DELINDA COLLIER

MEDIA PRIMITIVISM

TECHNOLOGICAL ART IN AFRICA

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VISUAL ARTS OF AFRICA AND ITS DIASPORAS

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INTRODUCTION AFRICAN ART HISTORY AND THE MEDIUM CONCEPT

> Speech is not in people's hands. People are in the hands of speech.

Media Primitivism: Technological Art in Africa unravels the medium concept as it has been formed in the crucible of the Atlantic world. Therefore, the term *Africa* does two things in this book that at times will seem contradictory. It indicates a set of cultural practices of mediation that are specific to their place and history on the continent. But it also remains a concept—Africa—that is the antitype of art in art history and media studies: origins, essences, and immediacy. It thus refers to the desire for a common, prephilosophical experience that is frustrated by translation, semantic slippages, and the violence of conquest. Media primitivism is the specific place related to an artwork's *aura*, the historicity and sitedness of technology, and culturally specific conceptualizations of technology and art. Media primitivism is the relationship between geographical distance and acts of distanciation. In this introduction, I return to the origin story of the fetish in order to map out divergent and convergent definitions of *medium* in three fields—African art, art history, and media studies—in order to argue that Afro-Atlantic and Western theories of art and technology formed in mutual contestation and, many times, symmetry. The fetish concept is a locus of overlapping objects and intellectual histories: technology, religion, myth, art history, representation, and iconoclasm. Fetish is to fetishism as race is to racism: a misplaced concreteness attributed to people and their material objects.

Fetishism is allegory, further abstracted to become pseudofact used in theories of art and art history. I return to the accusation of fetishism, because critiques of the term have largely missed the fact that it was a judgment made about art *and* technology. It is therefore key to understanding current debates about mainstream art, media art, tech art, African art, and the art and science nexus.

Following the introduction's reorientation of methodology, *Media Primitivism* closely engages with works of art from around 1940 until the present that activate concepts of mediation (as opposed to static medium) using the oldest kinds of media—water, earth, air, metals, blacksmithing, and so on. They demonstrate a playful and sometimes painfully conflicted engagement with foundations: primitivism as material (matter) and as causation (origins). *Media Primitivism* examines the nearly outdated term *new media*, pointing to what it always ran from but also toward: origins or essences. The concept of medium would be unthinkable without the *iconoclash* of both granular and civilizational contact, conquest, racism, and colonialism. And so in this introduction, I look not only to the African art history that has been defined within and against the historical European avant-garde but also the longer history connected to territorial conquest: connecting long-standing questions of art to the earliest moments of contact and cosmopolitan Africa. The fetish is a singular representation of a metonymy, an impossible proposal, a black box of mediation that results in the fiction of one object of art.

African art's intermediality (especially the blurring of the sonic and visual), entanglements, and esotericism have haunted modernism's search for the singular and increasingly literal object of art. *Media Primitivism* draws connections between audible and visible modes of perception and mediation, charting a general history of technological seeing and hearing that merge by the end of the twentieth century. This "global village," the confluence of mediated sound and vision, is a return in some ways to philosophies and societies that did not neatly distinguish the two. Each chapter of *Media Primitivism* discusses the intellectual history of media in various African art and philosophies and the ways in which they haunt and lurk in the historical record. As the media historian Siegfried Zielinski implores about preserving such diversity, "Media are spaces of action for constructed attempts to connect what is separated. . . . In the longer term, the body of individual anarchaeological studies should form a variantology of the media."[1] If we are indeed to build a variantology of the media, we must quickly dispense of a myth that technology studies has perpetuated: that race and gender are stable, essential categories outside of progressive, changing technology. Categories of race, gender, medium, and technology are

vestiges of Enlightenment thought: all are implicated in the notion that "Enlightenment is an event in the history of mediation."[2]

The artworks that I consider in *Media Primitivism* ground themselves in *natural media* to reorient art to a broader definition of art and technology, to preserve the indeterminism of art, and to resist its reification. The art examined herein reoriented me to longer cycles of time and entangled histories and substances, and it has guided me in my thinking. I arrive in my analysis, at times, at something so primary that it cannot be depicted or analyzed. This some "thing"—also the nonthing, the noncategorical—then, is media primitivism. There are cognates in many languages that I will explain in order to help me approach the art. For instance, Christopher Wise writes of the Mande word *nyama* as "anti- or prelogocentric": "a *psychē* upon which the logos necessarily depends, a *psychē* that is blowing wind before it becomes mind."[3] Such concepts are culturally marked but seek to describe something as yet unmarked and unmediated, insignificant but potent. They reach and gesture, always incomplete. The artworks in this book use *technological* objects to mediate, but they activate atomic and objectless substances (water, light, air waves, electromagnetism, "alchemy") as concepts of technology. For this reason, I avoid the term *new media* in this book, while recognizing that in the broader art world, the label might be used to describe this work. However, in my desire to shift the language that we use to describe art, *Media Primitivism* highlights a pantheon of technology used in the art that substitutes media objects for ancestors.

Each chapter discusses various "new" media that have at some point been contested as art, beginning with film and ending with digital art. Allegory often accompanies shifts in the methods by which people desire and project material and conceptual stability in the face of societal change. The result is an Africa that, as Felwine Sarr writes, is "saturated with meaning."[4] In some of the most dramatic epochs, such as during the slave trade and colonialism, allegory and myth enact gaps in translation and erased histories and also attempt to share symbolism. Ethnography, James Clifford argues, is always allegorical: "These kinds of transcendent meanings are not abstractions or interpretations 'added' to the original 'simple' account. Rather, they are the condition of its meaningfulness."[5] Allegory and "figurism" are accusations associated with fetishism, which is imprecise, confused, and prone to revisionist history. Fetishism is not concrete and tends to give way to automatic or illogical thought. *Media Primitivism* therefore examines appeals to mythical thought via its resuscitation by African artists associated with modernism. To give just a few examples, Halim El-Dabh has relied on myth to give contours

of meaning and narrative to a sound practice that relied on the collision of sound waves and cultures in a studio in Cairo in 1943. His full-scale symphonic compositions are often based on myths from many sources. When he narrated the process of making *Ta'abir Al-Zaar* (1944), he included an apocryphal story of disguising himself in women's clothing to make it into the all-female *zaar* (spirit) ecstatic dancing ceremony, loosely resembling Dionysus in the Bacchae, in order to address his outsiderness to the ceremony. James Webb's *Black Passage* (2012) models itself on the journey of Orpheus (displaced in Africa) descending to the underworld connected to the epic of mining in South Africa. Souleymane Cissé's *Yeelen* (1987) reprises *Sundiata Keita*, an epic from thirteenth-century Mali. In addition to playful nods to European surrealism, these artworks align with allegoricity, the conscious move "from this to that" within mediation. If allegory is related to fetishism in that it is an accusation—that it results in a type of false seeing—then the dispute over the status of certain objects as art can be used to test the provincialism of the term *modernism*. Along the lines of Bruno Latour's "we have never been modern," we (the specific and the collective we) have never been so literal as to be without allegory, and allegory is one method by which supplanted histories have been renegotiated, with all of the risk that entails.

Electricity as the Animating Force of a New Art History

So, while this is another book about modernism in Africa, this modernism is not defined solely by nationalism or anticolonialism but rather the granular detail, work by work, of concepts and substances that make up the concept of technology—and thus the concept's reticence, seeming interiority, and poetics. Repeatedly throughout the book, I refer to electricity and light as emblematic of the complexity and the growth of the various media and their genres.[6] Electricity courses in and out of representation in modernism. Sometimes it is the invisible animating force of mediation, but sometimes it is visible and audible; it is represented. The media theorist Friedrich Kittler wrote that the digitization and fiber-optical transmission of all information means the end of medium specificity.[7] Neither Kittler nor I argue that perceptual specificity has vanished—indeed *Media Primitivism* is poised on the historicity of perception—but rather that transmission and the intermedial/multimedial/immediate aspects of art are more emphasized by artists after its electrification and subsequent digitization. The history of electrification in the colonies makes it more apparent that it is

not neutral or inevitable. To account for its contingency is to account for various methods and experiences of modernity around the world. Electrification was often limited to European enclaves and sites of segregated industrialization on the continent and was racialized along with concepts of technology. Still today on most of the continent, the implementation of electricity is guided by multinational interests and profit-loss calculations more than by ideals of innovation or social improvement. *Media Primitivism* begins with Michael Taussig's good-humored point about technology never having become second nature. He muses, "Try to imagine living in a world whose signs were indeed 'natural.'"[8] Of course, nature and technology were never really separate.

