The Invention of Nature;
whiteness;
and Re-membering
Embodied
Aliveness

Jules ~ Juliet Davis-Dufayard

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Under supervision of belit sag

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Abstract

This thesis investigates how embodied practices and rituals with nature can foster the active participation and contribution of white people towards racial and climate justice by nurturing reciprocal relationships with the more-than-human world and developing a more rooted sense of self. Starting from my experience as a white person, drawing on embodied pre/decolonial ways of knowing, I will address the following research questions: what are the social, intellectual, and psychological barriers and challenges that impede white people's capacity to re-member our interconnectedness? How do somatic methodologies help white people nurture grounded belonging? Can the recognition and application of such methodologies support growth and inspire in white people to contribution to climate justice?

In this thesis I investigate how embodied practices and rituals with nature can foster the active participation and contribution of white people towards racial and climate justice by nurturing reciprocal relationships with the more-than-human world and developing a more rooted sense of self.

As a white queer person engaged in climate activism within mostly white spaces, I embarked on this research with the concern that the urgency and unwavering radicalism in these environments may unintentionally perpetuate racism.

This led me to explore embodied pre/decolonial forms of knowledge in order to address the following questions: What social, intellectual, and psychological barriers and challenges impede our capacity to re-member interconnectedness? How do somatic methodologies help us nurture grounded belonging? To what extent can the recognition and application of such methodologies inspire growth and encourage us to contribute to climate justice?

Beginning with an examination of precolonial European cosmologies and the evolution of the definition of "nature," I turned to the Celtic archetype of the Three Cauldrons/ Three Ways of Knowing to understand the separation brought upon by the invention of nature and whiteness.

Using this lens, I explored how specific processes, which have impeded the growth of myself and other white people, can be unlearned through a range of supportive methodologies. These include moving through perfectionism and fear of causing harm by practicing repair, working with intuition, the body's natural knowing, while avoiding unconscious bias and spiritual bypassing, and moving through shame by practicing belonging.

To put these methodologies into practice, I investigated collective, seasonal walks and rituals as spaces to practice these remedial strategies. Specifically, I delved into the practice of cold-water swimming as a way of physically experiencing decolonial concepts such as non-duality and increasing the capacity to feel sensation and stay with discomfort, contextualizing learnings from Pleasure Activism (adrienne maree brown) for white bodies.

To create a more immersive reading experience and encourage active participation with my research, I opted for a writing methodology that combines my personal embodied diary entries and commitments, participants' embodied testimonies, and a formal academic writing style. My goal is to engage readers' entire soma, including their thoughts, emotions, sensations, actions, and relationships, rather than just their analytical minds. As readers progress, I also invite them to participate in self-directed outdoor activities.

<u>Keywords</u>: anti-racism, art, belonging, celtic festivals, climate justice, cold-water swimming, colonisation, decolonial practices, ecofeminism, embodiment, Emergent Strategy, generative somatics, implicit association, implicit memory, indigenous knowledge, intuition, liberatory psychology, magic, nervous system, pagan sabbats, Pleasure Activism, polyvagal theory, racism, Resilience Toolkit, ritual, sexual trauma, shame, social change, somatics, trauma, unconscious bias, witch burning, whiteness, white fragility, white supremacy.

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INTRODUCTION



Handfasting stone, with Hannah Leighton-Boyce in Cushendall, Northern Ireland, August 2017

In August 2017, myself and artist/friend Hannah Leighton-Boyce cycled from Manchester (North West UK) where we were both living, to Cushendall (Northern Ireland). We traveled over 2 days and 1 night, for a 2 ½ week residency in Cushendall's Curfew Tower. Our initial motivation for cycling was that we didn't want to fly for such a short distance and wanted some transition time from one project to another.

It had been a heavy year for me, physically and mentally. Coming out as queer, coping with depression, and the burn-out that frequently comes with artist-led projects and work... Hannah was overworked as well, and still recovering from cancer treatment a couple years before. Cycling along the rivers and the coast ended up having a much greater impact on our experience of the residency than we expected. We learnt so much about the place through the landscapes and people we came across. Our physical needs were put back into the centre of our collaboration. We didn't produce any "finished" piece of work, but the memories of these few weeks have stayed with both of us, and feel like a threshold moment in many respects.

Shortly after this trip, I moved into a housing co-op which Hannah was part of and became involved in its organising, akin to modern day commoning. I briefly joined the local Extinction Rebellion group, but was confused by how disconnected it seemed from the communities of our city and local struggles, and worried that the sense of

urgency and rigid radicalism in this white dominated space might lead to racism being reinforced.¹

In 2020, I did a nature facilitation training and physically experienced the "ecological self"; the sense of self expanding in widening circles to encompass what happens to the Earth. I also experienced Joanna Macy and Molly Brown's Spiral method: how grounding in gratitude and deep time can help move through grief and turn despair into action.² But despite the positive effects, I couldn't shake a feeling of discomfort, knowing that I was participating in a mostly white group, and that within that context the term "nature" was not analyzed nor whiteness reflected upon, making me worry about cultural appropriation and spiritual bypassing. I found myself experiencing conflicting emotions, wanting to connect with these earth-based practices but also feeling anxious about causing harm in the process. I felt ungrounded in my body and sense of self and simultaneously disconnected from the land and the history of my ancestors' practices.

In her book The Politics of Trauma, one of the many definitions Staci K Haines gives of healing, is the practice of bringing the soma back into present time so that it doesn't react due to projection of past traumas onto a new situation.³ In 2020, I followed a centering practice by Staci K Haines.⁴ Having done various embodiment practices over the years, what felt most powerful to me was that beyond my individual sensations, Haines was also making me center in dignity, interdependence, my history and what I am committed to. I was amazed that I could feel so much aliveness, strength and space in my body on its own, much more than a lot of group exercises I had done. Tears of excitement were flowing down my face, as I got a tiny glimpse of the potential of generative somatics: embodiment and healing informing purposeful action. These embodied experiences together with ecofeminist and decolonial learnings have inspired much of the content of this paper.⁵

This text reflects on the invention of nature and whiteness, the possibility of re-membering older ways of knowing (from the land and from our bodies), and how embodied

^{1 -} On rigid radicalism, see; bergman, carla, Montgomery, Nick, and Alluri, Hari (introduction). *Joyful Militancy: Building Thriving Resistance in Toxic Times*, AK Press, 2017.

^{2 -} Macy, Joanna, and Molly Young Brown. Coming back to Life: The Updated Guide to the Work That Reconnects. Gabriola Island, Bc, New Society Publishers, 2014.

^{3 -} Haines, Staci. The Politics of Trauma: Somatics, Healing, and Social Justice. Berkeley, California, North Atlantic Books, 2019.

^{4 - &}quot;Centering Practice with Staci Haines." www.youtube.com/watch?v=77EJgznvqLc&ab_channel=StrozziInstitute. Accessed 10 Dec. 2022. Centering in my length, width, depth, and all three together, I had a very strong physical and emotional reaction - feeling more aliveness, strength and purpose in my body than I ever had while being still and on my own. Youtube video shared by Yuxin Jiang during one of our Syllabus V zooms: the recording we used isn't available on youtube anymore, but this is a similar one.

^{5 -} I do not explicitly refer to ecofeminism in the rest of this text, but it felt important to mention, as one of my main entry points into this research. References include: Silvia Federici, Joanna Macy, Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, and Starhawk. A good introduction to ecofeminism (in French): Jeanne Burgart Goutal. Être Écoféministe: Théories et Pratiques. Paris, L'echappée, 2020.

pre/decolonial ways of being can support shaping change, and changing shape.⁶ A lot of my motivation comes from a longing for aliveness and belonging. I've experienced a lot of numbness, stemming from past sexual assault as a child and young adult, and from my upbringing, schooling, and whiteness, which have affected my connection to my body. Through learning about different nervous system states with the Resilience Toolkit we learnt in Ecologies of Transformation,⁷ and practicing embodied practices outdoors, I have realised that these practices can be applied to other contexts, helping me overcome limiting patterns of shrinking, tensing up, and appeasing. For example, having been harmed creates in me a strong fear of harming people, mistrust of my body and its intuition, and low self-worth (which is determined by my 'usefulness' to others). This can manifest as appeasement. When coupled with being painfully aware of my white ignorance of my own privileges, my trauma response from sexual trauma, and stress responses from upbringing or schooling, this can be amplified in multiracial contexts by the race element of a conversation, and make me shrink or doubt myself.

I share in this text some specific "aha" moments which help me as a white person to expand out of shrinking. I want to move from the practice of collecting new learning in an only cerebral way that isn't connected to my often limiting, outdated embodiment based on past experiences, towards more embodied, grounded integrity. In my curiosity to nurture reciprocal relationships with the more-than-human world how this can support social change, I want to look more closely at how embodied practices and ritual with nature can support white people's fuller participation and contribution to racial and climate justice. What are some specific barriers and challenges to this, what methodologies that can help us re-member our entanglement with the more-than-human world, and how can this support change and transformation?

I have learnt that it is important to keep in mind my own positionality and bring in certain methodologies. I am writing from my position as a white, assigned female at birth person, who identifies as genderqueer/non-binary. I have access to cultural/social and financial capital which has enabled me to access higher education and various other kinds of training, as well as sexual trauma therapy. I have been and currently am mostly able-bodied and neuroconformative, yet with the intention to neuro-queer embodiment.⁸

^{6 -} In this text, Black, Blackness and Black Feminist Theory are capitalised, while white, whiteness and white supremacy aren't, unless capitalised by the authors whose words I share as direct quotes.

⁻ brown, adrienne maree. Emergent Strategy. AK Press, 20 Mar. 2017.

⁻ Haines, Staci. The Politics of Trauma: Somatics, Healing, and Social Justice.

^{7 -} Ndefo, Nkem, The Resilience Toolkit, Loumos Transforms, https://lumostransforms.com/

^{8 - &}quot;Neuroconformative" is a term used by Dr Devon Price and Dr Dave Saunders instead of "neurotypical". "Typical" reinforces the false belief that there is a "typical" brain that other brains "deviate" from. "Conformative" reminds us that some of us are closer to conforming than others, but that neuro-conformativity harms everyone. It also reminds us that neurotypical violence is always imposed on us from power structures or hierarchy (bosses - work culture, teachers - school...)

