

IS THIS

Consumption, food, agricultural, and Anthropocene studies, practices, media, art and design works :

12.5.2022

Fournier writes:

I consider the ways identity is performed in relation to theory. How does this complicate autotheory's capacity to function as a means of critique? (s. 11)

I think about criticism. How certain people/positions are (forced to be) critical simply by virtue of being in the world. In the essay "The Cuteness of the Avant-Garde", Sianne Ngai writes about the aesthetics of cuteness, a phenomenon that Jane Shi picks up in her craft when she includes the word for "cute person" in her definition of autism. As a way to both reclaim something she, as a short, East Asian and queer person, is constantly perceived as, and to highlight the powerlessness that autistic people have historically lived with: Translated with DeepL.com (free version)

One night the other last month, I couldn't sleep. I thought, why not come up with a new Chinese word for autism? Being a heritage speaker, my vocabulary is small. All I could think of was the words for "cute person"—可愛的人 (kě'ài de rén)—which involves the characters for "can"—可 (kě)—and the character for "love"—愛 (ài). That is, those who allow themselves to be loved. Then, I got out my pink pen and put the character for love inside the "口" (kǒu—i.e. mouth, opening, entrance) of the character for can (可). It was like putting love inside of one's mouth, protected and held, but still present. Then, when I put the character for "self"—自 (zì)—beside this new word, I got the meaning, "those who allow themselves to love themselves"¹

THOSE WHO ALLOW THEMSELVES TO LOVE THEMSELVES.

Do you have to love yourself a lot to be able to write theory about yourself? Is it a necessity to love yourself in a world where others do not show the same love towards you?

Fournier writes:

In a context in which women, queers, people of color, and other historically marginalized groups represent large markets with consumerist agency and in which theory as a learned discourse with niche appeal signifies its own cachet with its own classist implications, how can we understand autotheory as a means of resistance, transgression, or dissent? (s. 11)

¹ <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/2021/06/13/reimagining-the-autistic-mother-tongue/>

I google Fournier and find that she has edited an anthology called *Fermenting Feminism* (2017). I am so interested. I have long been fascinated by fermentation. Aerobic and anaerobic processes, the life that lives without human interference. The environment that is life. I think about my thoughts that are fermenting as I write this diary.

I write a note to myself that I should remember in this text that

THAT MY AMBITION IS TO BRING TOGETHER AN AUTISTIC AND A FEMINIST MOVEMENT, THAT THROUGH CONCEPTS SUCH AS NEUROQUEER, THERE IS A BRIDGE BETWEEN FEMINISM AND QUEER OR AUTISM, THAT IT IS ABOUT FINDING A PERSPECTIVE ON THE WORLD, AN AESTHETIC, BUT THAT IT IS ALSO IN THE EXPRESSION OF THE SELF.

Find Jen Hadfield and Cat Chuong writing about writing and neurodiversity:

'Poetry permits a speaking from the margins' has seemed a commonly accepted assertion in my life over the last few years. Typically, this referred to the margins of race, gender, class, and sexuality practicing interventions into language which enacted a speaking back, a speaking out of places of erasure. I recently read that 'disability is the last margin to be addressed' (Scior and Werner, 2016) and while I know this idea isn't new I realise that while I was studying I never encountered a contemporary poetics that engaged with neurodiversity or disability.

I'm curious what it means to speak out of difficulty. I want to think about this in relation to the poem 'The Asterism' in *Byssus* (2014) which is preceded by a quotation from Annie Dillard's *A Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*:

a mystery, and a waste of pain

The first line of the poem is addressed as if to an 'Inexplicable pain – / ... a thing like Sirius / or Aldebaran –'. I wonder how you navigate difficulty within the fragile structures that constitute the written and spoken word? Between 'effortful' and 'proper tongue-tiedness' and 'sudden flu-encies' to say 'what we most need to articulate, even when that's difficult'?²

I think about how the auto theory can act as a counterpoint to the "waste of pain". Fournier writes:

The revolution of the everyday that took place in the 1960s led to a recognition of daily and domestic life as political: feminist writers, artists, scholars, and activists came to see that, as the slogan had it, "the personal is political," and that their practices (as artists, activists, educators, caretakers) could and should engage with the particularities of their lived experience as women, as queer, as racialized, and so on. (s. 15)

