

Composing ‘the bubonic tourist’: An Everyday Creative and Resistive Tourist Practice

by

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ABSTRACT

I argue that the bubonic tourist is a resistive and reflexive everyday character. I hypothesize that the bubonic tourist can generate spatial and temporal transgressions that sanction increased social agency and thereby transform our sense of subjectivity. By appropriating, cannibalizing, and carnivalizing social codes and modes of operation, I considered how communities are created through performance. I argue that by departing and arriving from the centre to the margins of a peer, social, and cultural genus—what Pierre Bourdieu calls *habitus*—marginalized individuals can both destabilize and inform demarcated and delimited categories. By performing and feeding back to social codes and norms experiences of the margins, the bubonic tourist creates fissures that engender self-reflexivity and meaning. I argue that, the bubonic tourist as a critical and creative practitioner can emancipate and empower the self and others. I considered how the bubonic tourist as an ethical individual is a member of a community that is created through performance. Finally, I considered how creative interventions might engender someone to transmogrify into the bubonic tourist and how as a methodology the bubonic tourist could have practical application. This study, seeks to outline the grounds in which instability can generate agency and a sense of self.

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Dedication

To Mia Nicole Rushton
and
Gerald R. Thurston

1. Introduction

Tourism promises transformation into, or self-actualization of, a more authentic self by virtue of contacts or encounters with extraordinary phenomena. Like film to the surrealists, it promises to lift the veil from our eyes, reminding us of the marvelous, intoxicating character of the world around us. It has the capacity to make ordinary things—walking, eating, sleeping, looking at other people or the environment—strange, difficult, unfamiliar.

(Bowman 125)

...we are tourists much of the time whether we like it or not.

(Edensor, "Performing" 61)

This paper encapsulates and extends a methodology and a character I have been developing since the late 1990's called the bubonic tourist. In September 2000, along with two other artists, I began working under the moniker of 'Bubonic Tourist,' advancing a practice as cultural impresarios—creating, curating, facilitating, and educating—with the intention of generating community through performance. We questioned what it meant to create and present performance in theatres, galleries, found, and site-specific venues (garages, warehouses, basements, parks, underground-car-pay-lots, benches, boiler rooms etc.), and what it meant to make the city streets an active participant in the creation of our work. We asked how three selfish, privileged, middle class white kids from Calgary—a Western Canadian colonialist settlement, turned oil-rich suburban spoiled brat—could possibly develop a pedagogy and methodology that was motivated by radical politics and was anti-racist, pro-feminist, and community oriented? Perhaps we sought to put the city, our bodies, and our identities into crisis by transgressing and transforming coordinates, turning them into spaces where myth, community, and identity could come into being, if only temporarily. Each event became an instance of articulation and an occasion of bringing together disparate audiences and artists. We worked with and within what

we believed to be the margins of Western Canadian culture, creating and presenting works that were by their very nature seeking to eradicate the borders between audience and artist, artist and environment, environment and audience. We blurred the borders between disciplines, generations, and demographics. Nevertheless, after six years of seeking to identify a mode of representation that didn't look like 'theatre' (because we never acted like 'theatre'), we shut down. 'Bubonic Tourist' (2000-2006 R.I.P) was less of an organization than it was, or had become a way of life (so cliché!). So admittedly, what I am attempting here is to recompose the 'bubonic tourist' as an avant-garde hybrid critical and creative character—a methodology and a model of cultural production, and a way of being in and "doing" the world.

While I do not deal specifically with the numerous creative activities of the past decade, suffice it to say that my field experience as a curator, facilitator, educator, performer, and social impresario has laid the foundation for the hypothesis I am expressing here. My priority is to unveil the ways in which the bubonic tourist operates in the everyday as a resistive, ethical, and generous individual, how the bubonic tourist generates spatial and temporal transgressions that sanction agency and alter subjectivity, and how the bubonic tourist creates community through performance by appropriating, cannibalizing, and carnivalizing social codes and modes of operation. I am determined, if only tentatively, to identify a way of theorizing the possibility of personal and social transmogrification and emancipation by means of performance and engagement—experiences that exceed mere political advocacy and rhetoric by taking into account the relativism of, and relation to, social, cultural, and geographical context.

I began this paper with two quotations that I hope will allow me to immediately identify my position. First, that tourism can make the ordinary extraordinary within the everyday, that tourism can generate agency and alter subjectivity, and that in a post-structural paradigm that interrogates and is suspicious of authenticity and identity, a sense of authentic self, as opposed to an authentic other (Harrison 34), can be obtained, even if only temporarily; and second, that tourism has increasingly become a productive strategy to conceptualize how we experience, engage, and perform the everyday.

To facilitate the composition of the bubonic tourist, I have divided this work into four sections. The first, “The bubonic tourist as Multi-Sensual Tourist: An Everyday Relational Art Practice,” considers a move away from gazing as an epistemological trope and proposes multi-sensual engagement as a form of carnivalesque that disrupts dominate Western masculinized narratives. Following through with these ideas, I continue to explore engagement as a way to unsettle hegemonic apparatuses, while looking specifically at Nicolas Bourriaud’s *Relational Aesthetics* and Michel de Certeau’s *Practice of Everyday Life*—wherein both view the individual as a participant in aesthetics practices. In “The bubonic tourist as Critical Performance Autoethnographer,” I propose that, as the bubonic tourist, an individual reflexively investigates their link to *habitus* and performs resistive relations to power. Furthermore, I contend that if critical performance autoethnography is pedagogical, and, therefore, educational, then performance can be a way of liberating oneself from *habitus*. In the third section, “Is the bubonic tourist Ethical?” I outline how departures or revolts not only generate agency and subjectivity, but also that through engagement, participation, and encounters, the bubonic tourist is an individual ethical character in the communities it creates collaboratively through performance. Finally, in “Deer Head Café: A Project in Art and Social Engagement,” I explicate the development and implementation of a ten-day project I created in the winter of 2007, that sought to test the methodology of the bubonic tourist.

1.1. A Departure: Taking Leave and Coming Home

As a brief preface to the discussion here, I want to identify how I am employing the metaphor of the tourist and how I view the bubonic tourist as a resistive character who operates in relation to social procedures in the everyday. The social procedures that I am addressing might best be regarded as *habitus*. Pierre Bourdieu suggests that habitual and repetitive behaviors (or *habitus*) come to pattern and define the everyday through normalized codes and modes of operation, that social principles produce and organize practices of representation, and that representations render and organize types of sociability by regulating inter-human encounters. By

internalizing and embodying social normativity, *habitus* makes history invisible. In this regard, Bourdieu is proposing that social, cultural, and peer groups identify and signify the boundaries of tolerable behavior by its membership. The “everyday is thus a realm of repetition” (Edensor, “Performing Tourism, Staging Tourism” 61), that is performatively disseminated and made ‘stable,’ dictating a behavioral hegemonic order with the appearance of free improvisation that produces practices or fields (Bourdieu qtd. in Schirato and Webb 78). *Habitus* and its corresponding fields tyrannically ratify the manner in which we should behave, what should be viewed, and how things should be done. The assembly of such parameters might be one way to understand how and why we perform in the everyday; but *habitus* positions, or casts one, more as a ‘local’ than it does as a ‘tourist’—at the centre, rather than the margins of habitual social practices. This would seem to deny Edensor’s statement that “we are tourists much of the time whether we like it or not” (“Performing” 61); so how might we conceptualize tourism if it is bound to the everyday?

Edensor’s statement refers specifically to John Urry’s proclamation that in a spectacular society—one that is inundated by mediated signs and spaces, marked and unmarked places—tourism, through our increasingly virtual and physical mobility has become a position from which to conceptualize how we experience, engage, and perform the everyday, and how our susceptibility to travel is governed by external operations. Edensor’s study considers the tourist destination as an ideological stage that is managed by an industry and includes the behaviors and misbehaviors of tourists upon these stages. Edensor states, “despite the prevalence of codes and norms, tourist conventions can be destabilized by rebellious performances, or by multiple, simultaneous enactments on the same stage” (“Performing” 60). If we were to extend the metaphor of the stage and tourist protocol to Bourdieu’s *habitus*, or as I have suggested, the local, then malperformance—accidental or intentional—might be considered a departure or an excursion from normalized social and cultural codes and modes; for example, a performance will either reify or dispute authority and jurisdiction. In this regard, as a departure point for the discussion here, the resistive practices of the bubonic tourist might be considered the transgression and return to

one's *habitus* or system of signification (I say *return*, because tourists are only tourists on account of their return, hope to return, or their being bound up with home/*habitus*). In this manner, the bubonic tourist in the everyday is continually adhering to and revolting against, moving towards and moving away from, cultural normativity—a movement I shall later designate, borrowing from Mikhail Bakhtin, as carnivalesque.

2. Part I: The bubonic tourist as Multi-Sensual Tourist: An Everyday Relational Art Practice

As Bakhtin observed: 'The most intense and productive life of cultures takes place on the boundaries.'

(Carlson 191)

Bakhtinian principles suggest that 'artistic form and meaning emerge *between people*'; it is '*dialogic relationships*' that give encounters meaning"

(emphasis in original, Harrison 46)

Art is born *between* individuals and communities and cultures in the process of dialogic interaction. Creation takes place not within the suffocating confines of Cartesian egos or even between discrete bounded cultures but rather between permeable, changing communities.

(emphasis in original, Shohat and Stam 56)

The resistive character that I am proposing—the bubonic tourist—is formulated in large part by the combination of two practices, multi-sensual tourism and the carnivalesque and is situated within the everyday. In this section, I want to begin by further articulating what I mean by both 'tourist'—that is, which 'tourist'—and 'bubonic'. I want to consider how in combination 'bubonic' and 'tourist' generate transgressions and departures from the centre to the margins of *habitus* and begin to outline how aesthetic and participatory engagement creates temporary communities through performance in the everyday. In this section, I am particularly concerned with the generative possibilities of the bubonic tourist regarding social relationships, appropriation, and knowing by means other than distanced and distancing forms of perception.

2.1. Multi-Sensual Tourism and the Carnavalesque

In “Beyond the Text: Toward a Performative Cultural Politics,” and “Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research,” performance studies scholar, Dwight Conquergood, levels a critique against Cartesian egos for advantaging a mode of engagement that is cerebral and ocular. As a means of producing knowledge and comprehending experience of the self and other, the rest of the body has been discounted under this Western epistemological trope. Conquergood has described this separation between gazing and embodied knowledge, as knowledge apartheid (“Performance Studies” 320), recognizing that embodied knowledge is often relegated to the feminine as “old wives tales,” as opposed to gazing, which is reserved for masculine narratives (“Beyond the Text” 17). Like Conquergood, Shohat and Stam, in “Narrativizing Visual Culture: Towards a Polycentric Aesthetics,” recognize that while the visual is an important strategic way of understanding the world, the visual is contaminated by the other senses—smell, touch, hearing, and taste (55). The masculine and phallogocentric mode of comprehending and engaging the world, that Conquergood and Shohat and Stam address, is reductive and fragmentary. It privileges sight and the essentializing gaze, over a multi-sensual, embodied, experiential, and participatory epistemology.¹ These critiques provide a tremendous opportunity to reconsider the ‘tourist’ as more than simply a sight(site)seer that is relegated to a position of disembodied hovering eye. Tourism and leisure studies scholar, David Crouch—equally suspicious of gazing as an essentializing trope that defines and demarcates perceptions and behaviors—has considered a way forward for the tourist. In his paper, “Places Around Us: Embodied Lay Geographies in Leisure and Tourism,” Crouch recommends that tourism is an embodied and experiential process through which individuals come to grasp, engage, make sense of and encounter the world. Crouch locates this assessment in an alternative type of perception; one in which there is not visual detachment, but engagement through a multi-sensual awareness of space, place, and others. In this way, the tourist comes “to know about the world in new, more complex ways” (65),

¹ Similar critiques have been leveled against the Western masculine gaze. I am thinking here in particular of the pioneering work of Laura Mulvey, John Urry, and Edward Said.

by constantly negotiating “the world in terms of relationships, emotions and feelings” (67); or as Harre has described, “the feeling of doing” (qtd. in Crouch 68). Tourist knowledge that is obtained affectively is not a matter of expertise, *per se*, but is perhaps more accurately described as, “participatory knowledge” (Shotter qtd. in Crouch 67); a knowledge that is acquired between individuals and communities—relationally, sensually, experientially, spatially and by practice, trajectory, and dialogue. In regards to the bubonic tourist as a resistive practitioner, the discussion of multi-sensual engagement identifies a tourist practice that does away with disembodied, ocularcentric, and monologic masculine narratives. Instead of the body being excluded and closed from the production of knowledge, the body of the tourist is pried open and splayed out by aesthetic, embodied, multi-sensual, and participatory practices. By taking leave of the visual tyranny, the bubonic tourist opens up possibilities for demarcated knowledges to be unsettled and the privileged body to be brought into contact with the self and other.

