**Powell – US History According to Katrina**

Katrina and the death march of neoliberal climate economy?

“Whether the mayor's plan offered true freedom of choice or free-market anarchy, a messier way of reducing the city's footprint than the ill-fated bnobc/uli plan, still is not clear eighteen months out from Katrina. There is an unmistakable Darwinism to Nagin's market-driven recovery. For in the recovery process slouching forward on the Gulf Coast, only the fittest seem likely to survive: those with resources and determination. The resourceless are likely to fail – indeed are falling by the wayside. It is true that Katrina's destructiveness was no respecter of class or race, but the same cannot be said of the recov ery. Renters, some from the underclass (an awful but inescapable word for the truly dis advantaged) but most from the working poor and almost all African American, are in dire straits. Those who have not drifted back to town, doubling up with friends and relatives or squatting in abandoned shotgun houses, remain strewn across the American landscape. Most of the city's rental property was devastated, and there has been scant urgency about restoring it, although a scarcity of affordable rentals is hindering the recovery of businesses starved for workers. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (hud) wants to tear down the city's still-inhabitable low-rise developments, even though they were constructed in the days before shoddy building standards overtook public housing. The state's solution to the rental shortage is to offer low-income tax credits to develop ers. Recipients of government-awarded low-income tax credits usually sell them to large corporations. The developers realize ready cash, and the corporations use the credits to lower their federal or state tax bill. However, the smart money is betting that most of the credits will go unused. Escalating insurance and construction costs are rendering the deals unworkable.

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**Dimock – World history According to Katrina**

Katrina as epistemic and moral watershed

Katrina and the coherence of United States as a category

Katrina and the need for nonsovereign climate history

Dimock, 33-34

It is instructive to begin with an essay on Katrina by Michael Ignatieff, published on September 25, 2005 in the New York Times Magazine. “When the levees broke, the contract of American citizenship failed,” Ignatieff says. The breach is not just in the physical structures, or in New Orleans as a physical city, but in something even more consequential, namely, the integrity of the United States as a nation, its ability to be sovereign.

According to Ignatieff, the most “basic term” of this sovereignty is “protection: helping citizens to protect their families and possessions from forces beyond their control.” And, just as the nation is defined by its

power to protect, citizens are defined by their right to demand that protection. They are “entitled to this because they are Americans.” Nationality, in other words, ought to be synonymous with a guaranteed safety, an

insulation from any harm that arises. It ought to be our bulwark against the storm. And the tragedy of Katrina is that it seems to have thrown that bulwark into question. Ignatieff summarizes the problem as follows:

Dimock 39

“What does it mean to write a history that is nonsovereign, with the seemingly extraneous being always ready, at a moment’s notice, to morph into the un-extraneous? I would like to come back to Katrina as a test case and explore two instances of this dynamic, when a seemingly secure jurisdiction suddenly bursts at the seams, becoming a kind of flooded container, flooded by an outside that refuses to stay out. To explore these two scenarios, I would like, first, to follow the unconventional coverage of Katrina by a local newspaper, the New Orleans Times-Picayune.

The Times-Picayune received the Pulitzer Prize for this report, so the importance of its work has certainly been recognized. But the history that it gives us is a nonsovereign history, not only because the initiative is coming

from the ground up, from a local newspaper, rather than reflecting a national consensus, but also because this initiative produces a database that in no way matches the official borders of the United States.Nonsovereign history is offbeat, off-key, off-center. Its unorthodox paths jump from the micro to the macro and bypass the default center, going over and under the jurisdiction of the nation. Its scale is both smaller and larger:

operating subnationally, on the one hand, as a grassroots phenomenon and transnationally, on the other, as a cross-border phenomenon, and, in this way, bringing into relief a practice of democracy significantly different from the nation-bound variety, at once dispersed and energized by a A nonsovereign history of Katrina shows that, beyond the broken levees, what needs to be mended is the democratic process itself and its need for a reference

frame beyond the geography and chronology of the nation. The example of the Netherlands is not extraneous to the United States for just that reason. Indeed, it is only by not externalizing this body of evidence—not blocking

it out, not seeing it as foreign or exotic—that we can begin to circumvent the short time line of the United States, embracing a democratic practice centered not on this nation, but taking its circumference from the world.” 39