² ['Inhabiting a Space of Love': Cat Chong & Jen Hadfield — Guillemot Press](#)

And I think that this, the "waste of pain" of being female, queer, racialized, neuro-o-typical, can be recycled (and fermented - Fournier describes the fermentation as:

As both a metaphor and a physical process, fermentation embodies bioavailability and accessibility, preservation and transformation, inter-species symbiosis and coevolution, biodiversity and futurity, harm reduction and care. [...] Spanning the speculative and the literal, the embodied and the ephemeral, the artists in fermenting feminism reinvigorate questions of health, materiality, canonicity, community, consumption, ritual, and tradition. The works in this publication obscure the line between illness and well-being, between science and witchcraft, between human and non-human, and between sentient and non-sentient to flesh out pressing political, theoretical, aesthetic, and ethical questions in the present. (s. 3))

through auto theory. And become something. The fermentation here, brings together the human and the non-human. The autistic has often been seen as less-than-human (see Botha above), but I would instead like to read the autistic position as more-than-human - as Anna Stenning's (2020) reading of, among others, Temple Grandin and Greta Thunberg claims. Not seeing neurotypical humanity as the only reasonable one also means finding allies among the non-human. It is a vulnerable position. It is a risky position. Both for those who claim its subversiveness and those who point out its subordination. In *Autotheory*, Fournier highlights how subversive vulnerable positions become a serious force, by being named as theory.

I choose to place myself, as an autistic agent, in a position that I read as subversive but vulnerable, and subversive through its vulnerability. This means that I read myself (auto) in relation to the theory. I read myself as autistic in relation to myself and to the theory. I call it **AUTI-AUTO-THEORY**.

17.5.22

Much of Fournier's text revolves around the work of Chris Kraus. Kraus, I argue, also fits into the autistic reading I do. A large part of Kraus' *Aliens & Anorexia* (2000) is about Simone Weil - a philosopher whom Törnvall reads as autistic with the support of Rosemary Dinnage and Michael Fitzgerald. Kraus reads Weil and, according to Palle Yourgau's preface, also tries to save Weil. I think about the problematic rescue, the colonial mission, the disadvantage that the autistic person ends up in when they always have to be rescued to the normal world. And I don't really agree with Yourgau's idea. I rather read Kraus' reading of Weil as a monotropic interest. The monotropic is a term used by Dinah Murray to describe the autistic interest - an interest that is narrow, but extremely strong, and "charged with feeling" (Murray, 2005). Kraus expresses a monotropic interest in Weil, as does Meinhof, as well as in the self and its art. Julia Miele Rodas notes in *Autistic Disturbances* (2018) that the autistic text is often judged (by neurotypicals) as having both too much and too little 'self'. Kraus' text, which is full of selves, is at the same time a self that merges with others (what Stephen Shore (2003) calls "fusing", which is common among autistic people). The boundary of the self becomes porous and vulnerable. Likewise the boundary between theory and fiction - which is Fournier's point - Kraus, and I, read theory as fiction through aliens. This "fusing" also belongs to Weil: "she felt the suffering of others in her body" (48).

I mentioned the other day that Ryan points out that autism and eating disorders are common combinations in non-males. Kraus describes Weil as "the anorexic philosopher [...] starving for attention" (15). Literally starving for attention is in line with the autistic's complicated relationship to metaphorical language. The body, the starving, becomes a complicated place precisely because it also engages in metaphorical being. I read *Aliens & Anorexia* with a monotropic interest - just as my interest in my own eating disorder makes it impossible for me to "get my act together" and get well. Kraus writes about finances: a situation similar to the one Freddot Carlsson Andersson describes in *B-Team* (2021). Finances, like other everyday things, become a crazy complicated thing. I think there is something autistic in the attempts to analyze the world in order to become part of it. I think this text speaks to my autistic bodymind. There is also the interest in aliens: "my skin became so porous that the cello crept into my body like an alien" (p. 45). This depicts a sensory alien, unable to experience the world like a neurotypical human. At the same time, Kraus' analysis is indicative of a monotropic interest in gossip and the social: 'and here begins the difficult task of trying to understand another person' (p. 68). And this difficulty continues to make the self porous and vulnerable, open to "fusing": "Simone Weil wrote about trying to 'see a landscape as it is when I am not there [...] if only I knew how to disappear' [...] sometimes I do this in Los Angeles" (97) and she continues:

I identified with the dead philosopher completely [...] [we] had absolutely zero sense of our own 'femininity' and gender" (s. 103) [...] surrounded by animals and children I was 'seized by an unnameable emotion' and suddenly burst into tears. The idea that you are momentarily outside your body because *something else is speaking to you*. It could be that sadness is the girl-equivalent to chance. (s. 119) Failure, like cancer, can only be a manifestation of a person's secret will" (s. 43)

I read Kraus autistically. Just as I read Fournier autistically.