Methodologically, electricity unites some of the concerns of art history, media studies, and African studies. Africanists typically write about the state form, and so in that discipline, electricity (as infrastructure) is a metric of citizenship. Art history has witnessed a multitude of writings about the changes in signification and representation as the world became electrified, but still, electricity is mostly invisible within the discipline. In media studies, electricity (not electronics) is only now becoming significant, despite the field's complete focus on art that uses electricity.[9] It is, in all three disciplines, the foundational material of modernism and a locus of both meaning production and the contestation of the separateness of the realms of art and science. But, if I can put it this way, the hypermediality of electricity-based art is an *African* way of doing art. The electricity that I describe is also energy, or nyama, what it takes to transmit something along or through a medium. Indeed, McNaughton likens nyama to electricity, writing, it "is a little like electricity unconstrained by insulated wires but rather set neatly into a vast matrix of deeply interfaced social and natural laws."[10] Compare this conception of mediation to what Caroline Jones writes about an experiential, "global" art: "Like Nietzschean sparks that fly from the philosopher's anvil, signifying energy can be violent. But the sparks of conflict also cast light. They can be used to forge tools to think with, produce a fulcrum for political commentary, ignite local debates, or construct a more elastic public sphere. In this context, art becomes open to event."[11] Jones figures energy into a larger discussion of "trans," a set of tactics based on the prefix for words like *transnational*, *translational*, *transactional*, and *transcultural*.[12] Using McNaughton's rich description of the concept of nyama, I'd suggest that this attention to that aspect of art as a larger energetic environment is deeply historical and set always against the pre- or ahistorical; that is, it appears to not have origins. This confusion of origins is one reason academic artists and scholars further developed the idea that African art was

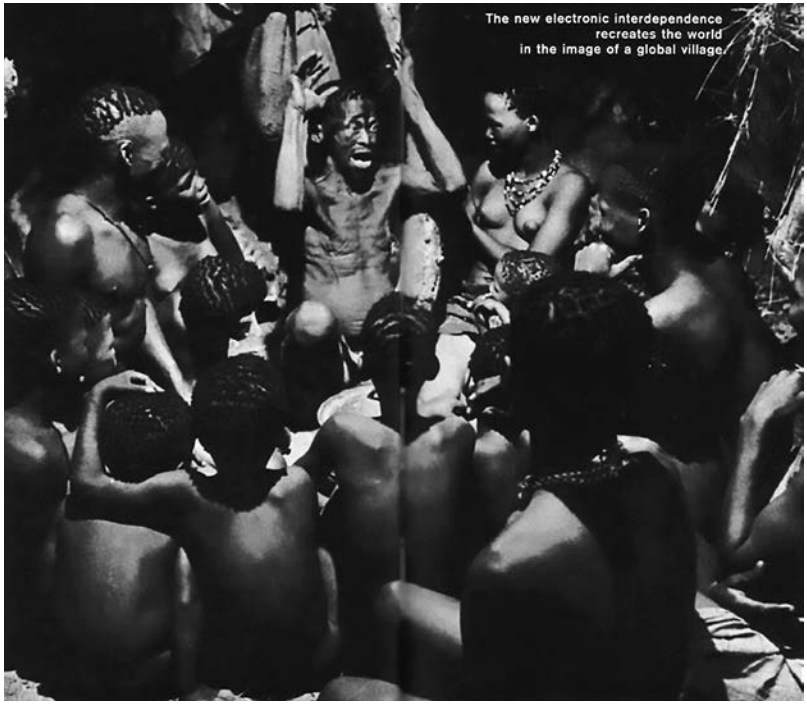
ahistorical, right at the moment that electricity was extracted/abstracted from the environment. Electricity and electronic media grew alongside photography and other new methods of representation, shaping new conceptions of subjectivity and nature, and particularly the concreteness of those terms in the way that they are perceived.[13] Increasingly, cosmopolitan Africa was refigured within tech and art discourses as "nature." Douglas Kahn writes, "These determinations of in-degree and in-kind, and the presence of different classes of energy involved, have influenced what is and what is not 'technology' and, thus, whether technology obstructs access to 'nature.'"[14] In addition to being a medium, electricity is a great way to think of the medium concept, in that it is both a substance and a process, with seemingly inexhaustible relations and attachments. It allows us to think through the problem of causation that lies at the root of the various breakaway fields of art and even that term *art* itself.

On the Field and Its Hidden Assumptions

Because tech art, African art, and art history are so complexly imbricated, the following literature review is unconventional and not comprehensive but rather speaks of objectivity as an unreachable ideal in each of my fields. I am particularly interested in demonstrating how certain texts pose causation as a shifting question, as this is where the question of technology in media studies and art is yet unsettled. Sean Cubitt notes that media studies tends to "privilege a technical-scientific conception of media above a more general, philosophical-aesthetic one," and, conversely, art history is generally ignorant of how many media work physically or mechanistically.[15] *Media Primitivism* is oriented at the borders of technological media history and the broader field of philosophy and aesthetics, because in many ways, African art has functioned as the negative condition of each. Media studies scholars have in recent years attempted to create a field for the work and to examine its shared origins with art history but with mixed results. These disciplinary divides have been institutionalized in nations, conferences, professional organizations, journals, and websites. But as Edward Shanken notes, the exclusion is more due to the inability for art history proper to account for AST (art, science, technology) as it has been written in the last hundred years. He presents the example of Jack Burnham's ostracization in the late 1960s as emblematic of a historical preference in art history for artistic volition as a driver of art production and a general abhorrence of technology.[16]

Returning to the fetish will account for this split in art and tech, via the prevalent understanding that African art was "natural" (base) material, non-technological, and nonphilosophical. A fetish was the fulcrum—a "discrete thing"—of things personal and societal, technological and philosophical.[17] Rather than positing a full faith in technology, or "the manufactured," to the exclusion of critical distance, as Pietz writes, "fetish discourse always posits this double consciousness of absorbed credulity and degraded or distanced incredulity."[18] Pietz cites a fifteenth-century Venetian merchant who claimed that Africans marveled at his navigation equipment, assuming that they were ignorant of the compass and the chart.[19] That is, the fetish accusation was based on an observation about both art and technology. The fetish discourse brings into full view the ambivalence about race and gender in AST and art history generally, its subtle, tricky, and persistent primitivism. Primitivism is obviously found in Hegel's and Marx's theories, but it lurks still nearly unexamined in Marshall McLuhan's infamous declaration that the natives of Ghana had no apparatus through which to understand new media.[20] *Understanding Media* in particular was an apocalyptic book, one that promised mass destruction with each new wave of technological takeover, and Africans were the innocent subjects within his scheme. It is literally illustrated in McLuhan's and Quentin Fiore's graphic book *The Medium Is the Massage*, where a two-page spread of an image of a group of black unclothed people (neither Ghanaian nor urban African) gathers around a storyteller who raises his arms up to emphasize a spoken exclamation. The caption reads: "The new electronic interdependence recreates the world in the image of a global village." The commonplace phrase "global village" that rolls off the tongue of nearly every armchair observer of mass media rehearses the racializing mechanism of media studies. It comes later in the Englishman Brian Eno's glib statement that there's not enough Africa in computers, the seemingly apolitical artist whose album with the American David Byrne *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* is emblematic of white men musicians freely sampling non-Western music in their championing of electronic sound.[21] Eno's work has eclipsed the other pioneer in electronic music and its relationship to African music, the Camaroonian Francis Bebey. Finally, there is the French new wave filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard, who used Mozambicans as his conceptual tabula rasa for radical televisual communication based on the very idea that the villagers were ignorant about mediation.[22]

J. Lorand Matory locates the assumptions about intention in the fetish accusation: "Contrary to Marx's demeaning metaphor and his assumption that the so-called fetishist is blind to the source of the fetish's value, Afro-Atlantic



I.1 Reproduction of Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore's *The Medium Is the Massage*, captioned: "The new electronic interdependence recreates the world in the image of a global village."

priests typically know that it is people who make gods."[23] Matory asks us to include the conceptual projections of African and Afro-diaspora artists onto so-called fetishes alongside those of later writers like Marx and Freud, writing, "A thing is most likely to be called a fetish when it mediates the relationship between parties with very different or even opposite perspectives on their social relationship, perspectives that are also expressed in opposite perspectives on the thing itself."[24] What made the Europeans different in this exchange is that they would go on to graft their negative experience of difference onto a racial schema within a complex trade relationship that included the fabrication of capital via the body of the slave.[25] The visibility of fetish within our texts, therefore, should have the express purpose of desublimating the vicissitudes of medium and the racializing mechanism of art history. The debate about the risks of using such a fraught and racist concept has been addressed by many,

including Pietz. Rosalind C. Morris notes that fetishism's "history appears in retrospect to be one of relentless vacillation between dominant metaphor and disavowed designator, between valorized and vilified referent."[26] And increasingly, many books published on the fetish lie at the intersection of art, material studies, new media studies, and cultural and black studies; it is a return of the repressed that occurs when disciplines are in crisis. The fetish accusation registers the degrees of anxiety about an object's mystery, its withdrawal from the knowledge of the accuser. It reorients art history to its beginnings as a pidgin language in the theater of conquest and institutionalized with the sublimated racism of abolition. It shifts points of view to regard European art's mystery to African artists, opening the possibility of art history as an unscientific constellation of mediations within this space of contact. I would perhaps leave the term behind and avoid what David Doris calls "the stain of perversity," except that the works of art I am most interested in were forged in similar spaces of contact and have constellating genealogies of art and technology.[27] Indeed, what Doris argues about the terminology "art" versus "power object" can be argued for any artwork, especially those that use the complex apparatuses of contemporary technological art, like computers: "If the real 'power' of an object resides not in finely articulated visible form but in the accumulation of invisible essences and processes, then what is at stake is the very authority of the 'artwork' as the ultimate bearer of meaning and value."[28] When the invisible and processual aspects of certain media art objects are key to their existing both inside and outside of Africa, the pidgin object/concept fetish can help us unfurl multiple aesthetic and political valences in works of art and how those relate to racial declensions. I want to put fetishism in its place, as a historically specific, frail, but habit-forming object- and status-obsessed discourse, the major aspects of which still operate in discussions of global art.

Whither the Fetish?

