

Yet one of the processes of colonization is to teach the colonized that they do not belong. The colonized deals with a perpetual embarrassment that she does not know what her nationality is. . . . If the process of colonization constructs me, it also constructs ‘me’ as an exile whose subjectivity compulsively tricks me into believing that home is elsewhere, while simultaneously being traumatized by the awareness that home is but an illusion.”
{You Ching}

—Janine Marchessault

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Film

A sheet of dirt covering a surface; twentieth-century art and entertainment.

—Janine Marchessault

Filth

“One man found, aged 63, living in his own filth. . . .”

“He peed in mason jars that he stored in the basement. Other times he used a litter box. . . .”

“The walls were literally crawling. The whole place was rat-, roach-, mice-, flea-infested. You name it. . . .”

It is with us from birth to death, regardless of age, race or class. Dirt, decay, trash, garbage, excrement—we are constantly generating it, removing it, generating it, removing it. Filth is intrinsic to life itself.

Freud theorized that the repulsion from feces is learned. At first “his majesty” the baby glories in shit, it is his special gift to his mother. Only later is shit detestable, only later does shitting become an activity to keep hidden. Even dogs seem to absorb our aversion—looking shyly over their shoulder as they poop on the public sidewalk. It is an awkward position, yet absolutely vital to maintaining the body’s, and by extension, society’s, integrity: the elimination of waste.

The phenomenon is familiar to all modern urban societies: the trash house, the cat lady. And it is all too understandable, for the tide of trash is so enormous, the impulse to dissolve your aversion and sink into abjection seems so temptingly near. The amount of energy spent in constant vigilance is considerable. No wonder the sick, the old, the lazy, and those of us who just don’t care, so quickly subcumb and begin to slowly acculumate detritus. We cease to place distance between ourselves and filth, and instead come to live amongst it. We throw the trash in the basement instead of out in the alley and save our urine instead of flushing it away.

Filth is the sediment of our bodies and our culture, the inevitable result of decay.

—Maria Troy

Flight

Hover in aquatic life.

—Ken Allan

Fuck

Once a legal term for rape (For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge) this term's use has expanded to include the middle name of the Christian saviour (Jesus fucking Christ), a mystical wonder (Fuck!) and the pepper spray of language (Fuck off). In order to preserve the word's integrity, and to keep its meanings from over-proliferation, a number of administrators around the world, a kind of word police, are presently employed to delete this word, most often when it is uttered by actors.

—Mike Hoolboom

Garbo

“Garbo still belongs to that moment in cinema when capturing the human face still plunged the audiences into ecstasy, when one literally lost oneself in an image as one would in a philtre, when the face represented a kind of absolute state of the flesh, which could neither be reached nor renounced. A few years earlier the face of Valentino was causing suicides; that of Garbo still partakes of the same rule of Courtly Love, where the flesh gives rise to mystical feelings of perdition.

It is indeed an admirable face-object. In *Queen Christina*, a film which has again been shown in Paris in the last few years, the make-up has the snowy thickness of a mask: it is not a painted face, but one set in plaster, protected by the surface of the colour, not by its lineaments. Amid all this snow, at once fragile and compact, the eyes alone, black like strange soft flesh, but not in the least expressive, are two faintly tremulous wounds. In spite of its extreme beauty, this face, not drawn but sculpted in something smooth and friable, that is, at once perfect and ephemeral, comes to resemble the flour-white complexion of Charlie Chaplin, the dark vegetation of his eyes, his totem like countenance.

Now the temptation of the absolute mask (the mask of antiquity, for instance) perhaps implies less the theme of the secret, (as is the case with Italian half mask), than that of an archetype of the human face. Garbo