of my dormant conscience, and wakens it—in other words, I am back.

But not for long.

Taken mostly from the Briticanna, this short bio is for all you little Indians out there who know far too little about what it means to be a somebody—outside the mainstream. Fanon was born in 1925, less a boy and more a force of nature. Up until he was a young man, he lived in the tropical

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<sup>65</sup> In addition to this assessment, I agree with Coulthard (2014) who says (given the Algerian context): *The Wretched* is “tragically appropriate” (p.16)—yet “overly instrumental” (p.23).

climes of Martinique—a sugar island located in a subregion of North America, near The Bahamas, which is where Christopher Columbus landed and thought he was in Asia (or rather India), hence the West *Indies*; there, in the Caribbean (an interchangeable term for the West Indies), Fanon sprouted under the French thumb of colonial governance (read: domination); come young adulthood, he served in WWII with the French and protected France against German occupation; he later attended university there, where he studied medicine and specialized in psychiatry. After graduation, he moved on and headed a psychiatric department in an Algerian hospital where he observed the effects of colonial violence on the psyche of Algerian and French soldiers during the Algerian War of Independence (aka the Algerian Revolution), a gruesome time of which undoubtedly influenced his crowning achievement, *The Wretched of the Earth*. Before *The Wretched*, however, he was a most busy man: not only did he assist the liberation movement in Algeria, he also edited a newspaper in Tunis and functioned as an ambassador to Ghana (for the newly liberated, provisional government in Algeria)—all of which connects to his dealings with the Front de Libération Nationale, or the FLN for short—which brings us to 1960, the year he was diagnosed with leukemia. I include the following passage by Homi K. Bhabha (as cited in Fanon, 2004), seeing as, on account of his writings (especially in *Black Skin, White Masks*), it seems to capture his intense, unyielding essence, which is unquestionably existential in its dimensions, and promethean in my estimate:

[H]e resisted his death "minute by minute," a friend reported from his bedside, as his political opinions and beliefs turned into the delirious fantasies of a mind raging against the dying of the light. His hatred of racist Americans now turned into a distrust of the nursing staff, and he awoke on his last morning, having probably had a blood transfusion through the night, obsessed with the idea that "they put me through the washing machine last night." [...] "[W]hen his wife, Josie Fanon, read him the enthusiastic early reviews of the book, he could only say, "That won't give me back my bone marrow." On the day of his death, the French police seized copies of *The Wretched of the Earth* from the Paris bookshops. After his death, Simone de Beauvoir remembered seeing Fanon's photograph all over Paris for a couple of weeks (pg. viii).

Before I attempt to dispense with the fluff, I must acknowledge its impossibility. In the same way that I must acknowledge the impossibility of decolonization—or at least what seems like an impossibility. My former advisor, you see, killed it for me, when he—with a wink—stated: “you

can’t decolonize colonization.” Or maybe it was: “There’s no such thing as decolonization”? Either way, whatever; he is no exception; at least not to me; for I have long been conditioned to think of decolonization as a sort of mischief—which is *not* to say I discount the claims of postcolonialists who argue for its necessity (cyclical and ostensibly never-ending<sup>66</sup>), but I do, like Paulo Freire,<sup>67</sup> discount its violent methods (even the hidden violence of the nonviolent methods), and so I walk alone, a pseudo-individual, a man apart, divided in his psyche and in his love for DWM art. I mean, goddammit, if I had to commit my friends to a labour camp on behalf of an eye-for-eye ideology, I wouldn’t—I’d sooner step in line and work myself to death alongside them. That said, I see my posturing as laughable; for I am at heart a pessimist, with a hint of vengeance in my veins;<sup>68</sup> a semi-trenchant fool who refuses to underestimate a history of envy and malevolence; which is to say, it strikes me as rather airy-fairy and idealistic (and perhaps even a bit theistic) to think of it as necessitous of men and women to come together when, to me, it is frighteningly obvious that the machine (and its apparatuses) marches on—and will continue to march on—like a forward sort of backwards: like the weight loss of a sauna.

But of course! The phone! An interruption!

A call from the clinic! Let us pause a minute.

After a discussion with the great skeptic, Dr. Letkemen, the word *arbitrary* comes to mind, a predictable inference in the mind of the colonized—a mind of which, in my limited estimation, equates to ambivalence, self-consciousness, fragmentation,<sup>69</sup> & cognitive dissonance; contradictions and blanket statements of which I wish to put an end to this instant. In other words, in plain ole English, I consent (as thouest suggest, as the old bird once suggested) to dispense with the fluff and to get this thing done.

Because woe is me! and life is meaningless! and who the hell gives a f ck.<sup>70</sup>

Some definitions:

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<sup>66</sup> Never-ending, that is, if one thinks of colonization and decolonization as the expansion and contraction of empires, which have been around since ancient Mesopotamia and beyond—

<sup>67</sup> (Freire, 1998, p. 2). I know APA says that footnotes are not for citations, and yet, now and then, I struggle to ruin the flow of the paper (insofar as there is any flow); it seems my future is in Chicago (insofar as I have a future).

<sup>68</sup> “Social democracy thought fit to assign to the working class the role of the redeemer of future generations, in this way cutting the sinews of its strength. This training made the working class forget both its hatred and its spirit of sacrifice, for both are nourished by the image of enslaved ancestors rather than that of liberated grandchildren” (Benjamin, 1936/1968, p. 260).

<sup>69</sup> “Fragmentation is not a phenomenon to postmodernism as many might claim. For Indigenous people fragmentation has been the consequence of imperialism” (Smith, 1999, p. 28).

<sup>70</sup> I jest. This line brings us to the fundamental misconception of existentialism: that being its conflation with nihilism and absurdism—isms of which I refute, here and now, with my very being as a resilient human and a struggling graduate student: facts of which in and of themselves connote a meaningful commitment *to* and an engagement *with* the world.

**nation-state:** “a centralized government that can claim and exercise authority over a distinctive territory—that’s the state part. It also involves a certain linguistic and cultural homogeneity—that’s the nation part” (Green & Meyer, 2013, 1:56).

**national culture:** “a national culture is the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify, and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence. A national culture in underdeveloped cultures should therefore take its place at the very heart of the struggle for freedom which these countries are carrying on” (Fanon, 1963, p. 233).

**Exegetical observations.** Fanon’s writings are a combination of postcoloniality, phenomenology, political science, Marxism, Sartrean existentialism, Hegelian dialectics, and—last but not least—psychoanalysis. He begins the chapter with a sort of call to action: “Each generation must out of relative obscurity discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it” (Fanon, 1963, p. 206)—an opening utterance par excellence. Yes, the existential perspective Fanon brings to his work breathes a certain amount of life into his claims, the while it bolsters and blueprints a combative way forwards for those post-war writers and intellectuals who mistake their efforts (who mistake their unsociable focus on their work alone) as enough...who think that their words alone (and not their politics) contribute to the growth of a national consciousness, which, according to Fanon, is both right and wrong, for culture is a living, breathing thing, fluid as opposed to static, and thus the writers who wish to isolate themselves and finger the historical records in an enchanted effort to construct a narrative that is allegorical, humourous, and or sentimental are dead in the water, left behind, for the new kids on the block have nothing but a material sense of urgency to strike when the getting’s good, an action-based sentiment which leaves most writers and intellectuals high and dry, not to mention the storytellers who, before 1952, according to Fanon, “are tedious to listen to” (Fanon, 1963, p. 240) and who relay stereotypes rather than speak essentials with and to the natives (of the present), the natives of whom intuit truth and hunger for its confirmation in the form of a hit-home message—and, again, preferably from an authority figure who speaks of essences; but I digress. Such is my proclivity to get ahead of myself. Next:

Or rather back to the beginning, in a sense.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> In unaffected terms, what I mean is that Fanon is critical of literature, which he refers to as “a reply on a minor scale...a will to particularism” (Fanon, 1963, p. 239)—indeed, “[t]he culture that the intellectual leans toward is often no more than a stock of particularisms” (p. 223). At this point in the literature, however, I imagine Fanon was pretty sick, so I forgive him—even though he might’ve been right...for “we [in letters] have sold out to trash” (Steiner, 2019, 37:46).

Fanon speaks to the LaRocquean civ-sav complex at the heart of colonization—which he touches on at the beginning of the chapter (as cited below), and which he upends with respect to the natural emergence of a continental consciousness through the concerted development of a national one:

Colonialism, which has not bothered to put too fine a point on its efforts, has never ceased to maintain that the Negro is a savage [sic]; and for the colonist, the Negro was neither an Angolan nor a Nigerian, for he simply spoke of “the Negro.” For colonialism, this vast continent was the haunt of savages, a country riddled with superstitions and fanaticism, destined for contempt, weighed down by the curse of God, a country of cannibals—in short, the Negro’s country. *Colonialism’s condemnation is continental in its scope* [emphasis added] (Fanon, 1963, p. 211).

This back-and-forth between the individual and the collective—or rather the nation and the continent (as regards a national culture)—weaves a narrative concerning the emergence of one through the action of the other, thus revealing a tapestry of events that are contemporary, historical, political, racial, economic, and, at bottom, imperial. What marries this chapter to the events that lead to an existential postcoloniality is, in a sense, the LaRocquean civ-sav complex: an experience of which (as evidenced in the text) is ubiquitous, doctrinal, and utterly characteristic of colonization (i.e., not isolated nor unique to the Americas but rather common, in its style and methodology, to Afro-Eurasia, and thus, in essence, global in scale); as an adjunct learning outcome, this chapter (in retrospect) reveals the potential calamities of ‘savages’ who rebel and revolt—through violence and acts of terrorism as opposed to activism—and thusly provokes insight into the grim reality of land-based decolonization (defined here, in this context, as the violent struggle for independence); yes; given the dialectical nature of Fanon, one can interpret this chapter (and, for that matter, the entirety of *The Wretched*) as a justification for and against violence as a means to liberation. What leaves me on the fence, however, is double-edged: on the one hand, from my perspective, recoiling in the opposite direction seems to lack sophistication (i.e., forgive the Man, forget the violence, and accept your role, under the master, as a slave, dependent and ashamed), whereas, on the other hand, using the overused metaphorical tools of the master to dismantle the colonial bastard’s house (à la Audre Lorde, 1984)—as a blind eye-for-eye ideology wherein the begotten end is violence—is equally lacking in sophistication, and thus somewhat redundant; so what gives? “It is at the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness lives and grows. And this two-fold emerging is ultimately only the source of all culture” (Fanon, 1963, p. 248). What I take away from the Marxist in

Fanon is that culture is an orgiastic politicking, a sort of dynamic, bottom-up organism: put different, culture indeed lies in *The People*; in the fight for liberation—in flux and muscly and thus possibly violent, despite the traditions of the nation; which is to say, national culture is in the streets, as if an expression of the belief in *any means necessary*—à la Black Panthers and Malcom X. Now, with that said, I say, as a sort of corollary (or an inverse statement), that Fanon here suggests—like a benevolent menace of Gramscian ethics<sup>72</sup>—that national culture exists *beyond* the garret and the ivory tower—for the writer and the intellectual. But again, I digress, I jump ahead. Before I get back on track, however, I would like to address the irony of the imperialist logic that simplifies and reduces an array of nations and cultures and ethnicities (in other words, an entire continent) to savages, barbarians, Negros, Indians, etc.: what I find ironic and amusing (or rather interesting) is how, in North America today, we find a similar ideological tactic retched back at settler-colonialists (in the discourse, for instance, around white-privilege); what I find interesting is the paradoxical and yet expected outrage it provokes in reactionaries and white nationalists who denounce these ‘race-baiters’ as reverse racists. It is amusing (in the saddest of ways) that, when the tables turn, we humans neglect what is right in front of our face: i.e., the violence of labels; to mark an entire continent or an entire race as inferior or culpable is, to make it plain, disastrous and dangerous—and yet nevertheless inevident, as evidenced by the current state of affairs, which are impossible to ignore because flagrant and frenetic. To recoil in the opposite direction (which I have already mentioned, and which I think Fanon recommends) lacks wisdom and historical evidence—and (given our unprecedented connectedness) sophisticated relevance. We want a better world and yet we revel in devilment. Case in point (regarding the attribution of culpability): “most responsible for the racialization of thought, or at least for the first movement toward[s] that thought, are and remain those Europeans who have never ceased to set up white culture to fill the gap left by the absence of other cultures” (Fanon, 1963, p. 212); case in point again: “we have seen that the whites were used to putting all Negroes in the same bag” (Fanon, 1963, p. 215). I get it, believe you me, I get it; but heck, after years of resentment and ‘butting heads’ with ‘white liberals’ and pasty men, I am dead; over it; debased by an administration that is faceless and deadly. And for what? My resentment did nothing but create enemies, burn bridges, and foster self-disgust; did nothing but leave me burnt-

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<sup>72</sup> It should be noted that I have never read the actual work of Gramsci (e.g., the *Prison Notebooks*), I have only read about him (his theories), which I supplemented with podcasts; that said, from what I recall, I am not too far off: so, when I say Gramscian ethics, what I mean is: get out of your ivory towers and into the streets—i.e., practice what you preach. Also, he referred to the bastard fascists as the *Bandar-log* (those mischievous monkeys in *The Jungle book*). And I love that. But again, my comprehension with respect to him and *all* is limited—so take everything I say with a grain of salt.

out, alienated, and stuck (a social experiment, if you will; an utter failure, a bust); but maybe I miss the point; maybe the real mechanism of decolonization and “disalienation”<sup>73</sup> is indeed the physical and emotional release that comes with and through violent struggle (with the people) in the fight for liberation (similar, by way of contrast, to the cathartic release of the intelligentsia in expressive literature, which Fanon (1963) interprets as a sort of tactic on behalf of the colonizers “[who, like good parents, encourage such literary expressions] to avoid their dramatization [on the national stage] and to [thus] clear the atmosphere” (p. 239); that said, I have my doubts; call me a pessimist, but the struggle is real—the violent struggle, that is—for I have seen people, young people, die (held their hands and watched them pass before my eyes), a series of lasting, traumatic images of which makes me question whether the psychophysical detriment of these experiences are any different from the insidious effects of intergenerational trauma (a trauma of which the dean of far-seeing knowledges<sup>74</sup> thinks we pander to ad nauseam);<sup>75</sup> or maybe Fanon expands upon this topic in the final chapter on “Colonial War and Mental Disorders.” Or maybe I should look to the example of the invasive violent British who seem just fine—wealthy, stable, educated, you name it. Or maybe I should look to the example of the white nationalists below the Mason–Dixon line. Or maybe I should look to the example of self and the work of LaRocque and see that the physical plane is the wrong plane for decolonization; indeed, maybe I should accept the premise that the more suitable plane for decolonization is the understated plane; i.e., the mind part of decolonization; that is to say, maybe decolonization lies in education around misrepresentation; or maybe Negritude was on to something; maybe we as natives need a book, a bible, a sort of *Kapital*, something to reaffirm our existence, something to help us organize and reorganize ourselves around an image and a system. Or maybe I should get back to the text. “To speak more of African culture than of national culture will tend to lead [the cultivated men of Africa] up a blind alley” (Fanon, 1963, p. 216); again, here he reiterates the backwardness of this continental approach; for, according to his conception of

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<sup>73</sup> Fanon, 1967, p. 4.

<sup>74</sup> I could “tell the truth and shame the devil”—Rabelais—but what the hell. Youse goofy and aight in my books.

<sup>75</sup> What I think I mean is this: violent struggle (as a reality) will undoubtedly leave a small or large proportion of the newly liberated nation in as bad of shape as almost all the other subjugated populations who have been *forced thru the washing machine* of (cultural) genocide (e.g., res schools, forced removals, battles over land, war, etc.)—and by bad shape I mean psychosocially, psychosomatically, psychophysiological-ly; which means, in the proverbial sense, violence begets violence, my friends; reclaiming the land through violence, then, is like going through chemotherapy (a systemic cleanse) and failing, in the end, to *thoroughly* denature the colony, or at least the resistant components of that metastatic colony: which inevitably propagates and eats, from the inside out, the body (politic). In other words, once again: violence begets violence, my friends. [“We victims and victimizers, we’re part of the same humanity, colleagues in the same endeavor to prove the existence of ideologies, feelings, heroic deeds, religions, obsessions. And the rest of humanity, the great majority, what are they engaged in?” (*Timerman*, prisoner, 111; taken from the chapter “Culture of Terror, Space of Death” in *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man* by Michael Taussig).]

decolonization, the forward-thinking approach begins, first and foremost, with the nation, then logically propagates across the continent, and conceivably drives out colonization the while. (You can see here the influence of existentialism, from Nietzsche to Sartre, which begins at home, with the self, the local, then conceivably propagates outwards in toto—which, in a sense (in this case) means the social: from the self—the individual—to the social; from the window to the wall; and here is where I come upon a major quagmire and a driving question for me: the ole “*Which is it?*” The individual or the society? And, while I have you, why the binary? Perhaps it is all of the above; or none of the above, or better to struggle violently.) And there it is again: the violence. To be or not to be? Noble mind or troubled sea? As a part-time member of the colonized, it easy to surmise exactly why the latter is often picked; seeing as ‘proof of culture’ (an alternative to violence) matters little with regards to racism, colonization, and claims around misrepresentation:

the need to exist side by side with the European Cultural Society. ... [T]he anxiety to be present ... with a culture springing from the very heart of the African continent. ... [T]his Society [the African Cultural Society] will very quickly show its inability to shoulder these different tasks, and will limit itself to *exhibitionist demonstrations* [emphasis added], while the habitual behavior of the members of this Society will be confined to showing Europeans that such a thing as African culture exists.... We have shown that such an attitude is normal and draws its legitimacy from the lies propagated by men of Western culture (Fanon, 1963, p. 215).

Which leads to the below-emphasized line that haunts me day and night:

The native intellectual nevertheless sooner or later will realize that you do not show proof of your nation from its culture but that you substantiate its existence in the fight which the people wage against the forces of occupation. [...] *You will never make colonialism blush for shame by spreading out little-known cultural treasures under its eyes* [emphasis added]. At the very moment when the native intellectual is anxiously trying to create a cultural work he fails to realize that he is utilizing techniques and language which are borrowed from the stranger in his country.<sup>76</sup> He contents himself with stamping these instruments with a hallmark which he wishes to be national, but which is strangely reminiscent of exoticism. The native intellectual who comes back to his people by way of cultural achievements behaves in fact like a foreigner (Fanon, 1963, p. 223).

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<sup>76</sup> You can see here where Audre Lorde, at least in part, draws her influence; which makes me wonder about the h-index of Fanon in contrast to Lorde. A useless note, but a note nonetheless.

In the same way that we can never appease the colonizer, the student should never set out to sycophantically dance for—nor obsequiously, obediently acquiesce to the demands of—the professor (who is indeed, as a critical theorist would admit, an apparatus of the state;<sup>77</sup> in other words, *in Althusserian terms*, an ideological state apparatus); and so, as you can see, I write for self: to work out the problems I see as personal (and thus, according to the academy, unworthy);<sup>78</sup> yes, the personal indeed, issues of which I wish to unravel (and ever so virtuously, I might add) for the sake of the social; a process of which I auto-theorize as self-as-social; a sort of “self-in-relation”<sup>79</sup>—except, in this case, less communitarian and more discrete, brazen, and action-based—all of which leads to the following quote: a shining example of confirmation bias, and, once again, another existential claim:

The colonized man who writes for his people ought to use the past with the intention of opening the future, as an invitation to action and a basis for hope. But to ensure that hope and to give it form, he must [alone] take part in action and throw himself body and soul into the national struggle [within] (Fanon, 1963, p. 232).

Here we see the first of many allusions (at least in this chapter) to physicality (the body, *muscle*, action), which I revert, fold back, and relate to the mind, and which I consider to be of vital importance (though not of central importance) to my thesis, and to my entire body of thought: which is why I plan to cycle ‘home’ (to Muskoday First Nation) in a few days, which is approximately 900 kilometers away (a place of which I have never been and yet *need* to visit, wish to visit—and have since 2016 (when I found out it existed; when I found out I was ‘Indian’); call it a self-imposed, ritual-esque vision quest; taking vengeance and making the best of it; which, in my mind, answers the question—of how to divest the self of fecklessness (not to mention affectlessness, an excess of constructed deficits, and the appendage of negative affect in urban denizens); which renders and re-renders the question; which reshapes and re-poses the question of How to arrest the agentic dimension of self-destructive insurrection—how to make exceptions, how to temper the will to indiscretion (born on the back of interpolative messages), how to, in essence,

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<sup>77</sup> See Poulantzas, 2014; see Nietzsche, 2005:

In brief, “the state lies in all the tongues of good and evil [of Manichaeism], and whatever it may tell you, it lies — and whatever it has [land], it has stolen” (p. 34)

<sup>78</sup> But nevertheless quite worthy to me: such is the repressed (read: sublimated) libido of my autoethnography: “experience, coordinated and stylized, lies behind every sentence. If in the end I have consented to a general tone, it is because I know that I could, at every line, every word, produce innumerable concrete facts” (Memmi, 1991, p. xi–xii). “Above all, [do not overlook] the importance, the richness, of personal experience” (Memmi, 1991, p. xi).

