

# **Sustenance:**

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**A Play for All Trans [ ] Borders**

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ACT Ø – Scene Ø.I

**Performing actants:** *utopian performatives as infinite translucencies, dislocating nomos*

*(The stage lights, like a cell phone searching for a signal, slowly come up and start to flicker.)*

*A fugitive figure moves to the edge of the stage and holds out a bottle of water. After a long pause, ze [“IT,” carved into zer chest] speaks.*

**Fugitive figure [a *trans-* prefix]:** This will be my brief aside before the performance, my trans ( ) critique, before/on/and within the (empty set). On this day only one will be hunted down by the state machinery, that old chthonian apparatus for bearing no name in the desert of the real. It is after all the Twenty-First “Brume” (June gloom) of Late, Growing “Lay Ter” Capitalism. So put on your wigs (hardly ski masks), wait in the wings and let aphanisis be your ex-officio EDT [Electronic Disturbance Theatre] wear.

*The fugitive figure walks off stage left, leaving the bottle of water behind.*

*(The lights come up on a chorus-line of San Patricio trans ( ) versals)*

Chorus establishes the shot:

**TRANSITION**  
(song of my cells)

Gloria Anzaldúa writes, “We have a tradition of migration, a tradition of long walks. Today we are witnessing *la migración de los pueblos mexicanos*, the return odyssey to the historical/mythological Aztlán” (1999 [1987]: 33). The historical? The mythological? Aztlán? It’s difficult to follow the soundings of that song. Today’s borders and circuits speak at “lower frequencies,” are “shot through with chips of Messianic time.” Might (*O chondria!*): imagine the chips’ transliteration and you have “arrived” at the engines of a global positioning system—the transitivity of the Transborder Immigrant Tool. Too: when you outgrow that definition, look for the “trans-” of transcendental -isms, imperfect as overwound pocketwatches, “off”-beat as subliminalities (alternate forms of energy which exceed Reason’s predetermined star maps). Pointedly past Walden-pondering, *el otro lado de flâneur-floundering*—draw a circle, now “irse por la tangente”—neither gray nor grey (nor black-and-white). Arco-irises: flight, a fight. Of fancy. *This Bridge Called my Back*, my heart, my head, my cock, my cunt, my tunnel. Vision: You. Are. Crossing. Into. Me.

Chorus kicks:

**PRECESSION**  
(An Irish Blessing)

“May the road rise up to meet you.  
May the wind always be at your back.”

May your tracks cut a poem—  
the shortest distance—  
between points A and B.

The earth on its axis resembles a spinning top.

$$\omega_p = \omega_s \cos(\alpha) \left( \frac{I_s}{I_p} - 1 \right)$$

The North Star (of the stars) most closely aligns itself with the earth’s axis. Hence, a constant changes over time, reassembling the circuit:

*Polaris, Vega, Thuban, Alpha Cephei.*

May you catch your bearing, the truth of true North against its pasts and futures’ constellating.

Mano Poderosa/mano negra:

“May God hold you in the palm of His hand.”

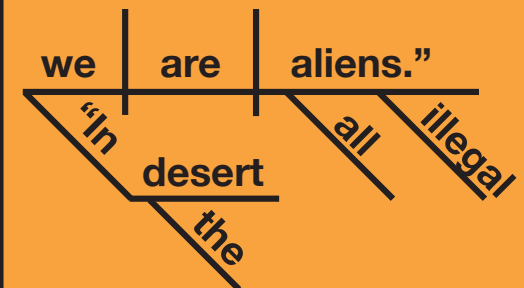
**Let Down [La Difunta Correa]:**

The Argentinean popular saint, La Difunta Correa, has yet to be canonized by the Catholic Church. Like Jesus Malverde, she resides in the hearts and minds of would-be border-crossers. Legend has it that she set off to find her husband with an infant in tow; but, crossing the desert, she died of dehydration. Those who found her body also found her son, miraculously still alive, his mouth latched to her breast. Entertain for a moment the baroque iconography of a corpse, one breast exposed, nursing an infant.

Most women, who have nursed, are intimately familiar with the phenomenon of “let down.” Your child cries, your breast responds, lactating to the call. Edited out of this narrative is the sheer magnanimity of the breast: in a grocery store, an infant wails, you let-down—no matter that s/he is not your own. To veer dangerously toward an essentialist narrative the body knows and responds to distress in manners that exceed fight-or-flight dialectics. To cross technologies of gender, race, sexuality, nation, religion, class: imagine caching water in the Mexican-U.S. borderlands’ “season of dying” as a comparable act of spontaneous release—not as a political statement (or not only that), but as a corporeal reflex, as an intuitive ethical gestus to insist, “not on my watch”?