Radical Black Feminist Theory inspires me a lot, and as a white person I wonder how to work with theories developed by persons with such a different positionality than mine, but working along the same axis of decoloniality. Here I experiment with bringing these texts in conversation with white writers who focus on whiteness and the invention and functionings of white supremacy, as well as practitioners who contextualise learnings from Black feminism theory for white bodies. For instance, Marika Heindrich from Wild Body Somatics reflects on what Pleasure Activism can mean for white people: this is not an increase of comfort, but an increase in the capacity to feel sensations. An increase in capacity for sensations will inherently also include uncomfortable ones, as the internal and collective work of dismantling white supremacy will force us to shift out of our white supremacist conditioned tendencies. Through these pairings I strive towards reciprocity (looking to the example of white writers or readers working to apply the learnings to their specific experience, rather than ignore their own positionality).

Certain parts of this essay came from embodied diary entries, where I was tracking sensations and idea associations, by using tools that would help me focus on them in my body, such as: note taking while daydreaming or writing while sitting outdoors or after swimming. I have also included a few "invitations" interspersed within the text, mostly instructions for activities to do outdoors. Please adapt these to your own needs and circumstances. You can also choose to use these as prompts for daydreaming or moments of resting indoors. I hope for these embodied elements and invitations to create an embodied response in the reader, so you can experience the text through your whole soma: "thinking, feeling, sensing, acting, relating", rather than just your thinking/analytic mind." I hope these help the reader experience this aliveness, entanglement, cyclical time and fluid identities I write about.

Some parts of the essay are written with a more academic style, or bringing in more specific resources from writers and practitioners that inform my reflection. This is mostly the case for the parts about the invention of whiteness and nature, and intuition in relation to whiteness, as I wanted to avoid any ambiguity that could lead to the weaponising of these words for the reinforcement of white supremacy culture. These themes can also be found in the more embodied writing parts. I am always weaving in the subjective experience of my body, to support the reader to keep expanding their thinking space to include feeling and sensation too.

Walker, Nick. "Neuroqueer: an introduction — Neuroqueer." Neuroqueer.com, 2021, neuroqueer.com/neuroqueer-an-introduction/.

^{9 -} Okun, Tema. "White Supremacy Culture: Still Here." White Supremacy Culture, 2021, www.whitesupremacy-culture.info/. The right to comfort is an attribute of White Supremacy Culture.

^{10 -} Johnson, Rae. Embodied Social Justice. London, Routledge, 2018.

^{11 -} The Hague Royal Academy of Art, "Melanie Bonajo in Conversation with Staci K Haines - Recording 15.04.2021." Vimeo, 20 Apr. 2021, vimeo.com/539247740?embedded=true&source=video_title&owner=8531999. Accessed 10 Nov. 2022.

Decolonisation is not a metaphor.¹² In the context of this research, I focus on the experience of decolonial aliveness and decolonial time as embodied experiences that can support personal transformation, that can spiral out into the community and wider world.¹³ These alone can't bring about decolonisation and are only a tiny part of a much wider ecosystem of change. "Decolonisation is necessarily unsettling, especially across lines of solidarity", and I hope these practices can be supportive tools to begin to work with some of the unsettling.¹⁴

I wrote this text having in mind readers coming from a dominantly white orientation who also wonder how to navigate this axis of decoloniality around embodied knowledge, ecology and whiteness. This could mean readers who are white, who may be working or wanting to work more with embodied awareness, destabilizing whiteness, or earth connection and spirituality. This text may also have some interest to Black and Indigenous people and People of Colour with some white ancestry (whether or not they want to work with this specific ancestry), or who work around these themes with groups that include white people. I hope you can take from the text what is useful to you.

In this text I first look at the invention of the nature/culture binary, at nature as something that could be extracted, and the role this played in the separation of European peoples from their land, and the expansion of colonisation. Secondly, I look at white silence, paralysis and perfectionism, and how embodied practices in nature, in particular cold-water swimming, can help deconstruct binary thinking, bring more complexity, and develop the capacity to be with sensations, to help situate whiteness while destabilising it. While working with embodied practices, we come up against the relation between whiteness and the mistrust or weaponising of intuition (the body's intimate knowledge). I will reflect on the relationship of the spread of whiteness and mistrust of intuition, articulating the different ingredients of that mistrust. This reflection and clarity brings back choice in how to work with intuition. It also helps to work through the perfectionism and paralysis mentioned earlier.

Thirdly, in this learning process, shame comes up, which I believe is one of white people's biggest barriers to growth. Inspired by the definition of shame as a fear of being unworthy of love or belonging, I learn from indigenous wisdom around belonging to a web of interrelations, in which gratitude and reciprocity are the main ingredients. I conclude by sharing some ways in which practicing collective seasonal rituals can help experience decolonial time, slow down the trauma cycle, and practice community care.

^{12 -} Tuck, Eve and Yang, K. Wayne. *Decolonization is not a metaphor*, in Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2021, pp. 1-40.

^{13 -} Barton, Camille, Spiral Model, http://www.ecologiesoftransformation.com/.

^{14 -} Tuck, Eve and Yang, K. Wayne. Decolonization is not a metaphor, p7.

CHAPTER 1 - Ecological self - written in the body 15 1.1 Re-membering nature as life force; the Three Cauldrons! three ways of knowing 16

<u>Invitation</u>: Go for a slow walk outdoors (preferably near vegetation or water) and find a "sit spot": a space where you can sit. Put your phone on silent and set a timer for 20min. Use your time in your sit spot to orient to your immediate environment. Notice the qualities of what you can see, hear, feel, smell, touch.¹⁷ Notice the patterns, movements, rhythms... If your mind wanders off to something not part of your immediate environment, acknowledge it, then let it go and bring your mind back to your surroundings. You can do this on a regular basis and notice what happens when you keep coming back to the same spot throughout different seasons.

Nature doesn't exist, or it exists as an ontological fiction - what there is is the relentless generation and the regeneration of life in the solar system from which processes emerged a species of living/languaging organisms. A limited sector of these creatures were able to define themselves as human and impose their self-referential description as standard for all living organisms of the same species.¹⁸

In On Decoloniality, Mignolo demonstrates how Racism, Sexism and Nature, the 3 pillars of the Colonial Matrix of Power (CMP) were invented by the imagination of the European ruling class, as interconnected systems and tools that would enable extractivism. ¹⁹ This started in Europe, with the witch hunt robbing women healers of their power, keeping women away from new professions and areas of influence, and creating class division along the lines of gender. ²⁰ This tore apart communities and enabled forced en-

^{15 -} The Ecological Self, class by Victoria McKenzie for MA Ecologies of Transformation, Sandberg Instituut, Amsterdam, Fall 2021.

Winterson, Jeanette. Written on the Body. Vintage, 17 Apr. 2013.

^{16 -} Hemphill, Prentis. "Remembering with Alexis Pauline Gumbs." Finding Our Way Podcast, 19 Oct. 2022, www. findingourwaypodcast.com/individual-episodes/s1e7. Accessed 29 Oct. 2022. As Alexis Pauline Gumbs points out, the "member" we are bringing back was/were always part of the whole, "only" coming home to itself/ves. 17 - This is inspired by an exercise I did during Nature Facilitation Training with Change in Nature: "Change in Nature." Change in Nature, www.changeinnature.org/. Accessed 30 Oct. 2022. This "sit spot" practice also reminds me of the "Orienting" embodiment tool from the Resilience Toolkit. Here you can find a video instruction for this tool recorded by Camille Barton as part of the GEN Grief Toolkit: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Nut-LFrUot8&list=PL2dL28eromtGlCNPi2ULssoaD6zvXrv_L&ab_channel=GlobalDiversityFoundation

^{18 -} Mignolo, Walter, and Catherine E Walsh. On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis. Durham, Nc; London, Duke University Press, 2018. Essay: "The Invention of the Human and the Three Pillars of the Colonial Matrix of Power: Racism, Sexism, and Nature". (pp. 153-176)

^{19 -} ibid

^{20 -} Stardust, Lady. Burning Women: The European Witch Hunts, Enclosure and the Rise of Capitalism. London, Past Tense, 2010.

closures of common land and forced migration to cities where the working class's factory labour would feed the nascent global market economy.

This method and its resulting traumas were exported to the rest of the world even more violently with the intersection of racism. Working class Europeans who had often been forced to migrate, turned into perpetrators and front-line enablers of similar expropriation they had endured from the ruling class in their native land. This included committing genocide of the original guardians of these colonised lands.²¹

This coloniality, or colonial way of making sense of the world, is an integral part of the colonial project and not a mere outcome of it. Mignolo made me feel with new clarity the threads of my non-innocent entanglement in the colonial project as an artist and cultural worker whose work is to "make culture". ²² And with this came the renewed sense of responsibility to decolonise myself and the context I live and work in. adrienne maree brown's image of the fractal in Emergent Strategy explains how changes at a small scale can influence the larger scale in a fractal way. Making change in what culture is produced and how, can influence the wider web of society, and therefore have an effect on the Colonial Matrix of Power. ²³

Mignolo also traces back the origins of the term "human" and "humanity" and how untranslatable it is in cultures outside Europe²⁴ Mignolo also demonstrates the evolution of the meaning of the term "nature" from Old French and Latin definitions ("natura") from the late 13th and 14th century in the definitions he found:

- · restorative powers of the body
- · powers of growth
- · nature being
- principle of life
- character
- to give birth
- creation
- · innate disposition
- nature personified
- Mother Nature 25

^{21 -} Dean, David. "Roots Deeper than Whiteness." White Awake, 27 Oct. 2018, whiteawake.org/2018/10/27/roots-deeper-than-whiteness/.

²²⁻ Migrants Organise prompt to Migrants in Culture when asked what they can do to support their campaigns: "You make culture, make me a new culture!" during Migrants Make Culture Activation Day, 18th January 2020, Raven Row, Spitalfields, London. https://www.migrantsinculture.com/

^{23 -} See: the "fractal" in brown, adrienne maree. Emergent Strategy. AK Press, 20 Mar. 2017.