Most accounts of the fetish begin with its mysterious etymology: it derives from the Portuguese word *feitiço*, which derives from the Latin *facticium*. The repetition of its etymology should clue readers to the concept's logocentrism and its emergence within comparative social sciences that seek hard, "material" evidence to allay the anxiety of unknown origins of objects. After all, the accusation of fetishism is that it covers up its real materiality and knows nothing of its own history. A few authors connect it to Egypt via Phtah in Herodotus

for various reasons, sometimes related to Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (77–79 C.E.) and the opposition of the term *terrenum*, or that which naturally occurs, with *facticium*. Pliny's delineation between the two occurs within an exhaustive discussion of the things of the earth and of manufacture: he is among the earliest commenters on mining, a recurring theme in *Media Primitivism*. The transactional capacity of African art was first developed in the fetish concept because African art was believed to sustain belief—alchemy, connection to the dead, mediation of the ancestors and other supernatural powers: the fetish was a charm and also a spell. By the seventeenth century, *fetish* had become a shared term, used often in conjunction with more local words for objects and practices. In one example from the mid-seventeenth century, Wilhelm Johann Müller writes, "When the Blacks talk to us Whites, they call their idol-worship '*fetisiken*,'" even though, as he notes, they have their own words for the same objects. He then goes on to note that *fetisiken* is probably a diminutive for the Portuguese "*fetiso*," before concluding without explanation that we will never know with accuracy where the term comes from because of the natives' ignorance: "They themselves do not know how they are led."[29]

Thus Pietz is correct to historicize the fetish as a discourse of contact, an object and concept that only exist in this zone of fluidity between Africans and European explorers and traders. It shaped what we understand as African art, but also as European art. Fetishes were coterminous with early African Islamic art and modern Kongo Christian art, "spaces of correlation."[30] During the Enlightenment period, as discovery turned into conquest, difference was figured as a (Hegelian) choice between art that is fundamentally base and material, knowable, and untranscended and one that is referential of an Idea or Spirit, wielded like a weapon in the messy and protracted struggle for territorial and resource control in Africa.[31] The fetish was—and still is—the focal object of an unrealized secular modernism. Pietz writes that "the fetish could originate only in conjunction with the emergent articulation of the ideology of the commodity form that defined itself within and against the social values and religious ideologies of two radically different types of non-capitalist society."[32] In William Bosman's *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea* (1704), he asked an informant in Ouidah to explain how many gods his people worshipped, and Bosman responded,

> The number of their Gods was endless and innumerable: For (said he) any of us being resolved to undertake any thing of importance, we first of all search out a God to prosper our designed Undertaking; and going out of

> doors with this Design, take the first creature that presents itself to our Eyes, whether Dog, Cat, or the most contemptible Animal in the World, for our God; or perhaps instead of that any Inanimate that falls in our way, whether a stone, a piece of Wood, or any thing else of the same Nature.[33]

Bosman, writing around the same time as Lessing's Laocoon essay on artistic media, explains that there is no distinction described between that which has been fashioned by human hand or by the god(s), a sentiment that would be repeated across subsequent explorers' accounts.

The feedback of the fetish concept, that is, was immediate. Latour argues that the fetish story reveals the double bind in Western culture: "Right from the start, the word's etymology refused, like the Blacks, to choose between what is shaped by work and what is artificial; this refusal, this hesitation, induced fascination and brought on spells."[34] He continues, "Yet the misunderstanding persisted, because each side, acting on its own terms, refused to choose,"[35] reminding us that Western culture is founded in many ways on denying mediation while reveling in its mysteries. That is, he argues, "If westerners had really believed they had to choose between construction and reality (if they had been consistently modern), they would never have had religion, art, science, and politics. Mediations are necessary everywhere."[36] Ultimately, Pietz writes, "the fetish must be viewed as proper to no historical field other than that of the history of the word itself."[37] *Fetish* became *fetishism* as a groundless word became institutionalized, reified in the process of creating comparative religion and the fields of sociology, art history, and anthropology. In 1760, Charles de Brosses, a liberal French aristocrat and protoanthropologist, compiled the literature on fetishes and published an analysis in his book *On the Cult of the Fetish Gods*. He penned the neologism *fetishism*, which mapped onto an already-existent racialized mechanism well established by the sixteenth century with the advent of the transatlantic slave trade. De Brosses's book, published at the height of the slave trade, contains passages like, "As a rule, among the most ancient nations of the world, those that were completely brutish and coarse fabricated for themselves these strange terrestrial Divinities through an excess of superstitious stupidity."[38] But it opens by linking the "confused assemblage" of mythology and its ability to grasp at any object with which to associate its concepts.[39]

De Brosses betrays anxiety about men becoming manipulated by tools or machines and can thus be seen in the larger Enlightenment debate about the value of technology. Francis Bacon in his 1620 *New Organon* hailed the advances in empirical study and thought made possible by gunpowder, printing,

and nautical compasses. To him, these three "mechanical things" differentiated the civilized and the barbarous.[40] Just a handful of years earlier, these same mechanical things were written of in terms of their ability to stoke disorder among African nations and catalyze the sale of enslaved persons to the Portuguese.[41] To superimpose the fetish concept onto the medium concept is to highlight the double bind of proximity and distance, attraction and repulsion, a result of the fetish's existence as a product of sacra and territorial and capital conquest. Media studies' ancestor Walter Benjamin was fascinated by the effects of distance and proximity on artworks; he formulated many of his most cherished statements on art and technology after close readings of the art historians, and his mentors, Heinrich Wölfflin, Alois Riegl, and Franz Wickoff. It is not just granular perceptual processes that inform medium theorizing but also the space of (global) conquest and civilizational/racial difference—that is, the spatial metaphors in art history. Finally, there has to be something to conquer, whether a word, a piece of wood or parcel of land, or a body.

The Medium Concept, Institutionalized

Both art history and media studies have characterized African art as absent of mediation (noncritical and nontechnological, respectively). Mediation—at the crux of debates and outright wars over representation, iconoclasm, figuration, and abstraction—relies on the possibility of its own negation. Given this, the Western philosophical history of the term *medium* is famously difficult to write. Western conceptions of medium vary between the imitative and the communicative. The etymology of the word *medium* is usually given as Latin *medias*, or "middle." From Democritus (460–370 B.C.E.), we receive the model of medium as occurring within perception, as objects impress upon our sense organs. The debate persisted with those who took to directly observing natural elements to explain the world. Others like Parmenides (c. 600 B.C.E.) and Empedocles (494–434 B.C.E.) elaborated on various aspects of metaphysics, each arguing the specific character of Nature, human perception, and what lay in between. The English word/concept *medium* in art history can be traced to two key texts: the Aristotelean conception of medium as means of imitation in part 3 of *Poetics* (335 B.C.E.) and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (1766).[42] Aristotle's interest in medium goes no further than a concern to be specific about the methods through which adequate imitation or mimesis can be achieved. John Guillory

writes that Aristotle "sets the question of medium aside, *where it remained for two millennia*."[43] The rise of communication media in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Europe occasioned a rereading of the nonobjective aspects of medium. In Walter Benjamin's many essays on medium, he would reconceptualize the "middle" as milieu: the sociohistorical as conditioning the perceptual. Antonio Somaini explains that Benjamin was influenced by the so-called *media diaphana* (air, smoke, vapor, atmosphere, etc.) in the post-Aristotelian tradition. He writes, "The study of 'media' is conceived as the study of the different material and technical articulations of the environment, the *milieu*, the atmosphere, the *Umwelt* in which perception takes place," and this tradition carries forward into media theory today.[44]

The shuttling between medium as middle or field and medium as object or discipline hinges on the distinction one assigns to perception, politics, historical or physical causation, and communication. Guillory argues that the concept of medium as we understand it today was anticipated—even *wanted*—before the nineteenth century and because of technological developments; it became necessary to retool the word *medium*/*media* to theorize communication: "the development of new technical media perplexed thereafter the relation between the traditional arts and media of any kind."[45] Previously, as noted in Greek sources, painting, poetry, music, and so on were not analyzed for their communicational qualities but rather their imitational, a registering of what impressed itself on the sense organs. Guillory explains that the term for *medium* as it was translated from Aristotle's *Poetics* was not an obvious one, with the early translations substituting *medium* or its plural, *media*, for "things." Aristotle enumerates some of these, naming what we understand to be the classical media of painting, drawing, poetry, music, and so on. These definitions of middle or means lay dormant until they had to: that is, until technical media introduced remediation, the transposition of one medium into another. At the turn of the twentieth century when large amounts of African art objects were removed to Europe, medium was being questioned alongside representation.

Such fundamental questions about art and iconoclasm typically occur when societal chaos makes it hard to distinguish art from everyday life. The notion that Lessing argues that a medium is material and distinct was argued alongside the artist's "freedom" from compulsion by religion to make art. His and other Enlightenment arguments for freedom from tyranny for themselves, Matory argues, occur not as an abstract concept but from the direct observation of enslaved Africans, a cognitive dissonance at the heart of Enlightenment theory.[46] Thus, the volitional model of art history embraces the

idea that freedom constitutes art, not material or technique. The autonomy of medium thus takes on a different kind of meaning when read together with the real conditions of a global slave trade that, by the eighteenth century, no European could ignore. Then, the question of ownership and private property is an aspect of the subjectivity being posited by Lessing, that a medium should never represent a different medium, which amounts to "a lifeless reflection of another's genius."[47] Medium corresponds to specific sense organs, depending on the properties of the medium itself, which are static. Lessing rests most of his analysis on the boundaries between painting and poetry, for instance, which correspond to the classical division of time and space in art, one of the most long-standing and unconsciously accepted tenets of art history. Later, via Clement Greenberg, the artwork obtains a status that is particularly charged and powerful, premised on its autonomy in the face of great uncertainty about art and science via the figure of technology, where art is defined primarily through its boundedness and Kantian criticality ("the imitation of imitation as process").[48] It constrains the concept of medium to the very edges, for instance, of the canvas. It is one thing.