Neither mixing nor nixing metaphors, one must concede that “enabling, enticing, aiding, abetting” (the worst case scenario spins on water-caching) are more complicated “acts of transfer” than this. Framing water-caching in terms of “let down” amounts to a refusal

Chorus kinship-diagrams:



Chorus code-switches:

Zwischenspiel  
(Lied meiner Zellen)

Gloria Anzaldúa schreibt, "Wir leben in einer Tradition der Wanderung, einer Tradition der langen Maersche. Heute sind wir Zeugen der *la migración de los pueblos mexicanos*, der Rueckkehr, der Odyssee zu dem historisch/ mythologischen Aztlán" (1999 [1987]: 33). Historisch? Mythologisch? Aztlán? Es ist schwer, dem Klang dieses Lieds zu folgen. Heutige Grenzen und Touren sprechen mit 'tieferen Frequenzen,' sind 'mit Bruchstuecken von Messianischer Zeit durchschossen.' Moege die Macht (der Mutter-Linie!): Stelle Dir die Transliteralisierung des Bruchstuecks vor, und Du stehst vor den Maschinen des Global Positioning Systems: der Vermittlung des Transborder Immigrant Tool, des grenzenuebergreifenden Immigrantent Werkzeug/ Zeug. Auch: wenn Du dieser Definition entwaechst, schau Dich um, schau zu den uebergreifenden, den transzendierenden 'ismen,' imperfect wie Taschenuhren die ueberdreht sind, aus der Zeit gefallen wie subliminale Zeiger (alternative Formen von Energie weit ueber die Sternmappen der Rationalitaet herausreichend). Weit weg vom Holzweg und Heide(egger), el otro lado des kreiselden Flaneurs – mach einen Kreidekreis, "irse por la tangente"— nicht grau und nicht graulich, und nicht schwarz-und-weiss. Arco-irises: Flucht, Flug, Fantasie. *Die Bruecke meines Rueckens*, mein Herz, mein Haupt, mein Schwanz, meine Moese, mein Tunnel. Schau: Du. Bist. Im Uebergang. Zu. Mir.

to recount the borderlands' competing and accreting essentialisms, a U.S.-based "privilege of unknowing" the escalating numbers of a continental humanitarian crisis.

It is difficult to procure accurate body counts, but the Customs and Border Protection Agency's 2009 fiscal year report documents 416 border-crossing related deaths from January to October 2009 (add that to 390 in all of 2008, 398 in 2007...). When the Berlin Wall fell, official reports claimed that ninety-eight people died trying to cross from East to West Berlin, while advocacy groups registered the number as exceeding 200. In contrast, humanitarian aid organizations like the Border Angels of San Diego/Tijuana estimate that 10,000 people to date have perished attempting to cross the Mexico-U.S. border (never mind those who've died crossing Mexico).

How does one convey the magnitude of these escalating death tolls? How does one repurpose language, technology, activism to

respond to the habitat fragmentation that national borders continue to "perform or else" at the beginnings of the twenty-first century? How does one account for a longitudinal lack of accountability, that risks everything for the longevity of multinational corporations, while colluding in the latitudinal micro- and macro- management (aka disposability) of what Lauren Berlant terms, "ungrammatical bodies"?

Because the promise of disentangling the ideological from the ethical in the above repeat performance shimmers like a mirage in the desert, we of Electronic Disturbance Theater/b.a.n.g. lab (an activist-based research group from the University of California, San Diego, and the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor) have opted instead to create a poetic gesture and safety device equipped to identify water caches on the U.S.

side of the border. Not intended to resolve the long histories of fear, prejudice and misunderstanding on both sides of the border, TBT is beholden to the often overlapping traditions of transcendental and nature writing, earthworks, conceptual art, performance, border art, locative media, visual and concrete poetics. Our project represents both a "conversation piece," a reminder that people are dying, and an ethical intervention, a hand extended to those who are lost and dehydrated.

**Soft Police Call:** On Jan 11, 2010, at 11:55 AM, Greg W. Buchanan wrote:

Dear Mr. Dominguez, Audit & Management Advisory Services has been charged with reviewing the funding sources and uses for one of your research projects. Accordingly, we would like to schedule a brief meeting with you to discuss our review. Please contact me as soon as possible so that we can schedule a time to meet.

Best Regards,  
Greg Buchanan, CPA, CISA, CISA  
UCSD Audit & Management Advisory Services

**Cheap Cheep! Cell Phones:** A key technical question: can sub \$20 phones be made useful for emergency navigation? The early generation of the platform we targeted can be made reasonably useful in a better-than-nothing scenario. Meanwhile, later phone generations (that don't yet cross our price barrier) are already fully useful as practical aids without even a SIM card installed or an available network service! With proper use, the GPS performance of newer phones equals any GPS designed for back country navigation, and their used prices are falling. Moreover, GPS itself does not require service and has free global

coverage, courtesy of the United States government. In an emergency scenario, we would trust these later mobiles to direct a lost person to a nearby safety site.