^{24 -} An important reminder to trouble anthropocene and posthuman discourse around "humanity".

^{25 -} Mignolo, Walter, and Catherine E Walsh. On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis. - list format of a selection of the words is my edit.

Nature was defined "specifically as material world beyond civilization or society" from the 1660s, and nature and nurture have been "contrasted since 1874". ²⁶ I have grown up white and been educated in France which prides itself as "the country of Enlightenment". I have been unlearning this pride by understanding the political strategy behind the witch hunt, demonisation of women, separation from nature and colonisation. This led to the start of a better understanding of the origins of white supremacy, and the ruthlessness of this machine. But the fact it was constructed means it can be dismantled too. The colonisation of Europe by the Roman Empire started the de-indigenisation of European peoples. ²⁷ Over a millennia later, the continent wide witch burning severed people from the land and each other even more violently. For me, this brought up some grief for the pain felt by my European ancestors, which was unexpected and felt like a significant experience to have as a white person studying within a multiracial group.

Nature is defined as "restorative powers" and "powers of growth"... Old French and Latin dictionaries reveal traces of European cosmologies that were erased or sent underground by the invention of "Nature". Cosmologies I hadn't even considered existed. A close reading of traces of cosmologies finds an example in the Celtic archetype of the Three Cauldrons or three ways of knowing cited in *Intuitive Herbalism*.²⁸

The Cauldron of Poesy, an Irish poem from the 7th century, describes three forms of poetic inspiration: the Cauldron of Warming, the Cauldron of Vocation, and the Cauldron of Wisdom, which overlap with other phenomenological systems like the three dantian in Chinese Medicine or the Indian chakra system.²⁹ The archetype of the cauldron also signals a dynamic, living process, as the Irish word for cauldron (coire) also means whirlpool. The Three Cauldrons archetype reminds me that my distant ancestors knew that we are connected to the earth and that our emotions can move through the body like water does. It reminds me that I am a mammal and that my ancestors lived in a way that was connected to that knowledge for much longer than colonisation and whiteness have existed.

Aliveness is the animal and bodily capacity to be responsive to surrounding change. Without that aptitude, living beings starve and die. Aliveness is the key and the possibility for transformation in every human being, no matter what ideas

^{26 -} ibid.

^{27 -} Rust D'Eye, Madelanne. "The Roots of White Supremacy Are in Our Bodies." *Transitionnetwork.org*, 5 Sept. 2017, transitionnetwork.org/news/roots-white-supremacy-bodies/.

^{28 -} Hughes, Nathaniel, and Fiona Owen. Intuitive Herbalism: Honouring Our Indigenous Plants, Walking the Path of Healing. England, Quintessence Press, 2016. The "cauldron" also gives a new/old meaning to the demonised witch's vessel, an archetypal symbol in Celtic traditions.

^{29 -} Rowan, Erynn. "The Cauldron of Poesy." *Seanet.com*, 2010, www.seanet.com/inisglas/cauldronpoesy. Accessed 25 Jan. 2023. Poem attributed to Amirgen.

or dogmas are currently dominating the landscape of consciousness. The question for liberation psychologies is how to create the kinds of environments that enlarge possibilities for aliveness.³⁰

In late summer 2020, after a few days swimming in cold North Welsh lakes and rivers, I made a commitment to myself to swim outdoors each month for the last year of my twenties, and pay attention to what would come out of this somatic practice. This commitment turned into (almost) weekly swims, usually with a friend. Throughout the winter lockdowns, this new somatic practice became a lifeline for me, each time taking me out of numbness or freeze and back into aliveness. I often tell myself or people after a cold swim that I feel 1000% alive. Somatics is a "holistic methodology and theory of change" that works to bring back the separated parts of the self together, and is a term that only makes sense in a context where they have been separated.³¹ Somatic approaches to trauma also talks about bringing safety, belonging and dignity back together and serving each other.

Re-membering the European cosmology of nature as "life force" helps me reconnect to an ecological self's feeling of flow and porosity and capacity for growth and change. As Alexis Pauline Gumbs says: "I know my life is not scarce because it isn't only mine, it is an energy that has flown through for so many generations, in so many forms. (...) Ancestral connection shows the freedom possible beyond my idea of myself as an individual, a unit through which we could be extracted". 32

^{30 -} Watkins, Mary, and Helene Shulman. *Toward Psychologies of Liberation*. Critical Theory and Practice in Psychology and the Human Sciences, 15 July 2008. p149

^{31 -} Plato, Phaedo, in J. Cooper (ed.), Plato: Complete works, pp49-100.

^{32 -} Hemphill, Prentis. "Remembering with Alexis Pauline Gumbs." Finding Our Way Podcast.

1,2 Naming and composting whiteness

<u>Invitation</u>: Go for a walk, take the time to answer this question by Resmaa Menakem: "When were your ancestors first declared Black or white (or Asian, or American Indian, or something else)?" ³³

Read Tema Okun's article "White Supremacy Culture - Still Here", then go for a walk and take time to identify some characteristics of white supremacy culture that show up in your life (behaviour, family dynamics, working methods, etc). What antidotes to white supremacy culture are already embedded in your life? Which ones do you want to bring forth? What specific changes can you make to support these? Find a way that's relevant or personal to you, to make a commitment to composting these characteristics, and embedding these antidotes. Make a note to check on this commitment later on

At the start of last year, while learning about the colonial matrix of power's history and about its impact on my Black classmates and classmates of colour, I noticed that I was staying silent in certain discussions. Feeling painfully aware of my whiteness, I worried my whiteness itself might trigger some classmates if I shared thoughts "under construction" about colonisation in a group discussion. I was also also not used to be "seen racially", which is a common trigger of white fragility.³⁵

This fear of causing harm, wanting to be "prepared", and the desire for perfectionism (a myth of white supremacy culture) resulted in me staying silent. However, "harm is already there in the room as soon as we walk in, and we can choose to add, not add to it, or transform it". The collective nervous system is created by moving through rupture and repair, and a multiracial conversation in which white people are staying silent turns them into white onlookers onto a conversation between BIPOC people. This lack of transparency can make it an unsafe environment for BIPOC people.

To avoid harm also meant avoiding the opportunity for repair and transformation. A conversation with our Resilience Toolkit teacher and Ecologies of Transformation tutor, Char CA, helped me identify some antidotes to this stuckness, to help me get more comfortable with "figuring it out in public".³⁷

^{33 -} Menakem, Resmaa. My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies. Las Vegas, Nv Central Recovery Press, 2017. You can find the full instruction of Resmaa Menakem's "Body Practice" in "Chapter 4: European Trauma and the invention of Whiteness", pp63-64.

^{34 -} Okun, Tema. "White Supremacy Culture." introduced to Ecologies of Transformation by Joy Mariama Smith in their class Si/Lo.

^{35 -} DiAngelo, Robin. White Fragility: Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk about Racism. Boston, Massachusetts, Beacon Press, 2018, p7.

^{36 -} CA, Char. "Harm and Repair", zoom tutorial, October 2021. Unless stated otherwise, quotes from this section are from this source.

^{37 -} Stuckness physically manifesting in pressure and heat in my skull, tight throat, fast heartbeat, and shallow breathing.

First, one method is to push on the western constructed binary, to move away from absolutes of racist/not racist, by simultaneously holding seemingly contradictory facts. One is that I am white, therefore have been socialised to be racist and benefit from it. The other one is that I am also practicing divorcing from white supremacy culture, as a lifelong journey: "Since my learning will never be finished, neither will the need to hold me accountable". 38

Second, I found I need to pay close attention to the sensations in my body, for instance when I was called in by a classmate who asked me to contribute to the conversation, saying the group needed to learn from its white members too. The emotion I felt the strongest was grief, for the personal and intergenerational racial trauma they and their ancestors experienced. Grief also for how hard it seemed for me to speak up and contribute in those conversations about colonisation, as a white person, and in other situations too. But I also noticed gratitude, that they felt safe enough to call me in and that I had received this information from them. I also felt motivation and excitement, that they thought I may have valuable thoughts to contribute to the conversations. Whilst grief might feel like the emotion that's taking up most of the space in my bodymind in those situations, looking for the other emotions that are moving around this grief, drawing my attention to them (gratitude, excitement, motivation...), can help me process the grief, move out of its paralysis and work through the grief towards action, guided by those other emotions.

"I cause harm and practice repair every day, several times a day" said Char. Meanwhile, DiAngelo writes: "What [people of colour] are looking for is not perfectionism but the ability to talk about what happened, the ability to repair". "Phis capacity comes from and is maintained through practice, and can be supported by a wealth of resources such as DiAngelo's own examples of perpetuating racism and offering apology and repair by following several steps. "Phis in "The Four Parts to Accountability - How to make a genuine apology", disability justice and transformative justice activist Mia Mingus also defines several components. "Self-reflection, apologizing, repair, and behavior change", all need to be practiced together, since practice is the only way to grow the capacity for accountability. Each instance of hurt or harm is an opportunity for repair, healing and transformation. Like adrienne maree brown's fractal, Mia Migus reminds us that developing our apologising skills and starting small contributes to the broader culture of transformative justice."

^{38 -} DiAngelo, Robin. White Fragility: Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk about Racism. p152

^{39 -} ibid, p146

^{40 -} ibid, pp139-154 from Chapter 12: Where Do We Go From Here?

^{41 -} Mingus, Mia. "How to Give a Good Apology Part 1: The Four Parts of Accountability." *Leaving Evidence*, Leaving Evidence, 18 Dec. 2019, leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2019/12/18/how-to-give-a-good-apology-part-1-the-four-parts-of-accountability/.