The open, grotesque body and multi-sensual engagement are critical characteristics of the carnivalesque as theorized by Mikhail Bakhtin, and are a complementary way of engaging and combating normativity. The carnivalesque is a discursive, counter-hegemonic, heteroglossic, and heterogeneous practice that is both a site of resistance and a rehearsal of possible futures; it is the “negation of uniformity and similarity” (Bakhtin 39). The carnivalesque is not homogeneous, essentializing, nor a monoculture, but instead violates “natural” boundaries (Bakhtin 40), by creating temporary communities and utopia(s)—or heterotopias²—that are pregnant with contradiction, social negotiation, social-relations, co-implication, and participation. Borrowing from Stuart Hall, the carnivalesque could be regarded as “articulated” in both senses of the term (qtd. in Grossberg 53). The carnivalesque is both the temporary adjoining or linking of two or more discourses, and an instance of speech or an utterance. As an intervention, the carnivalesque is both generative and performative (a ‘doing’) and operates in the slash between

² Heterotopia is a concept put forward by Michel Foucault describing a marginal space “where transitional identities may be sought and imaginative experimentation indulged, and the Western hegemonic power/knowledge axis bewildered and challenged” (Edensor, “The Culture” 219).

performance/everyday (Pearson and Shanks 15). By ingesting social codes and modes of operation through the open body, the carnivalesque appropriates and aesthetically excretes the formalities and decorum of aesthetic, political, and social hierarchies (Shohat and Stam 47). The body, “unfinished and open” begins to shed demarcation and “clearly defined boundaries” (Bakhtin 26-27), making one “aware of their sensual material bodily unity and community” (Bakhtin 255).

The ‘bubonic’ in this project might appear as contentious because of its connection to the plague and imminent death. On the contrary, as a metaphor, the delirium the bubonic plague caused, and the effects and affects it had on the body, I would argue are also some of the finest features of the carnivalesque: madness and the grotesque. Bakhtin himself states, “death is included in life, and together with birth determines its eternal movements. Even the struggle of life and death in the individual body is conceived by grotesque imagery as the struggle of the old life stubbornly resisting the new life to be born as the crisis of change” (50). Furthermore, I think here of Antonin Artaud’s first chapter in *The Theatre and Its Double*, “Theatre And The Plague” as an argument for “The Theatre of Cruelty” and the demand for a total assault of the senses in performance. While different in tone, but similar in nature, tourist scholar, Tim Edensor has defined tourism as a practice that confronts all of the senses, not just sight. Lastly, it was William S. Burroughs who declared “language is a virus,” and if language is indeed a virus and language is performative, then performance is always already contaminated and infectious.

While my understanding of the carnivalesque functions in the realm of metaphor, as opposed to the often-limited view of the carnivalesque as festival or carnival, I take my lead directly from Bakhtin—liberally applying my own interpretation to his theory. In regards to the bubonic tourist, I read in Bakhtin’s texts a possibility, one that allows for a multi-sensual epistemology based on relationships and engagement generated by instances of the carnivalesque. In *Rabelais and His World*, Bakhtin suggests

[t]hese truly *human relations* were not only a fruit of imagination or abstract thought; they were *experienced*. The utopian ideal and the realistic merged in this

carnival experience, unique in its kind..... This temporary suspension, both ideal and real, of hierarchical rank created during carnival time a *special type of communication impossible in everyday life* ... permitting no distance between those who came in contact with each other and liberating [them] from norms of etiquette and decency imposed at other times. (emphasis added, 10)

This ‘special type of communication,’ that exists in the interstices, or as an intervention into, the everyday, and where there is ‘no distance,’ can be regarded as multi-sensual engagement and participation. In this regard, ‘human relations’ that are not abstract, but ‘experienced,’ indicates the carnivalesque can be any occasion of multi-sensual perception that ruptures the Western masculine gaze as a way of producing knowledge about the self or other from an embodied, multi-sensual, dialogic, and relational perspective.

During instances of carnivalesque, therefore, not only are geographical and emotional terrains traversed, transgressed and (re)negotiated, but also cultural codes and modes of operation, or ‘norms of etiquette and decency’—what I have referred to above as *habitus*. Thus, the transgressions of the bubonic tourist have real world effects and affects. More specifically, the carnivalesque “rejects conformity to oneself” (Bakhtin 39-40). So while the bubonic tourist departs from a site within the system of signification, they must return from the margins to the centre of *habitus*. The bubonic tourist arrives ‘home’ with memories and rehearsals, changed and liberated “from the prevailing point of view of the world, from conventions and established truths ... [with] a new outlook on the world” (Bakhtin 34). As such, the bubonic tourist can claim a measure of agency and altered subjectivity that might not have existed prior to the excursion.

In this regard, if being the bubonic tourist is a temporal drama—acting and (re)acting, entering and exiting, or a perpetual in and out-of-jointness—then one’s relationship to cultural codes and norms is relational and dialogic—a departure from *habitus* feeds back to *habitus* the experiences of an excursion.³ The bubonic tourist is generative and creative because the bubonic tourist is a trajectory, an oscillation, or a dance that destabilizes hegemony. Or as performance

³ I will address this more fully in “Part II: the bubonic tourist as Critical Performance Autoethnographer”.

studies scholar Michael Bowman has suggested of tourism, it is an aesthetic and ethnographic practice (116), where through engagement and transgression of (multiple) borders—the physical, as well as the cultural, social, and political—knowledge, self-reflexivity, and temporary communities are produced. The bubonic tourist, then, might be considered a grotesque, infectious and contagious character, who by ‘traveling’—departing to the margins of *habitus*—disseminates (spreads) a counter-hegemonic or resistive disposition (plague).

This problematization of territory—social and cultural—temporarily turns attention away from representation, semiotics, the search for ‘authenticity,’ and gazing, toward investigating the bubonic tourist through performative modes of engagement and participation. Community and agency are based on multi-sensual experiences and individual interactions with landscapes, locals, and other tourists. Considering this, Crouch recommends that it might be more accurate to understand places not as simply the text of a producer/promoter, but as “something through which and with which lives are lived and identity and myth made” (64). Moving forward, I want to explore how the bubonic tourist is both an everyday resistive, relational, and aesthetic character, and how the bubonic tourist creates community through performance.

2.2. Relational Aesthetics and the Everyday

In his book, *Relational Aesthetics*, Nicolas Bourriaud advanced a new way to account for the visual and performative artwork—relational art—that emerged during the 1990s and contributes to contemporary art today. Relational art, as defined by Bourriaud, is distinguished by the fact that it takes “as its starting point human relations and their social context, as opposed to autonomous and exclusive art” (117). Relational aesthetics, consequently, is “an aesthetic theory consisting in judging artworks in terms of the inter-human relations which they show, produce, or give rise to” (117). What Bourriaud has proposed is that instead of art being an object that can be shuttled around from gallery to gallery, or museum to museum, and subsequently, spectator to spectator, the work is entirely beholden to the fortuity of its situation and audience—an audience that is thought of as a relational, self-generating, and a temporary community. In Bourriaud’s

relational aesthetics, participation and process moves beyond the commodified art object, shifting the emphasis from gazing to the audiences' performance and participation. As a result of the artists' intervention into the everyday, the work of art is co-created by, and consequently *is*, the audience, simultaneously. In this regard, the work of art is perpetually in flux, never-ending, unwritten, and immersed in the everyday. The meaning is created collaboratively through engagement (Bourriaud 18), rather than in the privatized place of individual consumption or disembodied gaze of the traditional gallery or museum-goer (Bishop 54).

Many criticisms have been leveled against Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics*. Most prominent among the critics is Claire Bishop, who contends that Bourriaud's theory and its approach to temporary utopia, community, and democracy is too subtle and homogeneous. In her paper, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," Bishop argues that the participant/audience of relational works are largely composed of existing players in the art market: artists, curators, art industry affiliates, and sympathetic patrons. Rather than being critically engaged, Bishop insists, conversations among participants are at best idle chitchat about whether the work they are experiencing is *art* or *not*. As the title of her paper implies, Bishop—inspired by Laclau and Mouffe—is proposing that antagonism is a necessary ingredient to generating heterogeneous social relations. I believe Bishop is accurate in this regard—that for communities and democracies to emerge, even temporarily, they must be authored from multiple positions. To use a Bakhtinian concept, they must be heteroglossic. Pierre Bourdieu has similarly suggested that there cannot be genuine democracy without genuine opposing critical powers (qtd. in Giroux 8); there must be friction. Bishop's criticism, from my understanding, is that the works Bourriaud includes as illustrations of relational art in his book—such as Rirkrit Tiravanija *Untitled (Still)*, wherein Tiravanija transformed New York's 303 Gallery into a makeshift kitchen, serving Thai Curries to visitors—are either poor examples, self-promotional, or just too palatable.

Bourriaud, for his part, has invited this criticism by mandating that relational works must be considered not only for their aesthetic qualities, but also for their *political* and *ethical* significance (64). *Ergo*, from Bishop's perspective, works such as Tiravanija's *Untitled (Still)* do

not appear to be political or demand an ethical engagement. Unfortunately, in Bishop's sprint to provide better examples that are antagonistic by the nature of their intervention, she fails to recognize the other half of the relational art equation. That is to say, Bishop's heavy emphasis upon intervention does not consider what is intervened upon—the everyday—and it is precisely the everydayness and the interstices of the everyday that Bourriaud is concerned with politically and ethically because, it is in the here and now that fissures and ruptures occur; it is here that instances of the carnivalesque discursively emerge temporarily unsettling hegemonic forces.

To fully understand how Bourriaud addresses the everyday as a site of political, ethical, and aesthetic negotiation in relational aesthetics, and to weave a thread back to the bubonic tourist, it will become important to consider and unpack a model of the everyday that arguably Bourriaud is employing. Relational aesthetics can be read through French sociologist Michel de Certeau's important work, *The Practice of Everyday Life*.⁴ In general, de Certeau seeks to illuminate the “everyday practices, ‘ways of operating’ or ‘doing things’” (xi), that generate *spaces*, but otherwise appear as an unintelligible backdrop to social activity. He is proposing that the dominant order or hegemonic forces of a society do not produce passive spectators (or consumers). Instead, the urban dweller is an active agent, who through ‘usage’ or consumption (or better yet, carnivalization, appropriation or cannibalization)⁵ of dominant representations or topographical systems is resistive and counter-hegemonic. That is, their everyday activities poach and trespass on the ‘property’ of others, making escapes while still remaining in the system of places of power. In Bakhtinian terms, the oppressed ingest the codes and modes of operation that demarcate behavior and spit them out as a ridicule of hegemony.

Michel de Certeau frames and situates these delinquent activities as ‘tactics’ that generate temporal ‘spaces’. In brief, he posits that, “space is a practiced place” (117). *Place*, de Certeau contends, is “the law of the proper” (117), or the geometric coordinates of a social, economic, and physical infrastructure, where one's own place and the other's is clearly delimited

⁴ See also, Dezeuze for a rather different employment of de Certeau in regards to Relational Aesthetics and the everyday.

⁵ see Shohat and Stam 47-51.

and demarcated. It is a strategically and syntactically ordered, fixed, and hegemonic ‘text’ written and read from a distance by a dominating gaze (what we in our discussion might consider *habitus*). ‘*Tactics*’ or human actions upon these coordinates, on the other hand, generate what de Certeau refers to as *space*. *Space*, in contradistinction to place—like the carnivalesque—is temporal, temporary, interactive, fragmented, frictional, and relational and has “none of the univocity or stability of a ‘proper’” (117). *Space*—generated by *tactics*—insinuates “itself into the other’s place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance” (xix). That is to say, relational participants or the bubonic tourist are resistive in the house of the oppressor, in the margins of *habitus*. Consequently, space and place are reciprocal, matrixical, and interrelated and are composed of multiple processes, power relations, and influences.