**Becoming Trans ( ) real:** A transversal line at the core of the Transborder Immigrant Tool rejects the will to purity. TBT tests the limits of the ethical and social principles at the foundations of the law. Gilles Deleuze writes, "Hume's empiricism is a sort of science-fiction universe *avant la lettre*. As in science fiction, one has the impression of a fictive foreign world, seen by other creatures, but also the presentiment that this world is already ours, and those creatures, ourselves." The radical translucencies of TBT seek to shift locative media from its urban grid experience to a winding dusty desert road. TBT emerges from logics of worlds colliding, erupting, multiplying, merging.

Unlike Alain Badiou's claim that "there are only bodies and languages, except that there are truths," which imposes the purity of the imagined laws of mathematics onto all bodies and lands, TBT

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515  
March 17, 2010

Marye Anne Fox  
Chancellor  
University of California, San Diego  
9500 Gilman Drive # 0005  
La Jolla, CA 92093

Dear Chancellor Fox:

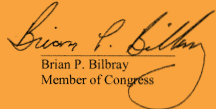
As you know, three University of California, San Diego, faculty in concert with a professor from the University of Michigan are working on a project to develop what they call the "Transborder Immigrant Tool" or TBT. The TBT is a cellular phone based GPS program that helps individuals illegally cross the U.S.-Mexico border. According to their own statements, they plan on disseminating this application to illegal immigrants to aid in their crossing of our southern land border.

If media reports are accurate, this would be a troubling use of tax payer dollars. Particularly, given many of the comments that have appeared in the media, it seems that tax dollars are being used in an effort to actively help people subvert federal law. With this in mind, we are writing you to enquire as to the funding behind this project in order to help determine whether various media reports on this issue are correct. As such, can you provide me with an itemized list of the funding sources for this project? Specifically, what grants and other awards have been used to fund the work on TBT? Were there any federal funds involved and at what amount? What was the estimated cost to the University in resources used in the development process including personnel, energy use and material support?

Additionally, there are concerns that these individuals have violated Section 274(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 by encouraging aliens to illegally enter the United States, which is a felony. Has there been any discussion within the University about whether this project may violate this, or any other federal or state law? Further, since it appears that at least some University funds were used to fund this project, did any University affiliate conduct a review of the project before funds were used? If so, please provide an outline of that review process and a summary of the findings. If not, please explain why. Finally, does the University have a plan going forward on how to address the many concerns that have been raised regarding the TBT project?

Your assistance on this matter and a prompt response would be greatly appreciated.

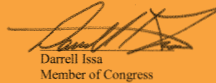
Sincerely,



Brian P. Bilbray  
Member of Congress



Duncan Hunter  
Member of Congress



Darrell Issa  
Member of Congress

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acknowledges that truths are in bodies and languages, in the movement and growth of flesh in transition, not separate from them. As Deleuze writes, "there is something wild and powerful in this transcendental empiricism." In the chaotic messiness of becomings and migrations from one state of being to another, from one body to another, from one label to another, of the body and the land coming together into a single motion of walking, TBT can be found, nourishing transitions like desert flowers in the spring.