Camille Barton, Head of Ecologies of Transformation, also recommended that the white students in the course come together outside of class to support each other in processing the learnings. 42 Sharing resources, reflections and learnings with Nikolitsa Paranomos and Emma van Bokhoven meant we weren't censoring ourselves as much as we would have in a multiracial group, for fear of causing a (micro) aggression. The ongoing discussions amongst white classmates enabled more vulnerability and therefore more mistakes and learning. 43 This supportive space also helped us as white people to take on more of the labour of anti-racist work. 44 Mary Watkins and Helen Shulman expand on the importance of situating one's whiteness before de-stabilising it:

If one sees oneself as White, a move toward nomadic consciousness involves understanding that identifying with being "White" is a constructed experience of recent history. In entering the United States, many immigrant groups became "whitened" to distinguish their fates from that of Native Americans and Blacks. Beneath the assumption of "being White" lies denial and amnesia regarding the multiple ethnic roots of all who live in America. Reversing this forgetfulness allows the claiming of one's own discarded pieces of identity that opens up possible points of contact with others. Such a re-membering entails seeing clearly the privileges that have accrued from the claim to Whiteness and the shadow of dispossession this casts on others. Braidotti (2002) says that to "rework whiteness in the era of postmodernity is firstly to situate it, de-naturalize it and embody and embed it. Secondly, nomadize it, or to de-stabilize it, to undo its hegemonic hold"45

Learning about the construction of whiteness but also about hidden cross-racial resistance (through resources such as the "Roots Deeper than Whiteness" course by White Awake) was a powerful way for me to understand how we got here, and to feel inspired to contribute to dismantling white supremacy. ⁴⁶ This includes by making (art) works that reflect on whiteness and explore alternatives as antidotes to another pillar

^{42 -} Barton, Camille (dir.), Ecologies of Transformation, Temporal Masters programme at Sandberg Instituut, Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam (2021-2023): http://www.ecologiesoftransformation.com/

 $⁴³⁻Cohen, Justin. \\ \text{``White Anti-Racism Affinity Groups: I Used to Be a Skeptic, but Now I'm an Evangelist." Justin Cohen, 2 Oct. 2016, www.justinccohen.com/blog/2016/10/28/white-affinity-groups. Accessed 5 Dec. 2022.$

^{44 -} I believe vulnerability from white people is important in that specific context to enable learning and growing, but not that vulnerability should always be a goal or expectation for everyone in any context.

^{45 -} Watkins, Mary, and Helene Shulman. Toward Psychologies of Liberation. p169

^{46 - &}quot;Roots Deeper than Whiteness, building emotional strength and political clarity for collective liberation, online course" *White Awake*, whiteawake.org/online-courses/. Accessed 21 Nov. 2022. https://whiteawake.org/online-courses/. Some of these learnings are mentioned in part 1.1 of this chapter.

of white fragility: the refusal to know.⁴⁷ This refusal to know shuts down any learning and is different from being comfortable with not knowing, an essential part of the learning process.

Resilience Toolkit teacher Char CA affirms that the biggest skill white people can bring to an ethnically diverse group is a settled and skilled nervous system. Increasing our capacity to be with sensations and emotions and not shut down or leave the room, helps "build our capacity to sustain the discomfort of not knowing, the discomfort of being racially unmoored, the discomfort of racial humility", an essential place to keep coming back to in this process or un-learning.

Luckily for us, there are many ways to do that, including the embodied outdoors practices I have been working with. Cold-water swimming for instance can provide opportunities to repattern, change shape and build capacity for discomfort, flux and humility, as we will explore in the next chapter.

^{47 - &}quot;The refusal to know": DiAngelo, Robin. White Fragility: Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk about Racism, p50.

^{48 -} ibid, p14.

It's the choreographed routine that comes back to me.

I've done it since I was a kid. In the fall or even in winter, I'd go out with my dad and we'd run in, go under and run out.

Dread stubborn chore

To

Mad

(first being in the water is mad then the thought of having not gone in the water is mad)

Clothes off, swimming costume on, wind on skin, pulse rises.

The mental preparation begins...

Laughter

I can never walk to the water, I run, I jog at least.

Before my niece went to sleep for eternity, the sea is where

I went each week,

emptying the water of my eyes and feeling the outlines of my body, caught by calm or fiery water, waves whipping like a burn.

My brain when it gets under the extreme stress of cold water, shuts down all non vital functions in my body, including large parts of my brain (thinking and emotional).

The first 20 seconds my body screams at me to get out - Danger! Stress!

The first moments are akin to a panic attack. Sit with it, sit with it.

Then I breathe through and everything slows down.

My thoughts stop and my senses heighten.

My body's climate systems adjust. Nerves communicate to each other.

The panic subsides. I can feel all of it.

Those frozen swims put me back in my body, here and now, and at the same time I'm dissolved in the water, outside of myself somewhere.

Access to the moon

My body is small and part of the sea.

I see the light reflecting on the water, the wind on my skin, the sounds of the birds.

I'm in the landscape, not looking at it

I have a 360 view of everything from within it.

Pieces of flora float past me. I watch the paths they take back towards the shore.

Numb but full of feeling.

I am washed with exultation.

At best it is pure euphoria.

Living with a chronic condition, floating in water or swimming is usually where,

amongst other things,

I find relief from pain. Swimming is a unifying experience with my self and reunion with being in, surrounded, held, supported by another body.

Even though it's cold from the second I get in, I recognize when it's getting cold enough to go out again. I am just in touch with my body.

I know it's good for me on a physical and mental level, but I feel it's also more than that - it recalibrates, bringing me to a version of myself before thought, before doubt and conflict, it somehow distills and resets,

returning me to a more instinctive intuitive self, one I feel I can get along with much better and better company too.

Sometimes I cry but not because of the cold.

Once I shouted under water.

Once I put a bouquet in the water.

Everything is still internally and externally. I am safe, I am well.

When I'm out, my skin is numb, my feet are white and stuck.

There's often an unspoken appreciation, body talk, kinship, joy in a friend's face

as we jump up and down and laugh to warm our bodies.

It brings us closer, strengths.

It reminds me to laugh more, to jump more, not just to get warm. Afterwards there is an electricity back to me, to us, to things, a sense of aliveness, potential and hope.

I am made of fire and could walk naked anywhere.

I find it extremely healing. I think there's many ways to achieve this, but the water can't lie. It's immediate.

I do believe it taps into something primal and amphibian in me, I believe my body remembers.

CHAPTER 2 - WATERY THINKING 2.1 - Cold-water swimming - becoming wavicles

"Watery thinking is the capacity to witness, accept and adapt to everything".⁴⁹ On a physiological level, cold-water swimming (or cold immersion/exposure in general) can help increase the "tone" of the vagus nerve, the main nerve of the nervous system that connects to all essential organs. A vagus nerve with a wider tone can manage bigger changes of emotions and is less likely to fall into depression or numbness, or jump into stress response, whilst the cold exposure also decreases inflammation and supports the immune system. Over time, the body learns to respond differently to the shock of cold water, which also gives more space and options for other (perceived) threats that may trigger fight, flight, freeze.⁵⁰

A common knowledge in anti-racism is that white people often experience such intense emotions in response to learnings about racism that they become either defensive, and unable to engage in the learning experience, or so swept up in guilt that they require substantial emotional tending in order to continue to engage. Katherine E. Roubos identifies the reason for these reactions as lack of stamina. This is not a permanent or constant personality-based inability to engage, not an essentialised quality about the nature of white people. This lack of stamina can be worked with and remediated. Roubos applies a clinical understanding of trauma (the neurophysiological response to perceived threats) to the manifestation of white fragility, in order to increase the internal resources to sustain engagement in racial justice education. S2

Similarly to the testimonies of cold-water swimming, to me, the waves of seemingly opposing sensations I experience simultaneously while swimming in cold water, remind me of an embodied experience of decolonial non-duality and contradiction that Mignolo writes about (opposition and non-contradiction as European constructs).

^{49 - &}quot;Undisciplined — Watery Thinking with Beatrice Alvestad Lopez and Bronwyn Bailey-Charteris." *Undisciplinedpodcast.com*, undisciplinedpodcast.com/watery-thinking-with-beatrice-alvestad-lopez-and-bronwyn-bailey-charteris/. Accessed 19 Oct. 2022.

^{50 -} Hof, Wim. "Wim Hof Method." Wimhofmethod.com, 2019, www.wimhofmethod.com/. Accessed 15 Oct. 2022.; and Griffiths, Simon. "Cold-Water Swimming: A Guide to Temperature." Outdoor Swimmer Magazine, 7 Oct. 2022, outdoorswimmer.com/featured/swimming-in-cold-water-a-guide-to-temperature/. Accessed 10 Jan. 2023.

^{51 - &}quot;Shame and guilt tend to focus on the self ("I am bad", "I am a mistake") whereas remorse focusses on behaviour ("I did something bad", "I did a mistake"). Shame is correlated with addiction, depression, violence, aggression... remorse is inversely correlated with those things. The ability to hold something we've done or failed to do up against who we want to be is incredibly adaptive" Source: "Roots Deeper than Whiteness, building emotional strength and political clarity for collective liberation, online course".

^{52 -} Roubos, Katherine E. Cultivating Resilience: *Antidotes to White Fragility in Racial Justice Education*. 2016, scholarworks.smith.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2819&context=theses. Accessed 15 Nov. 2022.

Creating such capacities for white bodies could then be one methodology for Marika Heinrichs' contextualising of Pleasure Activism for white people: to increase the capacity to feel sensation, including discomfort. ⁵³ Being able to feel more sensations (especially challenging ones) and stay with the trouble of working through them together, can bring "satisfaction, hope and resilience". ⁵⁴

This also seems to align with the quantum physics concept of superposition: "things that can be opposite things at the same time".55 As my skin interfaces between the inside and outside of my body, gets surrounded on all sides, the cold of the water enters inside me and I merge with the cold water's qualities. The heightened sensations make my body feel bigger and denser, whilst I'm also reminded of my insignificance within the vastness of the water cycle going through me. The wavicle, or wave-particle duality, asks us "How can we embrace uncertainty and avoid self-righteousness of dogmatic practices? How can we equally value process and outcomes?" 56

The weekly practice of cold-water swimming reminds me of my commitment to process and complexity, my ancestral, molecular belonging to water and (meta) physical connection to all that water touches. In the following part, I combine this embodied practice with an embodied writing experiment, to explore how the ecological self that can be accessed through cold-water swimming, can also support a more somatic understanding of the theory around the colonial violence of the last half millennia. After reflecting on ways to work with intuition, shame and belonging, I will write more about the embodied knowledge and transformation that can come from practicing rituals inspired by Celtic seasonal festivals.