<sup>79</sup> Fyre Jean Graveline (as cited in Kovach, 2009, p. 14).

take the struggle within and to smuggle it—into the world of self-empowerment (like a savage Nietzsche who believes in self-creation, but in a way that is novel, and methodologically native): in this vein, Coulthard (2014) suggests we attempt to achieve a state of self-recognition “though cultural practices of individual and collective self-fashioning” (p. 18), to which I add the magical practice of education (both internal and external, self and world, self and nation, self-in-relation, self as social-affirmation, an oblique kinesiological perspective on disalienation); out of the body and into the world, onto the pavement, onto the page, for the sake of the self (as social): the local, the community (let it propagate and build immunity); and let us call it a provocative and a higher-order duty; through action, sublimation—two wheels and a crank: sport/leisure/recreation, in place of war, self-hatred, procrastination—debate (audience-less debates; echo chambers); a sort of self-annihilation: which, at bottom, is not unlike the bottle—not at all; or maybe I am wrong and my consciousness is false; a false consciousness; addiction is indeed a monster—a shapeshifter, a trickster, a foreign slickster—different than a hit-or-miss-er—but listen, listen, in this instance: in terms of the lotto and the wisdom, the system: I proffer this: we need religion; but not religion; rather, a manuscript of agreed-upon aphorisms; a philosophy of well-nurtured skepticisms; a daily appraisal of inner convictions; a body of knowledge whose main tenet is this: This bag of opinions is full of holes: your mission (for the sake of joy, as a form of rebellion) is to poke a few more holes in it; your job (for the sake of dissidence) is to stay ultra-curious, and to break what isn’t broke, and then fix it: you can start, first and foremost, with the monolithic; then work backwards, towards *The Story of Ferdinand*, *Peter Rabbit*, and *The Little Prince*—call it food for thought and consciousness; children’s literature; spit-shine the conscience and make it glitter; and—in terms of the above comment on religion—worry not: I speak as a godless hypocrite; because all I know is this; there is no revolution where the bottle is a given; and so contra-bottle it is: and, in its place: a Wiki-bender of all things indigenous; and maybe a heart-rate monitor to honour the circulatory system (“*truth as Circle!*”; circle it! the crank: *a revolution implicit*): overcome indecision, flog contrition, and slaughter cynicism; the heart needs love; condition it; awful as it is—this regime of healthism—but listen, the good news is this: you can individualize it, you can eschew the gym; for instance, the crank is my militia; whose generosity increases with increases in angular velocity; the crank! recreation, embodiment; a walk, a daily walk in nature to give form to thought—anything is possible—regarding the existential idea around congruence, by Rogers, which involves the all-mighty Circle, plural, like a Venn diagram, a bicycle, with me in the middle, a triangle, trying to increase the overlap of the circles—of my perceived and ideal selves—thru action, in the name of self-overcoming,

congruence, personal congruence, psychological congruence (for the sake of bringing the two in unison, making the two a unity, like the half-breed—full, complete), another term for authenticity, in the metaphysical enigma that is life as an Indian—during an era and a time of which everyone is complicit: during an era and time of which everyone gets to listen—*but not speak*; a condition of which certain people refer to as habitus, ‘post-TRC.’ Truth and reconciliation; (forgiveness of self; forgiveness of being); forgiveness of them and you and me—indeed indeed. Sylvia Plath frees up thought; like a professional—like an espresso, like an essential shot of self-belief. Written (this piece), in its entirety, and quite fittingly, to Peace Piece—on repeat.

And so much for all of that.

Picking up where I left off, insofar as I ever started; which is questionable; nevertheless: I think it is important to reiterate, once more, that existential truths are found in action, and that *a truth you cannot live is not a truth—“can one live it?”*<sup>80</sup>—which is an existentialist claim if ever there was one, and indeed the metaphorical through line (as well as the tone: both manic and slow) of this revolutionary text (not mine, *The Wretched*); the sense of urgency, the undercurrent, the zest—for the individual to act, for the collective, in the name of the collective. Such is the pith of his message—self-as-social, as told, as mentioned, both plainly and subtextually.

*The consciousness of self is not the closing of a door to communication* [emphasis added]. Philosophic thought teaches us, on the contrary, that it is its guarantee. National consciousness, *which is not nationalism* [emphasis added], is the only thing that will give us an international dimension (Fanon, 1962, p. 247).

Here (once again) Fanon discounts the mobilization of a continental project (like the *African Cultural Society*) in favour of a Gramsci-style praxis-project, an action-based, theory-driven initiative of which is pertinent to The People and thus closer to home—like the Front de libération Nationale.<sup>81</sup>

Heck, upon reflection, even his definition of national culture has the words action and existence in it, which makes me wonder: Why is it that writers undergo these insightful existential crises at the moment just before their death—like a computer that wigs out before its final exit? I cannot help but reflect, however ineptly, about the relationship between profundity and death—but the real question is the extent of that profundity, given his connection to the (un)enlightenment project and its utter disconnection from the surrounding proletariat traditions (Memmi, 1973). Not to mention the question of whether or not his sermons and soliloquies even constitute profundity,

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<sup>80</sup> Nietzsche (as cited in May, 2004, p. 29).

<sup>81</sup> i.e., national, local—not global.

which obviously then calls into question my highly limited intellect and my sheer ignorance with respect to the Algerian context and perspective). And so, in essence:

Allow me to obsess a second longer on the existentialism of the text, which is about the only thing that ignites me out of a state of black depression. Then I shall outline the limitations of negritude, the Fanonian meaning of “African Dawn” (the poem); and the quotes that give me pause, which may or may not be important to the decolonial project.

### Existentialism Continued

Yes: let us now comb thru the text for some exceptional examples of existential sentiments, paying particular attention to what it means to exist as a collective—especially given the unfortunate reality that, no matter your level of independence, power is only found through collectives<sup>82</sup> (and here I suggest you note the calls to action in the following quote-heavy section):

Sékou Touré (as cited in Fanon, 1963): “In order to achieve real action, you must yourself be a living part of Africa and her thought” (p. 206)

Fanon (1963): “[a]s for we who have decided to break the back of colonialism, our historic mission is to sanction all revolts, all desperate actions, all those abortive attempts drowned in rivers of blood” (p. 207); “man has to liberate himself .... Whether the fight is painful, quick, or inevitable, muscular action must substitute itself for concepts” (p. 220)—this sentence turns me on as regards my thesis project, whose ontological absolute is to decolonize the mind and to suture the “double consciousness” (Du Bois, 2009, p. 8) via ‘muscular action’; “[native intellectuals] find themselves in exceptional circumstances [and] feel the need to speak to their nation, to compose the sentence which expresses *the heart of the people* [emphasis added], and to become the mouthpiece of a new reality in action” (p. 223); Fanon then goes on to describe “African Dawn”—the long poem in *The Wretch*—by Keita Fodeba as “a true invitation ... to battle” (p. 227): again:

The colonized man who writes for his people ought to use the past with the intention of opening the future, as an invitation to action and a basis for hope. But to ensure that hope and to give it form, he must take part in action and throw himself body and soul into the national struggle (p. 232).

Note the felicity of embodiment, the diction of that last sentence—a testament to the existentialist in Fanon; a powerful device of rhetoric (of artists and intellectuals alike). In hindsight, such devices are effective in their ability to *reach the people*, as it were—a sentiment (an emotional truth, a

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<sup>82</sup> Political power, that is—vastly different from the power within.

verisimilitude) of which often leads to a “lyrical fever” and a “Manichaeism” in a generation of despairing youth whose “troubled identit[ies]” (Memmi, 1973, p. 39) are front and center in the struggle for recognition—which thusly makes anyone who articulates this level of hypermasculine subjection a messiah among men (impressionable men, no less).<sup>83</sup> Regardless, I once again jump ahead; let us reconnect; let us connect instead the above quote with the following quote: “We must not therefore be content with *delving into the past* [emphasis added] of a people in order to find coherent elements which will *counteract* [emphasis added] colonialism's attempts to falsify and harm” (p. 233); Brendan Hokowhitu (2009) raises a similar point in his article on Indigenous existentialism:

Fundamentally, the search for pure traditions and precolonial authentic identities relocates an Indigenous sense-of-being in the past. In so doing, it fixes what should constantly be in flux (that is, culture) and, in turn, debilitates Indigenous existentialism. The idealism Indigenous people locate in the pure-past limits how we conceive of ourselves through the *immediacy* of experience.

Indigenous studies needs attention to the past, the future, and, most significant to this [thesis], the *immediacy* of the here and now; ‘the everyday’ (p. 103).

Hypothetically, what these two authors call for is a readjustment; the connotation being that, in practice, after years, decades, and generations of practice, the possibility of salvation or emancipation (or any other kind of ‘ation’) through counterpunches—historical counterpunches—is, though not insignificant, quite apparently limited.

Though I am not so sure about that.

But fuck it, never mind, no matter; I mean, the impulse here is to riff on privilege and *thrownness*, but the wisdom says to let sleeping dogs lie. So it is what it is.

Ultimately, to conclude this quote-heavy section (regarding the connection between action-based sentiments and existentialism), Fanon, in the closing paragraph, says: “If man is known by his acts, then we will say that the most urgent thing today for the intellectual is to build up his nation [through violent action]” (Fanon, 1963, p. 247). But I am not so sure about that either. What I distrust about it all is the desire to be known, the desire to transcend; a thought of which drives a lot of zealots over the edge; but, seeing as god is dead, perhaps too is the desire to transcend.

**Moving on.** At heart, what makes distinctions relate is the ubiquity of dehumanization: “There is no common destiny to be shared between the national cultures of Senegal and Guinea; but

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<sup>83</sup> Impressionable men who tend to gravitate towards ostensibly unassailable truths.

there is a common destiny between the Senegalese and Guinean nations which are both dominated by the same French colonialism” (Fanon, 1963, p. 234). Colonialism: “a lexical strateg[y] of belittlement” (LaRocque, 2010, p. 38); a continuum of our epidermal kinship; a jingoistic form of ethnocentric humanism (a money-spinning, myth-driven system whose existence is akin to a website that is paywall-ridden); colonialism: an ostensibly Enlightened mission; a so-called divine right to civilize with a kind dismissiveness; given this, Fanon (a dialectical intellectual, and our person of interest) does not take sides per se, but instead considers it—all of it—from the quasi-detached position of scientific distance:

Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native’s brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it. This work of devaluing pre-colonial history takes on a dialectical significance today.

When we consider the efforts made to carry out the cultural estrangement so characteristic of the colonial epoch [which George Steiner, a sympathetic member of the hunted, refers to as “‘planned amnesia’: our young are being brought up with no past” (Wachtel, 2020, 47:16)] we realize that nothing has been left to chance and that the total result looked for by colonial domination was indeed to convince the natives that colonialism came to lighten their darkness. The effect consciously sought by colonialism was to drive into the natives’ heads the idea that if the settlers were to leave, they would at once fall back into barbarism, degradation, and bestiality.

On the unconscious plane, colonialism therefore did not seek to be considered by the native as a gentle, loving mother who protects her child from a hostile environment, but rather as a mother who unceasingly restrains her fundamentally perverse offspring from managing to commit suicide and from giving free rein to its evil instincts. The colonial mother protects her child from itself, from its ego, and from its physiology, its biology, and its own unhappiness which is its very essence (Fanon, 1963, p. 211).

Cue Duchemin (1990) and the misrepresentations of non-Europeans (of the periphery) by Europeans; ludicrous images and descriptions of which are borne out of nothing other than assumptions, anecdotes, and pseudo-scientific judgments from the earliest days of contact with the ‘savages’—assumptions and myths of which evolved into a sort of “‘scientific racism,’ which declared the Indians, with indigenous peoples all over the globe, to be both culturally and biologically an inferior species” (Duchemin, 1990, p. 69); then cue Blaut (1993) and the diffusion of

culture from high to low, from the Eurocentric node of everything (including history, culture, invention, being) to the antinode of nothings; (Europe indeed, The Great Teat, without which the infants of humanity would be a travesty to being); then cue LaRocque (2010) and the civ/sav dichotomy, the expansionist myth-making system of which she exposes as a dehumanizing social doctrine (an acquisitive sort of coded economics)—a doctrine wherein the “nomadic” savages serve as “the moral antithesis to progress” (p. 43); indeed, a social doctrine, a sort of license to kill: an obligation to god; and then cue every other author in the history of counter-narratives and what you get, in essence, is the present (or rather, in the case of *The Wretched*, the people of Algeria): a situation wherein alienated human beings are backed into a corner—by an assortment of quasi-prison guards with a sense of superiority (I need not mention the Stanford prison experiment); indeed, such power disparities often catalyze the ‘action potential’ of a fed-up, desperate intellect to such an extent that it manifests in the form of *The Wretched*. Like empires that expand and contract, or lies that circle back, or falls from greatness in tragedies, or even the potential fall of the humanities, every ill-conceived acme reaches its nadir: falls from grace, as it were, are indeed law-like in such cases; for what goes up, must come down; similar to the cyclical phases of light and dark in Hieronymus Bosch—Trump and Obama (but opposite): if I am honest, I think the time of our lives is upon us. And it concerns me deeply; and yet not at all; seeing as, even in spite of the current state of affairs (the pandemic, the economy, the protests, the unrest), the material conditions of the oppressor are still quite strong; which is to say, the thing that gives me a strange sense of relief is the fact that much of the anti-imperial violence of the past took place in colonies whose nation-states were unbalanced—a direct consequence (in the case of France, at least) of the Second World War. Nevertheless, despite this instability, and despite what I think I think (like a Pollyanna who believes in world peace; like a war-mongering provincialist who ahistorically preaches), I cannot help but despair when I read political treatises like these, for I cannot help but take them ultra-, uber-seriously, because who knows what the world will look like in five years, ten years, or three months. In other words, if the shit hits the fan, and my nephews face the draft, I imagine a calm, cool, and collected descent into panic, whereby I will kick myself for never asking: Which side are you on?

The conscientious objectors? The clan? The long list of Caucasian friends who treated you like family? The professor who engages in anarchy? The seditious praters who relay a sort of ideological insanity? What a travesty! We must effort to ask such things! We must effort to examine our beliefs! Because if, as the existentialists believe, a truth is only true if you can act on it (and still breathe), then what about the militant who gets his blains blown free? and what about the reverbs of

the person who squeezes? What is truth indeed? What is your onto-epistemological position? especially in times like these? Cue the historical images of unyielding beliefs—Tiananmen, Oka, Vietnam, the man with the gun to his head and an inflexible mien. Cue Helmuth von Moltke and take stock of cavalier people. Indeed, my friends, indeed: What is truth for thee? And how tall does it stand against the backdrop of history? And how low does it lie under the LaRocquean eye of scrutiny?

Out with it! Your position!

At the very least admit to the influence of Steiner and his aphorisms, which condition your opinion: “In signal instances, writers, musicians, artists, and academics sided, more or less overtly, or by indifference, with the agencies of the inhuman” (Steiner, 2013, 0:07). And so which is it? Do I take up a sort of stiffness with my indigenous position? Or do I show up on game day and cross the picket?

Put different: Do I consign my soul to totalizing theorists who espouse the necessity of their henchmen to pick? Or do I free-spirit it and disappear into the mist?

Jesus, even I get sick of my own shit.

Back to the text, now *texts*, seeing as I included Emma, etc.

Nevertheless, I think this questioning is what it means to be on the fence, what it means to pay attention, what it means to understand that “existence...precede[s] essence”,<sup>84</sup> in essence, I think the hidden thread of decolonization is akin to the vagus nerve of life; the thread of which connects the belly, heart, and mind; that said, at this point in the record, the intellect might be our closet bet; in other words, we have to *think* our way out of this labyrinthine dimension; then and only then can our bodies open up, flower, unbend; sit up straight as opposed to cry; feel no shame and live no lie; shoulders back: an inkling of pride; on the bus, in public, brown to blue eye. And thus it is my contention that education, however unsexy, is central to the decolonization of the mind. Question, *educate*, and discover a history that aligns. Education, you see, as central, and user-friendly in its style. Edification, like kintsugi: a salve for the broken mind—edification, like kitsugi: as if a movie wherein you discover that you, like the bone, are strongest at the break; call it an aesthetics of imperfection: idiosyncratic re-perception for the native; a sort of survival strategy, if you will—a game within a game. Because hey, you can rage against the machine all you want—you can thwack away at its consolidated walls—you can think you are different, special, and not at fault—you can read

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<sup>84</sup> Heidegger (as cited in Sartre, 1943/1969, p. 460).

Shakespeare, act in *Macbeth*, and champion the virtues of Conrad, Ellison, and Becker; hitchhike, ride bike, count coup, and act demented; but then comes the day you re-read 217–220 of the *The Wretched*, and *bam!* you wince, take a knee, and feel pensive—given the unexpected and epiphanic need to re-center—for the work of this go-getter is prophetic (at least in part, in those pages abovementioned); in essence, he had you pegged from the start, before you were even born; which is to say, you are a symptom, predictable and malignant, of colonial scorn: the projected result of “psycho-affective injuries” galore (p. 18); in other words, the psycho-existential dimensions you exhibit are the norm—you are *not special*—and this, my friends, is a good lesson: yes, it is what a respectable education teaches you, as it transforms you: a benefit; and, well, what can I say? without it we are lesser—impressionable, predictable, disconnected—desperate for some sort of imperceptible, ever-lasting connection—hence the paradoxical desire to escape: to disconnect from our state of disconnection. Broken-hearted, absent men: running around like coop of chickens without heads; trying again and again to filter into a society that oppresses. “[A] stranger in his own land” (Fanon, 1963, p. 220), belonging to everyone and no one—like Memmi (1957/1991). An everyday fog—this lack of “anchorage”—thick and heavy (Fanon, 1963, p. 217). Rudderless, disempowered, and unsteady. And always already about to disappear—*like a backwater eddy*.<sup>85</sup> If you look close, you will see, clear as day, despite your feelings of readiness, that there you ain’t. Your entire life, a posturing (before a steamed-up mirror)—for shame. Stuck in a bind, between the rock cliché; the time has come, my friend, to face your education unafraid. *The time is now*, as Bolo once stated—to address your fallacies, and to assert your placement. Vulnerable, you admit your weaknesses, you bolster your strengths; for you know what you need, and what has to take place. And so instead of asking, you decide: *the time is now*—so pluck up your courage

and Queequeg your clam chowder.

Or stand down, like Bartleby, and remain dour.

Welcome to the ambivalence of the decolonizing hour.

And there I go again....

Look, my friend, all of the above is to say:

[If] we are going to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery [then we must do so ourselves, alone: an existential claim] because whilst others might free the body, none but ourselves can free the mind. Mind is your only ruler, sovereign. The man who is not able to

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<sup>85</sup> That’s all you, PK.

develop and use his mind is bound to be the slave of the other man who uses his mind  
(Marcus Garvey, as cited in Hooley, 2015, p. 2).

I hereby redress the unfortunate reality regarding the proclivity of Garvey and Fanon (and others of the ilk) to speak exclusively (as if by default) to men and not women—which reminds me of “The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and how such gendered attitudes of men over women intersect with the misrecognition of white over other; in other words—in terms of the Hegelian master–slave (the dialectic)—aka, the ole subject-object interdependence—such hierarchical relationships are detrimental. Which is why, seeing as we are discussing colonization as an ideological license to dehumanize, otherize, trivialize, kill, dispossess, behead, infect, belittle, etc., I must insert a quotable Gilman-based insurrection—which, in a nutshell, captures the colonial essence: “To swallow and follow, whether old doctrine or new propaganda [whether anti-Indigenous propaganda in the form of captivity narratives; or anti-Semitic propaganda in the form of films, posters, newspapers, children’s books, youth organizations, etc.; or whether the divisive propaganda of the social-media present; or whether the left-and-right invective of the World Wide Web, or even just the general venom of the digital dimension, whatever; etc., etc.; overall, the wholesale swallowing of ideology] is a weakness still dominating the human mind” (Gilman, 1892, p. 81). Glen Sean Coulthard (a Fanonian, Marxist, Dene scholar) notes how patriarchy figures into the analysis of decolonization, and how Fanon and Co. fail to take into account “the role [of] patriarchy in this corrosive configuration of [colonial] power” (p. 21). At this point I wish to explore essentialisms and the politics of difference (aka identity politics and particularisms); that said, such positions and essentialisms (whether strategic or not) are often in conflict and in service of no other purpose than to *mark*—but, because I am already marked, I foresee the immediate need to go back to the start; basically, these arguments are not my cup a tea; too, they are beyond the scope of this life—seeing as, after all, “existence precedes essence”<sup>86</sup> (which is likely *the* central tenet of existentialism).