African art, then, became the locus of medium questions in the early twentieth century precisely because it challenged the singular, intentional (subjective) work of art and seemed instead to harken back to art in the service of religion: artwork externally compelled and collectively made. African art exceeded, or at least tested, the boundaries of secular modernist disciplines. It was physical proof of a history of slavery and colonial conquest that was variously repressed within the European consciousness. African art was theorized in earnest beginning with the crisis of imitation that photography brought, the challenge to mimesis and to intention—to the very notions of Enlightenment freedom that seemed to be decaying with the advent of world war. The increasing terrible nearness of the Other, civilizational and philosophical, could also be experienced as a pleasure of distanciation hinted at by Guillory, when he writes of media relieving the anxiety of "the dispersion of persons in social space."[49] The difference between distance and distanciation is built in the theorizing of African art as a category, in that it is at once geographical and conceptual and rendered conceivable by object/concepts, that is, the fetish. The mercenary ship, the telegraph, the camera, and the *nkisi* nail figure are all media objects that registered and bridged the distance between Europe and Africa, just as they registered and bridged the difference between subject and object in Western philosophy.[50]

In the Enlightenment project, the Southern Hemisphere was to become the beginnings for Europeans; it was "experimental evidence."[51] Further,

Dipesh Chakrabarty has argued that Enlightenment philosophy, that which gave rise to art history, identified the beginning of human social institutions with nonhistorical or nonpurposive "primitive" humanity.[52] This kept open the possibility of "unintentional actions and their unforeseen consequences," part of the "experimental" aspect of the evidence that was compiled in travel accounts.[53] Rosalind C. Morris and Daniel H. Leonard take this to mean that "if 'savages' indeed participate in the creation of culture, as de Brosses's account of fetishism argues, then natural history introduces a historical horizon characterized by radical otherness: we no longer see our own image reflected back in the mirror of history."[54] The question of the unity of the species was therefore countered by the desire for that which withholds itself and remains Other.

While colonial governments used media objects to conquer Africa, black metropolitan artists were using those same media in search of a viable alternative to what they considered an ethically fraught European society. Unlike their maritime ancestors, the early European avant-garde artists' fetishizing of African art was culturally relativist, and the crisis of art, society, and communication was something to be entered fully. In James Clifford's classic text on surrealist art of the 1920s and 1930s—an art obsessed with the vicissitudes of medium—art and ethnography were coterminous: "To see culture and its norms—beauty, truth, reality—as artificial arrangements, subject to detached analysis and comparison with other possible dispositions, is crucial to the analytical attitude."[55] This research the Europeans did, in many cases, with African artists in their midst, asking similar questions. How this analytical attitude would be organized in relation to African art became, by the mid-twentieth century, a renewed question for scholars, curators, and artists from Africa and Europe. It persisted throughout the twentieth century, as technologies of both representation and war rose up to produce two assemblages that shifted the meaning of technology and nature entirely: the atomic bomb and the computer.

In response to these, and in the wake of McLuhan's field-defining work of the 1960s, systems and cybernetics thinking penetrated the art world with two exhibitions in its center, New York, in 1970: *Information* (Museum of Modern Art) and *Software: Information Technology; Its New Meaning for Art* (Jewish Museum). Both exhibitions embraced various trends in thinking, such as ecology, environmentalism, systems (broadly construed), and an expansive understanding of medium and art. This moment of theorization is foundational for current media studies, as it maps out when tech art breaks off from mainstream art history and criticism, the latter subsuming in many ways the former with the introduction of *Artforum* and *October* and a renewed philosophy of art.

David Carrier writes that Jack Burnham, the curator of *Software*, "championed the wrong new art," articulating an implicit suspicion of tech art in the circles that would come to dominate the discourse of art history in the West, particularly by writers affiliated with the journal *October*.[56] To state a possibly obvious point, the mainstream art world after the "radical" 1960s was as uninterested in African art as it was in tech art.[57] That is, it simply was not registered because, along with its supposed anachronism, it was assumed to be uncritical and naïve, like the fetish accusation. Typical is a statement that William Rubin made in his catalog essay for the contested exhibition *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art*, where he writes about the "generally low quality of most tribal art" and then goes on to muse about the lack of a critical tradition in "pre-literate" societies, even dismissing Yoruba aesthetic discourse.[58]

Evidence and Context in Institutional African Art History

The fetish was not just defined by its objectness—its misplaced concreteness—but also contained the entire distinction between that which is made and that which is natural: intention and arbitrarity as a metric of critical reason. None of the labels was neutral but rather often became a question of truth or lie, between who could be trusted and who could not; the made is trickery. It also meant that the fetish was untranslatable to the accuser because it was, essentially, irrational and thus had no comparison in the world of objects of the rational viewer. To resist the impulse to name a trickster, anthropology developed a model where African art should have to testify and be transparent as social scientific evidence. Thus art rests embedded in anthropology's radical contextualism, tied to the people (not person) who produce it. Edouard Glissant narrates the model's assumptions about people: "In order to understand and thus accept you, I have to measure your solidity with the ideal scale providing me with grounds to make comparisons and, perhaps, judgments. I have to reduce."[59] African art would become visible even if the Europeans had to force it to be "evidence" of superstition and reduced logic. It could not simply remain untranslatable or withdrawn or too complex to signify—especially as it demonstrated the existence of a cosmopolitan, interconnected Africa. There is no easy compromise between art's esotericism or poetics and the evidentiary requirement, for they both rely on there being a limit to translation.

The full history of African art history is beyond my scope here, but I want to remark on a few key issues, specifically the formal versus the evidence-

based writing about African art, a devil's choice between the singular art object and a *field*. At the turn of the twentieth century, the question of arbitrary form was variously proposed in debates about world art history. The literature divided between ethnography (i.e., Marcel Griaule and Franz Oldebrechts) and formalism (i.e., Carl Einstein and Vladimir Markov). After the end of World War II, the split mapped roughly onto the Iron Curtain, with Markov's literature mainly finding a Soviet audience and some influence in the journal *Présence Africaine* with Einstein. Scholars in the United States forged a third way, a combination of ethnography and art historical iconography that attempted to distance itself from European colonialism. Kate Cowcher explains that the relatively late adoption of models of African art that accommodated, let alone advocated, African self-rule was due to the political ambivalence of scholars in the United States and Europe.[60] A type of competition between the Soviet Union and the United States for prominence in Africa was the impetus for funding large-scale research of African art, and African scholars' attempts to host scholars from both sides of the Iron Curtain came from a stated desire to create a global but African-directed scholarship of African art.[61] At the same time as these attempts for African control over the discourse of African art were being made, "Africanist" art historians in the United States built the literature on extensive contextualization. The problem of establishing a context to determine meaning became the main force of African art history, whose scholars argued for the importance of African art to general discourses of art history. Erwin Panofsky, recognizable to generalist art historians, was widely used by U.S.-based art historians of African art, as he provided a method to study stylistic elements of the work of art in conjunction with some adjustments made to context to account for ethnographic difference. Context was built through an ever-important field research. By establishing a "correct" meaning of African art—the original context of its use and production or its relationship to local cosmologies and politics—scholarship could repair the iconoclastic and destructive tendencies in Western interpretations of African art; art could be stabilized within a social analysis.[62]

Henry John Drewal wrote in support of contextualization, saying that the "history of the discipline" and its "development during the age of imperialism meant that objects were often torn from their cultural contexts."[63] But as scholars have recently begun to note, the buildup of resources for research occurred within the funding structure during the Cold War, facilitated by institutions like the Ford Foundation, Carnegie, the State Department, and others.[64] And though, for some, reconstituting context was an ethical duty,

African studies in the United States was receiving extensive funding from the State Department to support fieldwork. The problem that context fixes, according to Drewal, is formalism: "objects in isolation."[65] One overriding concern scholars had, then, was exactly the racism of the fetish concept and the extent that its conceptual misreading was due to an inordinate focus on the object, disarticulated from a stable field or environment. The model relied on a dichotomy between field and object that some scholars implicitly critiqued when they acknowledged "the social lives of things," or how objects move from place to place.[66] Fieldwork attempts to describe a complete ecology and is based on a figure/ground relationship that was beginning to crumble as contemporary African art history included more than just colonial-era collections and historical African art in Europe and America.