Invitation: Find a nearby body of water (lake, canal, reservoir, river, sea) to immerse yourself in.

^{53 -} Heinrichs, Marika. "We Are What We Practice // Thoughts on Lineage, Knowledge Transmission + Whiteness in Somatics." *Wildbody*, 17 Aug. 2022, wildbody.ca/blog/practice. Accessed 25 Jan. 2023.

^{54 -} brown, adrienne maree, Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good. Chico, CA, Ak Press, 2019.

^{55 -} brown, adrienne maree. HOLDING CHANGE: The Way of Emergent Strategy Facilitation and Mediation. S.L., Ak Press, 2021. Sage Crump, p51.

^{56 -} Crump, Sage. "Ecologies Of Transformation guest lecture", Sandberg Instituut, zoom, 2021.

^{57 - &}quot;All that you touch you change, all that you change, changes you, the only lasting truth is change, god is change." Lauren Olamina's Earthseed verse in: Butler, Octavia E. *Parable of the Sower.* 1993. New York, Seven Stories Press, 2016.

2,2 - Entanglements

Your skin is dancing with and rising up towards the sun in the cold air.

We are told by the older womxn with the wooly hat about the stairs just below your surface, only visible to the knowing eye that's searching for them. My feet feel as if you are cutting them off from my legs as I step down and in. The swimsuit stayed at home and my bare skin wants to hide inside you. I feel held up as you envelop me.

How did you move, before you were coerced into this canal and reservoir, your back reduced into this route for coal across the region, in straight lines towards industrialisation?

This acceleration of exchanges and depletion of the hills from their trees and coal means you, too, are going faster now. You are losing your reciprocal relation with the soil, who lets you glide over them without being able to hold you for a moment.

No wall is too high for you, and each barrage creates the space for an opening elsewhere.

Some humxns near Hebden Bridge and Todmorden (North by North West of here), are learning from the beavers that build porous walls, pockets and meanderings in your bed with the land. Learning that they do it for a reason greater than themselves. Slowing down makes it possible for yourself and the land to spend time together without depleting each other.

I am reminded of how the law of ruling men, with complicity of the church and male doctors, used you as sites for determining whether life giving womxn healers should live or die. The very womxn attuned to your cycles through generations of knowledge gathering and observation, with death as only outcome, whether they floated or sank into you.

As I climb out of you back onto the wall, my limbs and feet feel awkward and numb, I struggle to keep my balance as I walk.

Gradually, the freezing and boiling currents washing all over me remind me that I carry you with me as much as you carry me with you. Your touch has sparked the whirlpool connecting my three cauldrons of warming, vocation and wisdom.

Thank you.

Remembering Sparth reservoir & Huddersfield narrow canal in Marsden, Autumn 2020, written as part of our work for Victoria McKenzie's class "The Ecological Self".

CHAPTER 3 - Intuition, whiteness, Shame and Belonging



What is the mother material of the soil? (photo by Dora Lionstone)

In a "portal" exercise in our Si/Lo class with Ecologies of Transformation tutor Joy Mariama Smith, I asked the question, "How can I heal my ancestors?" in relation to my distant European ancestors from the time of the enclosures and invention of whiteness⁵⁹. Instead, I came to realize the need to trace back the experiences of gendered violence in my recent matrilineage, how it manifested both as sexism, fatphobia and white supremacy, and how it connected to my own experiences, internalisations, and whiteness. Using inherited objects, I brought together stories of how patriarchy impacted my mother, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers' lives and created an altar to release these effects and to start a new cycle. I did this ritual during Easter 2022, and started with a Celtic inspired ritual and guided meditation ⁶⁰. The meditation guides you from the safety and tightness of an egg shell you have outgrown into a more alive and open form of embodiment.

⁻ This installation/ritual came about as part of an assignment for Joy Mariama Smith's class, Si/Lo, about makership and manifestation in spring 2022. Smith, Joy Mariama. Somatic integration / Liminal objectives, weekly class at dance studio Jacuzzi for MA Ecologies of Transformation, Sandberg Instituut, Amsterdam, 2021-2023.

^{59 -} Smith, Joy Mariama. *Somatic integration / Liminal objectives*, weekly class at dance studio Jacuzzi for MA Ecologies of Transformation, Sandberg Instituut, Amsterdam, 2021-2023.

^{60 -} Ede-Weaving, Maria. "Spring Equinox - Alban Eilir Solo Ritual No.1 | Order of Bards, Ovates & Druids." *Druidry.org*, 15 Feb. 2021, druidry.org/resources/spring-equinox-alban-eilir-solo-ritual-no-1. Accessed 25 Apr. 2022.

3.7 - Intuition, Stress/Trauma response, and whiteness "We are the daughters of the people who called the cops on the mitches" of the people who called the cops on the mitches" of the mitches " of the mitches" of the mitches " of the people who called the cops on the mitches " of the people who called the cops on the mitches" of the people who called the cops on the mitches " of the people who called the cops on the mitches" of the people who called the cops on the mitches " of the people who called the cops on the mitches " of the people who called the cops on the mitches " of the people who called the cops on the mitches" of the people who called the cops on the mitches " of the people who called the cops on the mitches" of the people who called the cops on the mitches " of the people who called the cops on the mitches" of the people who called the cops on the mitches " of the people who called the cops on the mitches" of the people who called the cops on the mitches " of the people who called the cops on the mitches" of the people who called the cops on the mitches " of the people who called the cops of the mitches" of the people who called the cops of the people who called

What is the mother material of the soil? (photo by Dora Lionstone)

Intuition is "the body's natural knowing", based on how the nervous system is operating in relation to experiences. ⁶² As I take myself and/others on intuitive walks in nature, I hope to support a deeper connection with the body's natural knowing. Our coercive and violent culture, in which we are made to not trust our bodies, makes us vulnerable to (self) violence and coercion. I hope that slowing down can also help us feel our (self) consent, intuition, and therefore support healthier boundaries as well, an important skill for liberatory movements. My experience as a white person recovering from sexual trauma is that both whiteness and trauma impact my access to and relation with intuition. Trauma easily sends me into numbness and dissociation, and the belief that "how it feels inside my body doesn't matter". Meanwhile, whiteness in its forms of white fragility and perfectionism leads to a fear of causing harm, with the effect that I often feel paralised. Both often lead to anxious reactions which feel like over-reactions, and to finding it hard to trust sensations.

It is essential to situate our somas and sensations in the social contexts they are shaped by, so we don't risk letting our prejudices underscore and provide explanations for our discriminatory or racist behaviors, such as Boris Johnson explaining that he feels fear or discomfort when he jogs past a group of young Black men, and uses his fear as "true" and useful information to inform policy making. ⁶³ As Staici Haines states, "Just because we feel something, it is not inherently true. Yet, much truth does come through feelings. As do habits, survival strategies, and reactions". ⁶⁴ Our intuition is shaped by our experiences and environments, social norms and economic conditions. So is our relation to spirituality. ⁶⁵ We therefore need to assess our intuition and our longings in the wider context they are shaped by, which requires us to "increase our internalized permission and self-trust, while also assessing and grounding our longings". ⁶⁶

^{61 -} Quote taken from a meme with a photo of a group of white women in fairy dresses, sitting around an altar made of crystals and pine cones; source unknown.

^{62 -} CA, Char. "Intuition and Whiteness", zoom tutorial, 25 Nov. 2022. Unless stated otherwise, quotes from this section are from this source.

^{63 -} On Boris Johnson's comment: Eddo-Lodge, Reni. Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People about Race. New York, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017.

^{64 -} Haines, Staci. The Politics of Trauma: Somatics, Healing, and Social Justice. p180

^{65 -} ibid, p180

^{66 -} ibid, p180

There is also a deeper relation between the spread of whiteness and the mistrust of intuition, as the invention of whiteness was a direct attack on femme bodies that used intuitive power in public (birthwork, medicine, etc.). This was a strategy for division and control: "It is easier to control a person if you have made their inherent impulses toward life and contact shameful or punishable." This ancestral fear of intuition still lives in our collective memory. We still have bodies, and intuition, but whiteness training, for white people but also people of any colour impacted by colonisation, "compresses and hides the body's training", and makes it hard to know how to access the knowledge that is still there.

Since thinking about white supremacy and whiteness training often makes me feel blank or overwhelmed, one remedy to this is to get more specific about the ways in which the fear of intuition manifests. This can be expressed as fatphobia ("if I can't trust my body for something as basic as appetite, how can I trust my body about other things?"), and academic supremacy (discounting the body's natural intuitive knowing by creating a hierarchy between different kinds of knowledge), to name just a few. Paying attention to the specificities of each prejudice and tracing back to their interconnected roots can bring political clarity and help create space away from these prejudices.

In "The Roots of White Supremacy Are in our Bodies", Madelanne Rust d'Eye defines "implicit memory" as:

Our bodies have their own memory system, ...via which they "remember" the events of our lives in a non-linear tapestry of sensate experience and image. We don't know we are having an implicit memory; we simply might feel a certain way in a certain context. (...) The body doesn't evaluate the credibility, appropriateness, or value of its implicit associations; it just has them.⁶⁸

In contrast to "implicit memory", we also have "implicit associations" which might feel similar, but are formed by the culture we are immersed in rather than actual lived experiences, and the prejudiced associations these media will repeatedly make with certain identities. ⁶⁹ This has been used for centuries by those in power to maintain their power and control. ⁷⁰

Char CA reminds us that stress is also intuitive, but only a fraction of the scope of intuition. We are often only practiced in stress response, and can practice opening up to all the other options within the somatic skill of embodied intuition. Accepting that living

^{67 -} ibid, p41

^{68 -} Rust D'Eye, Madelanne. "The Roots of White Supremacy Are in Our Bodies."