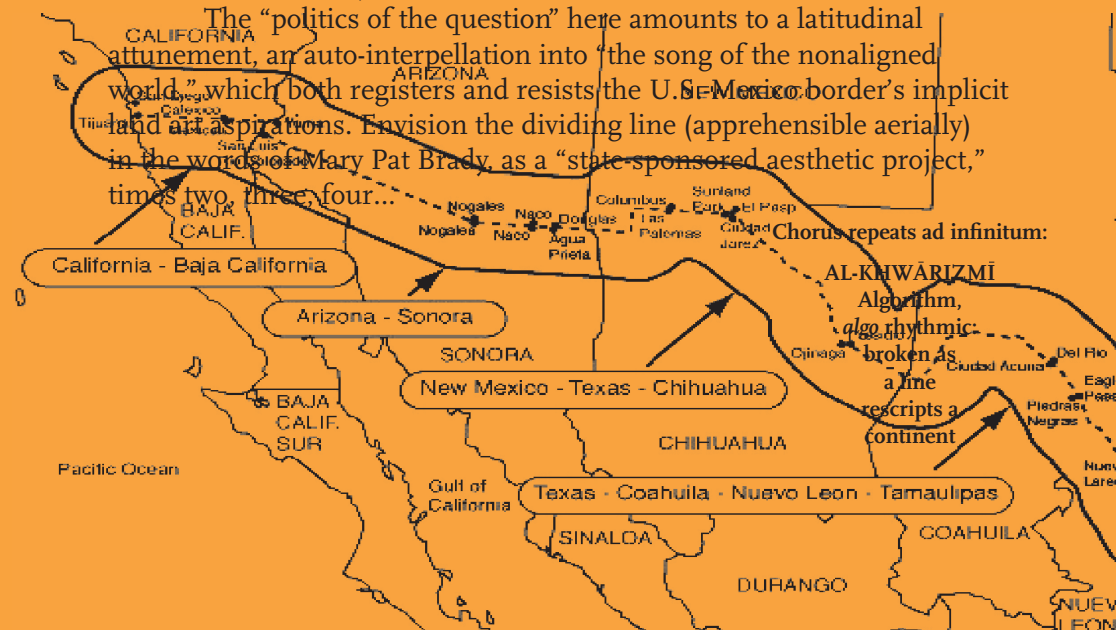
**Transcendental -isms (¡Tierra y Libertad!):** Mid-nineteenth century, in an essay alternately titled "Civil Disobedience" and "Resistance to Civil Government," Henry David Thoreau wrote, "Let your life be a counter friction to stop the machine." He was, of course, referring to the well-oiled machinery of the state, and its bedfellow capitalism, as each related at that time to the U.S. reterritorialization of Texas and the globally inflected (ideological) state apparatus, otherwise known as slavery.

Thoreau's call for informed dissent, squarely tied to transcendental -isms, infuses the landscape, "la tierra," with the very concept of an inter-Americanist "libertad," taken up in parallel fashion in the proliferation of Zapatista struggles (1910-1917 and 1994-present).

In each instance, the specificity of place—a Walden Pond, a rural Massachusetts, a United States built upon inclusion versus exclusion for Thoreau; a Morelia, a Chiapas, a Mexico that guarantees equal access to land and education for the Zapatistas—literally grounds the possibility of "civil disobedience," materially and virtually.

Moreover, *place* in Thoreau's formulations (and in those of the Zapatistas) cups like a candle civil disobedience's appeals to a "higher law doctrine." For, just as Martin Luther King, Jr. claims, "an unjust law is no law," Thoreau performatively insists, "This people must cease to hold slaves, and to make war on Mexico, though it cost them their existence as a people." Promoting that one must stand one's ground—Thoreau cognitively maps walking as practice, as a tool for ethical survival. Similarly, we recognize the legitimacy of *walking*, of would-be-crossers' continental philosophy (an appeal to the "higher law" of the Americas, a becoming-minor transcendental -ism).

The "politics of the question" here amounts to a latitudinal attunement, an auto-interpellation into "the song of the nonaligned world," which both registers and resists the U.S.-Mexico border's implicit land aspirations. Envision the dividing line (apprehensible aerially) in the words of Mary Pat Brady, as a "state-sponsored aesthetic project," times two, three, four...



Chorus emanates:

TRAN S I T I V I T Y: a linguistic continuum of feeling. Subjects plus objects— never free-standing— beholden to volition's liminality. An ethics of cause-and-effect causes affect, i.e., for every action, a fearful symmetry: the agent, her "recipient," and a verb's bridging trouble the waters of a sovereignty supreme. Hobbes' Leviathan—the social contracts—post-neoliberal as whiplash. Transient beings rise, ride the tide, bring tidings of a brow furrowed, wide. Widening the gap between have-knots and have-nots—a fearful asymmetry—in 1902, Conrad stole, or borrowed, or sold (mind you, the difference's perspectival as painting) Bolívar's line: "governing Spanish American republics is like plowing the sea." Almost a century late, Hardt & Negri: "The forms in which corruption appears are so numerous that trying to list them is like pouring the sea into a teacup." This, we insist, is transitivity, polymorphous, polyofficially bound to the bottom and the top; imaginary access around which a sphere spins to feign stillness. Transcendental -isms view the occasion of the border as transitive, as more than the matter of linguistic slippage, as less than the lumpen sum of democracy's lubricants.

**Trans ( ) infinities dancing on the void:** e-vents arrive on dove's feet, they surprise us in the moment of greatest silence, e-vents a-void the void of the (empty set) by engendering paralleling(s) that call on us to "share the labor" of what is to be done without Infinity. All locative situations echo back the alpheh ( ), the empty brackets, like rattling handcuffs that become state-sanctioned attempts to contain infinities, to lockdown the set ( ) and throw away the key. TBT exceeds the singularity of Infinity by overflowing the set, by naming the pluralized trans ( ) infinities that never relinquish what borders subtract—the logics of an aberrant ethics=aesthetics that walks within and alongside us sin nombre.

