



Creative Writing Session (6th July 2023) – Team writing and responses

‘Sometimes I strain to see the invisible...’

Irene to Sharon

Sometimes I strain to see the invisible boundaries that divide my gender, race, sexuality.

Sometimes I am a chimera, a border creature with fur and feathers with smooth skin, textured hair, the masculinity of my brother, the voice of my father, the selfishness of our youngest, the gentleness of my sister, and the selflessness of my mother.

Other times, I am plainly exist. No boundaries, no definitions of gender. No assignment. No objects of identity pushing back and forth.

I wonder which is the most natural state outside of socialisation and social constructs. Is there a natural state or is that a new age dream? What does world without boundaries look like?

Wait.

But why must we push against boundaries? Why not weave boundaries? Boundaries exist to avoid harm. I state my boundaries---my limits--so others can appreciate me as singular person.

How can we both respect boundaries but---gently?---push against them?

Wait. Pushing. Respectfully. My waiting, not pushing is dis-respectful to me. Constructs abound which challenge the textures of my soul – the textures which exist outside of my body, my skin, my voice, my family. These textures are me.

Sometimes society strains to see the invisible elements that create the dream but define the natural.

Sometimes society strains to see the consequences. The beliefs which assign onto me, onto you and onto us, a definition of a society outside of reality.

If I strain to see this world without boundaries, what are you seeing? Do you see or can you (un) see? Are you the pusher or the puller? The one that conforms, confirms and maintains.

Do you strain to see me? See me. I am not the limits of myself within this state of distant, close, boundaries. I am not my limits. I am not your limits. I am not their limits.

Sometimes I strain to see the invisible lines that differentiate my boundaries from yours. I will stop waiting, stop straining, stop seeking, stop contextualising, not for you but for me.

Sharon to Irene

'Sometimes I strain to see the invisible paths which control our movements. The invisible strings that play, the threads that weave societies ill-wishes and controls. I strain to see why my path, your path, their path, our path has been built to create boundaries. Revealing the invisible walls that hold is challenging. We must leave the safe haven of our thoughts and our imagination. The textures we feel to guide us through these invisible paths are bumpy, stinging, lingering – they move and turn but they are rock. Steadfast in what they mean for me/you/us to move through this world.

Sometimes I strain to see the invisible, but sometimes I cannot unsee the visible forms that contain me/you/us. Moving past, pushing past, with elbows, knees, hands, fingers, arms, legs, thoughts, words, spirit, soul, we strain to see what we can be, what could, the futures that could hold us.

Sometimes we strain to see the possible. Objects that stop us, objects that challenge, objects that conform, chastise. Sometimes is a time, a frame work, a frame that doesn't work for you/me/us.

Sometimes we strain to see the world. Experiencing it through limited views of ourselves and others. Blinders of ideology that trap us in a system that does not work. We become complicit in our own oppression. Doing the work of the "master" with no end in sight.

Sometimes we strain to speak the possible. Afraid that the sound of our whispers will hit the wrong ears and our dreams of freedom will be weaponised against us. As though saying "black trans live matters" under our breath will cause any hope of mattering to end. As though the truth of mattering will turn our matter into dust.

Sometimes we strain to speak our power. As acknowledging our agency will mean we are accountable to something beyond us---something that might move us.

We are everywhere entangled...

Jeneen to izzy

The scapegoat of the world sat in their empty wooden hut, in the cold air of the night, so clear that the stars in the sky were pinpoint clear sparkles. He turned the black stone object in his hand, it was cool to the touch, and his ashen naked skin shivered slightly as he sat naked on his rough and rickety wooden chair. They turned the object over and over between their fingers, lightly circling the flat textured underside with their fingertip, waiting for it to begin its spin into motion that would herald the breaking of the entanglements. Their job was simple, to take the blame, to vent the build-up of pressure on Earth so that some sort of equilibrium could be gained. Now though he had the black turnstone, that could free him from this abyss of loneliness. They silently speculated about their onerous task, the unfair legacy that they inherited, as the last remaining survivor who had the knowledge and skills to perform the untanglement but through untangling, they questioned, "what will be lost?" and "what could be gained through entering the entanglement?". Yes, danger, death and destruction were possible but so too were hope, connection and fun. The only certainties were adventure and messiness. Their breath became shallower and louder as they contemplated, "what's next?" As they realised what they needed to do, the black stone object, suddenly felt heavier in their hand as they slowly raised their arm and summoned all of their strength and threw the object beyond the horizon, waiting for the uncertainty to come.

Izzy to Jeneen

We are everywhere entangled

I am a rock, I am an island (Paul Simon)

No man is an island (John Donne)

Paul Simon was wrong. He is not a rock, nor is he an island. The sea shapes islands and rocks and they form part of the sea. Their boundaries are porous. The sea moves and changes its course to find its way beyond the island. The rock, once formidable, rough and tough is polished and humbled by the sea, rendering it a mere pebble, pretty and collectable. Paul Simon, like you and I, are part of the messy assemblage that is the human race, the natural world and the digital spaces we occupy. Boundaries ebb and flow, messy entanglements are rife, and yet so much time and energy is spent enforcing boundaries, making them up to suit particular power structures. Humans are meaning making machines, so we force meaningful boundaries on abstract notes into the shape of songs that will help us find meaning in the world. An attempt to unpick the entangled strings of communication, power, emotions, and relationships. Our archive seeks to collect objects that push boundaries in order to provide space to breathe for those who inhabit the messy edges, the spaces of entangled meaning that we are everywhere.

The centre cannot hold

Laurence/cc

'The centre cannot hold...'
Who made you the centre?
Who decided that you were the centre?
Was there a vote?
Did anyone that's not you have a say?
Is it that you are the centre or that where you are is the centre?
If it's geographical, will you no longer be the centre if you move?
No, see I can tell you don't like that thought
You made yourself the centre and the centre is where you are – your rules
Aristotelian laddery structures
Classical
Inviolable
Monotonal
Friable
Fragile
Fucking snowflake
You are the self-proclaimed centre but there are more of us
You are the centre because we allow it, shape it, share it
What if we didn't?
What if we stopped?
What if the centre was shifted ?
What if the centre was plural?
What if the centre started from me ...
And my bodies, others bodies...
Who can I hear, smell, touch , see?
How do we move together?
And away from each other...
What becomes of our collective centre ...
And it's hold...

CC to Laurence

The centre cannot hold ...
The centre is a two headed beast
It craves control and is craven
Will fight tooth and nail and bloody claw to hold its status
Panting, drooling, head swivelling toward any threat
Ugly, stupid, hollow-believed, empathy-free, bellowing
Red-eyed, dead-eyed, wild-eyed dinosaur - the meteor is coming
Then what comes?