At the close of the Cold War and during a time of renewed thinking about global art history (as supplanting world art history), Whitney Davis opined that the reliance on context and Panofskian methods meant the field of African art history was "in deep, perhaps fatal, conceptual trouble."[67] He wrote, "The 'contextualism' of the essays, then, is paradoxically constituted as an attempt to fill in or paper over the hole in the center of the project—a metaphysics of meaning that is systematically voiding the history of representation."[68] In Robert Soppelsa's text on Panofsky, for instance, he writes that an analogous practice to Panofsky's examination of literary references in Western art would be things like "oral traditions, literature, archaeology, ethnography, and ethnohistory."[69] The logocentrism of Western art, itself famously hard to obviate, is stretched thin to encompass other evidentiary materials from Africa, its sameness simultaneously negated by the "ethno-" prefix. In attempting to right the wrongs of earlier imperialist art history—world art history—Davis argues the scholars commit another logical error, where, once again, the group and the artwork must remain stable entities within an "expression theory of art."[70]

Formalism

In U.S. African art history, formalism became shorthand for what was opposite to context and "thick description," an inappropriate commitment to the thing itself, isolated and autonomous. But in the 1960s, some scholars in the Eastern Bloc revived Vladimir Markov's writings in the Soviet Union as a way to combat the "bourgeois ethnography" of the West.[71] Markov rejected the notion that African art was externally compelled, and his conviction that

it was made by artists comported with African political autonomy. Indeed, Zoe Strother suggests that Markov's close-up photos of African art, many of them head shots, evoke a sense of the subjectivity of the maker.[72] Indeed, the collapsing of the subjectivity of the maker with the sculptural qualities of the (especially figurative) African art objects would formulate the terms of representation generally. That is, a photography that evoked the real presence of the objects, described in textural detail with an emphasis on their boundaries and contours within space, would shift in later decades to photography as the primary vehicle for political subjectivity and visibility.[73]

In many ways, then, the fruitful time before African independence movements in the late 1950s and early 1960s was fully institutionalized by the Cold War and the professionalization of overseas research. The visible political academic research of *Présence Africaine*, its purposeful revisionist historiography in the service of black emancipation, was contained to the few years between its founding in 1947 and 1958. It was a time when the question of origins was debated in the academy, particularly around the work of Cheikh Anta Diop. Diop's scholarly work set out to prove that black Africans were derived from Egypt, laying claim to its celebrated past and working against its appropriation by imperialist academics. Egypt gave African art a longer and more developed genealogy. The persistent question throughout the key years of the journal was how to historicize African art. Jacques Howlett, the philosopher and cultural advisor to *Présence Africaine* beside Alioune Diop, insisted that Picasso's now infamous statement—"Negro Art? I've never heard of it"—was a negation of the theory that African art was a recognizable precursor to European art. Howlett goes on to argue for an otherness of African art once again based on its functionality, that "[African objects'] deep meaning was not disinterestedness but practice, they were in all rigor neither simple things nor aesthetic creations, but pragmata, tools."[74] Only three years earlier, however, *Présence Africaine* had published an article by the dealer and cubist scholar Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler that stated Picasso's and Matisse's interest in African objects was aesthetic; they understood it as art.[75] But unlike a tool, Kahnweiler argues, instead African art was the ultimate art that made a "plastic reality," that is, an illusion made real in space.[76] In both accounts, the object is central; in both accounts, the question is its purposiveness and disarticulation from a field and its status as a medium that shifted its position according to the time and place of its regarding.

This again raises the question of a radical contextualism that renders a foreign object so entirely culturally specific that it cannot be appropriated or translated. Such a thing would exist almost as an abstract proposition itself,

which is partly what we should consider Carl Einstein's famous book *Negerplastik* (Black sculpture) (1915). Sebastian Zeidler writes about Einstein's employment of the fetish to describe the "nonessential" in *Negerplastik*.[77] His embrace of "that culture's irretrievability" struck the possibility of it acting as an ancestor of European art. Einstein's *Negerplastik* was the most radical of the arguments about the relationship between African art and the question of representation. He argued that African art confounded its viewers because it did not address them in a straightforward, mimetic mode; it lay outside of the history of mimesis. Certainly criticisms had been made about the appropriation of African art for the purposes of prefiguring what was to come in European art. A major aspect of Charles de Brosses's term *fetishism* is the appeal for concrete evidence in studying fetishes, along with a growing outcry among Enlightenment scholars against so-called figurists, both Neoplatonic and Christian: figurism, the notion that African art prefigured (or prophesied for some) European.[78] Einstein goes further. Zeidler writes that it "was an attempt not to reify African sculpture as a set of new objects that would enrich the modern Western world picture, but rather an attempt to think it capable of shattering that picture, by confronting a subject who expects an experience of sculpture to be a realization of the possible with an object whose formal structure ought instead be described as an actualization of the virtual."[79] Zeidler argues that Einstein was obsessed with undermining the integrity of the "unified whole" of Western art, and particularly the deployment of words to understand African art. Rather, African art was the epitome, formal and philosophical, of art being unassimilable. No wonder, then, the photographs of African objects do not have captions. Zeidler brings up a key point in the placement of African art in Einstein's work and the beginning of the twentieth century generally: "Like *African Sculpture* [Einstein's earlier book], *Negro Sculpture* cannot stand as an accurate historical account of African art. But, thanks to its art-critical share, it can stand as something like the obverse: as a book that, by taking the art deeply seriously as visual fact rather than distancing it as historical or ethnographic document, allowed it a powerful comeback against contemporary models of Western sculpture."[80] Hovering between accuracy as an art historical (and ethical) value and pure fantasy or hallucination, African art embodied a pure Other that was, at once, recognizably art and outside of the Western tradition. Zeidler again: "It is not just that we don't know what 'fetish' means, Einstein is saying: we don't even know that we don't know what it means."[81] What I argue via the fetish is similar, that the source or meaning of a work of art congeals only as a compensatory gesture for the risk of its not meaning anything to "us." As with *Negerplastik*, there

is a certain perversity and impossibility in decrying logocentrism in a book, but collectively, African art has, since the early twentieth century, distressed standard methods of translating nonverbal objects into meaning that can be properly analyzed according to either science or philosophy.

That is, even the avant-garde rejection of the Enlightenment institutions of academic art and art history had a limited ability to interrupt the automatism of the racialized mechanism, let alone its cultural universe, of its methods. Strother contends that Carl Einstein departed from already-established facts about African art in order to fantasize a condition of total detachment and unbridled creativity. Einstein was, as she notes, particularly taken by transformation in masquerade practice, something not again proposed about masquerade until the 1970s (which corresponds to amulets and *minkisi*, which were included in art museums in the 1960s).[82] Indeed, these periodic flights of fancy wherein Africa is an allegory of ecstasy are attempts to suspend accepted propositions of historical or physical causality. It is a projection on Einstein's part of what he wanted from art generally, mediated through the fantasy figure of the African artist. Strother writes of Einstein's choices, which seem to be formal but can be politically construed: "Einstein never once uses the term fetish. However, make no mistake: the work that collapses signifier and signified, the thing that is mistaken for the god, is none other than 'fetish.'"[83] She argues that Einstein could not have been ignorant about the function of African art, as by the 1870s there were long and developed debates about the function of African art in religious practice, with anthropologists like E. B. Tylor openly correcting himself and other popular depictions of Africans worshipping "things."[84] Rather, she suggests, the collapsing of all signification was a desire he projected onto this external object along with vacating its place as the historical antecedent for European art. It was a bold negation of the philosophical bases of Western art but one that relied on a willful ignorance of a long history of African cosmopolitanism. However, perhaps Einstein, like the Afro-Atlantic priests throughout history about whom Matory writes, knew he was making a god out of African art, a genre without an origin or a history.[85]

Zeidler remarks further, "What we have here is a transformation of autobiography into art-historical fact. The ontological position formerly held by Einstein's authorial persona is shifted to the African artist."[86] He goes on to note that for Einstein, African art was the ultimate existence of nonessence in art: "it means nothing"; it does not symbolize. As his ultimate goal was to render his own writing "meaningless," Zeidler explains that his texts have held an ambiguous place in the history of the academic discipline.[87] Though

as fraught as Einstein's text was, his desire for nonorigins was the recognition that Western art history can never account for African art but must mediate it with fetish objects. In fact, it would have an audience in early twentieth-century scholarship by black diasporic writers like Aimé Césaire, Léopold Sédar Senghor, and Alain Locke, all of whom argue that Einstein was the first European to take African art seriously.

Milieu and Perception

Einstein's book was part of an avant-garde use of African art as a counternarrative to ocularcentric Western art. It was one way to cope with the difficult task of attending thoroughly to trance, magic, and myth as obscured causality: a perceptual and conceptual apparatus that is unavailable because of the distance of time, space, and language. *Negerplastik*, on the one hand, put African art under the reign of Western ocularcentrism but simultaneously suggested it could not be had visually. The proliferation of photographs of African art during the first decades of the twentieth century registered levels of access to African art objects and held the viewer in suspension between belief and disbelief of the work of art—they staged the concept of mediation that variously exposes and conceals the object of African art. They can be seen as an attempt to control the terms of mediation and to highlight the "trick" of African art by fixing its perceptual milieu, leaving aside Africa. Some have noted the importance of lighting African objects in the process of their photography, adding a different dimension to the argument that electrification shifted perceptual conditions.[88] Walter Benjamin's many definitions of medium included the space of perception, the ontological act of naming, the world of color, and a diaphanous halo. It is this last definition of medium that would later become his famous and oft-misunderstood "aura" in his 1935 essay "Work of Art in the Age of Its Mechanical Reproducibility." As Antonio Somaini explains, Benjamin's interest was in conditions of perception, "the atmosphere that surrounds the material world of the nineteenth century as it is represented through photography and that conditions the possibility of the modern spectator to have access to it."[89]

Strother argues that *Negerplastik* relies as much on photography as it does on any new way of understanding African art; she cites André Malreaux's statement that photography "intellectualized" art, that "the creation of a homogeneous archive of images, skillfully sequenced for purposes of comparison and contrast, constituted the founding act of African art history."[90] In-

deed, as Malreaux would remark in his famous *Museum without Walls*, "For the last hundred years (if we except the activities of the specialists) art history has been the history of that which can be photographed."[91] But I want to suggest that African art's visibility in this early avant-garde moment of its photography was at best reluctantly intellectualized, because photographers also consistently suggested in their work that the visual apparatus was not enough to understand African art and especially not its history, if it was even allowed that it had one. African art appeared but would remain strange both because of the way(s) that it was practiced on the continent and the subsequent framing of that difference in Western art history. African art became emblematic of what was available and restricted to visual perception, suggesting a host of other sensations that were missing—things that couldn't be touched, smelled, or felt—thereby reinforcing the notion that Africa was out of reach. This way of framing African art was (and still is) common in media studies, which often drew uncritically from colonial-era writings. Many of these studies had the goal of proving the inaccessibility of Western mediation to Africans.[92] Like the fetish as it became fetishism, the registering of difference in the field of perception was extrapolated to describe civilizational epochs, where one Ghanaian man's response, a sanitary inspector from Accra, is a synecdoche for the African perceptual apparatus. In turn, Africa is emblematic of the global village, a technophobic version of the myth of eternal return.