**Trans [ ] walking into the sacred:** In *The Devil's Highway: A True Story*, Luis Alberto Urrea enumerates the seemingly irreconcilable distance between walking as art/philosophy and walking as migratory necessity at the twenty-first century's crossroads of labor, location, subjectivity, subjugation. He writes,

Most walkers die a relatively short distance from salvation [...] After a day of baking in the sun, they start to get disoriented. They drink too much water. They're dizzy and weak. By the second or third days, when they need their wits and strength about them, they are near death. And they drop, often reported with sad irony in the press, a few miles, or yards, or feet, from water, a home, a road, or a Border Patrol outpost.

Recalling prior waves of border cultural production, we emphasize alternative aesthetics for the Mexican-U.S. borderlands (and beyond). On the one hand, the performative matrix of TBT functions as an efficacious, wholeheartedly inefficient poem-in-motion, as an earthwork to interrupt discourses which, ensconced in their own design of market-oriented-transparency meet military-industrial-complex, reduce the would-be crosser to debris or felon. On the other hand, TBT balances the

Chorus constellates:

|          |                                    |          |
|----------|------------------------------------|----------|
|          | <i>e</i>                           |          |
|          | <i>x</i>                           |          |
|          |                                    | <i>i</i> |
|          | DA/<br>SEIN                        |          |
| <i>s</i> | All along—<br>the watch—<br>Tower. | <i>t</i> |
| <i>e</i> |                                    |          |
| <i>n</i> | The distance:                      | <i>c</i> |
|          | <i>i</i>                           |          |
|          | BE/<br>TWEEN                       |          |
|          | <i>a</i>                           |          |

aforementioned critical code-switch with the blessed literalism of direction. Between the lower-cased border of Mexico and the United States and the upper-cased Borders of theory, art, literature, public policy..., between the literal and imaginative cartographies of blockage and flow, we submit, per Jacques Rancière, "The real must be fictionalized in order to be thought." Plagiarize utopia! *Let your life be a counter fiction to stop the machine.*

Chorus projects onto the cave's walls:

♀♂♀♂♂♂♀♂♀♀♀♂♀♀  
 ♂♂♂♂♂♀♀♂♀♂♂♂♂♂  
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**Becoming Trans [ ] real [Mud Magic]:** The radical translucencies of TBT are akin to the "becoming worldly" of Donna Haraway, whose "queer messmates in mortal play," "make a mess out of categories in the making of kin and kind." As Haraway states, "I am a creature of the mud." Ironically, Haraway's mud was written as a critique of Deleuze's forgotten quotidian, but her mud brings us back, by way of Deleuze, to the question of purity. Because it is in Haraway's close relationship with the mud, squeezing it through her fingers, that she encounters the *Otherworldly*, just as in the flesh of the human body, when she writes, "human genomes can be found in only about 10 percent of all the cells that occupy the mundane space I call my body; the other 90 percent of the cells are filled with the genomes of bacteria, fungi, protists, and such... to be one is always to become with many." Haraway undermines the myth of the purity of the body as something that can be conceived with any simple, singular identity. She reveals the Whitmanesque porous borders of our flesh, the transborder migrations of bacteria which keep alive our bodies, our ecosystems. Her investigations illuminate not a simple empiricism of reactionary judgments, but eminent domains, vast planes of immanence.

Chorus  
trans[ ]positions:

Codo a codo, codo a  
coda:

entre el difunto correo

**ESTAMOS**

y la Difunta Correa

**A Prisoner of Love whispers from a cell (w)hole:** Genet sought to summon what the vision machine doesn't see—the blind spots that produce systemic reverse hallucinations. If a hallucination is seeing what is not there, then a reverse hallucination is not seeing what is there. Genet calls on us to conjure spaces for traumatic myths

that could manifest spontaneous simulations capable of haunting power's post-spectacles. His texts hail us to spook the simulacrum of the visual with simulations of the small unseen gestures being made by those who suddenly could rally empathy beyond the screen. The digital here adds the possibility for a speed of production and distribution *almost* as fast as that of dreams. An actor/audience network can quickly develop a dialogue, a design, a meme, and an outcome that builds small waves of visibility. Minor simulations of the unseen must focus on those tricky passages, nonlocations where spectacle networks transgress their own limits. Any performance must be a simulation of what is not apprehended—the truth of e-vents, “enabling fictions,” second-lives that hit the ground. Genet attempted an ethics for a politics of simulation, affirming an aesthetics of the false[tto] for fragile voices. TBT, translating tangentially Genet's alchemy, chortles from the balcony, **TODOS SOMOS ARIZONA.**

**Trans [ ] borders:** Oppose the political and aesthetic possibilities of interpellation and constellation. Judith Butler's introductory remarks in *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, like many regarding hate speech, implicitly remain attached to a paradoxical insularity of the subject. Conterminously, Butler's “performative utterances” excise or obscure what Coco Fusco names “the other history of intercultural performance”—what we might approach as the “aesthetics” of hate speech—in favor of a focus on the latter's politics.