I do not believe I have addressed the limitations of negritude yet. Allow me instead to cover the three phases of native writers and intellectuals, which I consider a most remarkable section. In the first phase, Fanon (1963) says, we see a desire to impress, to show evidence of assimilation (p. 222); in the second phase, we find madness, the “literature of just-before-the-battle” (p. 222); it is here that we come upon a period of nostalgia and navel-gazing, not to mention an eerie penchant for humor in what Fanon astutely labels “a period of distress and difficulty, where death is

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<sup>86</sup> Heidegger (as cited in Sartre, 1943/1969, p. 460).

experienced, and disgust too” (p. 222); in the third phase, we find an ardent mouthpiece, an existential revolutionary, a sort of Malcom X figure, who, fed up with colonial oppression, arrives on the scene to awake and “shake the people” (p. 222). In sum, negritude is earnest but wishful in its thinking, a sincere project of pan-African disalienation—a wrong-headed quest for collective affirmation—through the European methods of phonetic linear notation (aka, literature, linguistics), methods of which are governed by a system (rules, syntax, diction, all of which are British) and underwritten by the Logos. Indeed, a sort of war on the cultural plane, a form of storytelling that undercuts the tradition of orality, by race—which is to say: consider the Socratic work of Plato, which we uphold as a work of European genius and canonical greatness, the while we hold it over the despicable folklore of savage pagans. A racist fact of which harks back to the analysis of LaRocque (2010) who reveals the politics of this civ/sav process—who exposes the ideological blind spot of writers who think White is superior and Other is not—who depicts how numerous authors cast savagery as the “antithesis to human fitness” (p. 40)—read: the antithesis to genius, civility, heroism, husbandry, Christianity, biology, technology, and, in all, so-called progress—despite substantive evidence (which she unveils) to the contrary; she also shows that savages are hard pressed to quibble over historical inaccuracies and double standards, for the ‘civilage’ is harmless in comparison to the savage:

They engaged in murder, pillaging, scalping, torturing, sexual assault, deceit, dishonesty, drunkenness, laziness, and generally “lawless” behaviour. They exhibited cruelty, cowardice, greed, ignorance, bigotry, and irreverence. Many were fully or semi-illiterate, and most wandered from place to place. In fact, they were so much like the very traits they purported to see and hate in “Indians” (p. 48).

And there it is; the prestige: the trick: that is, for anyone who isn’t LaRocque or interested, you probably thought “they” equated, factually, to “Indians”—well, my friend, you thought wrong—school-book history wrong; I mean, was not the clue “historical” obvious; for it is here that LaRocque exposes the other side of Whitey—as monster; as psychological projectors of inner problems; and she does so, I might add, with extensive evidence, and splendid nonchalance.

All that said, back to Negritude, and Coulthard (2014) who mentions: “Fanon, although critical of the at times bourgeois and essentialist character of certain works with the *negritude* tradition, nonetheless saw the project as necessary” (p. 43).

Now, before I lose my train of eleventh-hour unity, allow me to relay some key takeaways from Negritude and Fanon as regards this section and its topic: that is, the role of the national culture in decolonization, and groupthink consciousness:

It is true that the attitude of the native intellectual sometimes takes on the aspect of a cult or of a religion. But if we really wish to analyze this attitude correctly we will come to see that it is symptomatic of the intellectual's realization of the danger that he is running in cutting his last moorings and of breaking adrift from his people (Fanon, 1963, p. 217);

As you can see, Fanon posits that if we want to survive as a peoples, as a discrete series of distinct, autonomous, sovereign nations (and not just as a body of subjugated, indolent, and wasted fragments), then we must reject what tempts us most—our Will to Whitey<sup>87</sup>—and replace it with a will to the people, the culture, the nation, in the fight for liberation (self-as-social, self-in-relation). Now, before you think I buy this craziness, let me assure you, quite frankly, that I do not, I hate it;<sup>88</sup> the “lyrical fever” of *liberatory dude-bros* is dangerous (Memmi, 1973, p. 39; David, n.d.).<sup>89</sup>

This joint responsibility is not the fact of a metaphysical principle but the awareness of a simple rule which wills that every independent nation in an Africa where colonialism is still entrenched is an encircled nation, a nation which is fragile and in permanent danger” (Fanon, 1963, p. 247).

Indeed:

Fanon was attuned to ways in which the individual and collective revaluation of black culture and identity could serve as a source of pride and empowerment, and if approached critically and directed appropriately, could help jolt the colonized into an ‘actional’ existence, as opposed to a ‘reactional’ one characterized by resentment (Coulthard, 2014, p. 43–44).

As you can probably see, this part of the project has done nothing but challenge my beliefs (or rather the dogmatic doctrine of my body-logic); indeed, after all these days, I no longer know what to think; *all I know is nothing*; and all I have are questions; gone is any trace of confidence; and with it, the answers—the easy answers, to all that is complex. Like a collect call to *Hooked on Phonics*. I am left with nada. Like an emasculated Uncle Tom. *A total disaster*. A split man who eschews the

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<sup>87</sup> “For the [native] there is only one destiny. And it is white” (Fanon, 1967, p. 4).

<sup>88</sup> A false note; Nat Turner this bitch.

<sup>89</sup> A false note: Nat Turner this bitch. The only thing dangerous about it all is the loss of privilege. Fuck privilege.

*yada yada*—and so I am left no choice but to leave you with a quotation from the master—the civ-sav master:

“It is disturbing that so few scholars have really noticed the stark dehumanization that is engineered so casually” (LaRocque, 2010, p. 58).

## Episode 1.1: a sort of correspondence

### 1.2: an unsent letter to a little Indian

From: CP

Subject: Study Habits

To: [me]

May 13, 2020 at 11:40 PM [received]

I need studying advice and I know your the guy to ask, you taught me the 40 mins on 5-10 off pomodoro technique and am looking for more.

Say I want to absorb a lecture, remember most of what was taught. How do I do that? Do I write a couple sentences over and over again? I've always felt that I had trouble remembering info due to not knowing HOW to study. & I hear my friends all the time being happy with a 70 on their course. But I know a 4.0 GPA is fully capable because you've told me you done it. Obviously there is a way that works best for you so what is it?

From: [me]

RE Study habits

To: CP

May 15, 2020 at 1:43 AM [Found in **Drafts** – [umb\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*@myumanitoba.ca](mailto:umb*****@myumanitoba.ca) Mailbox]

I can write a thousand pages on the topic of study habits. For the sake of time and space, however, allow me to merely say: simple is sophistication—in other words, to hell with specific, rote methods: instead, approach the art of study as if your life depends on it; because it does. The acquisition of knowledge is akin to the accumulation of tools (for the mechanic with the most tools, not to mention the most experience with those tools, is likely the most capable mechanic in the field; maybe not the best but definitely among the most efficient). Indeed, think of yourself as not a scholar but a strategizer. Think of your classmates as not collaborators but competition (for grades! top grades! I know, I know: a sad reality; a shame). And think of your party-going acquaintances as not stress-relieving aids but as hindrances and distractions and escapes—from the dull, repetitive, *necessary* labours (and make no mistake about it: the dull, repetitive labours are *The Reality of Good Grades*—there is no shortcut nor panacea to literacy; the quicker you understand that, the better; so accept it, the reality of your existence, and save yourself the headache of buying into charlatanisms—from quacks who are in the business of selling snake oil to idiots; instead, *trick yourself* into loving the labour of scholastics—until it becomes a habit; and take into consideration the fact that habituation is a process, which takes anywhere from three weeks to four months; then, once you've habituated (after a period of labour), resist the urge to escape and over-celebrate; instead calm the fuck down and keep the momentum moving forwards—always forwards; like the Chinese proverb says: Learning is like rowing upstream; not to advance is to drop back). And quit rap. In a sense, '*rap is bad*' (I always forget to mention that I quit rap music during my undergrad—

music with lyrics in general);<sup>90</sup> I mean, think about it: the linguistic patterns of muzak can indeed shape and map your reality—for the worse. Personally, I *used music*, used it like a drug (which it sort of is), when I was OK with a 2.0—the minimum grade point average to stay eligible for football (when I thought—as a disinterested cynic—that life was “get money, fuck bitches”); but it isn’t! far from it! and so, when I began to take my studies seriously—*that word again is seriously*—I quit the lyricists, see? I quieted the messages of my external environment and sharpened the messages of my internal environment; *thinking* through difficult questions is a large percentage of an education, my friend; it is not merely about the time you spend at the desk; it is also about the time you spend in contemplation, or in conversation (with profs, classmates, and lecturers—or with whatever specific community of apprentices you find yourself in, or surround yourself with); contemplation is a tool, thinking is a tool—it literally uses energy; a lot of energy: and the harder the problem, the more expensive the cost.

#### ENDURE THE DULL, REPETITIVE LABOUR TO ACHIEVE THE OVERALL GOAL

Find a way to convince yourself that you *love* to study—and never, not for a second, allow yourself to complain—which is to say, do your best to *Detect and Reject* negative thoughts, attitudes, and protestations; eschew anti-intellectual gripes, pseudo-intellectual objections, and...remember: a forward-thinking mindset *is all about perspective*.

Again; remember: thinking and contemplating—aka, intellectual labour (the opposite of physical labour)—is stressful. So, when you find yourself anxious and fretful, or when you feel an overwhelming sense of The Dreadful (wearing on you, infecting your nightly dreams, ruining your ability to converse and relax and sleep, and swaying your capacity to enjoy the pleasures of problem solving), then allow yourself (your senses, your nerves, your brains, your eyes) the time to *completely and consciously relax*. Naps work, but conscious relaxation thru meditation is superior. Yes, in such moments of dreadful anxiety (of melancholic despair), simply allowing yourself to go thru the motions of intellectual labour is sufficient; pragmatically speaking, “doing the best you can” is often a good thing to focus on. I recently re-learned this bit of wisdom upon an important examination (which is another way of saying that I still sometimes fail, still make mistakes; the difference between the mistakes of yesterday and those of today are that I now fail forwards, onwards, greater); and so, during this important examination, you see, I’d burned out approximately thirty hours before my presentation; hadn’t slept in days; almost called it off; almost, that is, until I went for a walk and ‘paddled my own canoe’ with some positive self-talk; I treated myself like my own best friend, in a sense; I said, or rather autosuggested, that it was OK to fail, that it was OK to show up and simply do my best;<sup>91</sup> that it was OK to move forwards as best as *I myself* could move forwards (*not* as best as *someone else* could move forwards, but me myself); so I switched gears and thought “Time to think of the mind in terms of the body”—which inevitably led to analogies of athletics (our bread and butter, brother); that is, I had to remind myself that the hard work was done, finished; completed in the off-season; worked on in practice; and that it was now time to relax and show up—to play ball, to have fun—to contemplate and solve problems on the run—I had to remind myself, I had to remember, that it was OK to be myself, it was OK to do my best; I had to accept that “If I failed, I failed”—and that “If I lost the game, I lost the game.” Again, I conceptualized the lead-up to this important examination—amid all my anxieties, butterflies, complexes, syndromes, neuroses, sense of inferiority...not to mention my overwhelming sense of incompleteness and unpreparedness (regarding the idea, the panic-stricken idea, that there was still more work to do, more words to polish, more efforts to be made, etc., etc.: again, the “butterflies,” in a sense)—yes, amid all of this (OLIVE THIS), I had to remind myself that the

<sup>90</sup> Unless that rap was 2Pac. I mean, c’mon; pick and choose him all you want. And take a lesson from his rawness—his interest in politics, his honesty, the list goes on, like his life—a sort of brutalist citadel of inexorable knowledges.

<sup>91</sup> Which, mind you, is quite difficult for the perfectionist—

day before an examination was akin to the day before a football game (which we once knew as pre-game—‘walk-through’—a half-effort refresher); indeed, I’d worked myself so hard in the preceding weeks that the best thing for me to do was to take a day, to contemplate, to relax, to stretch the orbs and the synapses of my burned-out grey matter...to allow potential questions from my examiners to loose themselves from the sulci, germinate, and pattern)—and, as luck would have it, I passed—not with flying colours per se, but no matter.<sup>92</sup> Look, kid, I’m not smart, far from it; in actuality, I am a slow learner; in my undergrad, for instance, I was always the last one out of the exam room—a painful experience, especially when a good friend of mine would finish in 40 minutes what would take me two or three hours to complete (it should be noted, however, that I always did better than him, even though I always entered the exam room 29 minutes late—as per my “pre-game” ritual in which I avoided, strategically, the overcrowded, over-anxious, and over-caffeinated waiting areas—yes, 29 minutes late, for they locked the door after 30 minutes (and wouldn’t that’ve been a disaster...like the time I showed up late to an ACT exam and they wouldn’t let me in—there went that possible scholarship, and school visit); it should also be noted that I squeezed the hell out of those 29 minutes, used them wisely for one final in-depth review, but in peaceful silence, and reassuring solitude).<sup>93</sup> Anyways, like I said, I always did better than him, which thoroughly ticked him off. So, look yourself in the mirror and be honest: intellectually, you are probably slow, but not dumb,<sup>94</sup> for you are enriched with

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<sup>92</sup> Keep in mind that I was under much duress and pressure during this time...expected to sprint a marathon to save my life. Plus it was the dawn of uncertainty—and I had already moved eight or nine times in the two months that preceded covid, and then I was sort of homeless (when the pandemic struck); that said, with my back against the wall, I managed to ante up. But, as evidenced above, I almost went nuts (seeing as I holed up and shut off my phone and worked every single day and night alone for an entire month); which is to say, easy does it: a key to success in university is to slow the fuck down, which involves the *SLOW ACCUMULATION* of knowledge: i.e., the day by day grind, day in, day out—*every single day*: the review before class, the undistracted focus in class, the review immediately after class, and then *the all-important study session that evening*; all of which, in spurts, accumulates; you must also *meditate* on whatever food for thought your profs inspire in you that day (which is why any job that is not a student job often gets in the way of progress); you must make time for contemplation; you must make time for deliberation; you must make time for office hours with professors for the sake of deliberate conversation); you must sharpen thinking during the time of your education—which is to say, sharpen your mind; and think along the lines of iron sharpens iron. Consider it all a slow but precise grind. And realize that university life (as with the sharpening of a mind) *is a marathon and not a sprint*; even so, when it comes to the finish, sometimes you have to dig deep and sprint it; a sprint of which you’ll be prepared for, though, compared to the ones who crammed the night before an exam and landed themselves balls deep in unstableness. And, last but not least, *Know Thy Syllabus*—inside and out, before the first day of class—be responsible for everything and never complain; consider university a privilege, not an obligation—honour it; and spit-shine your future, your consciousness; improve your condition; calmly revel in what makes other people sick; like the athlete who wakes early for track because he knows football is about the sprint—not the biceps of the gym. Honour what is difficult; be about it with a grin—a subtle grin; with a relaxed gaze—a sort of humble glint.

<sup>93</sup> You may be thinking here “But I thought you were supposed to be relaxing and not cramming before an exam?” If so, how shrewd of you, my friend; yes, you are correct—sort of; for here is where we come upon the difference between graduate and undergraduate studies (see Bloom’s taxonomy): both fields of study and apprenticeship occupy two different sections of the critical mind. That said, such a taxonomic conception is but a hierarchy—which means it is your job (as an Indian with an imposed politics) to encircle it, sink it, and overcome it (the hierarchy, that is), with wisdom, intuition, and stick-to-itiveness...in essence, *play* as if your life depends on it. I mean, in a game of basketball, do you work or play? You play. And you *play hard*—because sport (like life) is unfortunately a game, whose end result is a part of who you are, the totality of who you are. It thus follows that *who you are* is dependent upon *how hard you play*, and whether or not you lose or win the game.

That is to say, who came in second during the 2010 Olympics?

(Man, talk about being infected by a neoliberal system. Look kid, it is what it is; life is hard & full of cysts.)

<sup>94</sup> Slow indeed—I mean, as a former truant, I’ll be the first to admit that we—a couple of wild, urban Indians from the North End—are obviously behind the eight ball in terms of phonetic linear notation; meaning, in the same way that the majority of the enlightened rationalists cannot run as fast as us, we cannot comprehend as fast as them; at least not yet; *but perhaps soon*; for if we continue to act as bridges for the kids, then maybe one day we will give the bastards a reason to sweat & trip; believe in it; for the BS these bastards peddled about us while we peddled shrunken heads is soon to come to an end—but only if we continue to act as bridges—and not as victims who threaten to bellyflop off of them....

visceral intelligence and lived experience; resourcefulness; indeed, you are capable of anything, kid, and you know it; so enough with the denial already—and quit being a “little bitch”). *Almost* anything, that is. (If only the face in the clock were friendly, unlike Iago to a snitch; that is, you are running out time and plasticity, which is important if you care to cement some lasting knowledge within.) And so it is: with that triteness in mind (the ole ‘anything is possible’), I say take action, and move yourself ten steps forwards so your kids only have to take two—instead of twelve. You are not the answer to familial absences, nor to common Indigenous problems, but you may be a bridge. Put different: you may not (at least not individually) leap the gap, the chasm, but you may help bridge it—like an individual athlete in a team sport: How good is a quarterback with a horrible offensive tackle? Indeed, you are only as strong as your weakest link. And our weakest link, in this nonindigenous world, is literacy. So immerse yourself in it. Or wait around for the revolution like a wimp.<sup>95</sup>

Yes, so, if you are as committed to intellectual labour as you think you are, or as you hint, then maybe your job henceforth (until the age of 26) is to sacrifice your time, your pleasures, and your desires—for the sake of not only you, but your familial future. Legacy is literacy (with a side of numeracy). And, yeah, yeah, surely money is security. *But knowledge is power...*

All that said, there are some tools (or resources) that can help you get that 4.0—no doubt about it. When I worked for the Academic Learning Centre—as a sorry excuse for a writing tutor<sup>96</sup>—I always suggested these straightforward handouts (tools/resources): <https://umanitoba.ca/student/academiclearning/handouts/handouts.html>

After you click the link, scroll down to “Tip sheets for writing and study skills”—  
and think of each subsection as a different muscle—  
which is to say, always work the core—and never forget the legs

Consider these tools/resources/methods as top-of-the-line tools/resources/methods, in the same way that you would worship a top-of-the-line workout program—simply put: these tools only work as well as you work them. For the most part, I intuited my way through university—with a sort of Ahab madness—but I nevertheless incorporated some of these tools into my methods as the years progressed (most of which, once again, I had already partially intuited, through time-consuming trial and error, and depression); and, to be sure, I only used the tools that jumped out at me and affirmed my preferences; I mean, let’s not forget: I approached the art of study from the perspective of My Life Depends On It—because it did. From there, I found *my* way. Your job is to find *yours*. Immerse yourself in whatever is in front of you. Commit yourself to it. And find the bliss in the bullshit makes other people sick.

*‘If it were easy, everyone would do it.’*

If I do not stop myself here, I’ll find myself writing a book—or a thesis? Unfortunately, time is money. Which means, if I were a counsellor, you’d owe me big

I expect repayment via accomplishment

Find YOUR way (like a wayfinder)—the above-mentioned admonishments were mine.

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<sup>95</sup> Or, if you are serious, get after it like Nat Turner did. I tried and failed, got whipped—to wit: minus 10 grand, a C+; alienated, blackballed, gaslit...an endless list. And all I did, for the most part, was call a racist a racist—which he later *admitted*...—a member of the administration, no less; but heck, at least he admitted it, I guess.

<sup>96</sup> I know, right? A university tutor.... Come interview day, I pulled the wool over their eyes like you wouldn’t believe. *Smoke and mirrors, baby! smoke and mirrors! I mean, if they wanna label us as myth-driven savages who use black magic, then let em have it*

## NOW NOW | BLINKERED BOMBAST | “I SPIT YOU OUT”

Find YOUR why—which ties into that well-known Nietzschean phrase in the popular discourse these days: “A man with a why can bear almost any how”

I had a why—and MY why meant I had no choice but to figure out a how

Which is partly why I sort of succeeded

For the past couple of years, however, I have not; I have instead explored, experimented, and somewhat rested on my laurels..

Failed to advance, as it were—and thus dropped back

But now I’m back

And fresher than ever

Given my hectic experiences with Dr. Duhamel—the asshole who made me better

Yeehaw

P.S. you mention the 4.0.

At the U of M they have a 4.5 scale. I’ll never forget the ecstasy I felt the day I achieved my goal of a 4.0 on a mid-term test one semester. What immediately trumped that feeling was the insight that I could do better, that I could achieve a 4.5—and that maybe, just maybe, I had set my sights too low, and that the real glory would come in a different set of expectations—i.e., “in aiming for the moon in the hopes of landing among the stars.” Which might seem corny until you consider that “purpose is analgesic” and that “concentration is the natural [succor] of the mind” ... so “keep holy your HIGHEST hope” ...and do not, whatsoever, settle for less. I know it sounds wrong-headed...but the achievement of a 4.5 semester was, for me (at the time) better than sex. Sex is a dime a dozen, ephemeral; and personally incomparable to the fruits of a work ethic (a non-protestant work ethic) whether physical or intellectual. I mean, heck, a 4.5 semester afforded me access to transgressions beyond my wildest comprehensions.