^{69 -} ibid

^{70 -} Through antisemitism, nationalism, sexism, and racism.

immersed in the sea of White Supremacy culture means that prejudiced thoughts are inevitable and cannot be avoided, but that we have a choice whether to let ourselves be guided by them into discriminatory or racist behaviour, or to work against them, can help move beyond paralysis, and back into the daily practice of figuring it out, trial and error, mistakes, accountability, repair. Knowledge of the internal automatic systems and culturally enforced felt-senses and associations reminds me that I have a choice on where I focus my attention, and how I act upon those impulses and associations. Kai Cheng Thom reminds me that "Choice is the opposite of trauma", it creates more space in my body and more options to respond rather than react with old survival patterns in challenging situations.71 Ultimately, if grounded in the knowledge of how our somas have been shaped over generations, reconnecting with intuition can be a part of the ecosystem of remedies to white supremacy. Situating my soma and relation to intuition in the knowledge of my "rooted, historical self", supports me to work with intuition with white groups and multiracial groups in a way that minimises the risk of further harm that can result from weaponising of intuition and sensation warped in and through white socialising. 72 This involves slowing down the interactions enough so that we can notice the intuition and feel the different options and choices accessible to us.

Practicing re-attunement to the wider field of awareness and reconnecting to the web of interrelations, through intuitive, slow walking and other outdoors embodied practices, can help reconnect us to intuition. Reminding myself of my entanglement and belonging to my ecosystem also helps me not fall into shame if a stress or trauma response arises, to and stay present in connection, as part of the ecosystem and its relations. In the following part, we will explore in more detail the relation between shame and belonging, and how reinforcing the sense of belonging to a web or relationships can help compost shame and guilt and move into action.

Sunny mountain

<u>Invitation</u>: go for an intuitive walk on your own: choose a start location, do not plan a route or duration, and practice listening to your internal impulses and intuition at each moment, letting these guide you. Slow down enough to really listen to what your body wants to do.

How different does this feel to the walks you usually take?

Before you start the walk, you might like to ask yourself a question relating to intuition raised by the text you've just read, and see what answers come from this walk.

^{71 -} Thom, Kai Cheng. "Loving Justice" class for Ecologies of Transformation, Autumn 2022, kaichengthom.com/. 72 - The Hague Royal Academy of Art. "Camille Barton in Conversation with Aurora Levins Morales - Recording 21.04.2022." Vimeo, 28 Apr. 2022, vimeo.com/704061749?embedded=true&source=vimeo_logo&owner=8531999. Accessed 6 Nov. 2022.

^{73 -} Similarly, the "orienting tool" from the Resilience Toolkit by Nkem Ndefo that helps regulate the nervous system, consists of actively widening one's gaze by looking around oneself and paying attention to the qualities (colour, light, texture) of our environment. It feels most effective for me when I'm outdoors, as environments with several life forms remind me of my entanglement and interrelation with the wider world.



Sunny mountain

Intuitive movement embodied diary extract: Feeling and following an impulse to align the triangle of my body with the triangle of light in my room. At the start of 2020, when I had been co-regulating with the whole world in over-performing response for several weeks. A few moments, glimpses of clarity of sensation and attention to the present space and moment I was in, within the constant fuzziness in my mind and body. Being guided by my sensations. Feeling impulses from inside my body, and embodying them as shapes and movements, "living from the inside out".

⁻ This photo was inspired by the prompt "Is there a work you are scared to do? Do it anyway!" for the first day of the online programme 30works, 30days, and as i am writing this I realise that this moment happened almost exactly 2 years before the "What is the mother material of the soil?" ritual, at a time when I wasn't consciously aware of living with sexual trauma.

^{74 -} Lorde, Audre. Uses of the Erotic. Crossing Press, 1978.

3.2 - From shame back into belonging 75

For white people, David Dean identifies shame "as one of the main barriers to growth, learning, accountability, and feeling fully human". Overwhelming shame can stop us from coming back in relationship with other humans and more-than-human worlds.

Sedgwick traces back the origin of the "shame-humiliation response" to the first few months of infants' lives, as an attempt to get back into the connection with their caregiver that is essential to their survival: "The shame-humiliation response, when it appears, represents the failure or absence of the smile of contact, a reaction to the loss of feedback from others, indicating social isolation and signaling the need for relief from that condition." Whilst Brené Brown instead defines shame as "the intensely painful feeling that we are unworthy of love or belonging". Bringing both these approaches to mind when shame comes up, and asking myself the questions "Why do I feel like I don't belong here? Why do I feel unworthy of love here? Is that true?" helps me approach my shame mindfully and with curiosity, to understand what it's trying to communicate:

(...) shame is itself a form of communication. Blazons of shame (...) are semaphores of trouble and at the same time of a desire to reconstitute the interpersonal bridge. (...) shame and identity remain in very dynamic relation to one another, at once deconstituting and foundational, because shame is both peculiarly contagious and peculiarly individuating. (...) it is the place where the question of identity arises most originally and most relationally.⁷⁸

If shame is about the fear of not belonging, and desire to reconstitute relation, then how do we come back into belonging? Aurora Levins Morales teaches us that belonging is "not about place, but has to do with being part of a web of interrelationships". ⁷⁹ Watkins and Shulman also position relatedness and interdependence as foundational to liberation psychology: "A utopian hope for peace and justice grounds itself in the idea that we can access a profound relatedness with all life-forms because we are historically embedded in the flesh of a biosphere". ⁸⁰

^{75 -} I want to acknowledge that for the sake of the word count limitations of this thesis, I made the decision to focus on shame in relation to whiteness within the specific thesis I'm working with here, but that this research would benefit from having shame analysed within a wider context and having this included in this text.

^{76 -} Roots Deeper than Whiteness - building emotional strength and political clarity for collective liberation, online Fall course by White Awake, https://whiteawake.org/online-courses/. Accessed 31 October 2023.

^{77 -} Michael Franz Basch, 765, quoted in Kosofsky Sedgwick, Eve and Frank, Adam. Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity. Durham, Duke University Press, 2003. p36

^{78 -} Kosofsky Sedgwick, Eve and Frank, Adam. Touching Feeling: Affect, Tedagogy, Performativity, pp36-37

^{79 -} The Hague Royal Academy of Art. "Camille Barton in Conversation with Aurora Levins Morales - Recording 21.04.2022."

^{80 -} Watkins, Mary, and Helene Shulman. Toward Psychologies of Liberation, p152.

How to get back into that relatedness that brings belonging? Although Aurora Levins Morales doesn't limit belonging to place in a physical sense, it necessitates situatedness and positionality. It's made possible by "being most authentically my historic rooted self and most curious of the ecosystem I enter. Understanding the root systems of my presence there, bringing my own authentic self with humility and curiosity to this ecosystem".81 This rootedness is echoed by white anti-racist educator David Dean in "Roots Deeper than Whiteness", unearthing the real (working class people's) history of what brought his ancestors to North America. The humility and curiosity also finds an illustration in Robin Wall Kimmerer's depiction of the so-called weed plantain, also called "white man's footstep" as it came from Europe with colonisation, finding its humble place in the ecosystem and becoming "naturalised to place".82 In her essay on "an economy of abundance" inspired by the serviceberry, a berry I used to pick as a child outside my school in Brittany, Kimmerer also brings in gratitude as "the thread that connects us in deep relationship simultaneously physical and spiritual, as our bodies are fed and spirits nourished by this sense of belonging (...) gratitude creates a sense of abundance, the knowing that you have what you need".83 I remember the childhood excitement of foraging and cooking our harvests. As an adult, I find a similar excitement in preparing for a Celtic seasonal ritual, researching its meaning, finding adaptations to my context, and seasonal food to celebrate. When I started gardening again in 2018, paying attention to and marking the passing of the seasons was a way to find more resilience to project myself in the future beyond the news around Brexit, and to feel connected to longer, cyclical time.

As I was starting to develop a ritual practice, for myself and with others, informed by Celtic practices, I could feel a lot of perfectionism coming up as fear of appropriation, and some resistance to connecting with my ancestors, for fear that I might connect with the "wrong" things that were contributing to the reinforcement of patriarchy, extractivism, and white supremacy. I realised that stopping myself from connecting with these practices, was also stopping me from connecting with the wider European history, processing the learnings from it, and forming a better understanding of my historical self. To deepen these learnings, I returned to Robin Wall Kimmerer and her complementary methodology to gratitude: "If the first responsibility of the gift economy is gratitude, the second is reciprocity" And Marika Heinrichs brings clarity on what reciprocity might look like for white people working with spirituality and somatics:

^{81 -} The Hague Royal Academy of Art. "Camille Barton in Conversation with Aurora Levins Morales - Recording 21.04.2022."

^{82 -} Wall Kimmerer, Robin. Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants. S.L., Penguin Books, 2013.

^{83 -} Wall Kimmerer, Robin. "The Serviceberry: An Economy of Abundance – Robin Wall Kimmerer." *Emergence Magazine*, 26 Aug. 2022, emergencemagazine.org/essay/the-serviceberry/. Accessed 20 Nov. 2022. 84 - ibid.

Being in right-relationship with a practice/ teaching is a form of relationship, and therefore involves reciprocity: offering something in return. If we are disconnected from our lineages what do we have to offer in exchange? How are we in reciprocal relationship if we are seeking only to fill a void? Even if we take the most ethical, consent based approach to practices from other cultures, if we aren't connected to anything about our own people, we are missing a crucial part of being in relationship.⁸⁵

According to Heinrichs, practicing attention, deep listening and gratitude can support connecting with these knowledges in a more intuitive, embodied and emergent way, rather than solely with our logical mind whose limitations are strongly shaped by white socialising. These could be the very practices that can support composting shame as I learn more about my ancestor's and my own implication in white supremacy: "We all come from people who at one time lived in deep relationship and reciprocity with the more-than-human world. Recovering a felt connection to our ancestors can help us show up with more integrity to face the present conditions we seek to change". See The following chapter is informed by my experience of organising events and rituals inspired by the Celtic seasonal festivals as spaces to deepen ancestral connection and to practice these right relationships mentioned above.