**Nativist Bullets:** From: Bryan Prince <yippy\_yuk@yahoo.com>  
Date: Wed, 10 Mar 2010 16:34:50 -0800 (PST)  
Subject: TBT: support this

You fucking anti-American CUNT!!!! I hope you die the worse death possible you horrible, disgraceful BITCH! GET THE FUCK OUT OF THIS COUNTRY YOU WHORE!!!!

**Nativist Bullets:** From: gil baco glbaco@yahoo.com  
Date: March 10, 2010 2:27:06 PM PST  
Subject: Cell system software to help illegals

You SON OF A BITCH. Giving people who cross illegally into OUR country a free electronic PATHWAY to non-detection? YOU SON OF A BITCH. I strongly suggest that you and your piss-ant, gay colleagues in this outrage, pack up your belongings and families and do your work from the other side of the world... because I am going online to declare you people as OUTLAWS. (Read the definition if you don't know it) ...

What would it mean to insist upon aesthetically minded interpretations of inflammatory “total speech acts”? A cursory examination of some of the hate mail/death threats that EDT members have received in the last few months illustrate the precarious aesthetics of an affective politics that shoots first (and asks questions never, not later). The racist, xenophobic, classist, misogynist, homophobic and transphobic “excitable speech” sent to us function in the vein of correspondence reported by national

representatives who voted for health care legislation. However inept the artistry of such epistolary dramas may be, they rely upon the intertwined performativities of language, subjectivity (individual and collective), and geography. At junctures, they naturalize the tissue that connects homosociality, misogyny and sexual violence. At other junctures, they rehearse a selective racist memory ballooning out into the histrionics of History (with the capital punishment of an upper-crust “H”). And, at still other junctures, they dispense a “New World Border” remix, the “paradigmatic drama” of Eve meets Malinche.

Put a flower in a gun and call it a win-win Situationalism. These incendiary messages (and their authors)—like so many posts and blogs against EDT and TBT—certainly could be seen as harboring intentions to interpellate their recipients (us!) insofar as they feebly hail our supposed vulnerabilities (as raced, gendered, trans/sexual[ized] subjects, what one post neatly summed up as our collaborative ability to represent “all the perversions.” But, simultaneously, these messages constellate into remarkable patterns, cognitive star maps whose coordinates demonstrate the larger contested “aesthetics” of immigration policy and debate, of the Americas' elongated isthmus (where to place the accent on aesthetics versus politics amounts to a dislocation of activism's lengthy implicit shouldering of the burden of alter-representation).

**Nativist Bullets:** From: gil frank <kickswithfoot@gmail.com>  
Date: December 29, 2009 11:17:21 AM PST  
Subject: Hold Still

Hold still just a little longer while I center these cross hairs on your faggot liberal scum bag head. GOD I'd love to bust a cap in your ass. You are no more than a cancer in this country. Look over your shoulder and be VERY afraid.

**Nativist Bullets:** From: Robert Bess <robertbess@embarqmail.com>  
Date: December 30, 2009 4:03:05 AM PST

My answer to you... Is that I hope you are driving during a rain storm, slide under a big truck and taste our own blood! Jerk. Get a real job, and stop wasting tax payer money. Waste of skin, no load freak. Oh, and all of that is preceded by a big 'ol in your face. Completely disgusted by you existence, Robert



**Soft Police Call:** Professor Dominguez, In regards to our Transborder Immigrant Tool inquiry, I have one follow-up question from our meeting a couple of weeks ago. Could you provide a rough estimate for how much time/effort you put into the Immigrant Tool, apart from the work you do on your other VA/Calitz projects?

**Cheep! Cheap Cell Phone as Walking Code:** TBT software is designed specifically for short-distance emergency navigation addressing the “last mile” problem of finding local safety sites. We are trying to create a platform that does one thing very well—help find emergency resources in a contained

### Chorus counsels:

Just before sunrise, Bedouins turned over half-buried stones in the desert to catch the dew that the night's coolness had condensed on the stones' surfaces. Indigenous travelers in the Mexican-U.S. corridor searched the broad leaves of yucca and agave. Rainwater collected at each plant's base—the leaves' apex—remaining there up to a few days after a summer or winter shower. Proceed from this simple premise: the desert caches water in unlikely places that it resists divulging. Do not expend all your energies searching for its secret stashes, but, likewise do not assume that its pockets of moisture are nonexistent. Restrict your water reconnaissance to early or late in the day when your liquid net-gain will outweigh the perspiration you expend. A thirst is seldom quenched; it morphs to reappear on the horizon. Meanwhile, the desert reflects the sun back like a mirror. You are caught in that pair's uneven, inconsummate exchange.