Bourriaud, like de Certeau, views these tactical and resistive acts as hidden and creative—*poesies*, not *mimesis*; art here does not imitate life, but irritates it. So while the gait of the urban dweller cuts up the ‘text’ of the city like the scissors in ‘how to make a dadaist poem’ or a Situationist Parisian map, the participant of relational art insinuates themselves both into the gallery and the work, using and mis-using both in tandem—creating temporal and temporary *spaces*. Both figures—the urban dweller and the relational participant—flagrantly jettison Aristotelian verisimilitude—beginning, middle, and end—disrupting and tearing open the tightly woven fabric of the everyday by introducing an erratic or random movement into the system that seeks order and fixity (de Certeau xx). The participants’ actions, trajectory, kinesis—or better yet, multi-sensual engagement—with the city or work of art debunks and destabilizes decorum, commodity, and linear plot. In short, de Certeau is proposing the death of the author and the urban dweller as cultural producer. He is proposing another system of creating knowledge that is participatory, feet-on-the-ground and *relational*. A knowledge that is spoken, enunciated, uttered, and not written; because as de Certeau explains, it is only from a distance, through disengagement, and gazing that the written—“a graph...which the eye can master” (xxii)—may be read. Or as Bakhtin states, “carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it” (7).

To bring de Certeau's theory of the everyday, back to relational aesthetics more fully then—works of relational art are temporal and temporary *spaces*, reliant on and generated by usage and consumption. Relational art works are not read or viewed at a distance like a painting or theatrical production, but are experienced affectively and multi-sensually by its participants. The tactical activities of the audience/participants, in relational works insinuate themselves into the proper places of the gallery or museum, while cannibalizing, appropriating, misusing, and ultimately carnivalizing the intentions/production of the author (the hired artist). Relational art works, as stated above, are not only created by the audience, but are the audience, their interactions, usage, and consumption. It is the employment of tactics and the interstices of the everyday that Bourriaud has located relational art. Therefore, the carnivalesque is a useful way to understand that what everyday relational art does is create fissures, social negotiations, and heteroglossia in the hegemonic modus operandi.

To consider the bubonic tourist through this relational lens liberates the conversation from 'authenticity' and 'commodification' of a destination (the art or the stage) and, instead, shifts it to the experience of the audience (the bubonic tourist) as creating meaning upon that stage, with the temporary community that is created ultimately becoming the destination itself (the work of art). As such, what the bubonic tourist does amounts to practice and performance. If, as a resistive, relational, and aesthetic character, the bubonic tourist is creating places—social codes and modes of operation (*habitus*)—anew through carnivalesque and by traversing the coordinates of the destination and engaging with others in dialogic and discursive practices, then the bubonic tourist is a social agent, an artist, a collaborator, co-creator, spect-actor, and co-performer; and therefore, being the bubonic tourist becomes a matter of process, practice and 'doing'. The bubonic tourist engages and generates instances of carnivalesque whereby she/he breaks through into performance (Hymes) and transgresses rather than transcend normative meanings and traditions "plunging [themselves] back into the cortices of political struggle" (Conquergood, "'Beyond' 33). For, as Michel de Certeau has so eloquently claimed, "what the map cuts up, the

story cuts across" (129), suggesting the dialogic and discursive tactics of the bubonic tourist generate embodied, relational and self-reflexive communities through performance.

3. Part II. The bubonic tourist as Critical Performance Autoethnographer

Performance offers a new authenticity, based on body knowledge, on what audiences and performers share together, on what they mutually construct. As a form of cultural exchange, performance ethnography encourages everyone present to feel themselves as both familiar and strange, to see the truths and the gaps in their cross cultural embodiments. In this exchange, we find an authenticity that is intuitive, body-centered, and richly ambivalent.

(Jones 14)

The theme of madness is inherent to all grotesque forms, because madness makes [people] look at the world with different eyes, not dimmed by 'normal,' that is by common place ideas and judgments. In folk grotesque, madness is a gay parody of official reason.

(Bakhtin 39)

The pedagogical as performative in this work does not merely provide a set of representations/texts that imparts knowledge to others—it also becomes a form of cultural production in which one's own identity is constantly being rewritten, but always with an attentiveness to how culture functions as both a site of production and a site of contestation over power.

(Giroux 16)

In the last section, I considered how the bubonic tourist is not simply a sight(site)seer, but rather a practitioner. I contended that sensory, emotional, and spatial engagements as carnivalesque, coupled with relations to others, can produce the site of relational art in the everyday. I looked at how the bubonic tourist generates instances of carnivalesque through relational and embodied engagement and how these aesthetic, resistive, and tactical

actions/performances create spatial and temporal departures from the centre of *habitus* to the margins of social and cultural apparatuses. I concluded that a destination/community is generated simultaneously as it is performed in the interstices between performance and the everyday. In this next section, I want to look at how the bubonic tourist can produce and disseminate meaning and knowledge through reflexivity as a critical performance autoethnographer, while occupying the margins of *habitus*. To begin, I want to consider two types of knowledge that Bourdieu has outlined as a means of engaging in embodied practice, practical knowledge, and reflexive knowledge.

For Bourdieu, practical knowledge allows one to comprehend *habitus* and the rules that govern competition within one's field. This knowledge, gained by repetitive 'negotiation' and 'improvisation,' allows one to "determine which practices, discourses, moves or forms of capital [cultural, social, symbolic] are appropriate to the moment" (Schirato and Webb 256). When the social and cultural codes and modes of operation that govern behavior become obvious or noticeable, displaced or transgressed, practical knowledge, as Bourdieu suggests, is enlarged through reflexivity or reflexive knowledge (Schirato and Webb 255). If reflexive knowledge, or reflexivity, is instigated as a result of estrangement from habitual practices—what we might consider an everyday Brechtian *verfremdungs-effect*—then as Schirato and Webb indicate regarding Bourdieu's theory, individuals become "aware and evaluative [of their] relation to oneself and one's context" (256). Though Bourdieu conceptualizes reflexive knowledge as always in relation to *habitus* and sanctioned by one's field (Bourdieu is thinking specifically of the social sciences), it is this sanctioned distancing from hegemonic fields and *habitus* that, not unlike Bakhtin's carnivalesque, one can reflect on the "unthought categories of thought" (Bourdieu and Wacquant qtd. in Schirato and Webb 266). Reflexivity, therefore, critically exposes the social modes and codes of operation, the 'unthought' habitual patterns of practical knowledge that govern effects and affects. Finally, if reflexivity critically exposes *habitus* and practical knowledge, then it also "provides a means of moving beyond what the subject already knows on a practical

level, and offers the advantages [...] of transposable knowledge” to negotiate not only “across societies and cultures but across [...] cultural fields” (Schirato and Webb 268-269).

In Julia Harrison’s *Being a Tourist: Finding Meaning in Pleasure Travel*, she quotes one of her research participants who suggests that, travel can illuminate “attitudes and assumptions that [we] carry and which would remain unknown to [us] in familiar surroundings. But, by being in a different place, by being in a foreign place, [we] have the opportunity to learn about [ourselves]” (86). What Harrison’s respondent regards as attitudes and assumptions, we might consider practical knowledge with familiar surroundings being *habitus*. If travel for the tourist proper or the transgressions of the bubonic tourist do expose *habitus* and the limits of one’s practical knowledge, then not only does the opportunity to become cognizant and critical of *habitus* arise, but so too, does the possibility of dialogue between subjectivity, agency, and others; and dialogue between subjectivity and historical and social structures of culture emerge. This discursive space wherein individuals come to reflect on *habitus* and identity could be considered the margins of *habitus* as outlined in the previous section. Keeping Bourdieu’s notion of reflexive knowledge at hand, it is here then that I want to introduce critical performance autoethnography as a reflexive, resistive, and relational practice. This will allow me to articulate how the bubonic tourist produces and disseminates meaning and knowledge.

3.1. The Reflexive Turn and Critical Performance Autoethnography

Like tourism, early ethnography was born of modernity, the quest for the other, the exotic, and authentic and was integral to imperial and colonial projects. By the mid-20th century, the ethnographer’s ability to remain dispassionate and objective, passive and gazing, came to be understood as a superficial—in fact, impossible—position. Feelings, emotions, ethical and moral stances, previous and immediate experience, participation and reflections were acknowledged as fundamental dimensions of ethnographic work. Ethnographers, whose historical and traditional role was to record and gather data objectively through gazing, came to acknowledge themselves effected and affected personally by displacement, fragmentation, and encounters with others and

communities. As a result, the boundary between the author, its objects of study, and reported data eroded as collaboration, participatory experience, and personal narrative bled into otherwise objective and passive observation. Consequently, as a genre of enquiry, the contemporary ethnographer's biographical experience has been deployed reflexively in ethnographic analysis (Denzin 33). As a methodology then, autoethnography seeks to investigate the personal—one's subjectivity and agency—and one's dialogue or articulation with history and social and culture structures, including race, class, gender, and ability. This reflexive turn, coupled with a post-structural and post-colonial paradigm, resists conclusion or closure by interrogating, transgressing, and de-centering essential and normative representations of culture and self; authorizing autoethnographers to do away with an authoritative and positivist voice. Autoethnographers, therefore, employ reflexive knowledge and a personal perspective that seeks to make "sense of the autobiographical past" in the present (Alexander qtd. in Denzin 15). As Norman Denzin has stated, the autoethnographer utilizes lived experience and personal history as a site/cite of cultural investigation, "turning the ethnographic gaze inward on the self (auto), while maintaining the outward gaze of ethnography, looking at the larger context wherein self experiences occur" (Denzin qtd. in Trujillo 227).

Reflexive knowledge coupled with a performative paradigm, that insists on what Victor Turner regards as "*making*, not *faking*" and Homi Bhabha as "*breaking* and *remaking*," shifts the emphasis of cultural and autoethnographic practice from "*invention* to *intervention*" (emphasis in original, Conquergood, "Beyond" 32). As a radical cultural intervention, performance allows the autoethnographer to comprehend experiential phenomena through kinesis and engagement, rather than simply through viewing. The performance autoethnographer comes to know as a result of "doing" (Alexander 415), the "act of doing" (Grossberg qtd. in Alexander 425), or like the multi-sensual tourist, 'the feeling of doing'. Performance autoethnography is an experiential participatory practice, wherein the researcher is situated in, and is an active agent of, the production and critique of cultural representations and meanings (think relational art and the carnivalesque). As such, performance autoethnography becomes a "civic, participatory, [and]

collaborative project”; one where the project’s ownership and interpretation is shared with members of the community (Denzin 17). As an embodied practice, performance autoethnography, therefore, problematizes the performing body, subjectivity, and history of the researcher and the audience. In this regard, both come to know others and the self through an experiential participatory epistemology. As a political and counter-hegemonic project, critical performance autoethnography, like Bourdieu’s conception of reflexive knowledge, works to “expose the ways in which power and ideology [*the unthought categories of thought*] shape self, desire, and human consciousness in concrete institutional and interactional sites” (Denzin 33). The critical performance autoethnographer, therefore, like the bubonic tourist seeks to problematize and carnivalize *habitus* while simultaneously rehearsing possible futures and producing alternative relations to power.

To consider the bubonic tourist as an everyday critical performance autoethnographer provides an exciting opportunity to imagine how, by way of a critical disposition, practical knowledge, *habitus*, and the self can be effected and affected. If the bubonic tourist reflexively uncovers one’s relationship to *habitus* and relations to power through instances of embodied carnivalesque, then I want to propose—following Lawrence Grossberg—that the bubonic tourist’s intervention into the everyday enables the bubonic tourist to behave strategically and counter-hegemonically, so as to alter their relationship to power and *habitus* (qtd. in Giroux 7). That is to say, the bubonic tourist, like the critical performance autoethnographer, must recognize that their behaviors are entangled with and ultimately maintain or resist the hegemony of *habitus*.