^{85 -} Heinrichs, Marika. "We Are What We Practice // Thoughts on Lineage, Knowledge Transmission + Whiteness in Somatics."

^{86 -} ibid.

CHAPTER 4 - Liminality as method, ritual as process - "widening circles" so



Summer Solstice Overnight Walk 2022 (photo by angela jerardi)

Overnight walk through Zuid-Kennemerland to the sea, with Angela, Effy, Emma and Sabrina. "To walk is to be grounded. It is the physical congregation of the body at one place at a given time. (...) It is to be." (Sophie Refsgaard's testimony after a Winter Solstice walk)

Watkins and Schulman, and many of the writers I have mentioned so far, affirm that "the future depends on the breaking down of paradigms".⁸⁸ This involves a radical shift of our embodiment to compost our internalised Colonial Matrix of Power.⁸⁹ As we transform, we embody and perpetuate fewer of the oppressive systems.⁹⁰ In somatics, 300 repetitions bring muscle memory, and 3000 repetitions bring embodiment, so a lot of repetition and learning through practice is needed to get us where we want to be.⁹¹

^{87 -} Rilker, Rainer Maria. Widening Circles, poem read by Joanna Macy, On Being podcast https://onbeing.org/poetry/widening-circles/ 11 Aug. 2016. Accessed 20 Nov. 2022. From Rilke's Book of Hours: Love Poems to God. first published April 1905. Translation by Joanna Macy and Anita Barrows.

^{88 -} Watkins, Mary, and Helene Shulman. Toward Psychologies of Liberation.

^{89 -} Mignolo, Walter, and Catherine E Walsh. On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis.

^{90 -} The Hague Royal Academy of Art. "Melanie Bonajo in Conversation with Staci K Haines - Recording 15.04.2021."

^{91 -} Haines, Staci. The Politics of Trauma: Somatics, Healing, and Social Justice.

Fred Moten reminds us that "What we've been trying to figure out how to get to, is how we are when we get together to figure it out". 92 How we relate, what we embody when we get together matters; so we need to keep recentering on our joint purpose as we gather. 93

The liminal spaces of nature and ritual can help us through that paradigm shift, by helping us get back into relationship with our body's intuition, with each other, and the more-than-human world.94 The quarter days (the 8 sun-based and moon-based Celtic festivals that predate medieval times) (Solstices, Equinoxes, and 4 festivals in between these, based on the full moon) were spaces of "in between", between earth and work seasons, and moments of feast, rest, getting employed for a new season, rent collection from landlords, and debt forgiveness.95 These rituals perhaps also point at moments where social structures are more fluid or even transgressed. Similarly, in Sub-Saharan cultures, rituals involving the whole group bring a break in routine and altered states, where everything that could not be spoken or thought whilst maintaining the structure can be creatively worked with and aired. 96 The loss of liminal spaces of common lands and rituals during industrialisation meant people were now getting exhausted trying to navigate rupture on their own, with their new individual identity.97 Reconnecting with the practice of ritual, and direct connection with the land, can help shift from feeling overwhelmed by a rupture, to a "willingness to explore its context".98 The edges of ecosystems, physical liminal spaces where species from different ecosystems meet, are the spaces where the most exchange can take place. They have the highest biodiversity and are very dynamic and adaptable. 99 Permaculture strives to create as many edges as possible, and we can apply this rich edge approach to social movements too with the practice of ritual marking threshold moments.

Fremeaux and Jordan make a distinction between art and ritual, the later transforming the world, rather than just representing the world or reflecting on it.100 This brings to

^{92 -} Moten, Fred. "Fred Moten on Figuring It Out." www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmnFeGaCkGI. Quote shared by Victoria MacKenzie during a class of Guerilla Dancer.

^{93 -} Hague, Royal Academy of Art, The. "Melanie Bonajo in Conversation with Staci K Haines - Recording 15.04.2021."

^{94 -} I would like to stress that this isn't about "going back" to pre-colonial embodiment or relationality, but about being informed by the bringing together of knowledge of pre-colonial practices, knowledge of anticolonial resistance, and knowledge of embodied practices to devise practices that are relevant and appropriate to the specific context I'm writing and working in.

^{95 - &}quot;Radical Quarter Days." *Https://Www.folkloreforresistance.com/*, Folklore For Resistance, docs.google.com/document/d/1-ZY3EDMG5EjyghHMee_XdFz2c5hOK6PtecioxqM_kvI/edit. Accessed 12 Oct. 2022.

^{96 -} Watkins, Mary, and Shulman, Helene. Toward Psychologies of Liberation.

^{97 -} ibid.

^{98 -} ibid.

^{99 -} Permaculture Course with Rietveld Academy's Garden Department, 2022. The environment that is most adaptable to extreme weather, in temperature, drought or rainfall, is a mature woodland.

^{100 -} Frémeaux Isabelle, and Jay Jordan. We Are "Nature" Defending Itself, Entangling Art, Activism and Autonomous Zones. London Pluto Press, 2021.

my mind the transformative experience of the first time I did "centering on purpose" by Staci Haines. As I repeatedly take part in or facilitate collective rituals, through repetition, I reshape my neural pathways towards more liminal, interdependent and "nomadic identities". "Of Watkins and Shulman remind me that "We are not only embedded in relationships, our very identities are created through relationships". These embodied rituals are "opening up new possibilities/ways of being by practicing on purpose". 103

To destroy attachments of the commoners to all that was or could be common, time was stolen too. (...) [The enclosures] did not just rip people from their access to a sustainable livelihood, they also tore from them the inner emotional experiences of interdependence that such rites provide. 104

Following seasonal rituals creates small containers where I can experience cyclical, decolonial time. Following the cycle of seasons brings space for death and rebirth and celebration into my life, which also brings space for composting grief: moving through it, and sending it back into the soil and cycle of life (often through the water cycle too, thanks to crying). Processing grief together allows connection. To Some cultures believe that untended grief leads to harm in the collective. The rituals I do usually involve release or intention setting, and one of the commitments I wrote last year in relation to ritual, as part of the trauma therapy I was doing is:

"Slowing down the trauma cycle:

I practice working through cycles in community, to slow down the trauma cycle.

I do this through rituals, marking closures, endings, thresholds - during Celtic seasonal festivals or grief rituals. Through these I practice being witnessed in community, and re-entangling negative experiences with positive ones, so that my nervous system activation doesn't get in the way of what I'm doing". 107

^{101 -} Watkins, Mary, and Shulman, Helene. Toward Psychologies of Liberation.

^{102 -} Frémeaux Isabelle, and Jordan, Jay. We Are "Nature" Defending Itself, Entangling Art, Activism and Autonomous Zones. London Pluto Press, 2021.

^{103 -} Hague, Royal Academy of Art, The. "Melanie Bonajo in Conversation with Staci K Haines - Recording 15.04.2021." 104 - Frémeaux Isabelle, and Jordan, Jay. We Are "Nature" Defending Itself, Entangling Art, Activism and Autonomous Zones, p113.

^{105 -} Macy, Joanna, and Molly Young Brown. Coming back to Life: The Updated Guide to the Work That Reconnects. Gabriola Island, Bc, New Society Publishers, 2014.

^{106 -} Barton, Camille. "Grief Toolkit." *Global Diversity Foundation*, Jan. 2022, global-diversity.org/grief-toolkit/. Accessed 1 Oct. 2022.

^{107 -} An example: Mayis and I did a grief ritual in our classroom, after our funding application to do an anti-racist project at school had been rejected. I felt like I had already processed most of that grief before the ritual itself, but it was nonetheless a supportive ritual, including hugging, moaning, singing and moving. The next day, I got some unexpected sad news, and instinctively started to moan. I felt as if my body automatically knew what to do to process my emotions, thanks to the muscle memory of the ritual the day before.

As I have now been following these Celtic rituals for several years, I notice that it is not just a repetitive cycle, but a widening circle or spiral. Each year, I am marking the same moment in the season, and making a commitment linked to the significance of that season, from a higher or wider embodied vantage point. 108

These collective rituals are also an opportunity for me to practice gratitude and care for myself, others, and the more-than-human world. In The Politics of Care Rachel Brown and Deva Woodly describe care as "an inherently interdependent survival strategy, a foundation for political organizing, and a prefigurative politics for building a world in which all people can live and thrive". ¹⁰⁹ Similarly, Robin Wall Kimmerer notes that although the strongest driver of evolution on the level of the individual seems to be competition, on the level of the collective, it is cooperation. ¹¹⁰ Collective rituals can be a powerful way to practice "care as a political theory, an ethic and a political praxis that reorients people toward new ways of living, relating and governing". ¹¹¹ Along these lines, a commitment I made last year, related to care and ritual:

"Care:

I move away from the belief that I need to provide outstanding care to maybe deserve care myself. I deserve care regardless, for the simple reason that I am a person.

It can be a vulnerable thing to receive care; receiving care can trigger a cycle of grief for the times I didn't receive it.

I lean back into the care when I receive it.

I build trust that I can be cared for." 112

As we do the work of "caring for a world that must be undone", collective care and ritual, or what Watkins and Schulman call "narratives of participation" provide social glue, and allow the structures of that society to cohere and evolve in inclusive ways through rupture and repair. We can grow individual and collective resilience through ritual:

^{108 -} Hemphill, Prentis, and Taylor, Sonya Renee. "Feeling Whole with Sonya Renee Taylor." *Finding Our Way Podcast*, 12 Sept. 2022, www.findingourwaypodcast.com/individual-episodes/s3w7. Accessed 17 Sept. 2022.

⁻ I also notice that I have been experiencing less Seasonal Affection Disorder (seasonal depression) in the years that I have honored the passing of the seasons, and the natural shifts in rhythm and energy they entail. 109 - Woodly, Deva, et al. "The Politics of Care." *Contemporary Political Theory*, 24 Aug. 2021, 10.1057/s41296-021-00515-8. Accessed 15 Oct. 2021.

^{110 -} Wall Kimmerer, Robin. "The Serviceberry: An Economy of Abundance – Robin Wall Kimmerer."

^{111 -} Woodly, Deva, et al. "The Politics of Care."