日出之前，貝多音人把半埋在沙漠中的石子翻過來，捕捉石頭表面上夜色所凝聚的露珠。美墨走廊當地的旅人會找尋絲蘭花和龍蛇蘭的大葉子。在冬夏的陣雨後，留在葉底——葉的頂點——的雨水殘留數日。從簡單的法則起步：沙漠會把水留在最不可能的地方，不輕易洩露。請不要把所有的精力用來找尋這些秘密的所在，但，同樣的，也不要假設這些潤漬的水包並不存在。把重新認識水份的機會限每一天的早晚時分，因為彼時水分收入勝於呼吸的花費。渴求極少被滿足的，它將變形，融身而重現於地平線。同時，沙漠如同一面鏡子一般的映出了烈陽。卡在交流卻無法交融的兩者中的，是你的身影。

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*Arborescent monocot.* “Mothers of the Disappeared.” “I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For.” “Bullet the Blue Sky”: “Put El Salvador through an amplifier.” Seldom free-standing (Mexican as the Irish in the United States), the Joshua tree sends out yellow-green flowers—like flares—in the spring. Mormons referred to the trees—actually shrubs—as “praying plants.” Anthropomorphizing each's branches, they compared the largest of the yucca evergreens to the Old Testament prophet Joshua as he pointed toward the promised land. Use the Joshua tree's lightweight wood to splint broken limbs. Chew the plant's roots for the steroid-like compound released (in cases of allergic reaction or swelling).

樹狀單子葉植物。「所有失蹤者的母親」。「我尚未找到我所尋找的」。「子彈劃破藍天」：「透過擴音器播放薩爾瓦多」。極少獨立（墨西哥人正如在美國的愛爾蘭人），約書亞樹綻放黃綠色的花——像閃光——在春天裡盛放。摩門教徒提到這種樹——其實是灌木——通常都稱為「祈禱的植物」。他們把每株分枝都擬人化，將最大的絲蘭常青樹比做蒼約先知約書亞，像他一樣指出樂土的方向。利用約書亞樹質輕的木材做夾板來固定斷肢。嚼植物的根，釋放似類固醇的化合物（萬一發生過敏反應或腫脹的症狀的話）。

region (say a ten kilometer radius from your location at the time of emergency) with maximum, redundant cognitive support (screen, audio and haptics...) The later generation of phones we're using actually hold the advantage for short distance navigation, specifically because we can design the UI to focus on very particular problems. The outdoor GPS devices from Garmin and Magellan are indeed useful aids for the *long distance* overland orienteering required to walk into the United States. Readily available at Wal-Mart and Best Buy in Mexico, they have been utilized for a long time in border crossings. In other words, capitalism long ago accomplished what the atavistic right and its neoliberal administration fear most!

### Let Down [el difunto correo]:

Many maintain that the Latin American “lettered city” is dead. Others bemoan the dearth, if not the death, of authorship, of the aesthetic's inefficacies (for argument's sake, let's shorthand these positions as the alibi of “el difunto correo”/the dead letter). In “Numbers Trouble,” Juliana Spahr and Stephanie Young reflect on the current state of poetry and publishing. At their article's far-from-simply-number-crunching close, the pair

chronicle their informal survey of several women poets, “We'd be curious if you could imagine some way that poetry, or poetry communities (again, however you define the terms) might do more to engage the living and working conditions of women in a national/international arena.” Transcribing some of the responses they received, they go on to leave the ball in the reader's court.

Consider the Transborder Immigrant Tool to be our humble response to Spahr and Young's call. Arriving at a moment when a generation of poets, artists, and activists are repeating questions about the possibilities of social engagement in what's shaping up to be the era of the proliferating post- (post-post-modern, post-post-colonial, post-neoliberal, et cetera), TBT queries, “What constitutes sustenance?”

Seeking to undocument (per the conceit of Rosa Alcalá's Undocumentaries) the de facto fact-driven aesthetic of policy-minded and social scientific representations of the U.S.-Mexico border, and indeed, of what Teddy Cruz identifies as the global “necklace of conflict,” TBT echo-relocates Roberto Bolaño's planetary, “salvage (versus savage) detective” guarantee, “todos somos emigrants, emigrants del Espíritu.” Refugees of the Hegelian spirit, no doubt! Like Kojin Karantani in *Transcritique* we seek asylum, “a space of transcodings between the domains of ethics and political economy, between the Kantian critique and the Marxian critique” wherein we aspire to base materialities of language.