That circumference, in turn, radically changes the way we think about causality: the web that articulates it, the claims that can be pressed, and the responses needed as a result. The implications are far reaching, because to draw a larger input circle around the nation is also to draw a larger circle of accountability, to give a broad interpretation to the harm that it might have perpetrated at a distance, harm that might seem extraneous from one point of view. How, for instance, can we makea nation face up to the death and destruction that it is causing hundreds and thousands of civilians, thousands of miles away, on a different continent? Justice looks very different when it is framed in this way, seen as extended rather than encapsulated. Rather than being a problem of crime and punishment contained within a single nation, it becomes another instance of the flooded container: flooded, in this case, by the causal web that links it, against the illusion of sovereignty, to cross-currents affecting the entire planet, a seascape turbulent and borderless. World history and world literature have much to contribute to this enlarged sense of justice, for crucial to these fields are just such crosscurrents, input networks with multiple sources, fluid rather than territorial. Hurricanes are very much part of this seascape: they are indexes to the hydrology of the world as a whole. Generated by air-sea interaction, this hydrology can be adequately studied only through “multi-basin indices,” which is to say, by comparing data from the North Pacific, Indian, Southwest Pacific, and North Atlantic Oceans. Not Tracking hurricanes by their “power dissipation index” (a combination of the lifetime of storms and their intensity), Emanuel shows that “this index has increased markedly since the mid-1970s,” an upward trend strongly correlated with the rise in the sea surface temperature.”

**Modeling Life**

Organic Machine, More-than-Human/Transversal, Autopoeisis, sympoiesis and the Physics of Sand , Fossil Capital, Climate Debt, Spaceship Economy

Modeling life? How life grows.

Birds, forests, mountains, glaciers, vapor, smoke, rivers

**Invisible Climates and the Multisensory Arboretum**

Climate sounds beyond the visual

Plants and sounds from the places they are from

Narratives about those plants

**Woods - Blues tradition of explanation**

Music and Climate

1. How Music responds to the climate. How blues music forms from the historical conditions of Reconstruction Louisiana 25

“To ensure the autonomy of thought and action in the midst of constant surveillance and violence, Afiican Ameri- cans constructed a highly developed tradition of social interpretation. This practice finds its origins in the secret societies prevalent during rluu"ry. During this period, African, Native American and European inteliectual iraditions were forged in the crucible of the plantation South. what emerged was a highly developed introspective and universalist system of social thought and practice whose influence upon the modern world can never be underestimated.” 29

1. How music creates climates by traveling across space - the African traditions and literal instruments that create the climate of the blues by traveling across the Atlantic

“Several recent studies have identified the continuation of numerous African vocal, instrumental' and composition traditions in the blues. They have also noted the continuity of the role of performers as educators. African string instruments range from the one-string bow to the twenty-one-string kora. Furthermore, in various parts of Africa, giiots, musical families, and orchestras serve as historians, genealogists, counselors, reporters, diplomats, and social, cultural, and economic innovators' It was not a greal leap from the stringed instruments of Africa to the diddly bo, the violin, the banio, and, later, the guitar in the Americas. Despite intense efforts at suppression, the African musical sensibility and scale were preserved: How music creates climates by traveling across time.” 33-4

1. Rhythm as Social and Political Epistemology: How music becomes part of the narrative that define the culture of a climate and the climate of a culture . Blues reflect and act upon the rhythms of life in the Plantation and the post-Plantation economies

This complex of languagel4r{r}ic and performance must be understood as a whole. Albert Murray has taken to task those who associate blues music and lyrics with a state of emotional depression. Attempts to analyze the lyrics separately as literature ultimately fail because meaning and abstraction in the blues emerges from the simultaneous interaction between language, music, and movement.

Blues music is always an artful combination of incantation and percussion. It is not always the song in the conventional sense of the word . . . The essential message is usually conveyed by the music, whether vocal or instrumental . . . verbal statement can be contradicted and in effect canceled by any rnusical counter-statement. If the Iyrics laments but the music mocks, that statement is not one of lamentation but mockery . . . The words may bemoan the loss of a lover, but if the singer is also involved with such choreographic gestures as finger popping, shoulder rocking, an hip swinging all the while, the statement can hardly be considered a form of bereavement.2e

Sidran attempted to link this "oral physicality" to the process of the construc-tion of individual and community identities:

The essential nature of communication through rhythm is an unknown quantity due primarily to a lack of interest on the part of Western science. Rhythm . . . is the cultural catharsis Fanon has suggested is necessary to black culture ... it simul- taneously asserts and preserves the oral ontology ... it is on this basis that black

music can be seen ... as a source for black social organization ... to  
[According toRaymond Williams] "the process of communication is in fact the process of  
community.