You don't have to be a feminist just because you are autistic. But there is a neuroqueer movement that repeatedly reminds us that autism is there and fucks up the idea of a normal way for the brain to function. In the same way that feminism fucks up the idea of gender. I read my autism feministically because I am emotionally involved in my autistic girlhood.

I read the autotheoretical as autistic, because the autistic position has always been researched and theorized. The DSM-5 has become a bible. I use pathologization as a party trick. Kraus can't make a total resistance because she fucks up failures: because patriarchy is like cancer, and somewhere it has all eaten into the brain's secret will. I read Krause's experiences with my autistic eyes and my autistic body. I fall in love with the grandiose that knows nothing about proportions:

I said 'I'm working on a little movie about God'. (s. 40)

IS THIS

Mediation with, through and for other or 'weird' or weirdings of metabolisms (spiritual medium, metabolic dreaming, etc.)

12.5.2022

Fournier skriver:

I consider the ways identity is performed in relation to theory. How does this complicate autotheory's capacity to function as a means of critique? (s. 11)

Jag funderar på kritiken. På hur vissa personer/positioner är (tvingas vara) kritiska enbart gnom sitt varande i världen. I essän "The Cuteness of the Avant-Garde" skriver Sianne Ngai om gullighetsetetik, ett fenomen som Jane Shi plockar upp i sitt pyssel när hon tar med ordet för "söt person" i sin definition av autism. Som ett sätt att både återta något hon som kort, östasiatisk och queer person ständigt blir uppfattad som, och att synliggöra maktlösheten som autistiska personer historiskt levt med:

One night the other last month, I couldn't sleep. I thought, why not come up with a new Chinese word for autism? Being a heritage speaker, my vocabulary is small. All I could think of was the words for "cute person"—可愛的人 (kě'ài de rén)—which involves the characters for "can"—可 (kě)—and the character for "love"—愛 (ài). That is, those who allow themselves to be loved. Then, I got out my pink pen and put the character for love inside the "口" (kǒu—i.e. mouth, opening, entrance) of the character for can (可). It was like putting love inside of one's mouth, protected and held, but still present. Then, when I put the character for "self"—自 (zì)—beside this new word, I got the meaning, "those who allow themselves to love themselves"³

THOSE WHO ALLOW THEMSELVES TO LOVE THEMSELVES.

Måste man älska sig själv mycket för att orka skriva teori som handlar om en själv? Är det en nödvändighet att älska sig själv i en värld där andra inte visar samma kärlek mot en?

Fournier skriver:

In a context in which women, queers, people of color, and other historically marginalized groups represent large markets with consumerist agency and in which theory as a learned discourse with niche appeal signifies its own cachet with its own classist implications, how can we understand autotheory as a means of resistance, transgression, or dissent? (s. 11)

Jag googlar lite på Fournier och hittar att hon varit redaktör för en antologi som heter *Fermenting Feminism* (2017). Jag blir så himla intresserad. Har länge varit fascinerad av fermentering. Aeroba och anaeroba processer, det liv som lever utan att människan lägger sig i. Miljön som är liv. Jag tänker på mina tankar som under tiden jag skriver denna dagbok får fermentera sig.

Skriver en anteckning till mig själv om att jag ska komma ihåg i den här texten att

ATT MIN AMBITION ÄR ATT SAMMANFÖRA EN AUTISTISK OCH EN FEMINISTISK RÖRELSE, ATT DET GENOM BEGREPP SOM NEUROQUEER FINNS EN BRYGGA MELLAN FEMINISM OCH QUEER RESP AUTISM, ATT DET HANDLAR OM ATT

³ <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/2021/06/13/reimagining-the-autistic-mother-tongue/>

HITTA ETT PERSPEKTIV PÅ VÄRLDEN, EN ESTETIK, MEN ATT DET OCKSÅ FINNS I UTTRYCKET AV JAGET

Hittar Jen Hadfield och Cat Chuong som skriver om skrivande och neurodiversitet:

'Poetry permits a speaking from the margins' has seemed a commonly accepted assertion in my life over the last few years. Typically, this referred to the margins of race, gender, class, and sexuality practicing interventions into language which enacted a speaking back, a speaking out of places of erasure. I recently read that 'disability is the last margin to be addressed' (Scior and Werner, 2016) and while I know this idea isn't new I realise that while I was studying I never encountered a contemporary poetics that engaged with neurodiversity or disability.