Phase 1: With twenty-twenty hindsight, we identify the viral reportage on the Transborder Immigrant Tool as the first instance of the latter's deployment (a contagion). Phase 2: This is how TBT's aesthetic, a poetics of dislocation, unfolds to queer the Nation's concretude... Often—rightly enough—conversations about crossing the Mexico-U.S. border refer to disorientation, sun exposure, dehydration. TBT both attempts to address those vicissitudes and to remember that the aesthetic, too, sustains.

Revalence the acronym GPS in the vein of Laura Borràs Castanyer and Juan B. Gutiérrez's efforts to imagine a “global poetic system.” The location of the poetic in the Transborder Immigrant Tool, a dislocation, is not in the particular poems uploaded onto the cell phones (each one, “a long cool drink” for some readers/listeners; “muddy water” for others). In the vast “desert of the real” known as public culture, we tend to favor accounts of *La Difunta Correa* over those of “el difunto correo”

Chorus contemplates:

♥ &  
NEGRI-  
TUDE

(although we realize that we've got our work cut out for us on the ground and above). For now, channel the contours of an (electronic) civil disobedience, wayward as a waking dream:



Hum. In March 2010, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced that the virtual portion of the separation barrier erected along the U.S.-Mexico border thus far had proven ineffective, manifesting numerous technical glitches (notably, a hyper-vigilant inability to distinguish among wind, sage brush, and human beings). (Adrian-) Piperian “food for the spirit”—did a political unconscious will the fence’s malfunction? Wabbit trans/nation? Mayan meets queer technologies? “Earth Telephone”? Sleep Dealer’s nod to node-to-node resistance? It’s your turn to try to circumvent borders with this “true story”—the border(s) falsely constructed between the university, the gallery, the museum, the library... and the “real world.”

Chorus raps parallel tracks,  
acknowledging its mounting debts (to Greece):

#### MITOXONΔΡΙΑ

Αρχαία *μίτος*, *σιμίονι* +  
Αρχαία *χόνδριον* (από *χόνδρος*), σπυρί, κόκκος.

Από τα σύννεφα, ανέρχεται η Βόρεια Αμερική, η έβδομη αδελφή, μια θάλασσα, ένα  
φυτώριο, νήματα--πλεκτά--συντεταγμένες που πιάνουν το φως σαν την σκόνη σαν τις στάχτες. Σε  
στάχτη (ένα «εσύ» και ένα «εγώ»): *χώρα*, ο χορός, το κοράλλι, μια μελλοντική ανακούφιση που είναι

όπως “agua” σε “*¡Aguas!*,”  
ένα υποκοριστικό.

#### MITOCHONDRIA

Greek *mitos*, warp thread +  
Greek *khondrion* (of *khondros*), grain, granule.

From the clouds, North America ascends, the seventh sister, a sea, a seed-  
bed, threads--interwoven--coordinates that catch the light like the dust like  
the ashes. To ashes (a “you” and an “I”): *khôra*, the chorus, a reef, a relief to come that is

like “agua” to “*aguas*,”  
a diminutive.

**Becoming Fugitive** [“*Who knows but that, on the lower frequencies, I speak for you?*”], **an audible postscript [from off stage left]**: The trans in transborder and transgender can signify a crossing, but also a hope and a bravery in crossing. As a trans person, I am familiar with the hope of crossing over to a new place, the place of a new body. I think that this is something I share with those who hope to find a better life by moving their bodies into a new place, across an international border. I also know that many people cross daily in the hopes of becoming something else, becoming a good parent, able to financially support their children, becoming a professional, or even becoming a self, free from gender-based oppression. In a way this hope is always a hope for the unknown, for the person can never know what the result of the crossing will be, a better life, a new body, death or injury. I imagine TBT as a gesture of transborder solidarity, one that can help prevent needless deaths of those whose only crime is hope.

(Stage lights come down to a pinpoint on a bottle of water that overflows, spilling beyond the light.)



**No-Movie credits roll [an interior scroll]...**

**Electronic Disturbance Theater/b.a.n.g. lab [bang.calit2.net/xborder]**:  
Ricardo Dominguez, Brett Stalbaum, Micha Cárdenas, Amy Sara Carroll,  
and Elle Mehrmand

**Play Directors:** Amy Sara Carroll and Ricardo Dominguez  
**Cultural Liaison:** Chanda L. Carey

**Poems:** Amy Sara Carroll

**German translation:** Petra Kuppers

**Greek translation:** Yanoula Athanassakis

**Taiwanese translations:** Lili Hsieh/謝莉莉譯 and Zona Yi-Ping Tsou/鄒怡平譯



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