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The University Under Capitalist Ideology: Knowledge Production, Radical Otherness, and Poetic Language

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The University Under Capitalist Ideology: Knowledge Production, Radical Otherness, and Poetic Language

Julie Ha

WHAT IS COMMUNICATIVE CAPITALISM AND THE UNIVERSITY?

Communicative capitalism concerns the circulation of information and media, although depoliticized, in communicative networks.

The University is a communicative network specific to modern academia, in which knowledge and information— new forms of capital— are produced, consumed, and circulated in a vacuum.

HOW IS OTHERNESS CO-OPTED BY COMMUNICATIVE CAPITALISM?

The Radical Other is reduced to “difference,” which renders the incomprehensible comprehensible.

GENGHIS CHAN

Private Eye XV

You broke the star
I pinned to the ceiling

that stacked sky
I swam beneath

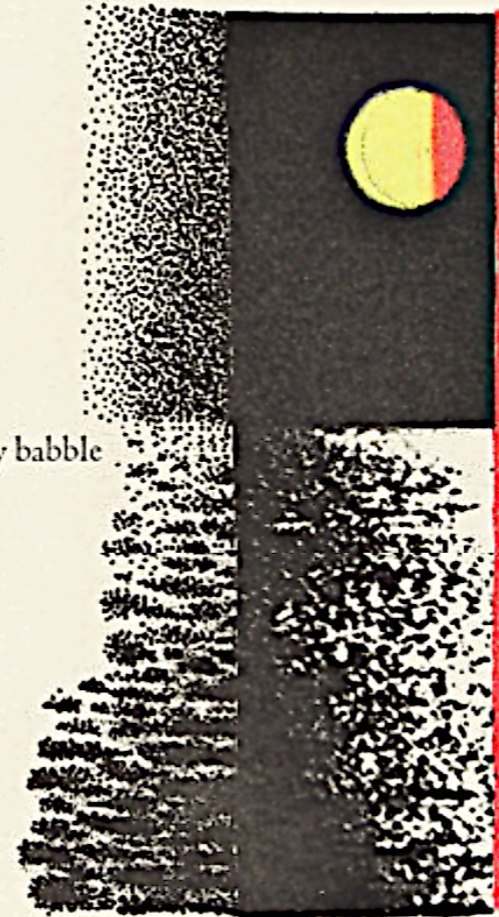
toward the window
where you were landing

watching a yellow moonlit
race of bold potatoes

outrunning the new elite
the stain clingers and honey babble

You were a music taker
at home in the spit

Poem by John Yau (1997)
Etchings by Ed Paschke (1998)



HOW CAN WE CONCEPTUALIZE THE UNIVERSITY AS A CAPITALIST IDEOLOGY?

1. **Individualism:** neoliberal fantasy that self-initiative in knowledge production sparks social and political change is internalized by academics
2. **Reliance:** the University paints itself as a safe space for representing the Other and promotes an activist-academia alliance despite information empirically outpacing and destroying meaning
3. **Militaristic Transparency:** the University’s “need to know” preemptively destroys liberatory knowledge and representations of the Other

HOW CAN POETIC LANGUAGE BE USED AS A MECHANISM OF RESISTANCE?

Poetic language

1. Focuses on form instead of content
2. Maintains the distinction between capitalism’s established reality and the world of the Other

WHAT ARE THE STRATEGIES OF POETIC LANGUAGE?

1. Mimicry and parody
2. Defying traditional grammar and syntax
3. Unknown and unstable subjects
4. False friends and false cognates