Reflexivity, therefore, allows one to critically adjust one’s behavior and produce new meanings and knowledges about the self and culture. This adjustment becomes performative (a doing) and a creative act—*poiesis*, not *mimesis*, making, not faking—confirming Denzin’s assertion that if the world is representation, than to “change the world, we must change how we write and perform it” (78). The bubonic tourist, therefore, becomes a cultural (secret) agent wielding the weapon of identity, experience, collaboration, generosity, compassion, intuition, and transgression. By crossing borders, and operating in the margins, identity becomes a trajectory,

making the project of the bubonic tourist in part, smuggling passports and granting self-citizenship. By distancing “ourselves from the disciplined mobilizations of every day life in order to rearticulate the sites of our affective investment,” Peter McLaren suggest, “we can ‘reenter the strategic politics of the social formation’” altered by (qtd. in Alexander 425), or rather armed with, new reflexive and rehearsed knowledges. This does not mean that space and place cease to be, but rather, the demarcations established by *habitus* become porous and unstable (Giroux 6). As a cultural agent and cultural producer, the bubonic tourist operates in the realm of the relational and the aesthetic, but also, in what Henry Giroux calls, the “sphere of the social” (6). The bubonic tourist’s development of agency and an alteration of subjectivity, therefore, becomes political and the political, as performative, is pedagogical.

3.2. Performing Pedagogy

In “Walking in the City: Pedestrian Speech Acts,” published as part of *Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau states that walking has an ‘enunciative’ function:

it implies *relations* among differentiated positions, that is, among pragmatic ‘contracts’ in the form of movements (just as verbal enunciations is an ‘allocation,’ [walking] ‘posits another opposite’ the speaker and puts contracts between interlocutors into action). (emphasis in original, 98)

What I find particularly instructive about this passage by de Certeau is that movement, trajectory, and kinesis are inherently performed in the presence of an other, an interlocutor. This could mean a collaborator, co-creator or more broadly, *habitus*. [D]e Certeau’s passage, then, becomes a valuable place to set about considering how the critical performance and the autoethnographic practices of the bubonic tourist are pedagogical. To begin, if during instances of transgression and carnivalesque, the bubonic tourist becomes reflexive and subsequently alters her or his behaviors according to inward and outward investigation of cultural and social apparatuses, then, I would propose that not only is the bubonic tourist performing, but that these performative acts

are public. The bubonic tourist, by critically performing alternate relations to power, is publicly declaring subjectivity and agency, while simultaneously making *habitus* visible. Giroux regards this public performative act as an oppositional intellectual practice (16). An intellectual and performative practice, I would contend, that forfeits authority and democratizes intellectual activity, giving way to the transformation of social life by knowing or doing the world differently.⁶

In his book, *Ethno-Techno: Writings on Performance, Activism, and Pedagogy*, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, states that his role as a cultural practitioner and performance artist, is to open up a temporary space—what I have defined as the margins of *habitus*—in which “meaningful and ‘radical’ behavior and progressive thought are allowed to take place” (24). Gómez-Peña hopes that by publicly performing alternative relations to power, he might embolden his audience to reassess their own relations to the social codes and modes of operation that govern their lives and alter their behaviors accordingly. The hope that Gómez-Peña employs is a politics that drives many radical pedagogical projects (Friere; Denzin; Giroux; Gómez-Peña; Thurston), and one that I too share. That said, there is a complementary approach to understanding how and why critical performance autoethnography can be political and pedagogical. Following performance creation professor Gerald Thurston, the generation of new or counter-hegemonic representations is not only a political practice, but also an infectious practice. Thurston, echoing the field of critical pedagogy, has pointed out that education—with “educate” as its root—has as its potential, the ability to evoke or draw out an individual’s latent capacity to understand or “do” the world differently. That is to say, the bubonic tourist, by critically performing her or his self in relation to *habitus*, offers a participatory experience to an interlocutor. This experience offers the promise of displacement, allowing the bubonic tourist’s collaborator *space* and the opportunity to uncover *habitus* and practical knowledge through reflexivity. This is a reciprocal, horizontal, and emancipating process, where there are no leaders or hierarchies, nor are there followers. Instead,

⁶ I am thinking specifically here of Antonio Gramsci’s declaration that everyone is an intellectual, while remaining cognizant that every “relationship of ‘hegemony’ is necessarily an educational relationship”; i.e. education as a cultural practice is not innocent, but makes us subjects of and subjects to *habitus* and relations of power (in Giroux 13).

there are only collaborators, co-creators, and co-performers. Each person is “working together to develop new lines of action, new stories, new narratives in a collaborative effort” (Denzin 240). It is here then, that we return to the thread that runs throughout this research, creating community through performance.

4. Part III: Is the bubonic tourist Ethical?

What is at stake in both political struggles and revolts of imagination is renewing a sense of agency that allows each person to create meaning for themselves.

(Oliver 173)

It is the systematic process of discovering personal referents by deconstructing the image(s) in/a(c)tion of the culture and by manipulating and utilizing common referents, [that] creating a meaningful and relevant statement for the performer and audience [becomes possible].

(Thurston, "Fill" 6)

Because it is a distortion of being more fully human, sooner or later being less human lead the oppressed to struggle against those who made them so. In order for this struggle to have meaning, the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity (which is one way to create it), become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both.

(Friere 28)

Up till now, I have been affirming that social modes and codes of operation—*habitus*—can be cannibalized, appropriated, or carnivalized by the bubonic tourist as a form of resistance. In this last section, I continue to consider the role of engagement and encounter, while shifting the discussion towards the bubonic tourist as an ethical member of a community. Certainly, in tourism proper, there are grave concerns with how one can engage the other respectfully and without being exploitive. I do not pretend to answer these questions as it is not the direct focus of my research at present, but rather I seek to theorize "the tourist" as formative in agency and subjectivity and, therefore, of symbolic import. As the bubonic tourist is one who travels to the margins of cultural, family, and peer *habitus*, there is room in this discussion to formulate some

form of ethical practice in instances of excursion and return. Hitherto, I have made claims that by taking flight and coming 'home,' individuals develop a sense of agency and an altered subjectivity. These departures have been framed as antagonistic to *habitus*, but I want to clarify at this point, as I near the end of this discussion, that the bubonic tourist is not a nefarious character, but quite the opposite. It is here then, that I would like to develop further how departures or revolts not only generate an enhanced sense of agency and subjectivity, but also how through engagement, participation, and encounters, the bubonic tourist is an individual ethical character in the communities it creates collaboratively through performance. To facilitate this discussion, I return to relational aesthetics, briefly considering the manner in which Bourriaud addresses the issue of ethics in relational art. Following through on Bourriaud's assessments, I will then introduce two homologous concepts of agency and subjectivity as relational and ethical practices—those proposed by Kelly Oliver in the *Colonization of Psychic Space* and *Giving an Account of Oneself*, by Judith Butler.

In *Relational Aesthetics*, Bourriaud advocates a model of evaluation that considers not only the aesthetic, but also political and ethical merit of a relational artwork. Bourriaud is not a solitary voice in this recommendation. Other contemporary art critics have also postulated that contemporary and relation works have ethical implications. For instance, in his evaluation of documentary as being bound to human-rights or bio-politics, Okwui Enwezor has argued that contemporary artists are hybridized between activism and aesthetic practice—an assessment not much different than the one I have considered in "Part II". By drawing on Levinasian ethics, Enwezor positions the contemporary artist's subjectivity (and their audiences) as ethically bound up with the other: "the central concern for the other, the being-for-the-other [therefore,] is the ground [in which intersubjectivity] governs the communicative principle of exchange between two people" (24-25). Bourriaud's own assessment is not drastically different from this dialogic positioning of individuals, but he is apprehensive of the approach put forward by Lévinas. Bourriaud asks, "don't ethics have a horizon other than this humanism which reduces inter-subjectivity to a kind of inter-servility?" (23). Bourriaud's interrogation of ethics is grounded in his

discussion of *form*, wherein he proclaims, *forms* are generated by the digression and chance encounter of hitherto related constituents—in relational art, these constituents, of course, are people. In relational art, Bourriaud summarizes, *form* is relegated to the field of encounter and, as such, *form* generates the conditions for subjective exchange. *Form* is dialogic, and henceforth, a field of ethical reciprocity (24); for Bourriaud, unlike Levinas, the genesis of ethics is the compulsion for acknowledgement, not the forestalling of violence or competition. Bourriaud demonstrates this desire for acknowledgement, by alluding to psychoanalysis, “the work [or the interlocutor] tries to catch my gaze, the way the new-born ‘asks for’ its mother’s gaze” and *vice versa* (23). While Bourriaud’s discussion of ethics is extremely brief, his undeveloped reference to a Lacanian psychoanalytical subject positioning and desire for address might well be the new horizon that Bourriaud is soliciting. Unfortunately, he fails to pursue his own line of thinking. That said, however, the implications this ethics has on the theoretical development of the bubonic tourist are exciting, because first, it means that encounters and exchanges can be grounded in both humility and generosity, not violence; and second, the introduction of psychoanalysis will enable us to reconsider how the subject operates in the matrix of power relations.

In *Giving an Account of Oneself*, Judith Butler seeks to identify how the fragmented, contradictory, and unsteady post-structural subject might operate ethically and responsibly beyond humanism—unpacking, coincidentally, the new horizon that Bourriaud has called for. By employing several discordant theorists—Foucault, Adorno, Lacan, and, Levinas, among others—Butler argues that the inability of the post-structural subject to give a totalizing and comprehensive account of oneself does not deny that subject’s ethical responsibility in the postmodern. Rather, by arguing that the self is always already entrenched in systems of signification—i.e. we are implicated in and interpellated by language and the codes and modes of sociality as an “I”—then “the very terms by which we give an account, by which we make ourselves intelligible to ourselves and to others, are not of our making” (21). We do not create language, rather it creates us; our subjectivity is opaque and we cannot recall our emergence into the social realm, our calling out (read: Lacan’s mirror stage). As a result, any narrative account—

a discursive assembly of the self—is incomplete, because the ability for one to provide a narrative account of oneself is entirely beholden to the social realm in which the self is conditioned.

Language, therefore, interrupts and incompletes us; and as a result, we will never be able to provide a full account of ourselves because, we are incapable of knowing our pre-symbolic and presumably whole self.

Why does this matter? Butler advises that, the “I” requires the other for emergence and subjectivity; that “*I am my relation to you*, ambiguously addressed and addressing, ... without whom I cannot be and upon whom I depend to survive” (emphasis in original, 81). Butler’s conclusion, therefore, is that the “very meaning of responsibility must be rethought on the basis of this [self] limitation; it cannot be tied to the conceit of a self fully transparent to itself” (83). Instead, she maintains, “my very formation implicates the other in me ... my own foreignness to myself is, paradoxically, the source of my ethical connection with others” (84). It is in this ‘space’ of relation, then, that we can become ethical and responsible subjects because, if the “I” can never be fully present to itself—not even through a narrative or critical performance autoethnographic account—then a “new sense of ethics” can arise from the “willingness to acknowledge the limits of acknowledgement itself” (42).

Humility, therefore, becomes the foundation of Butler’s proposed ethics, wherein the subject provides a constant critique of the norms, codes and modes of operation that bring the subject into being: “How are we formed within social life, and at what cost” (136). If Butler is accurate in her assessment, then her theory is not grounded in humanist self-determination and violence, but rather in codependence and acknowledgement of, and from, the other. Butler ultimately indicates, we must recognize that “ethics requires us to risk ourselves precisely at moments of unknowingness, when what forms us diverges from what lies before us, when our willingness to become undone in relation to others constitutes our chance of becoming human” (136). “To be undone by another,” Butler continues, “is a primary necessity, an anguish to be sure, but also a chance—to be addressed, claimed, bound to what is not me, but also to be moved, to be prompted to act, to address myself *elsewhere*, and so to *vacate* the self-sufficient ‘I’

as a kind of possession” (emphasis added, 136). In regards to the bubonic tourist, then, the codes and modes of operation—*habitus*—that might ‘bind’ us to a social group that is ‘not me,’ or to a normative centre, is also the site/cite of departure, wherein one is ‘moved’ or ‘prompted’ to transgress *habitus*. As a result, one can address themselves ‘elsewhere’ (on ‘vacate’-ion and in the margins of *habitus*) and subsequently, critique or move against the interpellated “I”; the “I” we possess as our own centre, but an “I” that does not “stand apart from the prevailing matrix of ethical norms and conflicting moral networks” (7).