Nevertheless, it also cost me a lot of pleasure, intimacy, closeness, wholesomeness, and time with friends...<sup>97</sup>

That said, achievement is subjective; one can find achievement in multiple dimensions. For instance, I look upon my uncle as the greatest human ever—and yet he is but a grease monkey with a humble education: nothing of which prevents him from being a great dad, a lovable uncle, a steadfast son, a true provider, a tough lover, a strong fighter, and, to top it all off, a sort of mad scientist (in the realm of mechanics, that is). A madman, a self-made man; a man with a serious & methodical

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<sup>97</sup> Things of which I am starting to recognize as valuable by virtue of their sudden, utter absence, not to mention, by depressing contrast, the quick, vast distance between it (the possibility) and me, made especially apparent via the rapid passage of time, which makes me hella bitchy with respect to how much I’ve missed out on in life—as a late bloomer, a truant, and a notorious abuser of time; an abuser of time indeed—a proclivity of which was nurtured into me as a child, when I would ‘kill time’ on weekends between pool halls, food courts, and lives. That said, O what a lovely, marvelous, and mostly unsupervised time it was—one of which I wouldn’t trade for the world. (Or would I?)

understanding. In all, a damn good man. A business man; an everyman who works with his hands (in demanding spaces that involve a helluva lot more brains than the kids in the ivory towers like to think); simply put, he has no university education, and yet every time I am around him, I feel uneducated—for his wisdom and lived experience trump my limited knowledges—and by a long shot—and very often to my endless shame. But, as you probably know, there are limitations to both (to knowledge and wisdom)—striking a balance between the two (especially in this technocracy) is the fight we all face moving forwards. For now, however, all I can offer you is what someone offered me; which is nothing special, of course, but here it is:

there I was, working construction across the street from the Max Bell Centre one summer; fall semester had just begun; I was making around 26 an hour as a ‘Full Labourer’ with ‘The Union’ (getting overtime from Monday to Friday, and double time on weekends, etc.); I was sort of set, in my mind; but man did I hate the grind—building the Bomber Stadium, no less (the hypermasculine symbol of my physical self-deception, and -destruction); yes, there I was, on a hot day, across the way from the school, with a guy named Joe; we were sitting high up on the hollow core with our feet dangling over the edge, wiping the beads of sweat from our heads, and, in a sense, just basically killing time before lunch. Joe was an older guy: a former hotshot, a sort of straight shooter, and a downright loveable guy; a charismatic father figure—type. Magnetic, wild. So there we were, kicking it and connecting, shooting the breeze, when I mentioned, with hesitation—as we gazed across the street, towards the school, with the sun beating down on us, our overalls, our work boots, our hard hats and our safety vests—when I looked at him and said: I’m thinking of going back

and here, at the flick of a switch, he went from pleasantly idle to stiffly serious—

what seemed like minute passed as he glanced back and forth between me and the students walking past before he said, softly, with a click of his tongue and a shake of his head: *tsk*, get the fug outta here. I mean it—look at me—not even fifty and what? broken, can hardly walk anymore; fuck this racket; get outta here; if I could do it again, I would, but different; all I cared about were cars and women, and now look at me.

Silence—a wordless response of which constituted the majority of my interactions back then

After a while we got up, shook out the stiffness, and ambled back towards the trailers for lunch, and then that was it: we never talked again, seeing as I punched out early and changed my life forever.<sup>98</sup> I saw him, though, one Christmas, from a distance, about four to six years later, and it seemed as if he had aged about 15 years. That said, he still had the same, genial mien about him, the one that made him so likeable; a mien of which was essentially a mask, however, which he removed that day to speak honestly with me, to reveal the heaviness underneath the *reality* of it all. (An education in *ontology* if ever there was one; *not all classrooms have four walls*.)

I often think about him, seeing as it was in large part because of him that I carved out four years of my life, and thereby set out to essentially remake myself intellectually, the while I wasted away physically (not actually, obviously; but in terms of an overly developed hypertonicity, totally); indeed, it was because of him that I imprinted a sort of prison-like mentality on my study habits as I endured (with aforementioned Ahab madness) the dull, repetitive labours of scholastics—and oh man what a glorious and solitary four years it was. Call it a lunchbox work ethic; a prison-like work ethic; an extreme form of attentive repetitiveness (distractionless)<sup>99</sup>—I basically had to teach myself how to sit. There are no two ways about it but to engage in industrious action—

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<sup>98</sup> this conversation comes off as phoney because it is phoney; yeah it happened and all but I’m fucked if I remember exactly how it happened. Not only that but also this: the time constraints of this godforsaken process make it impossible for one to craft a more authentic portrait. Which means I sort of fail in terms of ‘verisimilitude as validation’ in the ‘let go’ criteria mentioned on page whatever near the goddamn beginning of this thing—in figure 1, the chart thing. But all of this ish is a bunch of gibberish; an excuse; a bit of bullshit; that is, if it is what it is, then I should just let it *tsk*.

<sup>99</sup> In addition to the autodidactic schooling of Ruben and X, google the story of Nikolai Morozov. As told in a blurb by the Guardian, [Morozov’s] biography “reads a little like *The Count of Monte Cristo* if you replace revenge with science. He

because before you can break the rules you have to master them.<sup>100</sup>

And with that I again say yeehaw. Find your art in ‘progress’—“Don’t waste your pain; it’s a useful pain” ... “destroy your reputation” ... “burn yourself in your own flame; how could you rise anew if you have not first become ashes?” So make it happen—get after it; give it a try—take the leap and quest your mind; *create yourself*. Travel and friends can wait; the time before twenty-five is the time of your education—*so commit to it!*

One last thing: the misfortune of my love for my uncle (or rather my worship of him) is that we both know (him and I—and Joe) that the way forward is the way of education—average life expectancy for people in his line of work is maybe in the mid-to-high sixties (like my grandpa) or early seventies; whereas the educated tend to reach their eighties and nineties. Not that life expectancy equates to quality of life, but it might, if you act forthrightly and you treat your body right.

also, when you think you have nothing to do, organize, organize, organize. Stay organized. Ay ay, captain, stay wise.

And by ‘wise’ I mean ffs man learn to manage your time

best

[UNSENT]

From: [me]

Re: Study habits

To: CP

May 15, 2020 at 11:05 PM [SENT]

# as if your life depends on it

<https://umanitoba.ca/student/academiclearning/handouts/handouts.html>

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spent 25 years as a political prisoner in a 14th-century castle turned prison on a small island outside Saint Petersburg, during which time he taught himself 11 languages and published works on everything from the structure of the atom to the geology of the Western Caucasus. Shortly after his release, he turned his attention to astronomy.” So don’t tell me it’s too late “to be who you want to be”—Fitzgerald.

<sup>100</sup> Football is a ridiculous game; nobody forces you to play; but think back to how you felt when someone abused the rules of it—wasn’t so cool now, was it? Did it not cross your mind, in those instances... Who does this prick think he is? Well, kid, the same goes for scholastics; it is what it is; find a way to resist, but, in the end, remember this: *It is what it is!* you have to, with clenched teeth, ‘respect’ the system—you have to accept the reality that is given, before you can alter it

**Excerpts of Game Changers (a reformulation of values; a driver of behaviours; a reiteration)**

“*I am not what happened to me, I am what I choose to become*”—Jung

“*For what it's worth ... it's never too late...to be whoever you want to be*”—Fitzgerald

“*Purpose is analgesic*”—Peterson

“*Concentration is the natural piety of the soul*”—Steiner, 2003

If you are stuck, engage in an act of self-overcoming—an act of bravery.

Bored one day, I found myself in the basement of University College where I stumbled upon an audition for a Shakespearean drama constructed around the theme of masculinities and gang mentalities—which of course caught my eye. So there I was, intrigued, thinking: What could be more nerve-wracking than acting? (*Public speaking, instant judgment, complete aloneness/nakedness on a stage, lack of experience, preparation, etc.*—adrenal activation needn't always involve stealing a car or jumping out of a plane.) So I signed up, received a long soliloquy, ingested it in fifteen minutes, entered the studio, made a fool of myself, had some “fun”—told the director and the associate director that I was under no illusions and that I just wanted to embarrass myself in an act of self-overcoming—“bravery”—shared a laugh, left, received a callback, said Uhh...returned with some reluctance, acted uninhibited (because noncommittal), earned a part, declined it, heeded the opinions of the stage manager, reconsidered it, decided Why not, went all in. Four months later: one of the best experiences of my life. Almost cried afterwards—and all because I one day decided (while down in the dumps, wandering around and looking glum) to engage in an act of self-overcoming.

Give it a try. Expand your horizons.

How often, in our short little lives, are we offered a part in a Shakespearean drama?

How often do we pass up these potential moments bestowed upon us?

Truth is actional:

Nietzsche would say, for example, doesn't matter what you say; *it matters what you do* [actions speak louder than words!]; and if I want to figure out what you believe, I don't ask you; I watch how you act; and I *assume* that your true beliefs are those that are directing your actions; and so truth is discovered in action—and that's a very different claim, you know, and it's, it's not the claim of a passive observer; it's the claim of someone who is actively interacting with the world; and of course we are always acting, we're always acting interactively with the world—and not only that: if we don't act interactively with the world,

we cease to EXIST [which, in the Latin sense of the word, means to appear, to manifest, to emerge, to stand out, to come forth]... Nietzsche said ‘Can one live it? All truths are bloody truths [for] me!’ and that’s one of the things I really like about reading the existentialists, too; there’s no abstract disembodiment in their philosophy; you see that the people who are writing as existentialists are committed to what they say; they want to enact what they say in the world; and it’s romantic because it does involve emotions and motivation; you see, with reason alone, the enlightenment view of reason was that: reason and the passions were antagonistic, that all the passions could do would be to cloud reason, and that it was reason’s job to lift itself up above the body and the emotions, and clarify the nature of the world; the existentialists would deny that completely; they’d say no no no: the appropriate mode of being is to act properly, and rationality can be a guide to that but it can also deceive in all sorts of ways [like the idea that the mind is a loyal servant but a deceitful master]; the passions INFORM YOU [intuition; body-logic]; they don’t *cloud* your reason; although of course they can because they tend to be kind of single-minded, you know, they can take you off course, but that doesn’t mean they’re enemies of rational clarity per se; and when the existentialists write, you can tell, *they put their whole being into it*; so it’s gripping, and passionate [impactful] (Peterson, 2015, October 17, 46:45).<sup>101</sup>

“Intelligence is found in the core of our body system—in our viscera, the *na’au*”  
(Hokowhitu, 2016, p. 99).

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<sup>101</sup> See what I mean? What an extraordinary speech! The man can speak! Which leads me back to the philosophy of BOTH/AND! Keep the baby *and* the bath! Coalitions! Complementarity! Pluralism! We can be both indigenous methodologists (revolutionaries, radicals, anarchists, activists) *and* existentialists who spew Petersonisms—we can still quote from the prick who lays himself open (and his entire body of work) to the public! It’s all there for the taking, for the examination, for an opportunity to critique, learn from...by inference—we can pick and choose what is useful and be critical of what isn’t! We can, dare I say, form (or be of) ‘heterodox’ opinions! Like existentialists! Like Saint-Exupéry and all the people who scream what it means to exist as caring joy-filled wondrous open-minded individuals who rise above the moral and sociopolitical conventions of the times (at least sometimes, that is, like when the sexual mores, for instance, need a twist) and who see that life is difficult and painful and full of despair for EVERYONE! while keeping in mind that ‘all lives matter’ is pure ignorance, and that privilege exists and all but also this: ‘people should reach beyond themselves for, if not greatness, at least goodness’! ‘respect the ground all walk on’; be a person with a learned position! who sees the divisiveness of one-sidedness! BOTH/AND! Pick and choose what makes sense for you—as a caring member of a community! THINK *THRU* the complementarity of the ‘individual’ in the ‘community’—develop a critical understanding of the dominant views! And then move beyond them, those old-order movements! those biopolitics! ...

The intellect has little to do *on the road* [emphasis added] to discovery [of the self: call it me-search]. There comes a leap in consciousness; call it intuition or what you will, and the solution comes to you and you don't know how or why—Albert Einstein

“knowing without knowing how you know”— Nainoa Thompson (a Polynesian wayfinder, as cited in Davis, 2007, 18:30)

Without wanting to be essentialist, I contend that the key to the success of the colonial project was clearly the deconstruction of interwoven epistemic knowledge based on corporeal metaphysical cognition (i.e., mind/body/spirit) ... Thus, both animate and inanimate entities contain a life-force that enables a common association, a familiar relationship between all things; hence, the belief in telekinesis, dream travel, and metaphysical vision. Without the unnatural divide between transcendent forces and the body, imposed via the language of ‘non-madness,’ the everyday becomes enchanted and, as a consequence, unimaginable to Western secular thought [rationalism]. Critical Indigenous studies should begin to comprehend how knowledge lies within our physical genealogy, that the *everydayness* of the metaphysical challenges the objectification of the body in the project of moral transcendence, and that insurrection of Indigenous intelligence will produce transformative subjectivities (Hokowhitu, 2016, p. 98).

The unknowable metaphysical epistemologies of Indigenous peoples were the principal threat to the colonial/Enlightenment project because they simply defied the Western order of things, and thus these epistemologies were branded and discarded as fanciful, childlike myths of a precivilized self that had yet to come up to speed with the rational European mind (Hokowhitu, 2016, p. 96).

Rua [Kenana] is not merely a historical figure; he was a prophet who embodied subversion through knowledge unintelligible to Western rationalism, ironically in part thru [c]hristianity. Such a fantastical apocalyptic amalgam, in contrast to ‘Indigenous’ ontologies to some degree produced by Indigenous studies, helps me at least envisage what it might mean to be post-Indigenous (Hokowhitu, 2016, p. 98).

Embedding the beauty and the horror of Indigenous knowledge should be an aspiration of critical Indigenous studies. . . . Critical Indigenous studies with radical intent reflects an independence of will and the freedom and responsibility to construct knowledge beyond the ramparts of [rational] colonial [constructions]” (Hokowhitu, 2016, p. 95).

Indeed

Dreams are at the forefront of thinking. They get there before you [like me in the car in Steinbach? about to dig into the unconscious?]. The creative imagination is at the forefront of thinking; and if you’re moving out into the unknown to gather new information, what gets there first is the imagination—*obviously*. . . . That’s what [Jean] Piaget said...you imagine it first, then maybe you can represent it in speech. And the dream is a part of the imaginative process; that’s what artists are doing: they’re going out into the unknown and representing it imaginatively (Peterson, 2017, February 21, 44:30).

Yes, the artist imagines—like the vision quester, who goes out into the unknown and experiments with truth, and not only imaginatively, but physically and brutally—“Can one live it?”: the truth concerning claims around intuition, existence, dreams, and visions—aka the curiosities within: especially those curiosities that insist. I mean, what is the urban Indian—removed from tradition—but a survivalist, a nonentity who questions being, existence, like the Eastern Europeans during the reign of Stalinism? The hangover is real; like post-war flower children—like present-day Indians—but, in this instance, the flower is powerless, and, in actuality, always has been; given the hidden nightshade permutations of the poisonous. O hellish reverberations! like the slow accumulation! of cyanide and arsenic! and narcissism! from seeds and grains and cynicism!

Kierkegaard and Nietzsche could not escape, in their special historical situations, the tragic consequences of their own intensity of self-consciousness. Both were lonely, anti-conformists in the extreme, and knew the deepest agonies of anxiety, despair, isolation. *Hence they could speak from an immediate personal knowledge of these ultimate psychological crises* [emphasis added].

Nietzsche held that *one should experiment on all truth not simply in the laboratory but in one’s own experience* [emphasis added]; every truth should be faced with the question: “Can one live it?” “All truths,” he puts it, “are bloody truths for me.” Hence his famous phrase, ‘error is

cowardice’ [which I take to mean: If you refuse to bleed, then you can forget about the discovery of truth indeed]” (May, 2004, p. 29).

Underneath this quote, a note:

Both Kierkegaard and Nietzsche knew that ‘*man cannot sink back into unreflective immediacy without losing himself*’ [emphasis added]; but he can go this way to the end, not destroying reflection, but rather coming to the basis in himself in which reflection is rooted.’ Thus speaks Karl Jaspers in his enlightening discussion of the similarities of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, whom he regards as the two greatest figures of the nineteenth century”<sup>102</sup> (May, 2004, p. 29n40).

### Intermission

as you can see from the above, from the scramble and fragmentation, it is probably best to dispense with more than half of what I say; probably best to get a numerical education; and if not an education, then at least read Miriam Toews. Or code. Or learn logic. Whatever you do, don’t end up like me—an idealistic ungulate who thought he was a king (a shepherd in a world of sheep). Believe me: when you meet a truly smart person, you’ll learn a little modesty. As I said in the beginning, and which no one will tell you but me, you are born fucked, dying and uneasy; and what’s worse is the following realization: If an education is secondary (i.e., not paramount) among your priorities by the age of ten, then you might as well hit the airstrip and jump in front of a jet—if, that is, you value (or come to love) the intellect. A double-edged detriment. Beware of false prophets, overconfident friends—debauchery. Advice is dangerous, dodgy: it belittles the conscience, shrivels the product, and dresses itself up as honest. With that said, there is nothing left to say. Except, well, think for yourself. Become an individual. Do what is difficult. Dependence is worse than a prison: it’s a closed-loop riddle; a labyrinth of an addiction—on the margins

—in the middle.

Ditto.

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<sup>102</sup> Post-game N.B.: Upon reflection, I again stumble upon Men loving Men...and I can’t help but think *geez Louise, What the heck?* it seems I am becoming a full-fledged feminist! because suddenly the subjugation of women is *notoriously* evident! along with the omnipresence of androcentric sentiments, not to mention masturbatory statements (the ‘OH HE’S SO GREAT’-nesses). All of which makes me yearn for Afeni Shakur and Miriam Toews—and the RBF radicalism of androgynous pagans. With that statement, I am indeed over it (all of it) the blue-balled loners & the fame-crazed cynics. All of which took this farm, *this blast from the past*, for this Indian to realize it, to *embody* it, in the same way that it took an in-depth, enactable role in *Macbeth* to grasp the insidiousness of our entrenched, malignant masculinities within. Yes, the patriarchs, the ‘masters’ of this farm, rub raw what it means to be a remembrancer—for Tyra:

a notmemory of which calms the nerves and stills the eye

like the image of a lioness—in the grass, crouched with violence...in the style of an Indian-cum-survivalist

A quiet shitty life can be a blessed life if you live it right. And hell, if you care to live it right, then maybe resort to your body as a guide. “For indigenous people (as with all people) there is nothing more immediate and everyday than the body” (p. 108); “[a]n indigenous existentialism will recognize that the power of the body is still unknown and it is our *choice* to investigate the abyss” (Hokowhitu, 2009, p. 116). Indeed, for what your body senses and detects is often more useful than the intellect (unless, of course, you are full of it, and the intellect convinces you you’re not; unless, of course, you’re studying, and it tells you that their hot). In any event, as a general guide, if it feels wrong, it’s probably not right. But, I could be wrong—and that’s aight; for at least I try.

Also, P.S. Be wary of authority figures who tell you to question everything, who tell you *not* to be so certain...who say things like All I have are questions, not answers—such people are radical jackasses—ineffectual shams...completely impractical if you want to live and thrive and not collide with the world, life. Reality. “*There’ll be times when you’re going to have to act as if you are certain in life,*” confident, assertive. Without a little certainty, you end up like Wallace. David Foster. Or Josep K. You need confidence. A little confidence—a hint of gall. Be ballsy. Gain traction through action—and *act* (at least sometimes) as if you are certain; because even if you’re wrong—even if you feel the embodiment of *Nab* (a burning embodiment, a loss of confidence) even if *you know you’re licked before you begin*, and after you’ve gone—you’ll live. So *let it happen*. And, if you *are* wrong, *licked*, acknowledge it, with vulnerability and confidence, and then move on: that is, don’t waffle; I mean, you can sit on the fence all you want, but you’ll only end up an unblemished mongrel, a beautiful monster, a travesty—a narcissist completely lacking in the idiosyncratic advantages of flaw. So take the risk and—above all—believe in yourself. *We have to believe in ourselves!* We have to believe in something. Nihilistic Humpty Dumpties who hipply question everything and nothing end up craven, neutral, jumpy—“*STAND UP FOR SOMETHING! Or fall for anything*”—which quickly leads to the intersection of nowhere and resentful: where everything is a little funny, and insensible. Be better. Even if that means, on occasion, an existence in ‘the system’ (as a so called ‘cog’)—I mean, shit, even manure is a product; be useful, harmonious; be honest: we are not demigods—as football taught us—

and that’s OK.

In response to friends and academics who insist I pick sides, I say: maybe they—*they*—are just winning the culture war and I am too uncritical, naïve, and suggestible—too impressionable—too susceptible to the rhetoric of the conventional, close-minded, and detestable.

I am blinded, it seems, by a will to be dependable.<sup>103</sup>

It is ‘logical’ that through colonisation itself and recourse to a victim mentality that the dialectic of self and other has consecrated Indigenous studies and that the analyses of the Indigenous condition constantly reverts back to this dialectic to gain the moral high-ground, but such a position constrains Indigenous existentialism and how we reside within the locatedness of our own bodies and historical moments (Hokowhitu, 2009, p. 111).

[T]he unrealisability of the power complex itself demands that an Indigenous existentialism move beyond such a construction to one where freedom, choice and responsibility are recognizable (Hokowhitu, 2009, p. 113)

Indigenous peoples must resolve to take responsibility, including responsibility for the disciplining of their bodies via colonisation. Thus, rejecting the idea of the Indigenous body as being merely passively inscribed upon in favour of also conceptualising it as a self-determining (Hokowhitu, 2009, p. 113).

To be sure, each letter herein—the one from May, and the most recent ones—signify a snapshot, a historicity relative to time and space; the first of which (the one from May) was written when I had just finished my proposal and was manic with insights about education; the most recent letters, however, were written about a month after a summer session of audio lessons in literature and existentialism (with none other than the fanatical, problematic, and dogmatic Peterson,<sup>104</sup> and the iconoclastic critic...mister uber-articulate, George Steiner). Both of these spaces and moments in time diametrically oppose one another on the spectrum of thought and thinking; and thus both of these moments (and ways of knowing) offer insights into an indigenous mind—which sort of speaks to “the schizophrenic envisioning of an authentic Indigenous self” (Hokowhitu, 2009, p. 112),<sup>105</sup> a

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<sup>103</sup> ugh....