Because a reconstruction of the mimetic faculty of a place, time, or people is impossible, according to Taussig the only hope is to mimic the condition of magic itself; the scholar wants her or his representation of art to become so concrete that it retains the power of the original. Taussig takes this desire to implore the scholar to think of writing as "the capacity of the imagination to be lifted through representational media, such as marks on a page, into other worlds."[93] But Kofi Agawu writes that building up context can never restore the condition of its historical or cultural perception, as it relies on a falsification of the aesthetic moment. He would rather focus on Europeans' accounts of hearing the "harsh disagreeable sounds" of African music.[94] He argues that aesthetic judgment made them more visible as interpreters and the sited specificity of the aesthetic moment:

> When in later periods of "proper" ethnomusicological discourse such descriptive language and its attendant ideology are excised, we enter also a period in which, perhaps only coincidentally, writers are less confident about what their ears tell them. With this new, mediated response, this

> elevation of symbolic above semiotic order, comes a substitution of a false piety for an authentic, personal engagement with the phenomenologist's Sachen selbst. The fate of African music reception is not helped by such piety.[95]

Then, Agawu introduces the possibility that Nigerians themselves might also find the music discordant and vile. This surface/depth conflict in interpretation leads me to the fundamental problem for medium and mediation: the myth of the stability—the neutrality—of contextualization. The outsider scholar, in assuming a native possesses more or better information about the work, also assumes that the experience or information is different than what has been culled from her or his own attention; this is what Agawu calls "ethnotheory."[96] That is, Agawu helps us to parse the data of an artwork from the practices and moments of its perception. It might not be enough to approach the work of art more closely, since there is no promise that accuracy and proximity will undo the condition of mediation, which is estrangement.

Rowland Abiodun's *Yoruba Art and Language: Seeking the African in African Art*, stresses the role of language (specifically the Yoruba concept *oríkì*) in writing about Yoruba art from a Yoruba perspective.[97] In his criticism of scholars who, according to him, do not account for Yoruba linguistics in their analysis of (usually precolonial) Yoruba art, he notes, as Agawu does, the conceptual baggage of European languages. Oríkì is extended into a verbal/visual nexus that allows for Abiodun to introduce other concepts that aid in interpretation. That is, the interpretive act is one of finding the most proximal to the origination of the object and thus the most "accurate." Proximal terminology assumes a fidelity to the aspect of the medium of African art that is its milieu—essentially its specific context—but these descriptions are often described in North Atlantic literature as "ethno-theories" of Yoruba or other located aesthetics. Abiodun writes that oríkì are a verb more than a noun; they energize and summon to action; and "quite often, they are mnemonic devices, transformer-carriers intended to facilitate free communication between this world and the otherworld."[98] Oríkì could indicate the difference between African art that we look at versus African art we look through or see with. Such an argument is found, but not completely developed, in Moyo Okediji's compelling theory of triangulation, which is meant to preserve the *in-betweenness* of art. Okediji suggests that the concepts found in Yoruba aesthetic theory are fit to interpret not only African art but all of art.[99] He maintains art's alterity.

Nsemi Isaki describes *nkisi* as "the name of the thing we use to help a man when he is sick and from which we obtain health; the name refers to the leaves and medicines combined together."[100] That is, the designation *nkisi* is in its combinatorial potency (metaphoric and metonymic), not in its particular form. Because of this functionality and interiority—their modes of addressing incredibly complex systems like the slave trade—they were among the last African objects to be considered art, because they always stood as the negative definition of art. The legacy of the fetish concept can be most easily recognized in art and technology that has been black boxed, such as computer art, internet art, and much of what has been called new media art. It, like African art from the time of de Brosses's texts, is thought to contain mysteries and demonic charge.[101] If the nkisi or the *mandinga* bag are emblematic fetishes, it is because the objects they assembled inside of themselves were metonymic, what made it most efficacious in the "makers' search for safety and protection in a violent world."[102] The logic of mixing contents that appear to be banal but are referential and indexical, what was in structural anthropology referred to as sympathetic and contagious magic, and the larger implications of the fetish as an in-between of art and technology emerge. It becomes an object whose concreteness is in direct contradiction of the multitudes it contains. On this principle of mixtures and their multitudes in technology, Latour writes, "Consider how many black boxes are in [your] room. Open the black boxes; examine the assemblies inside. Each of the parts inside the black box is a black box full of parts. If any part were to break, how many humans would immediately materialize around each? . . . The depth of our ignorance about techniques is unfathomable."[103] The things we live with, the things called technology or art, are assemblages of things but also of the presence and absence of people. In computers, the relationship between source code and action is occluded—it is, in fact, the ultimate belief in the magic of media objects that recalls the esoteric practices of religious art. The set of functions that could be understood epistemologically as an object—that is, a static epistemological unit versus the more fluid operations of medium—is what Wendy Hui Kyong Chun calls "sourcery," or the fetishizing of source code as the executor of a program.

This conflation of instruction and command with its product is likewise linked to software's gendered, military history, as Chun argues: "In the military, there is supposed [to] be no difference between a command given and a command completed, especially to a 'girl.' The implication here is: execution does

not matter—as in conceptual art, execution is a perfunctory affair; what really matters is the source."[104] Chun reasons that the relationship between source code and its ability to execute is made clear only after the fact of its execution. That is, execution is not guaranteed. "What is surprising is the fact that software is code, that code is—has been made to be—executable, and that this executability makes code not law, but rather every lawyer's dream of what law should be, automatically enabling and disabling certain actions and functioning at the level of everyday practice."[105] Chun argues that the vicissitudes of execution should be the very question of medium. Assigning a causation within the event of mediation is itself a power move that realigns social attachments. This debate over the fetish is about a power dynamic, a "transfer of efficacy," that corresponds to a mystification of freedom.[106] Chun, like Pietz, presses us into thinking about the source code fetish as likewise a "logical mistake of hypostasis" or Whitehead's "fallacy of misplaced concreteness" of the order that has been ascribed to African art objects and their worship. Accounting for the black box of technology and art, its existence as a multiplicity, risks unresolved intention and causation. In Wyatt MacGaffey's response to William Pietz's series of articles on the fetish, he writes, "The underlying principle that makes it possible for such objects [like nkisi figures] to seem meaningful is not mistaken causality but, once again, that of metynomy."[107] They were remarkable because they were known to represent and do many things at once. That is, there was no choice between the mimetic act and what it represented but rather a knowledge that any "thing" was also already a concept that was transitive, able to slide into or interact with something else.

Mining and Metallurgy as Figures for a Slower History

The regime of mining, with its logic of transforming or substituting objects and extracting energy, was generated as a naturalized racializing and gendering mechanism, an example of mediation writ large. Mining, it is worth remembering, is an activity as old as human civilization and was historically related to both painting (representation) and making tools (technology). Mining began in southern Africa at the Ngwenya mine in Swaziland, which has been a site of extraction for about 40,000 years. Industrial mining was increasingly made into a fetish object by creating an interior to the earth: inside are operations and assemblages that are hidden and causally obscure. Mining has formed a global division of labor and "may in no sense be differentiated

from the question of what is technical."[108] The world was divided into zones of materiality that corresponded to raw materials and finished products—to produce, in this sense, would also mean to bring up from below the surface and into form. I consistently return in this book to mining as emblematic of the "trans-" aspect of mediation: transmutation, transformation, transfer, and even transubstantiation. It is nearly impossible to write about modernity in sub-Saharan Africa and not address extraction. Industrial mining shifted the view of Africa as a mysterious and dark continent to one full of mineral wealth: potential energy and luxury. The legends built up around mining feats (one historian even describes a "metallurgical nationalism") are indicative of the mythical landscape new media occupies.[109] Therefore, classic anthropological writing on African art has equipped us to examine the myths and protocols of modernity. Eugenia Herbert's *Red Gold of Africa* (1984) pursues two lines of reasoning common in discussions of African technology: "objective" scientific descriptions and local mythologies of technology. As Herbert writes, "The smith functions as a priest, artist, shaman, magician, initiator precisely because his work demands not merely manual skills but the esoteric knowledge to manipulate the dangerous forces at play in the extraction of ores and in their transformation into finished objects."[110]

The study of artists and blacksmiths, their work with elements and because of that their cultural valence, is emphasized in the history of African art history because it has served as the most complete unification of technological histories and their philosophies. It brought esoteric knowledge to bear on the process of determining meaning. Patrick R. McNaughton, in *The Mande Blacksmiths: Knowledge, Power, and Art in West Africa* (1988), writes that *nyamakala*, specialized professionals, "own the rights to arcane spiritual and technological practices and are therefore able to offer special services to the rest of society."[111] And though I do not reflect on their work overtly in this book, Deleuze and Guattari's figure of the metallurgist, then, reverberates throughout this book, drawing as they do on case studies and the deep history of technology. Similarly, with the filmmaker, "light itself may well be eternal, and its handling historical, but we should not seek radical change where there is none."[112] In an attempt to archaicize the figure of the filmmaker and, in my case, the new media artist, the metallurgist deals with material that is constantly in flux, whose form constantly varies and shifts between state actors and nomads whose existence undermines the state. Using such broad strokes, the near defunct term *new media* can be restated: a medium is new when its origins and genealogy are in question and when its technology is not invisible.