Butler ends her book by stating that, if we “speak and try to give an account from this place [of dislocation and transgression], we will not be irresponsible, or, if we are, we will surely be forgiven” (136). That is to say, we must assume full responsibility for our actions, recognizing humbly, that we, like the other, can only in part comprehend our motivations. Responsibility, therefore, is simultaneously forgiving others for their subconscious actions or adherence to *habitus*. If, as Butler suggests, we do not accept responsibility for our actions, then the *habitus*—and its inhabitants that we have transgressed—must equally forgive us because, again, we cannot be fully aware of our subconscious desires. Responsibility and forgiveness, then, become essential to understanding how the bubonic tourist transgresses *habitus*, not as an intentionally egregious act, but instead as a search for altered subjectivity and agency that cannot be established apart from its social context; i.e., as a member of a community. It is here then that I would like to draw our attention specifically to how, methodologically, the bubonic tourist is an ethical member of a transitory community in possession of both agency and subjectivity. As such, I will to look at Kelly Oliver’s important work *The Colonization of Psychic Space: A Psychoanalytic Social Theory of Oppression*.

Suffice it to say, for our discussion here, that Oliver develops a homologous theory of ethics to the one proposed by Judith Butler—humility, acknowledgement, codependence, and forgiveness. Oliver, however, advances this thesis by unpacking how and why, as Butler suggests, we are moved to act and transgress. Oliver argues that alienation and marginalization generated as a result of transgression and enforced by oppression and colonization can be

transformed into agency and subjectivity through a process of sublimation and idealization. While Oliver deals specifically with self-loathing individuals and groups that are subjugated at the moment of their arrival into, or relation with a culture by racist and sexist oppression, her theory can prove fruitful if we were to consider *habitus* as a colonizing apparatus (which surely it is). Oliver suggests that colonization and oppression maintain power and stability by dividing behaviors into normal/abnormal, centre/margin, “proper/improper, pure/contaminated, good/evil” (198). These hegemonic and delimited actions or values are imposed upon the oppressed—and I would also argue, the oppressor—to the extent that each become “‘infected’ with the dominate values” of a culture (198). The colonization of psychic space, therefore, is not only the result of ownership, but also the repeated internalization of hegemonic signification. This internalization, therefore, acts as a self-governing or panoptic gaze that produces “alienation, shame, and melancholy” (198), leaving the marginalized feeling “empty, depressed, and passive, without a sense of their own agency” (172). Read another way, for *habitus* to affirm normativity or a centre, the extraordinary must be systematically effaced or abjected. By perpetuating the homogeneous and hegemonic characteristics of a *habitus*, the social can authorize and sanction the expulsion or disbarment of an individual from participating in meaning making. Hegemony as *habitus* seeks to erase or suppress the unconscious drives that motivate us to act or transgress and, therefore, develop agency. In regards to the bubonic tourist then, Oliver’s discussion will allow us to further configure, procedurally, how as an ethical individual who might be castigated and alienated for revolting, carnivalizing, or transgressing *habitus* can equally generate a “sense of itself as an agent who belongs to the community” (174).

Oliver is explicit in her consideration of how an oppressed person or group can become ethical meaning makers and social agents. To begin with, Oliver seeks to identify how our singularity, the inarticulate and unique configuration of every individual’s unconscious desires, moves us to transgress social codes and modes of operation. Oliver contends that singularity, our “eccentricity, oddness, and strangeness along with uniqueness” (174), cannot be signified or represented. Rather, it can only be “transferred or translated into . . . symbolic systems

[representation] through the imaginary” by way of sublimation (174). Unlike Freud, however, who favors the male libido and limits sublimation to the creation of works of art or intellectual activities, Oliver asserts that, singularity can also be translated into affects (emotions or inner dispositions). This is critical to Oliver’s theory of social oppression because it involves both the ability to conceptualize and generate cognitive images as “separate from perpetual experience [*habitus*] and an ability to *idealize* someone or something as beyond the self [... making] movement between these two worlds [the sanctioned and the ideal] possible” (emphasis added, 158). This becomes a psychic rehearsal of sorts and the genesis of liberation and emancipation. “Only through the realization of their singularity,” Oliver states, can “marginalized people begin the decolonization of psychic space” (163). By creating meaning from a personal perspective by virtue of sublimation, the individual as singular is established, positioning themselves within the homogeneity of language and signification. As such, through sublimation, idealization, and imagination, marginalized people can identify new horizons that enable the transference of corporeal affects into systems of signification through images, action, ideas, or objects⁷. As Thurston points out, “to free the imagination by exploring how it is structured by experience, education, culture, and society and how that structure draws on communally accepted interpretations” allows the individual to engender a sense of agency and subjectivity that makes revolt and, therefore, community and communication, achievable (8).

Furthermore, Oliver suggests that since the post-structural subject is unstable, then dominant representations that have been internalized by marginalized individuals or groups can also be redirected against representations itself, making them modes of resistance. As such, the self-confidence of marginalized individuals “becomes a form of resistance, which empowers them to assimilate cultural clichés in order to make them their own and, in the process, transform them” (154)—speaking as individuals that are in relation to culture as singular. The assimilation,

⁷ In my own performance practice, I cannot separate or rather do not view image, action, idea, or object as separate. Instead I view them as image/action/idea/object; all as one thing, but that is for another paper. While it will not change the outcome of this paper, I figure it is worth noting at least to provide the reader with some sense of how I interpret the world!

carnivalization, and transgression of social codes and modes of operation, therefore, not only “inaugurates subjectivity but also transforms the social through the transgression or revolt necessary for assimilation and sublimation” (177). Oliver asserts, therefore that, “through idealization and then sublimation, the individual enters the realm of meaning as a meaning maker, as an agent. [...] but insofar as one does so through preexisting forms of signification and meaning, one also belongs to a community of meaning and to a community of meaning makers” (156). Negotiation between individual and singularity provides a sense of agency and thus an individual who belongs to a community (Oliver 174).

In sum, Oliver contends that departures in the everyday by means of extraordinary and affectual procedures “begins to decolonize psychic space and frees the imagination from the restrictions of tradition [*habitus*]” (161). This process, however, requires as we have explored above, reciprocal and relational humility, acknowledgement, codependence, and forgiveness. By departing the centre of *habitus* to the margins, the bubonic tourist develops, in the distance, a sense of agency and self-hood, while generating and becoming a member of a community.

5. Part IV: Deer Head Café: A Project in Art and Social Engagement

Perhaps it starts like this: the first thing you see is your breath in the morning air and through it a deer sitting next to you at the bus stop. Your coffee is already cold, but the deer is colder in your hand as you pick it up to read: “hello. you have found what i have lost. please return to Deer Head Café...”

Or perhaps it starts like this: forty-five minutes remain in your lunch break, so you decide to walk to the lake. What first looks like a duck turns out to be an atlas of the world. You flip it open to Canada and dream of somewhere hotter just as a note falls out: “please return to Deer Head Café...”

Or maybe it starts like this: you are standing in line at the Bean Scene coffee house when you notice a poster that says, “your assignment: collect 5 [sic] leaves of matching size.” Or you are walking to the store when you notice affixed to a post “photograph yourself holding hands with a stranger,” or “take a picture of the lake” and you can’t help but oblige purely out of curiosity—a sense of wonder.

(from *Deer Head Café Press Release*)

In this next and final section, I begin to consider how it is possible to destabilize a person’s *habitus* through creative interventions. I speculate that by interrupting an individual in mid-stride one might metamorphize into the bubonic tourist—a critical and creative, reflexive and ethical individual. To facilitate this discussion, I will explicate the development and implementation of a ten-day project I created in the winter of 2007 called, *Deer Head Café: A Project in Art and Social Engagement*.

As a relational event, *Deer Head Café*, was divided into two interrelated sections, public interventions and *The Café*. The public portion of the project was composed of assignments

posted around town encouraging creative civic engagement, self-addressed postcards inviting people to write on a variety of themes, and 'lost' household items and plastic deer that people could find and return to *The Café*, where participants were invited to share tea and cookies with myself and other patrons. Situated within Kelowna's Cultural District and in the Artist in Residence Studio at the Alternator Gallery for Contemporary Art, *Deer Head Café* was an experiment in how the bubonic tourist, as a methodology, could be employed. *Deer Head Café* sought to create the context in which locals or transient residents of Kelowna's city centre could critically and reflexively engage with the city and their own *habitus* as the bubonic tourist. It was my intention with *Deer Head Café* to engender individuals as active agents, participants, co-performers and collaborators in the creation of a temporary community.

5.1. Convergence: The Past Meets the Present

When I arrived in Kelowna to study tourism through the lens of performance, my attention was focused largely on walking, finding, and collecting as an alternative and performative tourist practice. It was my intention to identify a "Kelowna" that operated outside of the mythology prepared by industry and government, and what we might consider hegemony. I was obsessive and repetitive. My hypothesis, that identity, place, and community (*habitus*) could be put into crisis through a practice of walking, finding, and collecting and that identity and knowledge production was a kinesthetic process, haunted me. So to inform this proposition, I decide to walk. I would spend my evenings and early mornings walking the streets, alleys, and pathways of the city. I would cut across parks and empty lots, seeking to encounter strangers. I would scour the ground for lost notes, photographs, and other bits of detritus—all of which I hoped might interrupt my habitual behavior and the narrative I had constructed of both Kelowna and myself. And in all of this walking, I began to find things (boots, letters, people, memories, stories, cats, dogs, broken beer bottles, empty lots, nuts, the smell of rotting apples, a favorite restaurant, alley plums, soft hands, long lines, huge trucks with huge sounds, baseball diamonds, beach fucking, graffiti, broken hearts, demolished houses, photographs) and I began collecting and cataloging them as

signifiers of my time in the city and as mementos that challenged normative notions of the tourist souvenir.

During the first many weeks of my tenure in Kelowna, I translated these experiences of walking, finding, and collecting into art objects. This practice, I came to recognize was not only dissatisfying but also failed to fully account for the ephemeral fragments and multi-sensual phenomena that collectively made up my ever-shifting understanding of Kelowna. I came to understand, that my practice was always already documented through a collection of blisters, slivers, handshakes, scuffed shoes, phone numbers, found objects, lumber scented jackets, bird shitted on hats, bad techno, hammering, honking, ripped jeans, bloody fences, stained scarves, beer bottles, gummed-up soles, pine needles, maple leaves, photographs, nuts, sketches, and memories. I came to realize that the experiences I was collecting could not be effectively translated into solitary and autonomous art objects. Instead, a model of re/presentation that could remain temporary and dialogic was required, a model that allowed the conversation I was already having with Kelowna to continue, a model that remained grounded in the community that produced it in the first place, and a model that refused any authority I might have as a researcher. I then remembered what I had long attempted to forget—my work with the organization “Bubonic Tourist”. And like any tourist, I arrived back where I had started (though slightly altered and with a different vocabulary), understanding that creating community collaboratively through performance is what and how I “do” the world. I realized that by employing my curatorial and facilitating skills, I could construct relational events that would embolden audiences as participants—transforming them into the bubonic tourist. So I set out immediately to do just that.

5.2. Summer Songs/Winter Walks: Kelowna's Club of Urban Wanderers

Before I began any work on *Deer Head Café* I initiated, along with visual artist Mia Rushton, a project called *Summer Songs/Winter Walks: Kelowna's Club of Urban Wanderers*. The purpose of *Summer Songs/Winter Walks* was to create temporary community and space through a shared sense of event. We solicited members using a poster (Figure #1). As 'club members' moved en masse throughout the streets, we located new places and people of interest. Through walking and talking we became collaborators in creating a shared "Kelowna". More often than not we were self-reflexive—interrogating our identities by sharing with others, through speech and action, who we were. We shared our memories, asked questions, identified differences, argued, took the lead or receded to the back. We wondered why we did not walk more, dug through piles of rubble, toured a twenty-four hour badminton club, and danced with the seniors who organized a weekly concert by an accordion practice society. We stood among topless and sweating kickboxing champions, snuck into abandoned buildings, supported striking apple juice factory workers, and scraped dog shit from our shoes; all the while critically performing ourselves in relation to others and our surroundings. 'Club members' simultaneously dislocated and displaced their identities and the city through trajectory and engagement, and it was here that we became tourists in our everyday lives and in our own town.

Often times, we would stumble across someone's old haunt, a place that held significance for one person or another—an area of town, a park, an ex-lover, or a house. These places were mnemonic devices (postcards or souvenirs) that would spur stories and remembering. We were archeologists who looked for the past in the present. On one such occasion, club member Josh⁸, took us through his old neighborhood. He showed us the previous location of an IGA that would give free cookies to children on Sundays before it was torn down and replaced by million dollar condos. He took us down the street he lived on in the late 80's, pointing out the house with a cherry tree in the backyard, the house that had always had a limo parked in front of it, and where "the twins lived." He showed us the field he used to play in and his

⁸ This is a pseudonym.

old house. We asked the current homeowner for a tour and he welcomed us in without hesitation and introduced us to his daughter. Josh pointed out things that had changed in the house and told the home owner a number of different memories he had of the place—where he used to do science experiments, where his sister slept, and that his dad made them do dishes using tongs. Our walking did not just become interventions into the public, but into the private as well. Our mapping and the performance of ourselves and our memories in the moment were also haunting the places of significance for others. We continued to transgress our *habitus* and cross borders into communities. We carried passports fashioned out of consideration, compassion, generosity, and respect—all principles of a radical performance pedagogy that is inherent to make up of the bubonic tourist.