I'm curious what it means to speak out of difficulty. I want to think about this in relation to the poem 'The Asterism' in *Byssus* (2014) which is preceded by a quotation from Annie Dillard's *A Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*:

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The first line of the poem is addressed as if to an 'Inexplicable pain – / ... a thing like Sirius / or Aldebaran –'. I wonder how you navigate difficulty within the fragile structures that constitute the written and spoken word? Between 'effortful' and 'proper tongue-tiedness' and 'sudden flu-encies' to say 'what we most need to articulate, even when that's difficult'?⁴

Jag funderar på hur autoteorin kan fungera som en motpol till "waste of pain". Fournier skriver:

The revolution of the everyday that took place in the 1960s led to a recognition of daily and domestic life as political: feminist writers, artists, scholars, and activists came to see that, as the slogan had it, "the personal is political," and that their practices (as artists, activists, educators, caretakers) could and should engage with the particularities of their lived experience as women, as queer, as racialized, and so on. (s. 15)

Och jag tänker att detta, den "waste of pain" som det innebär att vara kvinna, queer, rasifierad, neuro-o-typisk, kan återvinnas (och fermenteras – Fournier hon beskriver fermenteringen som:

As both a metaphor and a physical process, fermentation embodies bioavailability and accessibility, preservation and transformation, inter-species symbiosis and coevolution, biodiversity and futurity, harm reduction and care. [...] Spanning the speculative and the literal, the embodied and the ephemeral, the artists in fermenting feminism reinvigorate questions of health, materiality, canonicity, community, consumption, ritual, and tradition. The works in this publication obscure the line between illness and well-being, between science and witchcraft, between human and non-human, and between sentient and non-sentient to flesh out pressing political, theoretical, aesthetic, and ethical questions in the present. (s. 3))

⁴ ['Inhabiting a Space of Love': Cat Chong & Jen Hadfield — Guillemot Press](#)

genom autoteorin. Och bli något. Fermenteringen här, sammanför det mänskliga och det icke-mänskliga. Den autistiska har ofta betraktats som mindre-än-mänsklig (se Botha ovan), men jag vill istället läsa den autistisk positionen som mer-än-mänsklig – vilket bland annat Anna Stennings (2020) läsning av bland andra Temple Grandin och Greta Thunberg hävdar. Att inte se den neurotypiska mänskligheten som det enda rimliga, innebär också att hitta allierade bland det icke-mänskliga. Det är en sårbar position. Det är en riskabel position. Både för den som hävdar dess subversivitet och den som påpekar dess underordning. I *Autotheory* framhäver Fournier hur subversiva sårbara positioner blir till en seriös styrka, genom att benämnas som teori.

Jag väljer att placera mig, som autistisk agent, i en position som jag läser som subversiv men sårbar, och subversiv genom sin sårbarhet. Detta innebär att jag läser mig själv (auto) i relation till teorin. Jag läser mig som autist i relation till mig själv och till teorin. Jag kallar det AUTI-AUTO-THEORY.