<sup>104</sup> A psychologist-slash-academic whose politics I disagree with, yet nevertheless consider an amusing lamenter, particularly when not dogmatically proselytizing. Also, he is a simple, accessible option for existentialism; and not only that, but this: the one thing Indians can take from him is the one thing Vine Deloria Jr. gleans from Jung: myths, legends, and embodied monstrous knowledges—“the [cultural] hero has to be a monster”—Jung/JBP—indeed an insurrection of knowledges. Like Rua who uses, ironically, christian mythologies and fables to subvert the State.

<sup>105</sup> Again: “The current preoccupation of Indigenous theorists with the idea of ‘decolonization’ has developed a schizophrenic envisioning of an authentic Indigenous self located in a precolonial past and, thus, divorced from the materiality of the present” (Hokowhitu, 2016, p. 89).

split of which is exacerbated in the half-breed, *who belongs to everyone and no one* (Memmi, 1991, p. xvi)—and who thusly occupies a multiplicity, the while she is weighed down politically—by a divisive “double-consciousness” (Dubois, 2009, p. 8).

Layers upon layers—our narratives may be tangential, but they always circle back: you call it incoherent, we call it patterned...we want impact and not middle-class sadness...we forego a little organization for the sake of the manic (flow, hyperfocus, engrossment, and the comi-tragic), otherwise, in our eyes, what’s left is leaden and repetitive; and it is our contention that storytellers and lecturers ought to cause people to shiver and not bore them to death.<sup>106</sup>

To obliquely substantiate this snippet, here is a quote from Melville’s *Typee* on the differences between a Polynesian society and his own (which reads like the reportage of Marshall Sahlins’ essay on affluence):

What a striking evidence does this operation furnish of the wide difference between the extreme of savage and civilized life. A gentleman of Typee can bring up a numerous family of children and give them all a highly respectable cannibal education, with infinitely less toil and anxiety than he expends in the simple process of striking a light; whilst a poor European artisan, who through the instrumentality of a lucifer performs the same operation in one second, is put to his wit's end to provide for his starving offspring that food which the children of a Polynesian father, without troubling their parents, pluck from the branches of every tree around them (Melville, 1846, p. 91).

All of which addresses my style and rhetoric—which could be said to offer a questionable zest and a Quixotic essence; not to mention the fact that it all connects...to my proposal and presentation on: Play, Performance, Provocation.

Put different, in the words of Tutekawa ‘Tu’ Wylie (as cited in Hokowhitu, 2009):  
Maori play a particular type of rugby. It’s spontaneous and exuberant. In rugby we celebrate the joy of living. So we’re *prepared to take risks and to do things just for the hell of it* [emphasis added]. In our day it wasn’t whether we won or lost but the way we played the game ... I don’t know whether that’s being coached out of our players. And I don’t know whether New Zealand rugby has room now for our philosophy (p. 115).

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<sup>106</sup> The royal we, eh? To be sure, I speak for myself and no one else.

And *I* don’t know whether the ivory tower has room for our lack of monotony. All I know is this: my experience with the alternative (alternative writing, that is) kills the blockages (makes room for the indigenous: those unintelligible knowledges—what Hokowhitu calls the monstrous<sup>107</sup>—

“Hey Jude, don’t be afraid / you were made [to face rejection]”—The Beatles

“The notion of play is important to understanding the immediacy of the Indigenous body” (Hokowhitu, 2009, p. 114).

### **On Noninterference**

“Kindly let me help you or you’ll drown, said the monkey, putting the fish safely up a tree.”

Some researchers are “amazingly destructive—because [they’re] full of conceit; how do you know what’s good for [me]?” (Watts, 2017, para. 2).<sup>108</sup>

I cannot pretend to be what I am not. And, well, what I am not is a traditional Indian with unrealistic, sentimental ambitions for a “pure pre-colonial past.” There is no going back. Nor forward. And what’s more is there is no present, as Hegel said—or rather referred to (along with Hokowhitu) as “immediacy” (which Wilfred Sellars referred to as “the myth of the given”). Which could potentially mean that there is *nothing*—unless, of course, you adopt the attitude that things reveal themselves as *everything*. . . as past, present, and future; like Indigenous futurisms;<sup>109</sup> like your GPA: for a good GPA formally states that you studied hard in the past, and so it follows that you are content in the present, because the future is yours—cue the ole oyster.

A sort of mindfuck—in need of reorder—except for the last part: *everything matters*—for you are indeed a conglomerate of your future and past, sir.<sup>110</sup>

Indigenous theorising cannot fully develop without the possibility for existential agency, for it cannot be that the atrocities of colonisation can be the defining point, the point

Indigenous existentialism remains scarred indeterminately. Indigenous existentialism must materialise beyond such embodied and genealogical pain. The physical endurance of pain

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<sup>107</sup> Hokowhitu, 2016, p. 93.

<sup>108</sup> I hate to quote a mystic, but there it is. . . .

<sup>109</sup> “Something that I find cool with Indigenous speculative fiction [a futurism] is that it puts us not just in the past where we’re often relegated, but as the people we are today and will be in the future—as thriving” (Darcie Little Badger).

<sup>110</sup> first of all, it is equally valid that nothing matters. Second of all, use some common, critical sense; no one is trying to twist your arm to turn you into a traditional Indian; so get off of it. I mean, shit: give your head a shake, and maybe *read* something for once. Something substantial, taxing; something *difficult*. “Read some good, heavy, serious books just for discipline: Take yourself in hand and master yourself”—W.E.B. Du Bois

may not be a choice, but Indigenous people can choose to live beyond the genealogical scarring inflicted by colonization (Hokowhitu, 2009, p. 113).

In the real as opposed to the ideal world, most everything they teach you in the humanities leans on crutches, stands on toothpicks, and sits precariously in canoes as if salubrious...as if as if as if until it tips, until storm clouds appear over the mountains and vamoose your bliss. The world is a jungle, not a movie, kid. So dispense with your idealism, and nurture your stick-to-itiveness. Your present structure needs a few braces to survive the wind.

You once mentioned Jordan Peterson—he who fears social progress and thus loathes social politics; the YouTube Tartuffe who talks a lot and clogs the conscience; the “intellectual we deserve” who maps out *not* commandments but *rules*...for something as all-encompassing as *life*—in the name of what he describes as *order* (that order, of course, being a sort of supremacist, extemporaneous sense of order—a *semblance* of order). The ole *Ordo Ab Chao*, eh?

A translation: the old order out of chaos, eh?

Listen, do yourself a favour and grab a usage dictionary and look up hardliner and ‘fascist’ and then get back to this...<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> I find myself unable to use the term ‘fascist’ without air quotes—a term of which is too often applied to conservatives by the opposition, or the *knee-jerk critics among them*—out of respect for the individuals who came before and who know or knew what it means or meant to have a legitimate fascist in their neighbourhoods, pointing something at their heads. Call me naïve but it seems to me (research it for yourself) that Jordan Petey is no more harmful than Kevin O’Leary—i.e., a tory with a big mouth and an eye for wealth, the creation of it; I mean, if you don’t see how Jordan Petey uses every opportunity in the media as an opening for an increase in his GDP, his empire, via a predictable stream of shameless plugs (“which you can read about in my book;” “which I talk about in my lecture...”), then you’re out to lunch—and less of a North End hustler than I suspected. Surely you can say that his cupidity doesn’t make him a bad person, it makes him a smart person, and I wouldn’t object; I would say Sure, but you could say that it makes him a certain kind of person. What kind of person? I’m not sure. Intolerant? to an extent; traditional, yes; rigid, yes; cupidinous...the hypothetical list is endless. That said, without an in-person perspective, how can I disqualify the assertion that he isn’t also possibly a decent person? someone who is easy to get along with? (Personally, I’d be dead in the water if a thousand, unedited hours of ad-lib me were online, that’s for damn sure.) Indeed, I don’t despise the guy, but I do (like other envious types) often shake my head with respect to where he’s wrong—just plain wrong. Most of the time, though, he’s whatever. But I guess I can’t have it both ways, eh? Can’t have my cake and eat it too? Well, then, I guess it’s time to pick sides, to choose—and sorry, but I feel obliged to pick the side that doesn’t align with (or at least stands in opposition to) the intolerance of arm-chair politicians who are ahistorical, ignorant, and politically indifferent to (slash symbolic of) genocide (that’s right, I feel obliged to pick the side that doesn’t neglect *nor disrespect nor selectively ignore* the ripple effect of a living memory that is still quite present (a historical perspective)...that one should probably support (from an ethical perspective) and perhaps even attempt to uplift through policies around equity). Yes, I pick the side that doesn’t represent, in the mind’s eye, genocide. How could I? Man, that’s a heavy sentence. No time to perfect it. To reiterate: I don’t hate the guy—Thy Arbiter of Virtue—I just harbour as much vitriol for him as he does for our side—and yes, there are sides. Camps. Etc. Everything, remember, is politics. Actually, the more I sport these criticisms, the more I feel an interest in him—the paradox of cynicism....

Goddammit, no more Humpty-Dumpty-isms: Waffle no more, you bumbling idiot

As for rules for life, I am far too unqualified for such a christian task<sup>112</sup>—and yet...this entire screed slash tract...and so much for that, eh? Never mind. What I *can* do is offer up slices of my own life from which you can establish your own *rules* for life; that said, never forget: it is *you* who establishes *your* rules—within, of course, the constraints of the system, which we can think of here in terms of the gridiron—no different from the basketball court, but with a line of scrimmage, a line of which, for the Indian, is, well...*we're sort of backed into our end zone, kid*; indeed, bad field position—in a game dependent on field position. So do not let the charlatans tell you different. And do not let the bleeding hearts insist that we are victims. Instead, understand this: given the facticity of our survival-based existence, it is our job to be twice as industrious. Which means this: ‘No’ is your best friend; and delayed gratification your mistress. Single-mindedness—cultivate it—aim it at your mission; “doing what is difficult” means you accept a sort of prison; and not just being okay with it but falling in love with it—the commitment, the cyclic sense of *It is what it is*—which is to say, learn to say “*No*”—to this, that, and wo/men—while in the cockpit of your rocket ship, your prison. The consolation of philosophy—Boethius—minus the Christian...Lady Philosophy—move the line of scrimmage. Want to be a doctor, an engineer? Believe in it. Not you, *it*—the idea of it—for you are incompetent; that’s a given; but *it* isn’t—so believe in the *possibility* of it, a doctor who is (secretly) an idiot, then represent it, improve on it (be it, do it, *throw your whole being into it*), accomplish it, via an actional existence; and guard your mind, goddammit, armour it—and dispense with the shits: the victim-laden narratives—the rhetoric of the parasitic; oppression surely has its victims, but in a way that is both universal and relative—we *all* have our shit; indeed, “[it is] not the best way of getting clean”—as Huxley insists—“[by] rolling around in [it]” (1998, p. i). I mean, goddammit, kid: if there is one thing we both know (with respect to our visceral intelligence) it’s this: regardless of the score, we are the comeback kids. 28-6, 35-zip, it makes no difference. Because what happens is—when the game is on the line—a sense of urgency kicks in, and with it, our Indian condition (our “unceasing self-consciousness”) becomes Isn’t—and what falls into place is decisiveness; we become goal

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But I (as with him) don’t wanna be ‘boxed in’! I don’t wanna be predictable!  
I already admitted my distrust for categorical systems  
so WTF is this?

Also, what’s wrong with hustling? Isn’t hustling a lower-order motto of yours? Isn’t he right when he says the market’ll punish him if he doesn’t give into it—follow the rules of the system? like scholarships for well-read kids? A good GPA, etc., so what gives? Stubbornness? We’re all boxed in...predictable...and it makes me wanna spit....

<sup>112</sup> Given an extensive past of unruly madness, I think it would be a little insincere of me to lay down a set of commandments as comic and tragic as ‘Thou ought floss thy ass, kid! Yeah. ‘Unqualified’ I is—especially in terms of statements concerning the critical subjectiveness of our relativistic, state-diminished, philosophic systems—that is, ‘what does it means to exist’ for *our* existentialists—those repositioned, elder urban Indians....

oriented, decisive, clear—then comes the tunnel vision, a state wherein the crowd falls away and all that remains is body, breath, and mission: *move the line of scrimmage*. You may not win, but such efforts bring the Whole a lot closer to the vision (self-in-relation, we are but a bridge!); envision it: within every team accomplishment is the battle of individuals. So do your job, kid. Because with every dip in single-mindedness comes a momentum switch. Which is sort of akin to pissing in the wind—for only the idiot refuses to see that the community suffers because of it (the dip, that is); put different, when you lose your sense of duty, your single-mindedness, the team suffers, period. Momentum, like a train (of thought) is stubborn and indifferent; disrupt it and suffer the wrath of Newton’s first law, of physics. I once heard momentum described as a cruel mistress; indeed, indeed it is. Insensitive and vengeful like a mistress—cue the feminists. I kid. All of which is to say, I now see that a pile of words do not equate to research, just words. Words of which you’ve heard before: in one ear, out the other; *a laugh*. All that matters is work and family. Get after it. Show up. *Long days and a lunch box*. Be responsible.<sup>113</sup> Marry old, live young. No—marry young, live old; and save up. Bank on retirement, which, for the Indian, seldom comes. And there it is: the rub—in a nutshell, punk: politics. Whether to sacrifice youth for opulence, or to dispense with brass tax in the name of awesomeness, idealism. If the latter, be prepared (post-laughter) to “cry like a little bitch”<sup>114</sup>—or to hide out under a rock like a PoS, a snitch. Life is hard, and you are incompetent. *So there it is*: It’s your decision. Exist hand-to-mouth with the idiots; sit around and talk blasé about resistance. Or dispense with it—all of it—the cowboys, the mistresses, the masturbatory interests—and get down to business, as if everyday were unforgiven, as if everyday were a single minute (*with the time a-ticking*) just you and the line of scrimmage. Like Rilke implies to the kid; you will see the easy out and want to quit—I urge you strongly to dismiss it. Distrust what is quick and easy and overcome resistance—the real resistance. Habituate and surprise yourself, sublimely, with accomplishments. Still one of the greatest days of my life was when I achieved a 4.0—which made me realize that I could get a 4.5 (if only I aimed at it). And that I did. During a semester that started while I was in prison. Ask Dobie, ask Sisler:

I was That Kid—the athletic, trouble-making incompetent.

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<sup>113</sup> Responsibility in the epistemic, indigenous, existential sense, not the conservative sense.

<sup>114</sup> Ain’t nothing wrong with crying, my friend. [And yet...there totally is—when it becomes a habit, that is; for a habit can become a sickness. In essence, do not suppress it, but do not indulge it either...nor pander to it...nor question it..]

Which brings us to 2012, the semester I aimed at it, and changed my condition. Which makes me question what I’ve learned in the social sciences, for the greatest years of my life were relative. Dependent on my vision. Not the social condition. Not the thoughtlessness of racism; not the indifference of bureaucracies or “the system.” Let me restate it: *I was in chains—in prison—I can still feel the bracelets around my wrists; the gaze of the guards; the van, the trip—Remand to Headingly—the way the ankle restraints bit into my skin, dug in to my tendons, especially upon flexion; the Achilles tendons; the calm hecticness; the way they pulled me out of the van, like an object without a consciousness; from prison to prison, a barbarian, a dehumanizing system*—where I, like Malcom, like Ruben, made a decision, and steadfastly refused to turn away from it, until I turned away from it—the gravest of bad decisions; because what I neglected was this: every single day, they (Malcom and Ruben) *worked*—every single day: they worked, as if their lives depended on it, because it did; and so they did not take what they were given—that is, the victim narrative—and simply bullhorn it, nor enact it with listlessness or sunken chins. I cannot stress this enough: they did not take what they were given, they did not take what they were given, they did not take what they were given—a narrative—and do nothing with it. They engaged with it, wrestled with it, poked holes in it, challenged it—with an actional existence (day in, day out—the only given: *work*, like an obsession, an addiction; and don’t we know a thing or two about addiction? Fuck mental health. Chase after it. “The body is capable of anything; it is the mind we must convince”—a quote of which I have carried with me since my days of volunteerism—when I worked with spastic kids, who daily stretched themselves beyond their limits, who maintained an extraordinary range of motion—in spite of their condition. Gary Robinson, five days of running, no sleep, the mind playing tricks: keep it in perspective, kid; pain is temporary, but necessary—for transformation, for existence. Sleeplessness will nip at your sanity and your consciousness, the while a semblance of forward progress uplifts your consciousness—not to mention your self-concept, the while it demolishes your limits, your self-definitions. In street terms: “Don’t just sit there like a bitch!” Make a decision, and you’ll make it right. Make a decision, and fight fight fight. Sprint, don’t walk, or else fall behind. “Learning is like rowing upstream; failure to advance is to drop back”—a proverb. Like the frog in boiling water. Imagine an escalator, with you at the bottom—the escalator coming down: walk and remain in the same position; stand still and fall back. Sprint to advance. Casey Neistat said that (but, being the artist that he is, I imagine he snatched it—a thief: the artist is). Anyways, I was in jail, and when I got out, the first time, I was a reader, and the second time, a doer—a fervid man with a second chance, on a sort of mission—and when (after the slow accumulation of knowledges) I accomplished it, I felt higher (more so meaningfully than crowd-

driven) than I ever did after a game-winning touchdown, kid; for in football, I expected it (took it for granted, lost interest), whereas scholastics was different. It blew my mind, literally, for the impossible was now legit.

Enunciations; body/mind. Self-defeating narratives; other-imposed restrictions/*belief systems*.

Turn down the TV. Turn up the attentiveness.

ROCKY

Yeah -- My ol' man who was  
never the sharpest told me --  
I weren't born with much brain  
so I better use my body.

For the first time, Adrian laughs.

ROCKY

(continuing)

What's funny?

ADRIAN

My mother told me just the  
opposite. She said, 'You  
weren't born with much of a  
body so you'd better develop  
your brain' (Avildsen, 1976).

Develop Both—be a monster, an Academic All-Canadian. Don't just train your biceps; train your brain!

In accordance with Steiner, I think we need a little antidemocratic frankness in the social sciences—  
if only to dispose of dipshits like me.

*And there it is!*

Self-flagellation! Self-abasement!—the denouement of alienation! resentment! nihilism!

dispense with it!

It is your indigenous responsibility, CP, to eschew the allure of hearts that bleed, for even though it is an absolute fact that such people are far from spineless, it is equally true that (at least in my eyes) too much coddling will only fatten our minds—“one has watched life badly if one has not also seen the hand that...[kills with kindness]”<sup>115</sup>—

And yet—goddammit—it is equally factual that we need more balance. More weakness. More time and space for vulnerability. More room for feeling—more room for healing—more room for soft beliefs; more room for what Mister Rogers calls “expressions of care”<sup>116</sup>—expressions of care indeed

Mister Rogers: as mentioned, the sincerest of all existentialists

‘FAMILIARIZE AND REDUCE’—my undergrad mantra, and everyday solution; I damn near forgot about this beauty (*many study barriers broken because of you*). Truly.

Unsure of where to start?

Familiarize yourself what’s in front of you—  
now reduce it.

“What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow / Out of this stony rubbish?”

O addicted Indian: a quick note about phones during ‘homework’: *out of sight, out of mind*.

Proper attention needs its space and time—

Deliberation: our lifeblood, our inner Nile—

Look, it’s about autonomy<sup>117</sup>—about self-law; about rule-governed control over behaviours;<sup>118</sup> until the system changes (i.e., becomes communitarian, egalitarian, or commie), *the law is the law, you see*...in other words, until the tiger is polished, you do not bother it; such is the law of

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<sup>115</sup> Nietzsche, 1886/1989, p. 80.

<sup>116</sup> Rogers, 2015, February 8, 3:32.

<sup>117</sup> something of which the hyper-religious cannot stand, those zealous bastards. Make thy own values! Fuck the easy answers, and to hell with self-denial. Be an animal! “*what is ape to man?*” Adapt and overcome; overcome and laugh!