Figure 1: Summer Songs/Winter Walks Poster



5.3. Walking With the Deerly Departed

In late November, I purchased a stuffed and poorly mounted deer head from High Browse Books adjacent to Kelowna's main street.⁹ I did not initially plan to incorporate the dead deer into my practice of walking, finding, and collecting. It was simply meant to hang on the wall in my apartment above my desk. Without a shopping bag large enough to cover the dead deer, however, I had no other option but to carry it the three blocks to my apartment in full view. In this short distance, I was photographed three times by cell-phone cameras (to show people back home, or to remember it later, or whatever tourist metaphor you want to use). With this accidental intervention, I had turned those on the street into gawking tourists, but because of my aversion to gazing I knew that I wanted to rectify this passive practice. I began walking around town with the dead deer in my arms (Figure #2; Figure #3), using it to pressure normal social codes and to encourage people to engage with me beyond gazing. I used the dead deer as an icebreaker, striking up conversation with strangers, allowing them to hold it, to hold hands with me while being photographed with the dead deer, or to stroke its fur. I removed the distance between others and myself, generating instead a shared event and a moment of carnivalesque. This creature in its death, to quote Bakhtin, was "not a negation of life" but instead was "the condition of . . . [a] renewal and rejuvenation" (50); a birth of social engagement. With the experiences

⁹ Taxidermied animals have long been an integral part of my performance work. In the winter of 2000, while living in England, I created my first animal work, a dead rabbit orchestra. Because the university I was attending was located forty-five minutes on foot from the city, I would spend many drunken evenings walking back to my dorm room. The early morning hillsides were always scattered with rabbits chewing on lush grass. I would spend hours collecting—quite literally—field recordings, attempting to capture the sound the rabbits made when eating. I was fascinated by the near silence of these creatures. Quite coincidentally, after spending the evening reading about Joseph Beuys, I found a rabbit that had been hit by a car and I knew immediately that if the rabbits would not allow me to come close enough to record their munching when alive, then I would use their corpses as violins. I have devised numerous other dead animal works though rarely did any of them move beyond conceptualization as I have found it difficult to identify a festival curator or gallery operator who really wants a three hundred pound dead pig pushed across their floor.

generated by *Walking With the Deerly Departed*, *Summer Songs/Winter Walks* and my general practice of walking, finding, and collecting the impetus for *Deer Head Café* arose.

Figure 2: Walking With The Deerly Departed



Figure 3: Walking With The Deerly Departed 2



5.4. Deer Head Café: A Project in Art and Social Engagement

You will recall that at the start of this study, I suggested that I was composing the bubonic tourist as a way to *do* the world differently. With this in mind and with the momentum generated by several months of creating smaller events in hand, I sought to devise a project that would create a space where reflexivity, creativity, social negotiation, antagonism, and generosity could play itself out, even if only temporarily. I wanted to connect and precipitate personal relationships between others, and myself and in turn to instigate engagements that would interrogate ideologies, cultures, histories, dispositions, gender, class, race, age, and ability differences. It was my intention to create a relational project wherein participants could actively engage in the co-creation of an event and to create a space where individuals could rehearse possible futures by reflecting on their past in the present. *Deer Head Café* was a site of carnival and operated in the interstices between performance and everyday life. *Deer Head Café* was about constructing a scenario where my own and other's *habitus*, or way of operating in the world could be displaced, destabilized, put into question or affirmed. I set out to intervene into the lives of other's with the hope that these interventions would return the same and intervene in mine, making *Deer Head Café* dialogic, heteroglossic, articulated, and heterotopic. As such, I defined a number of collaborative projects that invited discourse with the citizens of Kelowna—transforming them from audiences to active participants, co-creators of an event/community, and finally, into the bubonic tourist. These projects, that occurred both in public and at *The Café* included, *Dear Head Café Postcard*, *Get Lost: An Invitation to Tea*, *100 Plastic Deer/100 Invitations to Tea*, *Your Assignment*, and *The Café* itself.

5.5. Deer Head Café Postcard

I met Judy today. For seventeen years she has been a community-based artist, cutting the hair of Kelowna's women and men at Pete's Barber-Stylists. We discussed economic inequality (the widening gap between the rich and the poor), the politics of squatting (apparently last year two hotels on Lakeshore Road sat empty awaiting demolition, providing free accommodation for those without any), and her family. I told her I was born at the Foothills Hospital in Calgary and am here to study tourism and performance. She imagined me playing the role of a hotel manager and laughed. And she is right, it is funny, because we are either playing the role of the tourist or the local all the time. I tipped two-dollars, bought a dead deer stuffed to the ears with foam from the neighboring bookstore, and walked up Bernard to my apartment pretending I was important enough to manage a hotel.

(from *Deer Head Café Postcard*)

Upon my arrival in Kelowna, I immediately began writing short, descriptive, self-reflexive, and personal texts, or "postcards" to the city: "in Rutland—we meet Deepak..." or "Dear Kelowna Rapist..." These postcards spoke of my experience as a tourist in town, as a researcher walking, finding, and collecting, and as the bubonic tourist scouring the city in search of multi-sensual engagement or instances of carnivalesque. *Deer Head Café Postcard* developed out of this exercise but moved beyond the format of a monologue. Instead of a single-sided correspondence, I devised the postcard in such a manner that individuals might be encouraged to respond to me. On the front of the card, along with a photograph of me holding the dead deer (I had started to become recognized by this time for lugging the thing through the streets), I wrote my text to the city (Figure #4). On the back, I addressed the postcard to my apartment in Kelowna and wrote a list of topics or questions people might address should they not know what to do or write. For instance, I encouraged people to "Introduce yourself to a stranger and write about it,"

“Draw a map from your house to work,” “Write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper,” “Be the sailor in love with the sea,” and among many others, “Why doesn’t your mother call you anymore?”¹⁰ Not unlike Flux-kits created in the 1960s by artists who belonged to the Fluxus movement, *Deer Head Café Postcard* sought to relinquish artistic authority and democratize creative activity by inviting everyone to be an artist. Finally, I affixed a stamp to the postcard with the intention of eliminating any financial barrier that might prevent somebody from participating.

As a means of dissemination, I left the cards at coffee houses, restaurants, social assistance centres, tourist bureaus, senior citizen community halls, art galleries, municipal buildings, or handed them to individuals personally. It was my intention with *Deer Head Café Postcard* to intervene in the daily lives of strangers with a personal story—an anecdote—but one that playfully and subtly articulated my attitude regarding social injustice, my own social status as a white, Western born, university educated individual, and, echoing Tim Edensor, that “we are either playing the role of the tourist or the local all the time”. I sought to autoethnographically perform my identity in relation to my *habitus* and my surroundings. It was my hope that as a performative and pedagogical practice, *Deer Head Café Postcard* would displace and then encourage participants to critically reflect on their identity, race, class, gender and habitual social and cultural codes or modes of operation.

Of the one hundred *Deer Head Café Postcards* disseminated throughout Kelowna’s cultural district, nearly twenty-five percent were mailed back to me (Figure #5; Figure #6). The content of the postcards ranged from drawings by children, maps from home to work, complaints about roommates, descriptions of walking past the cement factory, and feeling sadness on the anniversary of a parent’s death. The postcards articulated people’s playfulness, depression, memories, time spent in the city, and daily routines. Whether participants were reflexive and critical cannot be quantified. What I can speak to, however, is that as a recipient of these cards, my narrative of Kelowna as a homogeneous entity, was interrupted. I was fascinated, inspired, and affected by the creativity and generosity of the responses. I was moved to assess my *habitus*

¹⁰ See Appendix A for a complete list of *Deer Head Café Postcard* suggestions.

in relation to others experiences. Opening my mailbox became an event beyond routine. These postcards became an intervention into public and private places.

Figure 4: Deer Head Café Postcard Front



Figure 5: Deer Head Café Postcard, From Bookman

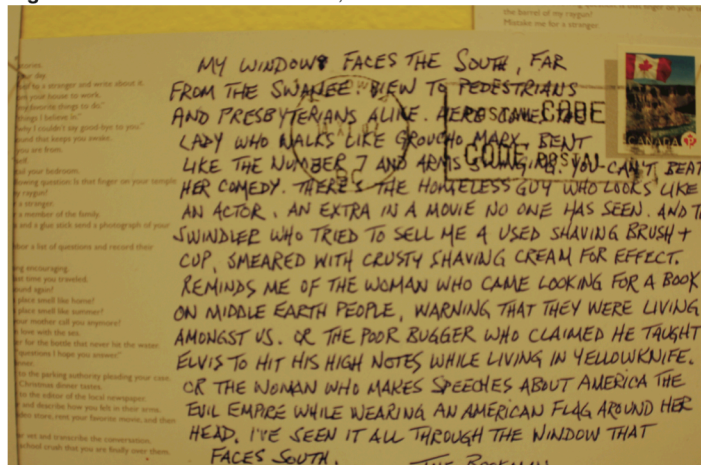
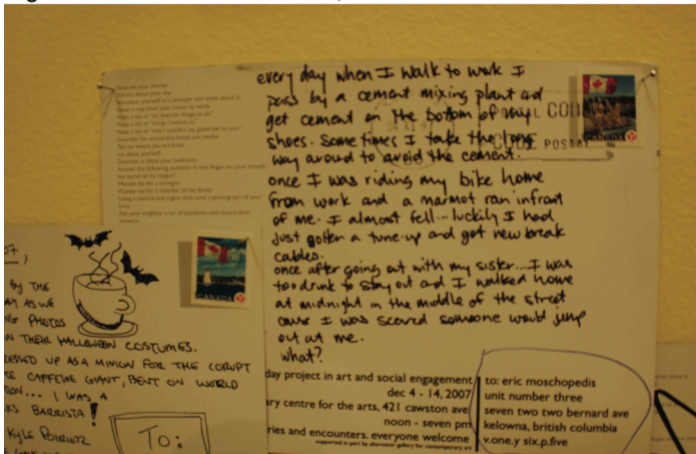


Figure 6: Deer Head Café Postcard, From Unknown



5.6. Get Lost: An Invitation to Tea And 100 Plastic Deer/100 Invitations to Tea

The second and third public components of *Deer Head Café* were *Get Lost: An Invitation to Tea* and *100 Plastic Deer/100 Invitations to Tea*. With these projects, I intentionally lost, with the hope that they would be returned, 100, one-inch plastic deer and fifty “personal” objects (books, utensils, figurines, a sports medal, a protractor set, sunglasses, and among others objects, a cake decorating set) in the city. Attached to each of these objects and to the deer were brown packaging tags that encouraged participants to return the found items to the Artist in Residence Studio at the Alternator Gallery for Contemporary Art where *The Café* was located. These items, like the *Deer Head Café Postcard*, sought to initiate a conversation with strangers. Unlike the postcard, however, where people could simply drop them in the mail, participants were encouraged to return the item in person. To facilitate this invitation to meet me at *The Café*, I wrote that the participant had “found what I had lost,” provided information of where and at what times they could “please return” the item, and that there would be “free tea and cookies and stories and encounters”.

In addition to the invitation to tea that was affixed to the plastic deer and personal objects, a short autobiographical narrative accompanied the lost personal objects in *Get Lost: An Invitation to Tea*. These narratives reflexively identified the significance of the personal object to my life and sought to autoethnographically perform my identity. For instance, I wrote of a used “0” candle from my tenth birthday that,

Dan spills Orange Crush on the carpet and I begin to cry. Perhaps it has to do with the fact that my mother worked hard to prepare this day for me, or that this is a new house and new carpet and a new decade. I call him a “fucking idiot” and tell him to leave. I celebrate my tenth birthday angry and eating cold pizza in my bedroom.

Or, as was attached to the package of green pepper seeds I lost outside of the post office, “My grandfather was an avid and organic gardener just outside Calgary’s city limits. I can’t help but think about death when I think about seeds”.