17.5.22

En stor del av Fourniers text cirkulerar kring Chris Kraus verk. Kraus, menar jag, passar också in i den autistiska läsning jag gör. En stor del av Kraus *Aliens & Anorexia* (2000) handlar Simone Weil – en filosof som Törnvall läser som autistisk med stöd av Rosemary Dinnage och Michael Fitzgerald. Kraus läser Weil, och försöker enligt Palle Yourgaus förord också rädda Weil. Jag tänker på den problematiska räddningen, den koloniala missionen, det underläge som den autistiska hamnar i när den alltid måste räddas till den normala världen. Och jag håller inte riktigt med om Yourgaus idé. Jag läser snarare Kraus läsning av Weil som ett monotropiskt intresse. Det monotropiska är en term som används av Dinah Murray för att beskriva det autistiska intresset – ett intresse som är smalt, men oerhört starkt, och "*charged with feeling*" (Murray, 2005). Kraus uttrycker ett monotropiskt intresse för Weil, likaså Meinhof, liksom för det egna jaget och dess konst. Julia Miele Rodas konstaterar i *Autistic Disturbances* (2018) att den autistiska texten ofta bedöms (av neurotypiker) som hade den både för mycket och för lite "jag". Kraus text, som vimlar av jag, är samtidigt ett jag som smälter samman med andra (det Stephen Shore (2003) kallar "fusing" vilket är vanligt hos autister). Gränsen för jaget blir porös och sårig. Likaså gränsen mellan teori och fiktion – vilket är Fourniers poäng – Kraus, och jag, läser genom aliens teorin som fiktion. Denna "fusing" hör också till Weil: "she felt the suffering of others in her body" (48)

Jag nämnde häromdagen att Ryan påpekar att autism och ätstörningar är vanliga kombinationer hos icke-män. Kraus beskriver Weil som "the anorexic philosopher [...] *starving* for attention" (15). Att bokstavligt talat vara *starving* efter uppmärksamhet går i linje med autistens komplicerade förhållande till det metaforiska språket. Kroppen, den svältande, blir en komplicerad plats just för att den också pysslar med ett metaforiskt varande. Jag läser *Aliens & Anorexia* med ett monotropiskt intresse – liksom mitt intresse för min egen ätstörning gör det omöjligt för mig att "skärpa mig" och bli frisk. Kraus skriver om ekonomi: en situation som liknar den Freddot Carlsson Andersson beskriver i *B-laget* (2021). Ekonomin liksom andra vardagsgrejer blir en helt sjukt komplicerad sak. Jag tänker att det finns något autistiskt i försöken att analysera världen för att bli del av den. Jag tänker att denna text talar till mitt autistiska *bodymind*.⁵ Här finns också

⁵ Bodymind: "because mental and physical processes not only affect each other but also give rise to each other—that is, because they tend to act as one, even though they are conventionally understood as two—it makes more sense to refer to them together, in a single term." (Margaret Price, 2015, s. 269)

intresset för aliens: "my skin became so porous that the cello crept into my body like an alien" (s. 45). Här skildras en sensorisk alien, som inte kan uppleva världen som en neurotypisk människa. Samtidigt är Kraus analyserande ett tecken på ett monotropiskt intresse för skvaller och det sociala: "and here begins the difficult task of trying to understand another person" (s. 68). Och denna svårighet fortsätter att göra jaget poröst och sårbart, öppet för "fusing": "Simone Weil wrote about the way she tried 'to see a landscape as it is when I'm not there [...] if only I knew how to disappear' [...] sometimes I do this in Los Angeles" (97) och hon fortsätter:

I identified with the dead philosopher completely [...] [we] had absolutely zero sense of our own 'femininity' and gender" (s. 103) [...] surrounded by animals and children I was 'seized by an unnameable emotion' and suddenly burst into tears. The idea that you are momentarily outside your body because *something else is speaking to you*. It could be that sadness is the girl-equivalent to chance. (s. 119) Failure, like cancer, can only be a manifestation of a person's secret will" (s. 43)

Jag läser Kraus autistiskt. Liksom jag läser Fournier autistiskt.

Man måste inte vara feminist bara för att man är autist. Men det finns en neuroqueer rörelse som gång på gång påminner oss om att autismen finns där och fuckar upp idén om ett normalt sätt för hjärnan att fungera. På samma sätt som feminismen fuckar upp idén om kön. Jag läser min autism feministiskt, eftersom jag är känslomässigt involverad i mitt autistiska flickskap.

Jag läser det autoteoretiska som autistiskt, för att den autistiska positionen alltid blivit beforskad och teoretiserad. DSM-5 har blivit en bibel. Jag använder patologiseringen som partytrick. Kraus kan inte göra ett totalt motstånd för hon fuckar upp failar: för patriarkatet är som cancer, och någonstans har allt ätit sig in i hjärnans *secret will*. Jag läser Krauses upplevelser med mina autistiska ögon och min autistiska kropp. Fastnar för det storslagna som inte vet något om proportioner:

I said 'I'm working on a little movie about God'. (s. 40)