As I wrote *Media Primitivism*, I found myself skirting a line I wanted to erase, between radical specificity that preserves the alterity of works of art, the cultures and singular minds that make it, and a growing urgency for species-inclusive history that erases difference in the present. Indeed, my desire for cosmopolitanism has historical roots.[113] In many ways, what I describe here is influenced by mid-twentieth-century thinkers like George Kubler or Gregory Bateson, who attempted to archaize technology and art by a descriptive reaching for the interpenetrating lines of thought and action with nature. Much of the humanities recently has come together around concerns about environmental and social disaster, discussing our responsibilities as both scholars and users of media, characterized by Jussi Parikka's argument that "nature affords and bears the weight of media culture, from metals and minerals to its waste load."[114] Paradoxically, this concern for the deep time of the media is also a form of presentism that I navigate in the last chapter of *Media Primitivism*. But primitivism was always a form of presentism.

Thus, obsolescent technology is another way to think about primitivism, in that objects are always already part of a deep time and prefigure their own death—their constant boundedness to the earth. In stating that obsolescent technology is a stand-in for ancestors, I ask us to consider anew the personification of objects that Western philosophy sublimated. To orient away from the "new," I mean to examine the avant-garde as a fossil, much like what T. J. Clark writes in his elegy for modernism.[115] Only here, I insist that we include the particular terror that the figure of technology has brought, the historical and current reality of human replacement and large-scale demise of diversity. And so I conclude this introduction with the enormously complex term in the title of the book, *technology*, as I wish the *technological* to become again a philosophical question in the artworks assembled here. I like to return, from time to time, to Heidegger's "Question concerning Technology," because, in its bold refusal to instrumentalize either the term or any object(s) to which it might refer, it also demonstrates a philosophy built on a racializing mechanism. "It is as revealing, and not as manufacturing, that the *technē* is a bringing forth."[116] What could be more about origins, about archaic truth, than the act of revealing and becoming, instead of a means/ends description of tech? Heidegger's belief in the purist aspect of origins able to be revealed as a technological process underpinned his ideological failings. In several passages of his works we now know of, Heidegger makes the same accusation of a misuse of technology against Jews (as a whole) that de Brosses makes against Africans (as a whole) in his coining of the term *fetishism*.[117] Both scholars create unarticulated

masses of people out of their particular fear of the massive assemblage of technology, that is, the metonymy of technology, which particular combination is its unquestionable—mysterious—political valence.

Surely, electricity-based mediation has reached the point where the human no longer is the primary audience for or even author of images, something highlighted in recent writing and artwork by Trevor Paglen.[118] But this kind of otherness of technology has long been the fear of humans and their objects, which is partly why the fascination with African art has reached a point of describing its otherness or sameness in various configurations. Laura U. Marks writes of the kind of self-replicating and groundless systems that characterize Islamic art and design, which is the same as electrified art.[119] There are parallels to be found among that which has been simply called "indigenous" design. But Christopher Wise notes that few writers are willing to see the implications of their research on nyama—and I would extend that to other "indigenous" art—to the level that abandons the analytical mode, where philosophy is heresy: "The paradoxical belief in the Father as intangible yet 'truly existing essence'—which then is represented by a filial copy in the unreal world of the senses—signifies a break from a far more ancient thinking of the world that flourished in Egypt and elsewhere, a theology of the word as groundless ground or *mise en abîme*."[120] If we understand *fetish* to be a pidgin term born of encounter and negotiation, we have a place to start: the alterity of art, the assemblage of art—not as an ends, evidence, or fact but as a dream of a mise en abîme of connection, address, encounter, substitution, and withdrawal. This media primitivism, then, is a paradoxical attention to the substrata, ground, and basic substances and concepts of mediation, while insisting that none can hold its ground.

NOTES

Introduction

Epigraph: Mande proverb quoted in Wise, "*Nyama* and *Heka*," 19–38.

1 Zielinski, *Deep Time*, 7. On the topic of natural substances as featured in technological media, see also Kahn, *Earth Sound, Earth Signal*; and Peters, *Marvelous Clouds*.
2 Siskin and Warner, *This Is Enlightenment*, 1.
3 Wise, "*Nyama* and *Heka*," 20. Wise enters a protracted argument about the use of *nyama* and Egyptian philosophy as precursors to poststructuralist thought via Jacques Derrida's reading of Plato's *The Timaeus*. All are concerned with the origin of the word and its relationship to potency, that is, action.
4 Sarr, *Afrotopia*, 13.
5 Clifford, "On Ethnographic Allegory," 99.
6 See Cubitt, Palmer, and Tkcacz, *Digital Light*; and Elcott, *Artificial Darkness*.
7 Friedrich Kittler writes, "When films, music, phone calls, and texts are able to reach the individual household via optical fiber cables, the previously separate media of television, radio, telephone, and mail will become a single medium, standardized according to transmission frequency and bit format." Kittler, "Gramophone, Film, Typewriter," 101.
8 Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*, xviii.
9 An important exception to this was Frank Popper's exhibition *Electra* at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris in 1983–1984. See his introduction to the exhibition catalog, in Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, *Electra*, 17–78. Popper notes this exhibition's predecessors in kinetic and light art, but his focus was much more explicitly on electricity and its affordances, and particularly to "celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the foundation of the Society of Electrical and Electronic Engineers not only in a technical, but also in an artistic way" (20).

10 McNaughton, *Mande Blacksmiths*, 16.
11 Jones, *Global Work of Art*, 165.
12 Jones, 152.
13 See Batchen, "Electricity Made Visible," 27–44. For a more comprehensive history of perceptual shifts in the nineteenth century as registered through art, see Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*.
14 Kahn, *Earth Sound, Earth Signal*, 130.
15 Cubitt and Thomas, *Relive: Media Art Histories*, 39.
16 Shanken takes particular aim at what he argues is now the canonical text of modern art history: Foster, Krauss, Bois, and Buchloh's *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2005). See Grau, "Historicizing Art and Technology," 43–70.
17 Pietz, "Problem of the Fetish, I," 12.
18 Pietz, 14.
19 Pietz, "Problem of the Fetish, II," 41–42.
20 From McLuhan's "The Medium Is the Message," in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964): "We are no more prepared to encounter radio and TV in our literate milieu than the native of Ghana is able to cope with the literacy that takes him out of his collective tribal world and beaches him in individual isolation. We are as numb in our new electric world as the native involved in our literate and mechanical culture" (113).
21 Eno, "Gossip Is Philosophy"; and Wolfe, "Digital, the Analog," 85–93.
22 See Fairfax, "Jean-Luc Godard in Mozambique."
23 Matory, *Fetish Revisited*, xix.
24 Matory, xix–xx.
25 Hortense Spillers writes,

> Typically, there is in this grammar of description the perspective of "declension," not of simultaneity, and its point of initiation is solipsistic—it begins with a narrative self, in an apparent unity of feeling, and unlike Equiano, who also saw "ugly" when he looked out, this collective self uncovers the means by which to subjugate the "foreign code of conscience," whose most easily remarkable and irremediable difference is perceived in skin color. By the time of De Azurara's mid-fifteenth century narrative and a century and a half before Shakespeare's "old black ram" of an Othello "tups" that "white ewe" of a Desdemona, the magic of skin color is already installed as a decisive factor in human dealings.

Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 70.
See also Thornton, *Africa and Africans*.
26 Rosalind C. Morris, "'Fetishism (Supposing That It Existed)': A Preface," in Morris and Leonard, *Returns of Fetishism*, viii.
27 Doris, *Vigilant Things*, 16.