These lost item stood in for my actually being there and became interventions into the city and people's lives.¹¹ The purpose of *Get Lost: An Invitation to Tea* and *100 Plastic Deer/100 Invitations to Tea* was to create walkers and collectors of the finders. I wanted to recreate a similar effect of displacement and affect in the participant that I had experienced by locating lost items through my own practice of walking, finding, and collecting in Kelowna. By putting personal objects and the plastic deer into the city and choreographing encounters with strangers, I was hoping to create instances of carnivalesque. I wanted to generate occasions where participants could transgress their habitual daily patterns. By engaging with the lost item, handling it, reading its related text and invitation, and then rerouting their behavior to return the personal object or plastic deer to *The Café*, I imagined participants would—to borrow from Dell Hymes—break through into performance. In this space of carnivalesque—following Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks—the finders as psudeo-archeologist and performer worked to “negotiate identities, of people and things” through the presence of heterogeneous elements (54). By transgressing their everyday routines, finders would become collaborators, co-creators, and co-performers of meaning, knowledge, and *The Café* itself.

Though not all of the items were returned to *The Café*, none of the items remained on the street. During the ten days of *Deer Head Café* I would regularly check on the status of the personal objects and plastic deer to see if they had been found and all were located and picked up by somebody. While this might be read as a shortcoming of the project, I have another interpretation. In regards to the lost personal objects, many of them had utilitarian value. For instance, I lost a pair of scissors, a bowl, a can opener, a mug, sunglasses, a book, and among other items, crayons. While I cannot identify who found these items and what became of them, I like to imagine that many of these objects are still in use. That someone's cat eats from the bowl, that a homeless individual cuts their friends' hair, or that a child draws pictures of the sky. In this way, *Get Lost: An Invitation to Tea* might have created encounters that remained external to the project, while providing a social service by distributing essential items to others. While the

¹¹ For more examples see Appendix B.

personal objects, as well as, many of the plastic deer did not return to *Deer Head Café*, they remain in someone else's home, as plague ridden and mnemonic devices, reminding the finder of a transgression in their daily routines—the time when they bent over to pick something up.¹²

5.7. Your Assignment

Fluxus artists first employed instructions to initiate creative practice in the 1960s. The last few years have seen a renaissance in instruction art, due in large part to the publication of *Do It*, a collection of instructions for art or events by contemporary artists, and the groundbreaking work, “Learning to Love You More” by Miranda July and Harrell Fletcher. In 2002, July and Fletcher, initiated “www.learningtoloveyoumore.com” that listed assignments (instructions) that the general public could complete and upload to the site that operated like a do-it-yourself gallery. The intention of the assignments, as posted on www.learningtoloveyoumore.com, is “to guide people towards their own experience” (July and Fletcher). *Your Assignment*, as included in *Deer Head Café*, was largely inspired by July and Fletcher’s project, but focused on local, not international participation.

Affixed to posts and hung in store windows through out Kelowna’s cultural district were five assignments people could complete and return to the café (Figure #7): “Take a picture of the lake,” “Describe the sounds you hear at night,” “Write advice to yourself in the past on a napkin,” “Take a photo of yourself holding hands with a stranger,” and “Collect 5 [sic] leaves of matching size”. The objective of *Your Assignment* was to encourage new experiences and generate creative and reflexive, personal and civic, engagement. Many of the assignments were designed to thwart gazing as a dominant mode of perception. As a result of collecting leaves, holding

¹² I still meet people today who found one of the personal objects or plastic deer. Anecdotally, many of these people explain that they simply wanted a reminder of the experience of finding one of these items. I also received a phone call from one of the social service centres in Kelowna telling me that many of the tags had made their way into the shelter, but that the objects were nowhere to be seen.

hands with a stranger, or listening carefully to the sounds that resonate in the night, the emphasis from sight, I hoped, would shift to multi-sensual engagement. Equally, by advising yourself that, “When ‘this is a bad idea’ goes through your head followed by ‘whatever’...stop following up with ‘whatever’ because it’s not ‘whatever’. You effect more than yourself and you’re [sic] hurtful and you feel like bird guts after,” is reflexive and performative. Walking to the lake to take a photograph might initiate a new appreciation for the natural landscape that surrounds the cultural district and alter one’s behavior accordingly. Each of these assignments, like the lost items and postcards described above, sought to transform citizens into participants. By engaging the city and performing, participants created spaces where critical and reflexive knowledge could be developed. By putting into practice elements of the bubonic tourist, participants publicly and pedagogically enacted an alternative relation to *habitus* that might instigate another to estimate how such actions fit into their own narratives.

Figure 7: Your Assignment Poster

DESCRIBE THE
SOUNDS YOU
HEAR AT NIGHT


submit your assignments to deerheadcafé@shaw.ca
or deliver them in person. free tea. we can't wait!

Deer Head Café
a project in art and social engagement
dec 4-14, 2007
studio III, rotary centre for the arts
421 cawston ave
noon - seven pm

free:
tea
cookies
encounters
conversations

supported in part by alternator gallery for contemporary art

YOUR ASSIGNMENT



5.8. The Café

In Nicolas Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics*, he articulates that the priority of relational work is to generate and interrogate "ways of living and models of action within the existing real" (13). It was my intention to create a multi-sensual and interstitial zone that operated in the everyday. As a site where transgressive behaviors could manifest and where individuals could struggle with and negotiate *habitus*, *The Café* was a safe, but consequential environment. For ten days in early December, 2007, the "neutral" Artist in Residence Studio (Figure #8) was physically transformed by bright yellow walls, a brown peg board floor, a communal circle of Okanagan valley tree branches, mason jars full of lake water, video documentation of *Walking With the Deerly Departed*¹³, and people (Figure #9; Figure #10). In *The Café*, I brought together the detritus I had collected while walking (Figure #11), completed assignments (Figure #12), found "lost" items (Figure #13), natural elements, myself, and of course, participants—creating a miniature and ever shifting "map" of Kelowna's cultural district.

As Crampton and Krygier indicate in their article, "An Introduction to Critical Cartography," maps wield power, interpolate subjectivities, are ideologically informed, and have real world consequences. Maps, Crampton and Krygier contend, produce—and I would argue, perform—places, geographies, territories, and political identities; and though they can be imperious, maps can also be counter-hegemonic and "a powerful means of promoting social change" (15). By creating an open and heteroglossic "map" that employed local, reflexive, critical, and personal knowledge's, *The Café* became a site where both Kelowna's cultural district and participants identities could be contested and negotiated. *The Café's* potential to proliferate social change existed in the performative and pedagogical interactions between strangers (live or with a completed assignment that stood in for another). As a dialogic "map", *The Café* could not be read or viewed in a privatized manner because, participants were collaboratively "doing" the "map" of Kelowna and rehearsing possible futures/"maps", simultaneously. In this regard, *The Café* was perpetually in flux, never-ending, and was rearranged with each new articulation—each entrance

¹³ Okanagan video artist Joanne Gervais recorded and edited this documentation.

and exit—and was, therefore, dialogic and antagonistic. As a series of heterogeneous encounters and a site of carnivalesque, *The Café* was a forum—to borrow from Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks—where critical reflection, interrogation, and transgression of everyday rituals or *habitus* could be enacted with actual effect and affect. *The Café* was a “place where identities [could] be created, shaped, contested and changed, where new agendas [were] set” with each multifarious encounter (28). Indeed, it was here, in the site of multi-sensual engagement and carnivalesque that individuals transformed into the bubonic tourist.

As host of *The Café*, it was my role to engender and facilitate encounters and engagements between participants, others, and myself.¹⁴ This forced me to occupy a precarious position between being the “artist,” who had to ensure the wellbeing of patrons, and a participant, who wanted to remain communicable and genuinely engaged with others. By performing this reflexive role, as Melanie Bennett describes in her article, “Please Return to the *Deer Head Café*: How Kelowna’s Community was Lost and Found,” I became “an actor in the public sector” (2). Forfeiting my “artistic vision” and abdicating the traditional role of “sovereign artist”, positioned patrons and myself as collaborators and co-creators. When participants arrived to *The Café* I would immediately welcome them, describe the contents of *The Café*, and invite them to join others and myself for a pot of tea. These engagements were entirely beholden to the fortuity of *The Café*’s participants and had very little agenda beyond enquiring where participants had located a lost item, thanking them for completing an assignment, or enquiring what their role in Kelowna’s cultural district was. While some participants were hesitant to engage with others and myself, many more accepted. On average participants would stay for upwards to forty-five minutes, if not longer, sitting on a cushion in the communal circle of tree branches, drinking tea, eating cookies, and conversing about literally anything (Figure #14; Figure #15; Figure #16; Figure #17). Each engagement had its own direction and created its own articulated community.

¹⁴ That said, however, once participants came to recognize that *The Café* was a collaborative environment and that they were co-creators, they would often facilitate the engagement between, themselves, others, and new arrivals. And so the plague spreads!

Many people reflexively meditated on their lives in Kelowna, comparing the city to other cities in the world they had lived in, or cities they had traveled to. Some spoke about their romantic lives, social customs, and marital practices. Others wanted to talk about politics, the war in Iraq, philosophical problems, art, drug use, homelessness, social inequality, and heartache. Others still wanted to hold the dead deer (Figure #18; Figure #19).

One of the more memorable engagements I had while in *The Café* occurred late on the third day. Moments after a number of exchange students left *The Café*, a woman in her mid-twenties named Sarah arrived¹⁵. She had been attracted by the assignment, “Take a picture of yourself holding hands with a stranger,” and she had come to *The Café* to have her photo taken with me or another participant. After spending nearly ninety-minutes discussing her difficulty making friends and describing her ideal partner, she admitted that she had come to *The Café* hoping to meet somebody who was single. As she was leaving *The Café*, she noticed that one of the assignments was “Collect 5 [sic] leaves of matching size”. The next morning when I arrived at *The Café* there was a small box wrapped in silver foil waiting for me at the door. Inside the box was a gold covered leaf that Sarah had been wearing around her neck the previous day. The other four leaves matched perfectly in size and shape, but were cut from a newspaper. On each leaf was a marital statistic: single, married, divorced, and never going to marry. Sarah had not only reflexively performed aspects of her identity, but also carnivalized and appropriated the assignment, making the project whole unique to her individuality.

Wild Bill, who had nicknamed himself, was another individual that I had the great pleasure of engaging with. Wild Bill arrived at a time when *The Café* was nearly full. He wanted very little to do with other patrons and wanted even less to sit in the communal circle. Instead, he invited me to sit with him in the corner and across the room from the others. He clearly wanted to talk about economic disparity and his life in Kelowna. Wild Bill had been a volunteer fire fighter some years ago and was a carpenter by trade. While helping a friend move a piano up a flight of stairs twenty years before, Wild Bill had severely injured his back. Since then he has been living

¹⁵ This is a pseudonym.

on the streets of Kelowna. He told me that *Deer Head Café* was accurately named because, nearly every day at four in the morning, two deer descend from Knox Mountain that borders Kelowna's downtown and walk through the cultural district. Wild Bill had found several of the plastic deer and was wearing them in the ribbon of his cowboy hat. He refused to return them.

Participants sought to engage and share stories as one way of making sense of adverse moments or epiphanies that had occurred in their lives. As participants dealt with their pasts in the present, reflexively and critically engaging in chitchat or earnest conversations, *The Café* became a site of archeology. By talking to others, being intimately located to someone else, and drinking tea, participants—who had already rerouted their daily routines by arriving at *The Café*—were at times presented with extraordinary phenomena (cultural differences or alternative relations to power) that had the potential to destabilize their practical knowledge and initiate reflexivity. In these instances, participants and myself would be forced to critically and reflexively contextualize our behaviors in relation to the cultural codes and modes of operation that patterned our everyday lives. By reaffirming or transgressing *habitus* we would transmogrify into performers—autoethnographically situating and performing ourselves in relation to a habitual cultural context.

These public, pedagogical, and communicable performances created new ruptures in *habitus* and had the potential to displace interlocutors, teasing them into the margins and promising them a *space* where they could reflexively reveal their *habitus* as both familiar and strange. As the bubonic tourists, participants and myself, entered reflexively into these familiar and strange encounters. We would pair our biographical information and experiences with the social codes and modes of others while transgressing our own. By transgressing *habitus*, individuals, it was hoped, could develop a sense of agency and community, even if only temporarily while in *The Café*. By collaborating in the creation of the *The Café* as a “map,” participants became cultural (secret) agents, whose weapon was identity, experience, collaboration, generosity, compassion, intuition, and transgression.