<sup>118</sup> You have to be your own little tyrant for a while. It ain’t cool but shit; it’s either that or you “take a whack at shaking the structure up, [only to find out] how much more consolidated the opposition is”; a select few ‘make it’ to the other side, where the grass is ostensibly greener, but even then they are still lesser and pimped by swine; so take solace in Kafka and in understanding John the Savage: “In the fight between you and the world, back the world”; “*you are free, and that is why you are lost*”—“the meaning of life is that it stops”—

the jungle, kid, like the law of the self—no different; disrespect it, be diminished; disrespect it and expect it: a claw for your punishment, a sort of sickness—for instance, in terms of the self, I imagine you lack a sense of consequence, or perhaps you have one that is twisted: that is, I imagine you fathom consequence like this (in terms of the nihilistic): from a self-serving position wherein your decisions serve the “best interests of the worst aspects of yourself”—a position of which, I suspect, is the reason you never win. Which is why I must insist: do not think for a second that consequence is out of your control, because it isn’t; you are responsible for it, for consequence; which is why, if you betray these laws, *your* laws (your autonomy), you feel awful, see? (hence the abovementioned sickness)...and then you proceed, as if obviously, to blame everything, and all, except yourself; which is ridiculous, and, from the outside looking in (despite academic fears of criticalness, given the social determinants), looks even more ridiculous; so get a grip; and admit it: that if you submit to that which coaxes you, that’s it—meaning, if you wish to break your laws (the very laws you determine to be, and thus value as, important, the very laws you enact and enforce in the name of self-creation, conviction, and ‘morals’; yes...these laws...to break these laws) is akin to he who hesitates...*be who hesitates is lost*—at a loss—he loses—*proverb*); indeed, succumb to the easy option rather than conquer it, and you, little Indian, are a goner; done for; and so I dare you to honour it—your self-laws—and to be wary of dishonor...be a monster; never pimp your sovereignty; own it; be responsible; or else the dog in you will dominate, limit your thoughts, and shrink all that is lofty—i.e., that vision of you as a dependable human; because despite your urges and excuses, it is you in the way of you—in the sense that, *if* we humans *do* have a modicum of control over our lives, then we ought to shut the fuck up and pay no mind, to BS; have some self-respect; make the difficult choice as opposed to whatever *seems* essential—for even Foucault admits that we “are much freer than [we] feel” (as cited in Hokowhitu, 2009, p. 116).<sup>119</sup> None of the above is to say that rules aren’t meant to be broken and that mores aren’t in need of change. All is to say, rather, that if you enter the university with an idealistic image of how things ought to be as opposed to how things are, you will find yourself with problems—like, for instance, lost time, a big ole bill, and a future of insolvency. The law of the jungle (the institution) is set in policy, the syllabus; so privilege it—act ‘proper’—and receive their privileges; or else be a victim of ‘the system’—its facelessness. The question you have to answer for yourself is this: Is it really nonsense? Or is it not? Perhaps it is better to find out what *isn’t* nonsense? Via the elimination process.... Such is the double-edged

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<sup>119</sup> In a sense, “No dalliance until due diligence”—K. Wilde

sword of politics; in order to change the system, you have to honor it (bow to it). And that’s it: Either you enter prison and become a slavish hypocrite, or you become a mindless victim of your impulsiveness:

“None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free”—Goethe

You see what I mean? You can’t escape the State, and that’s it. Period.<sup>120</sup>

So, in toto. Put your fucking phone away; place it out of reach, and keep it out of sight—i.e., out of mind. And if it slips back in (and it will), *detect* its presence and *reject* it. Slap it out of your head if you have to—or else the possibility of depth (i.e., profundity) thru your studies, thru your attention, will suffer—momentum, as I said, is cruel mistress.<sup>121</sup> And never forget what Rilke insists: “Do not be bewildered by the surfaces; in the depths all becomes law” (Rilke, 1986, p. 38). So dive deep and fall in love with your studies: the dull labours, the anxiety, the awfulness—all of it.<sup>122</sup>

Creation over consumption; education over entertainment; we must distrust what is fast and easy: like a sip, a swig, a toke, a judgment...making love with someone who has a husband. Be better, pay attention, create something.

Education over entertainment—

Movement over ‘wealth’

Creation over consumption—

Create something<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Deep down, I wanna *outright* disagree with it, because I also believe in this: “*It is difficult to free fools from the chains they revere*” (Voltaire). Which is why, spoiler alert, I think it is best to strive for the utopia, but only after the bastards *make the mistake of teaching [you] their history*. “Freedom may not come in our lifetime,” but goddammit if we don’t try.

<sup>121</sup> Again, cue the feminists—again, I kid.

<sup>122</sup> Even so, love the phone, worship the phone, be about the phone, just not during work; an interruption during study is like an interruption during sex—it ruins the flow. Flow state: it’s a thing; look it up. Say no to phones, during work: 3–4 hrs—minimum. Also, this: “evil is whatever distracts”—Frantz Kafka. So shut the fuck up and concentrate—until you get to that place “where everything is music,” where “the lifeblood of the master spirits” pumps thru it. I.e., you.

Nevertheless, Kafka also said: “One of the first signs of the beginning of understanding is the wish to die”—which I also tend to agree with. So again take everything I say with a grain of salt.

Because WTF? Perhaps phones are The Answer.

Or perhaps “we are but cyborgs”—and this life is but a pageant.

Lastly: Kafka’s usage of ‘evil’ sets up a bit of a binary—a dated binary—so one has to question it; and perhaps even dispense with it; question and dispense; question and perhaps even, indeed.

<sup>123</sup> “[CP] if you don’t [create], you [will] become a menace to society” (Semple, 2012, p. 140)—which isn’t a bad thing per se—unless, that is, you harbour images of significance and greatness—in connexion with (see herein) Mandela, Herzog, and self-in-relation (as opposed to the galimatias of cupidinous ignoramus).

consumption deadens, kills your ability to listen, pay attention; puts off questions and indulges in sentiments;  
in essence, make something—cheap or special,  
get a hobby; divert your obsessions—  
distract your obsessions; use your obsessiveness<sup>124</sup>

Nostalgia: a pillar of twin delusions:

Delusion one: nostalgia makes you think the past was better (hence the present is worse).

Delusion two: nostalgia makes you wish you could go back (as opposed to forwards).

Easier said than done, of course, but complain no more. In other words, if you are stuck—on an emotion, a project, a relationship, you name it—then it is of vital importance to realize this: if you neglect (or reject) the potential for a memory (for instance) in the very moment you are in, then it—the moment you are in—will soon become a figment of your regretfulness (a symptom of nostalgic wishes); *every moment you are in is full of potential, kid*; do not waste a second of it; **DO NOT LACK THE COURAGE OF YOUR ROMANTIC CONVICTIONS!** (*Qualified romantically to conflict with religion.*) Chase after it! the moments you are in! Make every moment unforgettable, kid!

Or at least try, that is.

Bleeding hearts repurpose focus erroneously, i.e., wrongly; ask them what they did to achieve their scholarships—work or holler? They certainly didn’t whine or moan or falter; nor did they whimper; instead, they got after it—they played the game, they submitted: for instance, each kinesiologist is a member of the system (“the State”), a sort of hypocrite, a member of the perpetrators, not the victims. Think, for instance, of the post-structuralists: if their ideas ever come to fruition, then, in all seriousness, their heads are in the gibbet: and believe you me, they do not want it, which is why they espouse the trivial as serious; it’s a bloated politics, all of it—a falseness; an insolence without substance; a tongue-in-cheek peevishness. A wine-and-cheese disobedience; a hippy credence for deviants, a sorry, self-deceiving, self-defeating pretence in the name of altruistic meaning; indeed, altruism—lemmings over the cliff; I mean, it’s as if these overeducated pricks are in the North End

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<sup>124</sup> Also: during my last revision I watched a vid that substantiates my position on phones, in a ‘scientific way’—in other words, it confirms my bias; fuck the phone; also of note: this revision came at a time when my S9 was in a coma (which means I was in a blissful state of hyperfocus) because of witness-protection protocols...in Mexico...where I...an execution...and now...the run...until the storm settles. Anyhoo, here’s the link:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2Wcu6aGyz8>

holding the hands of our dying kids. Injudicious interference with real-world consequences—as if *our* politics were a game that were victimless; “*the hand that considerably—kills*” ... “*kindly let me help you or you’ll drown, said the monkey, putting the fish*”—

Which is why they do not really mean what they say, in all seriousness; but neither do I, for that matter, so what gives?

Perhaps I am infected with it—the pathology of pretentiousness; an affected existence.

Anyways, as for my politics—this: “respect the ground all walk on.”<sup>125</sup> That’s it.

As for this? just thoughts and playfulness. *They’re just thoughts*, said my therapist. Ideations of suicide; we watch them pass, we let them ride—like weather systems—we acknowledge them...and then we reawaken to the awesomeness. Just thoughts and acknowledgements—

“Want not, lack not” (Sahlins, 1972, p. 11).

Nontherapeutic difficulty—the quintessence of life, according to Rilke, Kierkegaard, and Steiner. Nietzsche, Fanon, and the list goes on. To utter colonization is not a response, it is but a simple answer to what is complex, topical. And I shall here acknowledge that what is complex requires what is honest, and also that what is honest fosters the question Where, in a world of historical wrongs, did *I* go wrong? Self-analytical honesty; challenge your convictions with equal parts frivolous play and brutal calm; serious, reconstructive honesty; not reductive self-destructiveness. And be ready for what is difficult: the separation of the self from the fickle; the refusal to vacillate, and the assertion to sit still. Contrary (in a similar way) to the girl in Christina’s World:

“[T]oo proud to buy a wheelchair...this is how she got around [she crawled]. And the story is that Wyeth, who is her neighbor, looked out from his window—that’s the perspective of the painting—and saw his neighbour pulling [herself] across the lawn. And he [Wyeth] felt challenged, in his words, to use paint, to use his artistic medium, in order to do justice to what he called ‘Her extraordinary conquest of a life which most people would find hopeless.’ It’s a painting about defiance (Mount, 2013, 4:03).

“You must be ready to burn yourself in your own flame; how could you rise anew if you have not first become ashes?”—Nietzsche.

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<sup>125</sup> Kulchyski, 2018.

Boy, am I burnt to a crisp—and yet your promise of newness is imperceptible. I see a theme in this screed and it saddens me. But I shan’t censor nor perfect these deeds—these misdeeds, rather. I shall instead smh and submit the bastard, and then learn from it: for instance, that one should not perform a thesis in a state of mindlessness

And one should definitely make time for edits and revisions

Self-in-relation...I didn’t listen

Welcome to the unwieldy world of solipsism

For all my gripes and grievances, know this: I have not read enough of Derrida yet; nor Jameson. Nor have I read enough of anything, really; which means the scope of my notadvice is limited; the scope of my everything is limited. I speak harshly of the parasitic, yet display a sort of fickleness. In one hand I peddle it, in the other I diminish it—I hold it and I squish it. What I think it means is this: we are all but idiots, who flail about in a dusky unknowingness; rudderless in an ocean of disastrous bliss; there is no reason for any of it, I’m told; and life is meaningless. No, there is a reason for all of it, even our thrownness, and we know it, and yet we strive to do away with it thru chauvinism; insightful scholars, those rationalists; really, I mean it, even if I disregard them in toto like a simpleton; even if I consider them ignorant about the immediacy of our condition; then again, scholars are not bathwater; and even babes deserve a listen. I mean, yeah yeah, maybe I am awash with dissonance, and as harsh as I am on the ‘rationalists’ (a target ambiguous) and ‘the parasitic’ (also ambiguous) for reasons not given; or maybe it is because I hold them somewhat responsible for my condition, my nihilism<sup>126</sup>—

Man, it seems as if I yearn for a return to ignorance

A regression imminent, if not already finished

If nothing else, please note the importance of philosophy to the urban Indian—see Boethius; google it; pick and choose from it; i.e., skip religion

For the North End cannot afford therapy, kid

But we sure as shit can afford the consolation of it

Of philosophy, that is

I mean it, ask any lifer in prison

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<sup>126</sup> I take full responsibility for my ‘nihilism.’ I mean, shit: I sometimes even revel in it—my nihilism, that is—like a miserabilist. Because from my limited stance and position, we could use less Pollyannas and more Voltarians.

Philosophy is practical, affordable, applicable  
it uplifts

But don't take my word for it, take the words of ~~Bill Gates~~ re the Girl who wrote *Educated*—

Of the seven Westover siblings, three of them—including Tara—*left home* [emphasis added], and all three have earned Ph.D.s. Three doctorates in one family would be remarkable even for a more “conventional” household. *I think there must've been something about their childhood that gave them a degree of toughness and helped them persevere* [emphasis added]. Her dad taught the kids that they could teach themselves anything, and Tara's success is a testament to that [swap out the part about “dad taught the kids” for “Life taught them that they could teach themselves anything,” and you're golden.]

*I found it fascinating how it took studying philosophy and history in school for Tara to trust her own perception of the world* [emphasis added]. Because she never went to school, her worldview was entirely shaped by her dad [her community—which for us is often the opposite of a community, at least in the traditional sense]. He believed in conspiracy theories, and [thus] she did, too [whereas we believe in rap music...]. It wasn't until she went to BYU that she realized there were other perspectives on things her dad had presented as fact. For example, she had never heard of the Holocaust until her art history professor mentioned it. She had to research the subject to form her own opinion that was separate from her dad's [opinion, her community's opinion—a community of which, for us, is often a bunch of dipshits; and thus we must separate ourselves from the opinions of dipshits and become autodidactic halfwits] (Gates, 2018, para. 7–8).<sup>127</sup>

Radical change begins with new role models

Swap out the pop stars for the astronauts and philosophers<sup>128</sup>

The *artistic* philosophers

Melville, Miller, Woolf, McCullers, O'Connor

Or maybe not

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<sup>127</sup> I hate to include Gates, but let the book *Educated* be a hint of sorts as we move towards the coda.

<sup>128</sup> Unless, of course, that astronaut happens to be Julie Payette...even then, however...still better...

In his lecture on *A Complicated Kindness*, Nick Mount describes the zeitgeist of the times—“in an increasingly rootless society” (Mount, 2013, 3:22)—as *homelessness*. In other words, we are not alone!

Why watch a lecture on *A Complicated Kindness*? And not just once or twice but multiple times? Well, why not? Roughly speaking, I see Miriam Toews as a misfit and an existentialist;<sup>129</sup> a rootless someone who, like me and us, is stuck in-between—a liminal state of which the absolutists and the fundamentalists “cannot tolerate: [indeed, the bastards] cannot tolerate the in-between”<sup>130</sup> (Mount, 2013, 8:26); “*neither cold nor hot, I spit you out*” (Mount, 2013, 8:35); neither good nor bad, I spit you out; neither left nor right, I spit you out; neither Indian nor Pork Chop, I spit you out (which is pretty much the dichotomous essence of fundamentalism, a sentiment of which is a lot more pervasive than we estimate)—in essence, “Can you remember who you were before the world told you who you should be?” (Bukowski, XXXX, p. XX). “Is it wrong to trust in a beautiful lie if it helps you get through life?” (Toews, 2004, p. 246). “Nomi needs irony [to survive in a town where an] undiagnosed illness [is clearly environmental and literally killing her friend—almost like the feeling you get—from the (in)tangible rift between the South and North Ends]”<sup>131</sup> (Mount, 2013, 21:05)—we need stories<sup>132</sup>—“either our lives becomes stories, or there is no way to get through them”<sup>133</sup>—stories indeed:

endeavor like a quester  
step through your questions; have your limits tested  
and dare to remember that it is best  
to *Live Life like a Story*

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<sup>129</sup> A roguish picaresque existentialist, that is, especially after a re-reading of *AMPS*.

<sup>130</sup> “I’d just been excommunicated, shunned, banished, exiled, call it whatever you want to call it.” (Toews, 2004, p. 241). “Call it homelessness” (Mount, 2013, 8:51). “Being homesick at home” (Toews, 2004, p. 78).

<sup>131</sup> “This is my right.

It is the right of every human being.

I choose not the suffocating anesthetic of these suburbs...  
but the violent jolt of the capital. That is my choice!  
The meanest patient, yes, even the very lowest, is allowed some say  
in the matter of her own prescription. [*AUTONOMY! AGENCY!*]  
Thereby she defines her humanity.  
I wish, for your sake, Leonard, that I were happy in this quietness.  
But if it is choice between Richmond and death...  
I choose death” [Nicole Kidman as Virginia Woolf in *The Hours* by Michael Cunningham].

<sup>132</sup> “The stories that I have told myself are bleeding into a dream, finally, that is slowly coming true. I’ve learned, from living in this town, that *stories are what matter* [emphasis added], and that *if we can believe them, I mean really believe them* [emphasis added], we have a chance at redemption” (Toews, 2004, p. 245).

<sup>133</sup> Douglas Coupland (as cited in Mount, 2013, 30:36).

*excellence is a habit—habit is excellence.*<sup>134</sup>

*And yeah-yeah, whatever, I get it: to heck with existentialism*

*be an idea instead:*

*a congruent quester—*

*an adventurer who efforts*

*towards a perceived ideal—*

*of profound reinvention*<sup>135</sup>

Necessity can be a thirst quencher, especially when you are *drowning in possibilities*<sup>136</sup> and find yourself rather desperate for a more manageable perspective. But don't take it from me, take it from Helen Keller: “Life is either a daring adventure or nothing [at all]. Security does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than exposure.” Or take it from Carl Jung: “The safe road is the road of death.” Touché, my friend. All this talk of the road and adventures. “Dark moods are healed by images of darkness, not by images of light” Jung (as cited in Evans, 2016, p. 322). Hence the reason why you have to *go thru hell to get through it*. “Knowing your own darkness is the best method for dealing with the darkness of other people. Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate” (Jung)—fate indeed, the ole anthem of the streets. The ole song and dance of the first and fifteenth; cyclic like the seasons, but bi-weekly. Break the cycle, CP, break the cycle indeed. Pay attention and see (and notice and feel) how easy it is for some people to rage against being—when, in reality, they eschew the supports that could alleviate the grievances. Do what is hard, difficult; get therapy even—but, more than anything, believe!<sup>137</sup>—believe in yourself; believe in people; and believe in

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<sup>134</sup> An Aristotelian sentiment.

Evidence of Miriam Toews' existentialism (as cited in Toews, 2004, p. 209):

When I got to school I told my teacher I was on cloud nine. I told her I was so happy I thought I could fly. I told her I felt so great I wanted to dance like Fred Astaire.

She said life was not a dream. And dancing was a sin. Now get off it and sit back down. It was the first time in my life that I had been aware of my own existence. It was the first time in my life I had realized that I was alive. And if I was alive, then I could die, and I mean forever. Forever dead. Not heaven, not eternal life on some other plane . . . just darkness, curtain, scene. Permanently. And that was the key to my new religion, I figured. That's why life was so fucking great.

I want that day back. I want to be nine again and be told, Nomi: someday you'll be gone, you'll be dust, and then even less than dust. Nothing. There's no other place to be. This world is good enough for you because it has to be. Go ahead and love it. (Menno was wrong.)

<sup>135</sup> “You cannot find peace by avoiding life”

<sup>136</sup> Apparently a Kierkegaardian phrase—but in actuality is “flounder[ing] in possibility,” at least in my copy it is. See Kierkegaard, 1980, p. 36.

<sup>137</sup> “Keep holy your highest hope!”—Nietzsche!

necessity, for necessity is freedom—like difficulty—in terms of your sense of achievement, a sense of which operates like weightlifting, physiologically, but for your sense of being: truly, difficulty activates your thought mechanisms, saturates your so-called essence, like a stimulant—an upper, a drug: a body in motion is dopaminergic, and essential like the sun—it becomes akin to doing what you love, like the timelessness of football, breaking free on a run—into the end zone. Move the line of scrimmage; be dependable

in a game dependent on field position.

Build bridges—be a model for the kids.

If I were to wish for anything, I should not wish for wealth and power, but for *the passionate sense of the potential* [emphasis added], for the eye which, ever young and ardent, sees the possible. *Pleasure disappoints, possibility never* [emphasis added; goddammit I love that!]. And what wine is so sparkling, what so fragrant, what so intoxicating, as possibility!” (Kierkegaard, 2000, p. 45).<sup>138</sup>

“(b) Despair viewed under the aspect of possibility/necessity

For the purposes of becoming (and the self must become itself freely) possibility and necessity are equally essential. Just as infinitude and finitude...belong to the self, so also do possibility and necessity. A self that has no possibility is in despair, and likewise a self that has no necessity” (Kierkegaard, 1980, p. 35).

[...] I continue on in this obnoxious vein for ages, so let us cut to the chase:

It doesn’t make any sense to try and figure out why life is so tragic, traumatic, and full of suffering; no sense at all; all one can do is stare the pain in the face and smile and say Thank you, zir, may I have another? Musing on existence is an affected privilege, a sort of sickness, and so I urge you to get down to business and forget about all of this—

i.e., cut the bullshit, kid; Grin and bear it—your sufferance.

Main takeaway today during “breathing time” (Shakespeare, 2003, 5.2.165, p. 214):

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<sup>138</sup> “Did he have passion?”—

Some of your deepest insights—stumbled upon through the life-force of diaphragmatic breathing and deliberate contemplation—are often later confirmed by the so-called greatest thinkers of our times—intuition indeed (or “bodily cognition,” as Hokowhitu might call it).<sup>139</sup> Not that you, silly Indian, are a great thinker, but shit: maybe there *is* indeed something to this thing called intuition.<sup>140</sup> If only you still had the language to spin it—a fact of which (our languagelessness) has prevented us from climbing into the pulpit and spewing our vision haphazardly in a zealous mission to imprint it on the minds of others who have yet to realize it (themselves). Which brings to mind images of The Stoic (whether cowboy or Indian, misfit or otherwise), looking out across the mountainside; calm in thought as if content to die, right then and there; contrast this image with the Bible-thumping, tent-building nitwit, who stiffens up in front of pews to get ahead of it—*it* being the insight that he, always he, knows you are about to hit, like the coast a western expansionist; he waves his hands, distracts, and plays his tricks; and there you sit, all passive and complicit, and allow him to direct your vision; beware of it! and remember this (what Zarathustra insists):

*If [emphasis added] you must speak of it, then do not be ashamed to stammer about it ... speak and stammer: “This is my good, I love this, thus I like it entirely, thus alone do I want the good. I do not want it as a divine law, I do not want it as a human statute and requirement. It shall be no signpost for me to overearths and paradises”* (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 24).

