

I kept along, but I wished the entire time to be stopped on the side of the road by the perfect policeman who would ask of me these things. I didn't want some angel to right my path: no, I wanted the experience of he and I floating out of our cars and meeting in between and for once, ironing out the world until it was a paper thin disc with beginning and endpoints easily just there; until I had seen or heard or tasted what it was, so that I could tell you: that there is more, and that it is both big and small, grandiose and simple, like the logic of the pyramids.

CHRIS LILLIS MEATTO

SEE:

INTERSTATE 5

INDELIBLE

I can only see because the window borrows itself from the structure of an indelible house. She sits beside a window which transforms the petals of a single intention into feathers not at all transparent, like the leaf below the single—many blossom. Each center fit with a seed, as each engagement which has not yet been made, but which will present itself as easily as these serrated edges comb the eye of the inhabitant. I am inside this indelible seed-eye, wondering from where one may enter the house.

Welcome is a word misunderstood by many whose temporal insistence upon entering and exiting follows a map which shifts within the measured walk a day allows. They come asking: will greetings assemble themselves mildly upon impossible slopes leading up to a destination, as if a destination were a location or a distance to be traveled, as if there were any place other than this, as if there were time held curiously elsewhere which could be entered, other than the timeless where the indelible rests.

The question turned is an endless resource. Have I sufficiently welcomed the wish? Will I enter form? Only elsewhere is imaginary.

You may enter, she told the timeless inhabitant, and then began to see the indelible.

She asked for an image, though small, perhaps even hidden. She made room for an image while combing a name.

LAYNIE BROWNE

SEE:

ARCHITECTURE

DÉRIVE

INFINITION

Infinition (blend of *definition* and *infinity*, both from Latin *finis*, boundary)—an incomplete and unfinalizable definition; an infinite process of defining something that cannot be fully or precisely defined; an endless list of possible definitions.

Certain fluid concepts in their emergent state are subject to *infinition*--infinite dispersal of their meaning--rather than to definition. For example, Lao-tse never gives a definition of Tao but only its multiple *infinitions*: "The Tao that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Tao. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name." (*The Tao Te Ching*, ch. 1, 1–2). Dionysius the Areopagite offers *infinitions* of the Cause of Everything. "We therefore maintain that the universal and transcendent Cause of all things is neither without being nor without life, nor without reason or intelligence; nor is it a body, nor has it form or shape, quality, quantity or weight..." ("Mystical Theology", ch. 4). Jacques Derrida never defines his method of deconstruction but only *infines* it in numerous passages. To *infine* means to suggest many possible definitions and to recognize that all of them fail to define the complexity or fluidity of the subject. *Infinition* is for the humanities what a transcendental number, with its infinite expansion expressed by a non-periodic decimal fraction, is for mathematics: an endless approximation to and escape from discrete definition.

There are several ways to *infine* the concept:

1. A direct indication that the concept cannot be fully defined.
2. Multiple definitions that succeed and erase each other and have no end thus amounting to a long infinition.

3. A self-contradictory, paradoxical definition that points out to the mutually exclusive properties of the concept (such as “perfection” and “evolution”).

The necessity of *infinitions* can be logically inferred from Gödel’s Incompleteness Theorem. The most foundational concepts of any philosophical system, such as God, Being, Absolute, Spirit, Beauty, Love, are not definable within these systems. Each discipline has its own primary concepts, such as *wisdom* in philosophy, *soul* or *mind* in psychology, and *word* in linguistics, which are subject to *infinitions*.

Thus the method of *infinition* is congenial to the subject matter of this book, devoted to the infinite potentials of the humanities and its ever “infinable” human subjects.

MIKHAIL EPSTEIN

SEE:
ENCYCLOPEDIA

INFLUENCE

*I LOVE METAPHOR (AND YOU DON'T):
MY INTRODUCTION TO CHRIS KRAUS*

In her second book, *Aliens & Anorexia*, Chris Kraus muses, “It could be that sadness is the girl-equivalent to chance. Chance has always been equivalent to sadness, it is an interior reality so physical and large there is no need to access it by studying the mathematical laws of permutation. Do numbers exist outside the atmosphere, like stars? The 20th century male avant-garde, crocodiles in club chairs, studying chance as algebraic code... Chance is ‘work’ and ‘work’ is always something quantifiable. Trace the line between two points...”

Within a field and industry that is still so deeply patriarchal, it is easy, and perhaps expected, for established male writers to use their power to name their brothers and choose their sons. It is permissible for male writers to acknowledge the influence and impact they’ve had on the literary landscape, their influence on younger writers, and in the process, perpetuate their relevance to arts and letters. Women writers, in contrast, seem to me less likely to name mothers and sis-

ters, to choose daughters, often because they don’t have the same power to use, but for other reasons as well. Women writers tend to be taken more seriously if they rattle off a litany of older male writers as influences. Women writers are just influential to others, male and female alike, but less often credited or celebrated for their impact; more often, they’re ripped off. Ageism joined with sexism, for example, might make being called “the godmother” of the French New Wave, as in the case of filmmaker Agnes Varda, sound far less sexy and honorific than it should. Women writers shouldn’t love or celebrate each other’s work, shouldn’t name each other in public. As in all things, we should be jealous, suspicious, and catty, fighting for male attention and approbation. I remember how a male music reviewer once said that Rikki Lee Jones was suffering from “kill mama syndrome,” directed at Joni Mitchell. The relationship between the two had to be antagonistic. There was no other explanation, like, perhaps, admiration. Women artists must be singular, unique, aloof, no matter how many Dylan, Lennon, Hemingway and Kafka knock-offs roam the planet unchecked.

That said, there are so many points in my writing and thinking life that connect me to Chris Kraus, and illustrate the impression she’s made, and continues to make, on me. All these points come back to “work” : her influence on me as an editor, publisher, as a woman in this world, and particularly, as a writer. What I “know” about Chris Kraus’ work feels to be ancient history and very fresh and resonant, intuitive and lived experience all at once.

I was first affected by Chris Kraus around 1998, at Modern Times Bookstore in San Francisco, where I worked as a clerk. I’d already known of her, because I had bought Cookie Mueller’s *Walking in Clear Water in a Pool Painted Black* many years before, in Boston. I was glad to know that there was an editor out there interested in how people survived the raucous and shifting times they lived in, and documented that survival. First person fiction of real life. I filed that information away and moved on. At Modern Times, I put myself in charge of futzing with the Semiotext(e) / Autonomedia carousel, making sure the books were properly grouped by author in the spinning rack, were color coordinated, foreign, active and native agents integrated, commingled, relatable. Then one day, Chris Kraus’ *I Love Dick* arrived with our book order. There were three or four copies. Two never made it to the carousel. My friend and coworker, Peta, who’d ordered the books and somehow knew the Native Agents’