^{112 -} An example: This can mean physically leaning back against something while receiving the care (food, words, touch, etc) or physically leaning against someone, and really paying attention to the sensations. This reminds me of the "anchoring in green" we have been practicing with Char Azad for the grief toolkit: paying close attention to the moments when we feel "green" (a colour we use to describe when we feel connected, curious, inspired...) so we can strengthen our neural pathways related to "green" and make it easier to access and stay in this state.

Rituals help sustain these reciprocal relationships, they mark and enable change and yet frame the continuity of life, with its repetition and cycles, they are balancing acts. Most importantly they give gratitude and remind us what it means to be part of a commons made up of so many other perspectives.¹¹³

One of the outcomes of "ritualising togetherness" is cohesive community bonds, "a sense of being bound together in a sacred fellowship". The Conflict Transformation workshop we have with Mar Maiques from Ostra Escuela as part of Ecologies of Transformation, reminded me that just because a group of people are put together, doesn't mean they will automatically feel as a group or be able to work together as a group. This reminded me of the pre-enclosure collective ritual of "Beating the Bounds" described by Isabelle Frémeaux and Jay Jordan: the community walking around the limits of the common land, embodying the map of the community by walking it, supports the group to both feel like a group, and to feel part of the land. Making the group feel more like a group means it will be stronger, more able to work through internal conflicts, but also to get together to fight bigger structures or higher powers.

<u>Invitation</u>: Find out the upcoming seasonal celebration from the land you are living in, or from vour ancestors.¹¹⁶

Tell one or more friend/collaborator/colleague about it, set a date and space to celebrate and put it in your calendar.¹¹⁷ Afterwards, share about the experience with them.

Please note: this doesn't need to look or feel like what you think a ritual might look or feel like, it could simply be going for a walk, or cooking a seasonal meal. This is about creating a pattern in the year that allows space for a pause, reflection, gratitude, connection and intention.¹¹⁸

^{113 -} Frémeaux, Isabelle, and Jordan, Jay . We Are "Nature" Defending Itself, Entangling Art, Activism and Autonomous Zones. London Pluto Press, 2021, p119

^{114 -} Ibid.

⁻ Watkins, Mary, and Shulman, Helene. Toward Psychologies of Liberation.

^{115 -} Frémeaux Isabelle, and Jordan, Jay. We Are "Nature" Defending Itself, Entangling Art, Activism and Autonomous Zones. London Pluto Press, 2021.

^{116 -} For instance, in Western Europe, it could be one of these: Imbolc (1st February), Spring Equinox (21st March), Beltane (1st May), Summer Solstice (21st June), Lughnasagh (1st August), Autumn Equinox, (21st September), Samhain (1st November), (Winter solstice (21st December).

You could check out the resources from The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids (seasonal festival information and ritual suggestions). These are focussed on Celtic traditions, but have a lot of crossovers with Germanic, Scandinavian and other European traditions too: https://druidry.org/druid-way/teaching-and-practice/druid-festivals You might want to queer their suggestions!

[&]quot;Ancestor" could mean different things: blood relations, adopted or chosen family, queer or activist ancestors...117 - You could do it in separate spaces but at the same time

^{118 -} Carr-Gomm, Philip. What Do Druids Believe? London, Granta, 2006.

CONCLUSION

When nurturing more reciprocal relationships with the more-than-human world as part of organising towards climate justice, understanding the invention of the nature/culture divide, and its relation to the invention of racism, whiteness and sexism, is essential. This contributes to minimising the risk of reproducing extractivist, binary thinking and white supremacist approaches in our practices. It also opens up questions about the cosmologies that existed in Europe before these hegemonies. Glimpses of these come through definitions of nature as "the restorative powers of the body", and the dynamic, living process of the Three Cauldrons / Three ways of knowing archetype. This reminds us of the principle of aliveness as a key towards transformation.

Rather than being tempted to come back to precolonial times or embodiment, getting a sense of what was attacked or destroyed and practicing different ways of knowing inspired by these re-membered or reimagined cosmologies helps understand how centuries of colonisation have shaped our somas. This knowledge can provide guidance on the paths to take towards change.

For white bodies in particular, learning about the violence around the invention of nature and its connection to whiteness and racism, and the extent of what was lost in the process of being disconnected from land, can trigger strong emotions and a range of reactions including paralysis, perfectionism, and fear of causing harm. Avoiding harm also means inaction, and avoiding opportunities for repair and transformation, which can only be developed through practice. Some antidotes to this stuckness, and pathways to aliveness and responsiveness, include: deconstructing dualist binary thinking, developing our capacities to listen to sensations and stay in touch with the body, and naming and situating whiteness as part of destabilising and dismantling it. These antidotes necessitate a skilled nervous system, which can be strengthened with embodied practices.

Popularised as a supportive practice for people experiencing grief from bereavement, cold-water swimming can be a supportive embodied practice for ecological grief and working through white fragility. By increasing the tone of the vagus nerve, it builds stamina in the nervous system, which can be lacking for white people, and can create a barrier to learning. Cold-water swimming increases the capacity to be with a wider range of sensations, including uncomfortable ones, which directly relates to how Marika Heinrichs defines Pleasure Activism for white people. Cold-water swimming also enables physically experiencing decolonial archetypes such as non-duality, or emergent strategies like the wavicle (being two opposite things at the same time). Physically experiencing this depth and complexity helps embed these theoretical learnings into our somas.

While working with body wisdoms, the notion of intuition (the body's natural knowing) comes up. This "body technology" can be easily weaponised by white supremacy culture. In fact, the spread of whiteness is directly linked to the mistrust of intuition, since one of the foundations of whiteness - the attack of women healers - was an attack on intuitive

knowledge and bodily wisdom, as well as an attack of reciprocal relation to land. Whiteness collapses the body's knowledge partly by cutting off complexity and replacing it with blankness and stuckness. Bringing back some complexity and clarity, by deciphering the different ingredients of that mistrust of the body, and accepting that our culture makes racist "automatisms" inevitable, brings choice. Choice is the opposite of trauma, and knowledge brings more choice: to be governed by racist conditioning, or practice alternatives.

An important barrier to growth for white people is shame, which can manifest as shutting down or defensiveness. Shame, the feeling of being unworthy of love or belonging, is also in its original expression a form of communication, of wanting to get back into belonging. Letting go of our shame about shame, and treating it with curiosity, can help find remedies to it. We have much to learn from Indigenous and decolonial wisdom about shame and belonging. Following Aurora Levins Morales' thinking, belonging what shame calls for and desires—isn't attached to place, but linked to being part of a web of relationships. Cultivating gratitude, the thread that connects us, can reinforce the strength of relations and feelings of belonging. Learning from indigenous practices around gratitude (particularly through ritual) can raise the risk of cultural appropriation or spiritual bypassing. Robin Wall Kimmerer and Marika Heinrichs remind us that reciprocity is an essential ingredient of a relationship. For white people or people with European ancestry, educating ourselves about whiteness, how it was created and how it exists now, and also about our roots deeper than whiteness, can be a valuable part of this work of coming back into interrelationship. Reconnecting with European knowledges with an awareness of how whiteness shapes our somas, can help process shame, and really practice interdependence with integrity, from a rooted, historical self.

Generative somatics remind us of the importance of practice and repetition for embodied transformation. The liminal spaces of ceremony and ritual are essential to belonging, since they are spaces where relationships can be strengthened, with the challenges of rupture and repair processed together. Seasonal rituals in particular, enable experiencing decolonial, cyclical time, time to compost grief, loss, defeats, victories, to air conflicts and strengthen social glue by slowing down the trauma cycle. Rituals are also spaces to practice community care, an interdependent survival strategy.

A dedicated space for transformation, "Ceremony is the way we can remember to remember". The liminal spaces of ritual bring "the sense of being bound together in a sacred fellowship." The term "sacred" can feel loaded and bring to mind religious institutions such as the Christian church which cut people's direct access to the divine. But sa-

^{119 -} Robin, Wall Kimmerer. "Robin Wall Kimmerer — the Intelligence of Plants." *The on Being Project*, 12 May 2022, onbeing.org/programs/robin-wall-kimmerer-the-intelligence-of-plants-2022/. Accessed 22 Jan. 2023. 120 - Watkins, Mary, and Shulman, Helene. *Toward Psychologies of Liberation*.

cred can also mean "not a great something that you bow down to, but what determines your values, what you would take a stand for". ¹²¹ In order for the land to be commodified, the witch—the protector of the land—and belief in magic, based on an animistic conception of nature, had to be destroyed.

If magic is "the art of changing consciousness at will", let us practice it with consciousness of our history, and surrender to the knowledge that our belonging is sacred: "that which is made special by remembering the miracle of its existence". "22 Mine and Hannah's daily practices of cycling, walking, swimming, beach combing, and the resulting centering, aliveness and connection, sparked my interest in the magic and transformation that can come from cultivating gratitude for the land and bodies that we inhabit. We found a handfasting stone by a church near our residency, tied our hands together through the stone and made a commitment to care for each other and our new friendship. For me, the handfasting we did together also became a threshold into a new curiosity for Celtic practices, ritual, and embodied commitments. Almost five years on, this writing process has enabled me to understand the ripples from this moment, and the value of practicing and re-committing to our care for the more-than-human world.



Hannah extends her hand in a commitment to shift "from an objectified understanding of the body, to re-weaving the body and the self, and the collective body". 124

^{121 -} Starhawk quoted in Frémeaux Isabelle, and Jordan, Jay. We Are "Nature" Defending Itself, Entangling Art, Activism and Autonomous Zones.

^{122 -} Starhawk quoted in Frémeaux Isabelle, and Jordan, Jay. We Are "Nature" Defending Itself, Entangling Art, Activism and Autonomous Zones.

^{123 -} Handfasting can take different forms, including the old stone in the photo above. It is a Celtic tradition which has also gained popularity in recent years in wedding contexts.

^{124 -} Cahun, Claude. Je Tends Les Bras, www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/cahun-i-extend-my-arms-p79319.

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https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WE3aE4TpRNkDIXm5uGoLWexWRH9x-IU886G9Zy2Psy4w/edit?usp=sharing

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