Ah, yes, to hell with heaven—and amen to the hectic world of earthy over-men (and -women).

You know such men, you admire such men, the ones who do not attempt to imprint their opinions on gents; yes, the men you admire do not, even when you ask them questions, answer them the men you admire lead by example: the charismatic, the poet, the stoic, the lovable curmudgeon, the one who does and doesn’t—your respect for them is significant and untouchable. And then you learn what it takes to be among them; it takes a lot of work to be one of them; a lot of work and a lot of action: hustle your ass, kid. Live an actional existence—an *honourable* existence—I’LL SAY IT AS MANY TIMES AS IT TAKES FOR YOU TO TAKE ACTION! *I INSIST*—yes, an ACTIONAL existence; live it bullishly, and in spite of your condition—get a grip, jostle it, and be unapologetic about forgiveness—of the self; I insist! forgive it! (the self) for being lesser than it is, lesser than it could’ve been in every other instant; and condemn it *only* if it is lesser than it was last christmas. Now, do not take any of this as an imperative of tradition; it might sound familiar and

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<sup>139</sup> Hokowhitu, 2009, p. 110.

<sup>140</sup> “Sell your cleverness and buy bewilderment. Cleverness is mere opinion, bewilderment is intuition”—Rumi

quicken thoughts of dated images, most of them male-driven, but whatever—Be better and Dispense with it (the imperatives, the narratives, the images), for what matters is this: You show up, you care, you give. You do not sit around all passive like a cynic; rather, you stand up and chose interest over disinterest. You take truth as twoness: a choice between take or give—action or in: *Life is meaningless!*—a truth with two opinions: despair and holler and bitch, or fall to your knees and thank the goddesses; one leaves you freer and allows you to exist; the other psychosomatically about does you in. For instance, consider the earthlings in the colleges (on the artsy side of the scientific) ...and how they end up indifferent because they fail to acknowledge their convictions, *challenge* their convictions; put different: it is significant, truly significant, to have the courage of your convictions; but it is even more significant to challenge the courage of your convictions, and to maybe even see them as constrictions. (A sort of Nietzschean dictum.) Even professors should have to relicense their positons; without it, their convictions become dated and parasitic; they atrophy into a shapelessness; sit too much and lose the muscle of your ass and sticks; abstractions are like objects, no different—so get up and work them like an Olympian. Now, I reflect on what is said and I cannot help but cringe—regarding the above-mentioned utterance of men of action, and our attraction to the charismatic; in the North End, this blather can damage, seeing as the one who leads is usually a troubled being, a disobedient oddity, someone who earns their capital (their social capital, also known as street cred) via the unethical, attention-seeking desire to impress; with it (the cred) comes the power, and the abuse of it; then death. Zero to a hundred like a hit of meth; that’s how little time there is left when you sit in a jail cell and reflect; yes, it is among our greatest downfalls as the boys of absent men: our gravitation, that is, towards alluring gents: the bastards, the go-getters, the careless men / the father figure—types, the virulent, the demented; a gravitation of which, in the North End, often puts us in a bad spot; we go on joy rides, we make the drops; we allow our belief systems to become saturated with the leader’s thoughts—uncritically—until we find ourselves responsible for the consequences, at which point we pause and think O god! I submitted to a dominant—or instigated a submissive, dominantly—at which point the questions enter and bother: What made me do wrong? Where did I go wrong? *How* did I not think that was wrong? And *Why*—? Why do I never think before I act? until I find myself responsible for my actions? or the actions of others? Goddammit! Why do I do this to my family? my mother? Why can’t I be a better brother? I know damn well I am not a puppet. Nobody has that power over me; I am rather a domino in a skein of imaginings, happenings—deeds, feats—which are never-ending, cyclic, and so unbelievable that they make me unbelieving—which ain’t a bad thing, necessarily, and yet I can’t help but think:

*we must challenge our beliefs!—our thinking!—and bear the burden of freedom! responsibility! consequence!*

epistemologically—a sense of consequence, a sense of the cognitive, a *sense*—whether sixth or infinite, or bodily—like conscience—like intuition; instinct; a bad feeling—the opposite: a clean conscience. Guts. Have the guts to speak honourably. And do not let others instigate you dishonourably; do not slink or talk nonchalantly, unthinkingly. Establish a line and a willingness to honour it, and to believe—for instance, that life is full of meaning, and that everything you do is meaningful (a terrifying belief). A little belief in being is indeed as critical as a reaction to a bee—a couple of die on a Ouija; Do Not, I repeat, remain unbelieving! Of course, I predicate all this doublespeak on how serious you are about the university. If you enter, do not dabble; do not fall victim to the lazy prattle that, for instance, pleasure increases when you laugh off matters, when you refuse to take on life as a savage, when you act as if you’re *not* at a disadvantage and so indulge like a debaucherous bastard, like Dionysus—for hedonism diminishes autonomy; turns you into a follower, makes you a wannabe; gets you a seat at a table where the wolves of Wallstreet (those with the deeper pockets, you see) are leaders. Be your own leader, CP—lead yourself with optimism, self-belief—and you will see: how easily a species gravitates towards self-efficacy, or even just an aura of it; like planets in orbit, in accordance with the law of gravity—the law of gravity—the pull of self-belief, and meaning. Edgy arts students may label you a conformist dweeb, until they are out a dormitory and cannot afford a place to sleep, at which point they come to you for shelter from the storm, the sleet; progress and politics are ugly, CP; especially when you learn that you cannot live alone on what your professors preach; such is the embodied foundation of existential beliefs: i.e., understanding that, for instance, the oppressive elements of race and gender are real—but cheap—self-defeating, a form of categorical thinking: “When you pay too much attention to [categorical] boundaries, you don’t see the big[ger] picture” (Sapolsky, 2011, February 1, 16:57)<sup>141</sup>—categories are one-dimensional (a sort of monotheism), whereas life is multifaceted: i.e., it often lacks distinctions—and so, you see, for the idealist, the bearing of these categories on your life depends on how you perceive them; perception is everything, CP; mind-dependent or -independent is

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<sup>141</sup> See Allsopp et al. (2019) for more on categories, specifically regarding their take on the remarkable overlap of diagnostic criteria for psychiatric evaluations, criteria (categories/distinctions/divisions/taxonomies and boxes) of which allow for a flexibility in clinical diagnosis that “undermine[s] the model of discrete categories of disorder” (p. 15). Therefore the research suggests that the current system of psychiatric categorization is “disingenuous” (Allsopp, 2019, p. 15/21); i.e., the system that shrinks use for understanding distress (i.e., for naming illnesses; i.e., for labelling people who are momentarily distressed), a practice of which Rilke also implies is sketchy (intuitively giving it the hairy eyeball in a letter to young Mr. Kappus, circa 1909): “One must be so careful with names anyway; it is so often on the name of a misdeed that a life goes to pieces, not the nameless and personal action itself, which was perhaps a perfectly definite necessity of that life and would have been absorbed by it without effort” (Rilke, 1929/1986 e-version, p. 71).

dependent upon by your perceptions; blue or red? realistic, idealistic; sense, cognition; be an intuitionist. That said, do not worry or fret if you do not know these things just yet; worry and fret only if you make concessions; worry and fret only if you fail to take exceptions where you *should* take exceptions, especially among the unethical; *should* as opposed to *ought*, less oppressive; be firm and assertive, and yes, worry only if you think, incorrectly, that differences in perception, however pedantic or ostensibly pathetic, have no bearing on your being. My only suggestion is to Get in step & *think*; or else circumstance will step in and delimit your perceptions/beliefs (possibilities, readings, capacities for feeling, appreciation of novelty), like all those people you wondered about as a child from the back seat, all those people who were in and on the streets, awash with the god-awfulness of poverty. The fallen prophets of your milieu indeed—the harsh reality of your wiggled-out scene; a scene of which is a lot different than the one your professor preaches, or reads about, or is familiar with—*truly* familiar with—I talk specifically of the professor who preaches that you ought to have 100% empathy for the neighbourhood thief; the thief of whom makes your miserable life all the more miserable and who ridicules your beliefs: *This guy wants to be a doctor! Oollee! Settle down dere, hero. Take a chill pill!* Yes, of course—I mean, you have every right to be unseemly and dishonest in your conduct, in your being; you have every right to live out your life in a shanty of unbelievers; but always remember that nihilistic people are nihilistic for a reason; and surely that reason is often related to the reverberation of a trauma from historical wrongs and inhuman policies—truly—but to accept these reasons wholesale is a deficiency in thinking, a defect of rationality; deficits and defects of which often lead men and women to a passive-aggressive state of self-deception, and performativity, and martyrdom, a soi-disant state of suffering of which only exacerbates the inferiority complex in marginalized men and women, men and women who already suffer enough as it is—and who later on—a little too late, mind you—develop a sense of consequence, and who, in turn, become believers in the system: which I call the inevitableness of our lower-class existence; or rather the imposed perception of our victim-script; a value judgment, to be sure; one of which misses the point of far-seeing preventatives—up-stream qualitative approaches to end oppressiveness; but underlying all this is the implication that the dishonest, at heart, are not vicious, uncontrolled monsters. Sorry, but I grew up next to murderers, drug lords, and bon vivants. And so indeed, years of reality have marred my ability to see the good in people—all I see are deviants; in everybody, professors even, not just the meanies in the street. Belief. Marred, existential, and free-ish. The third phase of man, according to Kierkegaard: religious faith, religious belief (or so it would seem...). For me, personally, I say excise ‘religious’ and insert ‘spirituality’—if you must. Belief

alone, I think, is enough. Religion, according to Kulchyski, is the institutionalization of spirituality. Or was it the bureaucratization of spirituality? Either way—*believe in yourself, goddammit!* Take advantage of your physical intelligence and your manic temperament—sensitive as it is—and master it; get after it: with a belief in self, a limitless self-concept, and a silent calm that moves thru bricks walls as if anything were possible—all it takes is a little gall, a little bravado. Don’t ask yourself why, ask yourself Why not? This isn’t science, it’s nuance; a rip-off; stand on the shoulders of giants and “always *pitch above the head*[—of yourself]...*until [your] fingers ache with reaching*”<sup>142</sup>—and, if anyone refuses to take you seriously, consider it a dishonor—and then respond—honourably.

“Art and philosophy let us say what we cannot normally; they let us meet with others in the deeper or darker recesses of our minds, talk about what’s there, and connect on a level only possible in such a place; however, in order to successfully do any of this, we must first be willing to face and share ourselves with complete vulnerability...or at least try. When writing and discussing writing, Kaufman defends with great conviction the importance and value of pursuing and expressing art, creativity, and perhaps life in general, with honesty and self-truth, no matter how convoluted, dumb, strange, boring, or scary we might feel in the process: ‘*SAY WHO YOU ARE! Really say it, in your life, and in your work. Tell someone out there who is lost, someone not yet born, someone who won’t be born for 500 years; your writing will be a record of your time; it can’t help but be; but more importantly if you are honest about who you are, you’ll help that person be less lonely in their world—because that person will recognize him or herself in you.*’ Through the creative process, and perhaps in many other aspects of our daily life, it can be found that in order to do anything novel or earnest, we must risk having our deepest and most vulnerable qualities be rejected; we must risk sounding dumb, acting weird, being wrong, or feeling bad—we must risk all of this in order to ever share anything real about ourself[ves], and avoid living and dying without the world ever really seeing who we are.” (Pursuit of Wonder, 2019, July 16, 3:08).

And yeah, I know this missive sounds all high and mighty and dismissive, and unscientific; and perhaps even a bit reductive, misguided, and restrictive—or conditional; I know it’s imperfect; but I also know this: we have to start somewhere; and, for me, this is it; I mean, we need something,

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<sup>142</sup> Steiner, 2013, February 22, 55:39.

anything, even if only half-baked and hare-brained—“to [begin to] rally around an image of ourselves”<sup>143</sup>—for “*we have no book*”;<sup>144</sup> no bible; no *written aphorisms*, nothing to conflict nor win us; nothing to diminish nor undermine our *invidia*; nothing to split or suture our consciousness; nothing to piss off the ones who diminish us, who delimit our cognizance, with a benevolent fraudulence. Jesus, what am I on about this time? Shit. Epistemic responsibility, kid. Look it up and take consequence as the root of your newfound honesty kick.

Funny thing about all of this is my fear of sounding conservative—

Truth is, I am naïve when it comes to politics; perhaps even indifferent to it; especially given its deterministic analysis of people as fundamentally driven by economics; a huge motive, for sure, but not all of it.<sup>145</sup> Indeed, politics (...determinism), which focuses on divisions as opposed to cohesiveness; politics—as in the reality of it, not the utopic vision. No. For me, what matters is this: I spent the summer of 2018 on the fifth floor of HSC: the unit for major post-op recoveries; freshly paralyzed kids and people; my uncle, you see, had fallen and broken both of his legs; my uncle and I are close—as mentioned: the loveable curmudgeon, the doer, the caregiver, the man of jaw-dropping Negative Capability. I firmly believe that nobody works as hard as he; physically, and thus mentally. (All of which, again, I have already mentioned.) Yes, there I was that summer, at his bedside, bringing him bifanas and Sumols, making small talk, sitting silently, staring out the window, helping him make adjustments, watching football, playing games, solving intricate puzzles. And what befuddled me (and us) was how long he had to sit there, lie there, swelling dangerously and in such pain to the point he almost lost both his legs, all because a shortage of doctors, surgeons, nurses. Shit, I wanted in that instant to switch my mission, to pursue medicine, especially seeing as my disinterest in the social sciences, and the humanities, and even fiction, mounted by the minute; these thoughts became all-consuming and drove me to question my convictions, along with my reasons for why I made the decision to turn left and choose the soft sciences over the somewhat harder sciences (physiology, physiotherapy, the latter of which had long been my mission). But, at the last

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<sup>143</sup> Steiner, 2013, February 22, 9:25.

<sup>144</sup> Steiner, 2013, February 22, 9:37.

<sup>145</sup> A false note. Yes, politics is messy—but there *is* a coherent and rigorous way of reading and speaking about “the system” without outright dismissing it. Be an informed dissident and not a “little bitch”—ie someone who is disengaged, disinterested. Also, clearly politics is about more than economic determinism (which is a theoretically dated thought—dead and gone with Althusser, that killer of women). Not only that, but this: I was wrong to label the above passage false, seeing as economic reductionism is, after all, a common, valid criticism (among criticisms, checks and balances). (Albeit a disproven criticism. That is, invalid. Or is it? the economy is, after all, “a necessary condition for human existence...”)

minute, at the fork in the road, I found out I was Indian; and, impressionable as I is, especially under the powerful opinions of social scientists, all of whom encouraged me, and thus imprinted a politics in me, to pursue the reclamation of my identity (a rabbit hole of which, after five years, has emptied me, and regrettably remains devoid of meaning—seeing as, for the urban half-breed, the pursuit of these things is self-defeating: a word of which I will surely repeat). In that hospital, you see, I thought Shit, I wouldn’t be in this frigging position if I wasn’t an Indian—hard enough as it is (and always has been); I mean, I was on the cusp of something different, I was on the cusp of becoming a respectable individual, and then bam, broadsided, by the essence of my existential disconnectedness—at 26—with the now added layer of a political identity, imposed on me by powerful peeps who thought they were empowering me, but were in actuality disempowering me, with the ideologies of the effete—ideologies of which, no matter how hard I tried to swallow them, and wholeheartedly, have failed to sink in, indoctrinate me. Which is why it suddenly dawns on me that, if anything—academically, philosophically, professionally—I am, perhaps, an existentialist, see? somebody who stands outside of everything (see the above quote about ‘perfervid individualism’)—which is to say, Dear Academy; I think the well-intentioned therapies of your qualitative ministry, for the most part, have become diseased. But goddammit, if only it were that easy for the academy to stand back and not brand but rather advance the matters of noninterference, education dollars, and clean drinking water; instead, we have PAR... “[o]ne has watched life badly if one has not also seen the hand that considerably—kills” (Nietzsche, 1886/1989, p. 80). Which brings me back to my Aging classes, and reminds me of an all-important aging standard: *Never do anything for the Aging individual that the Aging individual can do for him- or herself.* Put different: *if all we have in the end is our sense of independence, then the application of overprotection quickly becomes a death sentence.* In other words, CP, be wary of dogooders who think in terms of dichotomies, dualistic conceptions of good and bad meanings. *We are but blockheads,*<sup>146</sup> but at least the hard sciences “*don’t bluff—they can’t bluff; they’re not going to lose their time with bluffing*”<sup>147</sup> because their formulas are serious enough that, if you eff them up, in surgery, with anesthesia, then the consequences are immediately visible, vital, rough;<sup>148</sup> whereas the consequences in the social sciences, and I might be one of them, are far from minimal; the only difference is that the professors of the parasitic can easily argue their innocence, given how flimsy it all is [...] And there I go again, shooting from the hip. I didn’t mean it—any of it—and so I beg of you

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<sup>146</sup> Michel de Montaigne, n.d., para. 2.

<sup>147</sup> Steiner, 2013, February 22, 3:44.

<sup>148</sup> That said, I am pretty sure (but do not take my word for it; double-check all) medical error is a leading cause of mortality in many westernized countries, and that’s not even counting the deleterious effects of polymedicine, etc.

forgiveness—I am simply at the nadir of my existence; it just seems as if the proponents of *difference* monitor student intelligence for wrongful politics; as if thinking were always-already dichotomous, as if thinking were always-already indicative...when, for me, politics is just the flavor of the instant—which is my pseudo-historicist view and position, this instant...all of which is subject to change, like perceptions, like truth, like immediacy, like the myth of the given. But enough of this dilettantish nonsense, this shooting from the hip—making attributions and refusing to muse on the three fingers that point back at me every minute: first of all, think back: think back to how that pilot project was aces, jack—the way the armour lifted off those mislabeled bastards, those bad apples, those “at risk” youth—not only aces but significant and moving; second, the utopia is worth pursuing, unlike this—this literary nonsense, this dogma, and these thoughtless abuses—shit, I know I’m wrong; I know I’m affected by the lot of it all: I know I want the greed of progress, the privilege of whiteness, and the dominance of bourgeois influence—I want it; all of it; the white picket fence and the scientific progress<sup>149</sup>...we need more doctors, obviously, but...goddammit, science, I’m conflicted; and there it is again, as Paulo Freire insists: “*Washing one’s hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.*” A sloganish truism of which I have foisted on colleagues and students, and nothing—just a look as if: You’re better when you’re funny. Also, what are my own motives in shooting from the hip? So I can later *humblebrag* about how cool I am because dissident? Insolent? Different? The performativity of my impudence is akin to the appendage of characteristics, unsolicited—“*everything is a performance, kid.*”

“Even mental illness?”

We will always fight for progress and reform, never tolerate injustice or corruption, always fight demagogues of all parties, always oppose privileged classes and public plunderers, never lack sympathy with the poor, always remain devoted to the public welfare, never be satisfied with merely printing news, always be drastically independent, never be afraid to attack wrong, whether by predatory plutocracy or predatory poverty (Joseph Pulitzer, 1883, New York World).

This quote reminds me to keep the pedal to the metal.

In essence:

eff the violence of the data-driven sciences

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<sup>149</sup> Post-game note: to be clear, Marx embraces and even praises the productivity of capitalism and its achievements in technology—in other words, Marxist/socialist/communist doctrines are not mutually exclusive of scientific progress; rather, they are inclusive of the potential freedom that arises as a result of its forces of production, and optimistic about the distribution of its abundances. Anyways, read more, and shoot from the hip [of hearsay] less. #defundthepolice

time, once and for all, to pick sides, join the riotous. Amplify—be a remembrancer  
for “enslaved ancestors,” tyras  
time to falsify and out-philosophize the tyrants<sup>150</sup>

“[W]e have an obligation to challenge the ideologies that shackle us. The purpose, then, is to push the edge” (Kovach, 2009, p. 93).

*“Forget safety. Live where you fear to live. Destroy your reputation, be notorious. I have tried prudent planning long enough. From now on I’ll be mad”*—Rumi

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<sup>150</sup> “Ideological leverage is always superior to violence...the problems of Indians have always been ideological” (Deloria, 1969, p. 256). Also, in reference to the abovementioned ‘respectable individual,’ all I can say (as someone who had ‘had enough of poverty’ and who had just wanted to make it in the world) is this: What an illusion, or perhaps a delusion, for me to think I could escape my skin—for even ‘my mission’ [to become a physiotherapist] was performative, a construction of my condition (a *reaction formation* against the shame of my heritage/skin/indianness—“Look, marster! I too can sing and dance with the bastards!” a reaction of which, in and of itself, is telling, re the society I grew up in.) Which speaks to what Hokowhitu describes, in my eyes, as a predictable construction: a discursive formation of resistance, a sort of predetermined identity in opposition. Which also speaks, by way of relatedness, to the plight of blacks to prove their whiteness (see the Fanon quote below). Which speaks to everything that is postcolonialism. It is all there, writ large, like a symptom. That said, “Can one live it?”

[A]s indigenous peoples continuously strive to be liberated, and as indigenous scholars employ the western tradition of dissent to defect, do we simultaneously enmesh ourselves further by corroborating the colonizers’ methods? In focusing on the colonizers, do we merely legitimate their presence? By resisting the colonizers, do we laterally give them mana (power and prestige)?” (Hokowhitu, 2016, p. 85).