Although I suspect many people did not view herself or himself as the bubonic tourist, performing, or breaking through into performances. Many did, however, recognize that they had abandoned their daily routine and were, simultaneously, both in Kelowna and not in Kelowna. As one participant described it, *The Café* was a third-space, a hybrid location that existed in the everyday.

Figure 8: Artist In Residence Studio



Figure 9: The Café



Figure 10: Tea Circle



Figure 11: Paper Bits



Figure 12: Kathy Reading Assignments



Figure 13: Selection Of Found Plastic Deer



Figure 14: Participants Drinking Tea



Figure 15: Participants Socializing



Figure 16: Jay Drinking Tea



Figure 17: Kathy Drinking Tea



Figure 18: Participant Holding Deer



Figure 19: Participant Holding Deer 2



6. In Closing

In her essay, “Bridging Haunted Places: Performance and The Production of Mostar,” Sonja Arsham Kuftinec states, “*who* we are intimately connects to *where* we are” (emphasis in original, 84). It was my intention in this project to consider ‘where we are’ in relationship to geography and *habitus*, and to imagine how transgressing both develops agency, an altered sense of self, and community. In this last section, I want to consider how composing the bubonic tourist has altered my experience in, and thinking of, creating original inter-disciplinary performance. At every turn, the work I conducted sought to inspire, innovate, initiate, investigate, identify, interfere, influence, and interrogate my own perceptions of performance, and by extension, my way of life. By developing a way in which to conceptualize the transgression of *habitus* as both liberating and ethical, has allowed me to enhance, enlarge, and develop a personal perspective of performance and communication that insists on an experiential participatory epistemology. Performance as a relational and communicable method of intimately transferring information, experience, and intelligence has become my priority. I believe strongly in the power of personal communication and pedagogical performance to emancipate individuals and groups. My role as an artist has always been about creating an environment of permission and forgiveness for myself and for my interlocutors—who are both my collaborators and co-performers. It is in these environments that participants locate and identify themselves as creators, performers, and initiators of personal expression and personal culture. It was my intention to create a methodology and a pedagogy that insists on collaborative, creative, and conceptual performance.

As I come to the end of this project, I am well aware that this is only a departure for what will inevitably dominate the critical and creative research I undertake in the future. It was my hope to begin envisioning how the bubonic tourist as a methodology might destabilize the social and cultural apparatuses that underpin our everyday behaviors and social engagements. There is no shortage of what I would consider hope and “blind” optimism for the bubonic tourist as a methodology, but I undertook this research with the conviction that, even if only temporarily, the

eyes needed to be removed from the equation, allowing the rest of the body to be privileged as a site of knowledge production. As a methodology, the effects and affects of the bubonic tourist are impossible to fully quantify and for this very reason I am most pleased. It is my belief that the approach of the social sciences, and equally, arts funding bodies, that continue to require quantifiable data regarding ephemeral encounters is absurd. Our culture is structured around consumable results. Instead, following Dwight Conquergood, I believe we need a participatory epistemology, wherein social engagements should be allowed to resonate and percolate in the individual. It is in the percolation that individuals become critical and reflexive and of course pedagogical. In this regard, I hope too, that this study here acts as an ephemeral encounter, a site of engagement, and only the beginning of a communicable dis-order.

Above all, following Michel de Certeau, it is my hope that by rethinking the possibility of performance as a model of political and intellectual authority, I can continue to conceptualize a manner in which everyday practices can be employed as both resistive and creative. By composing the bubonic tourist, I hope to offer a methodology and pedagogy that consumes and carnivalizes *habitus*, creating instead a counter-hegemonic disposition that refuses the sanctioning apparatus of authority. The bubonic tourist, I hope, will offer a practice in which people's lives and experiences can be continually invigorated, transgressed, performed, and reflexively re-imagined, even if just a little, and even if only temporarily. I do not claim to imagine the bubonic tourist as producing pure or perfect individuals; instead, individuals who reflexively and infectiously implicate themselves in the creation of flawed, articulated, and collaborative communities. In this regard, my project is a political one because it is a personal one, but also a communal and communicable one. The bubonic tourist, is never innocent, but is always forgiven and forgiving, for both hers and his transgression and adherence to *habitus*. The bubonic tourist is imbued with a politics of hope and the rehearsal of possible futures, all the while being entangled in a *habitus* that partly shapes and defines the authority being transgressed. The bubonic tourist drinks tea. The bubonic tourist holds hands. The bubonic tourist collects leaves. The bubonic tourist believes in progressive and modest social change.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Deer Head Café Postcard Full List of Suggestions

Send me your stories.

Tell me about your day.

Introduce yourself to a stranger and write about it.

Draw a map from your house to work.

Make a list of “my favorite things to do.”

Make a list of “things I believe in.”

Make a list of “why I couldn’t say good-bye to you.”

Describe the sound that keeps you awake.

Tell me where you are from.

Lie about yourself.

Describe in detail your bedroom.

Answer the following question: Is that finger on your temple the barrel of my raygun?

Mistake me for a stranger.

Mistake me for a member of the family.

Using a camera and a glue stick send a photograph of your lover.

Ask your neighbor a list of questions and record their answers.

Write something encouraging.

Describe the last time you traveled.

What is that sound again?

Why does this place smell like home?

Why does this place smell like summer?

Why doesn’t your mother call you anymore?

Be the sailor in love with the sea.

Write the letter for the bottle that never hit the water.

Make a list of “questions I hope you answer.”

Invite me to dinner.

Write a letter to the parking authority pleading your case.

Describe how Christmas dinner tastes.

Write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper.

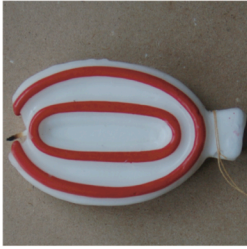
Walk to the video store, rent your favorite movie, and then review it.

Interview a war vet and transcribe the conversation.

Tell your high school crush that you are finally over them.

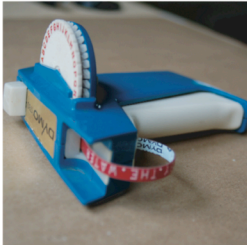
Appendix B: Get Lost: An Invitation to Tea Objects and Text

Figure A-1: Zero Candle



Dan spills Orange Crush on the carpet and I begin to cry. Perhaps it has to do with the fact that my mother worked hard to prepare this day for me, or that this is a new house and new carpet and a new decade. I call him a “fucking idiot” and tell him to leave. I celebrate my tenth birthday angry and eating cold pizza in my bedroom.

Figure A-2: Label Maker



“Meet me by the water.” The night before she wrote me this note I got shit on by a bird.

Figure A-3: Clock



I am listening to Tracy Thorn, drinking green tea, and dreaming of Sackville, NB, when I realize that in 45-minutes it'll be nearly 4 am and exactly a month since you drove off the road into a ditch.

Figure A-4: Icing Set



November 24, 2004: I am reminded that small tables, twenty-four candles, pink icing, and homemade chocolate cake is both romantic and frightening.

Figure A-5: Mug With Birds



She offers me tea and it breaks the mid-morning and the next-morning silence. While hot water runs over green leaves, she explains that although we've only recently met, she plans to marry me.

Figure A-6: Grandpa's Glasses



Before his death, my grandfather had the good fortune of two perspectives of the world—one apparently clearer than the other.

Figure A-7: Scissors



It is September 1985, and my father, sister, and I have traveled to Athens Greece to visit my grandparents. I am missing the first three weeks of grade one, learning instead to give haircuts to stray dogs under fig trees.

Figure A-8: Yellow Goggles



For my fourteenth birthday, my dad buys me a Honda 70 motorbike. He has a moustache and much more hair. We have dreams of riding into the sunset or the forest or sand dunes or the future. To protect my eyes from dust, my sister gives me these goggles.

Figure A-9: Pepper Seeds



My grandfather was an avid and organic gardener just outside Calgary's city limits. I can't help but think about death when I think about seeds.

Figure A-10: Stapler



My grandmother worked as a filing clerk during the Second World War. After returning home from the front lines, her father developed a bad case of cancer and died. She stapled his death certificate to his birth certificate and mailed it to an unknown address in France.

Figure A-11: Calculator



Five reasons why I was suspended from school in grade six.

1. Hitting Kim Stenning in the eye with a paper airplane
 2. Writing: "you have hairy balls on my desk."
 3. Eating other people's food.
 4. Kicking David in the crotch twice.
 5. Using a calculator to describe what I liked best about girls. (80085)
-

Figure A-12: Gell Well Globe



It is early. Sitting next to me on the bus is: red tie, black blazer, grey pants, and I begin thinking about my grandmother and that march 25th, 2003 marks the twentieth anniversary of her death and I remember:

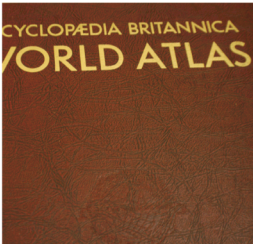
1. that she would tickle my feet
 2. that my grandfather could have been better to her
 3. that the house always smelled of baked bread
 4. that this was the last thing I gave her
-

Figure A-13: Bronze Medal



Paul tells me that his sister is in the stands and that she has asked to see me after the game. I am an eleven year-old anxious and in love third baseman, when the last batter of the final inning hits a fly ball that lands next to me, just as the opposition's star player crosses home base. He is a hero and I am a bronze metal winner with a broken heart.

Figure A-14: World Atlas



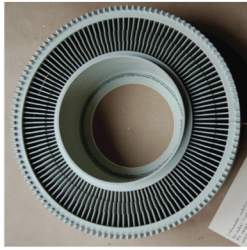
My grandfather tells me: in 1953 a bird drives its beak into the window of a café and drops dead, causing him to close his newly purchased atlas out of sadness and fright.

Figure A-15: Porcelain Owl



I learned as a young man from the David Lynch t.v. series, Twin Peaks, that "the owls are not what they seem." I should have heeded this advice when Sarah offered me this as a gift. I thought it meant love, not "let's be friends."

Figure A-16: Slide Tray



I remember watching my mother remember, how her mother tried to remember, who owned this car: the neighbor's son, or my grandfather's friend from work.

Figure A-17: Medical Car



I tell Debbie that my broken heart is a medical emergency. She laughs and leaves. Three days later this arrives in my mailbox.

Figure A-18: BC Button



Before BC was the "best place on earth" it was simply "beautiful". And so were three weeks during the summer of '96 when, of all the young men at the campground, the prettiest girl decided my hand was the one to hold.

Figure A-19: Clifford Book



Five dogs have influenced my life:

1. Sheba (1978-1993)
 2. Big Mac (1982-1994)
 3. Bandit (1985-1998)
 4. Abby (2000-still alive)
 5. Clifford (1975, original publication)
-

Figure A-20: Chalk Brush



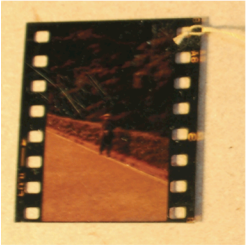
Every fall, written in chalk, the sign out front of my grandparents house read: "Sharon and Vern's Vegetables".

Figure A-21: Cookie Tray



She serves me a tray of assorted cookies, tea, and longing looks. Her eyes are beautiful and mine are too big for my belly, as nervously I eat every last cookie to reveal a map of Colorado.

Figure A-22: Film Frame



Stephen tells me he is moving on. He sells his house, his car, and his collection of vintage film reels. Left behind after his departure is a single frame with a solitary figure standing next to the road.

Figure A-23: Teeth Button



In 1994 we believed in Radiohead's "Pablo Honey," throwing rocks at passing cars, breaking and entering, selling raffle tickets for hockey teams, and fighting. In 1995, with newly minted metal in my mouth, I learn to believe in kissing with braces.

Figure A-24: Baby Fork



I tell her that I want to marry her, that I want to move to New Brunswick to become a farmer, and that I want her as my artistic collaborator. We talk about buying a dog, a house, and a lottery ticket. We fall asleep under a hundred thousand stars. This is next to us when we awake.

Figure A-25: Protractor Set



In grade seven after Nick Z. breaks my arm playing hockey, I pretend that I can't write numbers or letters because of the pain and I so spend the rest of the year carving "eric + venessa" in to the desk.