To be an ‘authentic’ indigenous person is to be one with the prevailing, and I would say State-induced, discourses that construct indigeneity (Hokowhitu, 2016, p. 86). [...*continued in footnote below*...]  
Indeed, the task for most, if not all, Indigenous people since [invasion] has been to reclaim their humanity, to make themselves fully human, to deliver their diseased, immoral, monstrous corpses from the jaws of death. Of course, under the watchful gaze of the colonizers, controlling, manipulating, morphing with the definitive purpose of social cohesion. Part of becoming Indigenous was become human in the eyes of the colonizers (Hokowhitu, 2016, p. 88).

Here we have the Fanonian quote about the plight of blacks to prove their whiteness (switched):

There is a fact: White man consider themselves superior to [red] man.  
There is another fact: [Red] man want to prove to white man, at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect.  
How do we extricate ourselves? (Fanon, 1967, p. 10).

“[I]n my case everything takes on a new guise. I am given no chance. I am overdetermined from without. I am the slave not of the “idea” that others have of me but of my own appearance” (Fanon, 1967, p. 87).

“I realized that the nigger is not so much a person as a form of behaviour; a sort of obverse reflection of the white people he lives among” (Faulkner, 1984, p. 55) [the voice of Quentín Compson, who, to reiterate, is the young man/character in the *Sound and the Fury* who cannot come to terms with his heritage (which speaks to the quote by Sartre about how “the status of ‘native’ is a neurosis,” and functions as an existential comment on what it means to exist as an Indian, or even just a half-breed, stripped of heritage and stuck in-between)]

*If you're constantly in a state of satisfaction and happiness, then nothing is going to affect you deeply enough, so that you'll become deep; and life without depth is, by definition, shallow—and [thus] meaningless. In order to regard anything as truly important, you also have to regard it's loss as truly meaningful; and that means to open yourself up to experiences of deep meaning, it also simultaneously means that you have to open yourself up to the possibility of deep hurt and sorrow—and you do that anytime, for example, when you make a relationship profound; you put your emotions on the line, and that has to be real or the relationship can't be real—JBP on why happiness is deceiving*

N.B.: the very concept of “Expanding Epistemological Boundaries” (Moreton-Robinson, 2016, p. vii)—the title of Part II in *Critical Indigenous Studies*—seems a worthy endeavor, a timely endeavor.

The theory of knowledge is our friend, sir—and so it is, once again, time for an ideological insurrection—for us up-and-coming eggheads to create a little elbow room, to nudge out the trailblazing but now dated doofuses, and to establish a newish episteme in the academy—a sort of scaffolding for what Hokowhitu calls ‘monstrous knowledges’—those unintelligible knowledges that make no sense to disembodied intellects; those embodied knowledges that awaken and revive what our minds deprive of us—that is, the ability to realize...in the affirmative: “Can one live it?”

Yeeshaw! Ignition: Repurpose you condition with a power notover but a power within.

Representation is an undeniable gift. Give it.<sup>151</sup>

**Practicum:** how to succeed as an idiotic human in the university: firstly, convince yourself that you love learning—like the Russian cosmonaut,<sup>152</sup> make it a priority to break the study barrier (a threshold of which you can actually *feel* yourself cross about twenty minutes in—into forced study, that is—similar to the way you can actually *see* a jet plane break the sound barrier, ya dig?): so quit

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<sup>151</sup> See Weigmann, 2012—google it even (the journal offers *free and open access*); it is a *Science and Society* article that discusses the necessity of bodies, and the importance of experience, in understanding the world, which connects back to the third quote in the section “*Things that give me pause*” (page 12?). In other words, bias confirmed—seeing as intuition, when taken seriously, is serious, you see? And so we must inspire it freely in the university; which means, unintelligibly, that we must demonstrate it, and weirdly; then and only then can we suture our heads back onto our necks—for the sake of embodiment—with movement, or a sort of movement. Indeed. We must become Frankenstein’s monster in the university, the ivory tower—an institution of which, as an ideological apparatus, sat by idly while the State went ham on our ancestors, or rather on the Indian in the little bastards—

<sup>152</sup> “So the cosmonaut decides...the only way to save his sanity...is to fall in love with [the thing that torments him].”

the mindfucking rap music, and enter that place of “right-doing and wrong-doing”<sup>153</sup>—“where everything is music”<sup>154</sup>—sublimate; learn to sit still; complete small goals (pencil in study blocks— one-hour study blocks; then, one by one, check them off; and pencil in breathers as you move along: every hour: ten minutes off); “All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone” (Blaise Pascal): we must learn to sit—especially us hyperactive kids—and we must also, second-most, learn to be alone. “Be alone, that is the secret of invention; be alone, that is when ideas are born”<sup>155</sup>—

“To live alone one must be either a beast or a god, says Aristotle. Leaving out the third case: one must be both—a philosopher” (Nietzsche).

The mind is sharper and keener in seclusion and uninterrupted solitude. No big laboratory is needed in which to think [which is perfect for us North Enders who are stuck and restless]. Originality thrives in seclusion free of outside influences beating upon us to cripple the creative mind [which presents a problem for us North Enders who are stuck in hecticness]. Be alone, that is the secret of invention; be alone, that is when ideas are born. *That is why*

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<sup>153</sup> Rumi, 1997. p. 36.

<sup>154</sup> Rumi, 1997. p. 34. (That said, I agree with Nietzsche who said “without music [or art in general, really], life would be a mistake”—)

<sup>155</sup> “I need solitude for my writing; not 'like a hermit' - that wouldn't be enough - but like a dead man” (Kafka). The greatest thing in the world is to know how to belong to oneself” (Montaigne). “[Be patient with those] who are afraid of the aloneness that you trust” (Rilke, 1986, p. 43). “Every day we slaughter our finest impulses. That is why we get a heartache when we read those lines written by the hand of a master and recognize them as our own, as the tender shoots which we stifled because we lacked the faith to believe in our own powers, our own criterion of truth and beauty. Every man, when he gets quiet, when he becomes desperately honest with himself, is capable of uttering profound truths. We all derive from the same source. There is no mystery about the origin of things. We are all part of creation, all kings, all poets, all musicians; we have only to open up, only to discover what is already there” (Henry Miller). “Go into yourself” ... “A seed has to totally destroy itself...” ... “Burn yourself in your own flame” ... “Destroy your reputation” ‘Destroy your dragon’ (Rilke, princess line; ah, here it is: actually, I’ll insert it later) “without great solitude no serious work is possible” “Everybody has the same energy potential. The average person wastes his in a dozen little ways. I bring mine to bear on only one thing: my paintings, and everything is sacrificed to it—you and everyone else, myself included.” Yeah yeah but art is a lie and you’re all assholes, except maybe Rilke, and Kafka. At any rate, back to the seed/flower line (the “totally destroy itself” one); recently, I’ve been at war with an infection of sorts; nobody could tell what it was, but clearly, they all agreed, clearly something was wrong; but what? Rewind: After three months of hell, I decided, after accidently missing a meal, to fast for 96 hours straight—a weird length of time of which I still worked and wrote and edited and read and shoveled and shopped for groceries and etc. and, by the 80<sup>th</sup> hour, I could literally feel my teeth rotting out of my head. I’d lost most of my muscle mass (which had taken me the previous three months to build up) and all my fat; I looked like hell but felt like god. Over the next few days, however, while gradually introducing solids back into my diet, I noted how ridiculous fasting is—a mistake, a blunder. But now, a week later, I see things differently, for I feel like a new man, starting from scratch...with an increase in energy, and a reduced number of rashes. Etc. In a sense, I broke myself down (self-destructed), so I could rise again, anew. With a fresh perspective—one that sees ever onwards, upwards, inwards—towards the center. Anyways, as with a computer, sometimes you too have to press the reset button, otherwise you glitch out and frag and that ain’t good. And so it is, lil Indian, hit up a Sun Dance ceremony and go all in. Cut your skin. *Give—*

*That said, what I fail to mention here (perhaps on purpose, or perhaps intentionally) is this: what was really healing during this time (of Esther) was an immersion in fiction—it had been a while since I had settled into a classic work of fiction (especially a classic of which I had read before, and could settle even deeper in). Ah, yes—what oddly full nights those were.*

*many of the earthly miracles have had their genesis in humble surroundings* [emphasis added]—Tesla  
(as cited in Milroy, 2020, p. 19).

What irks me most about my endeavors into the world of the politics is the exacerbation of my self-defeating indigenous limits, that godforsaken self- and other-imposed ontological condition; implicit; explicit, allusive, collusive, acquiescent, accredited; if only I had been less Indian, I might’ve been less self-conscious; might’ve even pursued an MD instead of the false prophecy of a doctorate.

## The Vision Quest: A Few Insignificant Excerpts

**January 28, 2020**

“*[Be] an experiment in human excellence*”—a [Kobe-related] paper clipping

Woke, jumped out of bed, dressed in a minute, egressed in a second, sprinted down the back lane, heard a honk, noticed a truck, a red Milwaukee truck—it was Chris Temple—parked illegally; he waved me over, abducted me, drove me to the University—thankfully; would have been late otherwise. Met with Dr. Henhawk for an hour and a half, talked colonialism, touched on Man, discussed my options for my master’s, finished up, said goodbye, entered the lab, pounded back some water, walked to Isbister, settled in, grabbed a spoon, exited the office, bumped into PK, touched base, cleaned the spoon in the washroom, downed two bananas with some peanut butter and honey and prunes, gave PK my office key because he forgot his, said goodbye, sprinted to Conklin, prepped and performed from six till ten, exited, walked to IQs, bought a coffee, sprinted onwards, bussed downtown, sprinted onwards, caught up on MMS, bussed home, recommenced never-ending stream of time-killing MMS, arrived home, walked the dog, cuddled him, soothed him, comforted him, made sure he did his business, settled in, read chapter one of Francis Jennings, scheduled a reading of chapter two for the morning (before, during, and after colloquia, which is at 11:30, which means wake time is 10:15 a.m., which means four hours of sleep, then bus, lecture, professionalization seminar, then class (three fucking insufferable hours), then food, then Conklin, then performance, then coffee, then repeat. My life must change. And immediately.

**October 16, 2020**

Had a proper meltdown today like Adam Driver in *A Wedding Story*, minus the slobber and the tears, but on par with the intensity; got over it; drove down McPhillips, marched into Walmart, bought three CO detectors, a fire extinguisher, nine boxes of Chex, and a liter of olive oil; read the instructions, cautions, etc., installed CO detectors. Studied, decided: tomorrow is the day I make up my mind—*sign the dotted line, start my life; tomorrow is the day I make the realist decision, not the idealist decision.* NO MORE WISHFUL THINKING. ACCEPT YOUR SITUATION, MAKE THE MOST OF

YOUR CONDITION, AND SLAUGHTER SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS—then restore a self-concept that fosters self-confidence.<sup>156</sup>

### October 19, 2020

Here we go again—but from a different angle this time:

The diary. The time is 1:27 a.m. and the mind is heavy—although light, seeing as I (by the hairs of chinny chin chin) am somehow safe for the night. Which brings to mind two profound, cliché-ridden insights: first of all—as you know—*you must go thru hell to get thru it*; and second of all, *patience is a virtue*; indeed, fools rush in; had I taken what was given, I would have missed out on this pleasantness; this safe haven (this rural hamlet outside of Steinbach) ... yeah.

... just finished up a long conversation (with an arts teacher in a granary, a former granary, now a hideaway and a house) about Miriam Toews, and fiction, and the depth and profundity of writers with PhDs in trauma. But off to bed they went, and now here I sit, in the living room, with my feet on the ottoman, and my mind on a bottle of ‘shrub’; above me, another student; to the left of me, a black dog; to the right, a black cat; and, on my lap, this.

...

look, kid, I struggle different; similar but different; I, like you, think about the “darkest of shit” — darker even than the darkest of vengeful nymphets. About the death of him. About the death of this; shit, from the outside looking in (from my perspective, that is, twisted as it is), I imagine it looks as if something is amiss; something of which, I think (from within), needs a radical change to see exactly what it is; tonight, a part of that change came with distance, in perspective<sup>157</sup>—*part* of it...a little bit; for distance indeed makes the heart grow fonder, and indeed necessity forces he who over-ponders—everything and nada—to do the ninety things he has been meaning to do but has not (out of stuckness, etc., yada yada, everything and nada); chalk it up to resistance—and the need to cut the bullshit with a damn hard kick; not a multitude of kicks, but an emotional kick, a solid kick; like the difference between a jog and a heavy lift; like the threshold of the action potential that makes you tick

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<sup>156</sup> After a year of instability, I decided it was time for some stability (time to sign the dotted line) so I could grind out this thesis and commit to the academy once and for all. [According to the Jesus freaks, however, the Lord had a different plan...or a hand in it or whatever...to which I laugh; to which I say eff the Lord, goddammit; and you too, R., you dirty rotten scumbag pastor of a landlord. In actuality, I’m glad for it—all of it—for I always turn a negative positive.]

<sup>157</sup> Like Fitzgerald who fled America for “a change of scenery to spark his creativity” (Fitzgerald, 2020, July 9, para. 13).

...

CP, to test the faith of my hypotheses, this thesis, and these existential themes (especially on difficulty), I shall drive to Tkaranto and take care of a few things that have been on my mind since the summer of 2019. I am going to, as it were, submit a ms and “See about a girl”—as for the girl, I seek rejection; as for the manuscript, whatever—

Yes, at bottom, as soon as these items are off my plate, and out of sight, I can move on, with both of them sufficiently out of mind. “Me-search,” as it were—

the I-novel, in a sense

O yes o yes Stay tuned, my friend

**November 3, 2021 [1:13 a.m.]**

[...] I currently sit atop my car (on the roof) in a Xerox parking lot, in Mississauga. I am cold as shit and life is hot, and bothered, seeing as “I read it wrong” ... now it seems as if anything is possible—like my head exploding or my tire popping off.

Sault Ste. Marie or Niagara Falls?

[...]

**November 4, 2020 [12:39 a.m.]**

Well, CP, your boy made it

but let us save the story for the presentation

a story indeed

I intuited it, dreamed it, knew it, believed it

I had a dream, baby, I had a dream

And man! what a dream it was

and a nightmare it is

Life, old sport, is glorious

**December 7, 2020**

Forget it! Forget what I said! I read it wrong! Again!

Retreat! Repent!

*“Nothing fixes a thing so intensely in the memory as the wish to forget it”*—Montaigne

**December 12, 2020**

Just worked with my uncle in the garage; and O god! what a fall!

from grace! no longer a god! O god!

how awful!

how human we are!

how tragic!

the fumes!

the madness!

the femboy!

the masochist!

XXXX, XX, 2021

[a phone note]:

A nod to footnote a hundo and two:

What to do what to do...with my life...do I work along the lines of Leanne Simpson or Owen Toews? Around narratives of joy or critiques of the State? Hokowhitu or Hydro? Gender or capitalism? Do I move/think forwards or backwards? I could be wrong, but I think the predominant factor (or perhaps the predominant hang-up) of my virtuous thinking these days lies around the legacy of MMIWG—I see an unwelcome future in mitigating or alleviating not just the conversation but also the material facticity of this reality that persists ... mitigating or alleviating it thru ‘male-driven’ indigenous futurisms that disrupt statistics via rhythmic movements (akin to music: via scherzos and allegros; indeed, movements) towards joy; it may well be that the proliferation of strength-based narratives around [genderless men]-in-relation (-to-MMIWG) is the missing ingredient...thru an urban-based settler-colonial critique...or a cross-sectional analysis...of male-on-male, male-on-female violence / lateral violence / domestic violence / violence for the sake of violence / violence for the sake wildness (as social capital/street cred)...subverting the ‘heteropatriarchy’ thru a coalition of rebellious ‘men’ who are feminists (thru an analysis of cultural icons who aren’t meninists...yes, alleviating the weight of MMIWG thru a project of ‘men’ who are remembrancers—‘men’ whose relational actions speak louder than gang-like words; ‘men’ whose physical conception and development of the self can still be, despite any mocking to the contrary, as heroic and stoic as Hercules...‘men’ who are equipped to unpick the spread of disease around beta/alpha binaries; men who re-conceptualize tough as tender and who see the toughest ever as the gender benders; men who understand both/and—men who see and support the meaning of one and the same and then some, two spirited plus)...or I can just write like a bastard and continue to be (sans Jordan Petey) a menace to the Faculty of Graduate Studies...and then take it from there...see what happens. Perhaps I’ll find out (finally) how to write something relatable and worth a damn, like Flaubert eventually did. Or perhaps I’ll just spontaneously combust and reincarnate as a fish...or as a hermit who meditates on the fate of ‘half-breed’ settler capitalists as tragic simulacra of invaders like Othello...or indentured figures like him...a historically contingent product of imperialist doctrine whose mission is to capture kill imprison ,

... whose fated, media-driven, blinkered ambivalence re women is the single greatest deficit in what it means to exist...whose conception of beauty is limited...whose conception of relationality is diminished, distorted by the condition...of the small pond ^ big fish

This is why I need to read more lit—free association causes rhizomatic issues that I struggle to unpick ,

Also this: do feminists even want the assistance of men-like dipshits? asexual Indians? part-time hypocrites whose ‘big-dick energy’ is hit or miss? feels akin to the immature “white allies ought to stay out of our politics” argument—shit, didn’t Spivak make a difference? To be or not to be [a feminist]—I have one feminist friend who says yes, and another who says Pfft—so what gives? A third opinion? Only to be ousted by the fourth? The fifth the sixth? WHAT GIVES!

What even is a feminist? Have I not, throughout this script, reduced them to an image that doesn’t exist? Have I romanticized a victim to uplift? As a postmodernist: isn’t gender nonexistent? i thought you said you figured out your shit?

*“How could you believe me—when I can’t believe myself? I’ve become such a liar”*—Eugene O’Neill

May 19, 2021

Thanks for the email, [FGS]. I appreciate the quick action on short notice. Dr. Henhawk and I are about to Zoom and discuss the concerns raised, but as for the ones listed here, I see one thing in particular that is problematic (creatively and theoretically, that is): the *table of contents*: because it’s a postmodern document that plays with the idea of fragmentation and fractured narratives, I leave the table of contents broken (in other words, the disconnection

is intentional; it's theoretical; it folds in on itself and is thoroughly conversant in theory in every covert way imaginable; that's what makes it performative, according to Denzin (2009); the stream of consciousness "implodes the controlling codes" and makes it so the reader, upon a complete read, is left to pick up the pieces, like someone in the aftermath of a tragedy; it attempts (and likely fails) to create verisimilitude with respect to how we make sense of unexpected events, or even just how we attempt to make sense of our lives in general, which is almost always-already a process of connecting the dots as opposed to linear progressions.

### April 19, 2021

Just received a package from the TRC.

In the summer of 2017, you see, after scouring ‘the records’ for members of my paternal family, I stumbled upon two names and submitted them at once to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation; anyways, yada yada, they searched their collection and alas—a part of me and the legacy of Residential Schools dates back to 1885<sup>158</sup> ... which is probably why I wrote what I wrote. An excuse, sure, a copout, yeah. But whatever. I’ll leave it at that. Like a police badge. In case the Man....

### Itinerary of the thesis, trip, vision & quest:

Faster alone, farther together? In the past fourteen months, I have survived, occupied, and squatted in thirty-five rather notable spaces (six of which I shivered in, four of which I slept with one eye open in, three of which consisted of cabins with no heat or running water, two of which involved the streets of the Quintana Roo, one of which involved a missed flight and an overnight in an airport, and one half of which involved a dive motel and a complimentary condom).

And tonight, after submission, could make thirty-six.

Not much left to say expect this: the peripatetic stress is hectic—and yet as good as it gets—

In essence, “Call me Ishmael...I account it high time to get to sea....”<sup>159</sup>

That said, I feel sort of stuck: between “my life has got to be like this—it’s got to keep going *up!*” and “more was never enough”—so what gives?

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<sup>158</sup> On this day in history: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* was released. “*A book for all and none*”—both/and; two-spirited plus. “Yes please!” “The Memmian condition”—“belong[ing] to everyone and no one.” Half-breed existentialism in a nut.

<sup>159</sup> “[for] there are certain queer times and occasions in this strange mixed affair we call life when a man takes this whole universe for a vast practical joke, though the wit thereof he but dimly discerns, and more than suspects that the joke is at nobody’s expense but his own”—Melville

NOW NOW | BLINKERED BOMBAST | “I SPIT YOU OUT”

Fin

**Conclusion**

In truth, I think; therefore, I am *wrong*.  
One must also feel.

N.B. This thesis runs 220 pages long but FGS was troubled by the content (and thus asked me to whitewash it) and, well, in all, my advisor was too overburdened to review it (on short notice, that is...after the sixth, seventh, tenth revision of it...) and so whatever ffs already just take it, I'm done with it—this white elephant; but know this: what you've read is literally only 'the half of it' (which is to say, in a sense, it's half-baked), whereas the rest of it makes it what it is: i.e., almost 'fully realized'; with the cuts, however, it's incoherent gibberish; shit, we didn't even delve into “Part II / Order / ‘unsubscribing’”—where I circle back and re-enter politics; so, as it is, all cut up and edited, you miss out on the critiques, the satire, the parody, the methods—the contentiousness—the art of it—the poetry that it is

yeah...a half-baked 'half-breed existentialism'—quite fitting, isn't it

“my [thesis] is a fish”