28 Doris, 16.
29 "Willhelm Johann Müller's Description of the Fetu Country, 1662–9," in Jones, *German Sources*, 158, 159.
30 Fromont, *Art of Conversion*, 15. See also Northwestern University, Block Museum of Art, *Caravans of Gold: Fragments in Time: Art, Culture, and Exchange across Medieval Saharan Africa*, and its accompanying publication, Berzock, *Caravans of Gold*.
31 Pietz quotes Hegel extensively in "Problem of the Fetish, I," note 10, including Hegel's commentary on the "African character" as lacking the idea of Universality. That is, for Hegel, Africans seem to be too literal and worship anything at hand.
32 Pietz, "Problem of the Fetish, I," 7.
33 Quoted in Pietz, "Problem of the Fetish, I," 8.
34 Latour, "Fetish-factish," 44.
35 Latour, 45.
36 Latour, "What Is Iconoclash?," 25.
37 Pietz, "Problem of the Fetish, I," 10–11.
38 Charles de Brosses, "On the Worship of Fetish Gods; or, A Parallel of the Ancient Religion of Egypt with the Present Religion of Nigritia," translated and reprinted in Morris and Leonard, *Returns of Fetishism*, 46.
39 Morris and Leonard, *Returns of Fetishism*, 44.
40 See a discussion of Bacon's idea of mediation via these three mechanical advances in Siskin and Warner, *This Is Enlightenment*, 6.
41 João Rodrigues Roxo writing in a letter about his trade prospects in Elmina, quoted in Green, *Fistful of Shells*, 119–120.
42 Lessing, *Laocoon*.
43 Guillory, "Genesis," 323 (emphasis in original).
44 Somaini, "Walter Benjamin's Media Theory," 8.
45 Guillory, "Genesis," 321–322.
46 Matory writes, "Indeed, the lofty, abstract and theoretical language of eighteenth-century European Enlightenment discourse about 'freedom' might be read a symptom of its advocates' cognitive dissonance, perhaps also explaining why many latter-day analysts of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century European political 'theory' overlook copious evidence that sixteenth- to eighteenth-century Europeans and Euro-Americans knew a great deal about the enslavement of Africans in their day and that the source of their metaphorical references to slavery was literal, contemporaneous slavery, rather than to biblical, Greco-Roman, or imaginative models of slavery." Matory, *Fetish Revisited*, 52.
47 Lessing, *Laocoon*, 50.
48 Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," 17.
49 Guillory, "Genesis," 357.
50 An important essay on distanciation in early discourses of African art, othering the civilization with the object, and especially the similarities between the two labels *fetish* and *magic* is Blier, "Truth and Seeing," 139–166.

51 Morris and Leonard, *Returns of Fetishism*, 7.

52 Chakrabarty, "Climate of History," 197–222.

53 Morris and Leonard, *Returns of Fetishism*, 325n19.

54 Morris and Leonard, 8.

55 Clifford, "On Ethnographic Surrealism," 541.

56 Carrier, *Rosalind Krauss*, 8.

57 Grace Glueck's *New York Times* review of *Software*, for instance, compared work made by a machine with work by the artist David Antin. She concludes, simply, "Mr. Antin's intention is art; the machine's is not." Glueck, "Jewish Museum's 'Software,'" 17. This dismissal of African art by the *Artforum* and *October* groups of scholars occurred despite an influx of exhibitions in the 1960s and 1970s on modern and contemporary African art in New York, Berlin, Los Angeles, Paris, and elsewhere.

58 On Yoruba aesthetic discourse, Barr writes, "This discourse should not be confused, however, with the formation of a cumulative, reflective, and self-referential body of critical writing such as exists in the West." Rubin, *Primitivism in 20th Century Art*, 21, 21n71.

59 Glissant, "For Opacity," 190.

60 See Cowcher, "Soviet Supersystems," 146–166.

61 Cowcher, 146–166. Cowcher cites Filatova, "Anti-Colonialism," 203–234.

62 As Monni Adams argued in 1989, the field of African art history remained perpetually "in between" fields and did not hold itself responsible to any one methodology or theory. She quotes Svetlana Alpers's lament that "it is characteristic of art history that we teach our graduate students the methods, the 'how to do it' of the discipline (how to date, attribute, track down a commission, analyze style and iconography) rather than the nature of our thinking." Adams, "African Visual Art," 62. Likewise, Sidney Kasfir suggested that African art history had managed to combine the worst parts of anthropology and art history. Kasfir, "One Tribe, One Style?," 163–193.

63 Drewal, "Object and Intellect," 71.

64 See also the presidential lecture by Jean Allman, "#HerskovitzMustFall?," where she calls out her American-based institution for not revisiting its beginnings as gate keepers for knowledge about Africa, effectively taking that power from historically black colleges and universities. Various maneuvers that Allman details had the effect of stymying the cross-pollination of African diasporic studies with African studies. And although the organization was not solely responsible for undermining knowledge production within Africa, she states, "At precisely the same moment that Africa-centered projects were being undermined in Africa, a massive influx of Cold War–related funding to Africa-area studies in the U.S. would lead to the emergence and fortification of what Martin and West have called 'that Africanist enterprise.'" She refers here to Martin and West, *Out of One*. Her talk,

which was recorded and posted on YouTube, has been published as an article of the same title in *African Studies Review* 62, no. 3 (September 2019): 6–39. It should be noted that part of this decolonizing of the discipline should entail an ongoing self-consciousness and transparency about how I, a white U.S.-based writer on African art, have been shaped by this discipline. The extent of all of our imbrication within structures of power is often hard to detect in the moment but becomes more fully visible within the next generation.

65 Drewal, "Object and Intellect," 72.

66 See especially Appadurai, *Social Life of Things*.

67 Silverman and Davis, "Reviewed Work(s)," 25. Elsewhere Davis notes that the quality of the essays varies, and there are uses of Panofsky that are more nuanced than others in the special issue.

68 Silverman and Davis, "Reviewed Work(s)," 28.

69 Soppelsa, "Western Art-Historical Methodology," 149.

70 Soppelsa, 28.

71 Chernova cited in Cowcher, "Soviet Supersystems," 153. See also Howard, Bužinska, and Strother, *Vladimir Markov*.

72 Strother, in Howard, Bužinska, and Strother, *Vladimir Markov*, 88.

73 Photography would later become understood as a tool of visibility and part of a renewed push to carve out a place for African art in a global avant-garde; this reiteration of an avant-garde has characterized scholarship on contemporary African art since the late 1990s. At the end of the Cold War and apartheid rule in South Africa, and with the prominence of biennial exhibitions, the avant-garde art is largely defined as that which establishes the subjectivity and artistic and politico-conceptual skill of the African artist; it is a heritage project connected to the independence decade of the 1960s. Beginning with Olu Oguibe and Okwui Enwezor in *Reading the Contemporary: African Art from Theory to Marketplace* (1999), the redefinition of African art from indigenous/aboriginal market identity to a folk/peasant political identity facilitated a shift in African art to an anticolonialism that corresponds to hallmark avant-garde moments like 1917 and 1968. But really, their most important work was to relink contemporary African art to global black art movements, showing that the earliest serious African art history has been done under the auspices of various pan-African movements. In a more recent iteration with Chika Okeke-Agulu, *Contemporary African Art since 1980* (2009) periodizes contemporary African art based on a World Bank restructuring of African economies; Enwezor argues that while deskilling used to be read as a loss of authenticity in African art, it should rather be considered a radical break from the colonialist affection for other people's tradition. These publications and Enwezor's many exhibitions have presented African art as a key antagonist of Western imperialism. That is, in Enwezor's interpretative model (and most current literature on contemporary African art is a similar or adjacent version), art is judged by its effectiveness in both referring to

and even bringing about the political condition of a postcolonial politics of representation. Enwezor's rereading of the contextual evidence in the history of African art is a political (read intentional) act.

74 Howlett, "L'Art Nègre?," 86 (translation is mine).

75 Kahnweiler, "L'Art Nègre et le Cubisme," 367–377.

76 Kahnweiler, 369.

77 Zeidler, "Sculpture Ungrounded," 63.

78 See Leonard, "Introduction: Fetishism, Figurism, and Myths of Enlightenment," in Morris and Leonard, *Returns of Fetishism*, 1–39.

79 Zeidler, "Introduction," 5–6.

80 Zeidler, *Form as Revolt*, 67. On the amulets' and nkisi's late inclusion in art collections, see Rarey, "Assemblage, Occlusion," 20–33.

81 Zeidler, *Form as Revolt*, 65.

82 Strother, "Looking for Africa," 19.

83 Strother, 15.

84 Strother, 16.

85 Matory, *Fetish Revisited*, xix.

86 Zeidler, *Form as Revolt*, 63.

87 Zeidler, 67.

88 See especially Grossman, *Man Ray*. For a general discussion of the shifts in perception that occur with inventions like electricity and photography, see Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*.

89 Somaini, "Walter Benjamin's Media Theory," 18.

90 Strother, "Looking for Africa," 9, 11.

91 Malreaux, *Museum without Walls*, 30.

92 One of the more famous examples of this, which I discuss in the first chapter, is a 1961 study read and cited by Marshall McLuhan in *Gutenberg Galaxy* called "Film Illiteracy in Africa." John Wilson claimed Africans looked at film differently than "us" because they were not accustomed to still images and had totally different ways of "scanning" images that appeared to work rather like "television scanners" instead of gestalt pictures. Wilson, "Film Illiteracy in Africa."

93 Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*, 16.

94 Agawu, "Representing African Music," 248. It is interesting to note that nearly the same word, *disagreeable*, was used by Frantz Fanon to describe how native Algerians heard the "aggressive and hostile radio voices" in the French-language radio broadcasts in his groundbreaking essay, Fanon, "Voice of Algeria."

95 Agawu, "Representing African Music," 249.

96 Agawu, 251.

97 Abiodun, *Yoruba Art and Language*.

98 Abiodun, 5.

99 Okediji, *Western Frontiers*. For a more elaborate discussion of what I see as the drawbacks and benefits of Okediji's book, see my review in *African Studies Review* 57, no. 3 (December 2014): 242–244.

100 Quoted in MacGaffey, "Fetishism Revisited," 173.

101 W. J. T. Mitchell fascinatingly connects the "hollowness" of minimalist art in the 1960s and the distrust of the personification of art, coming from this history of the discourse of idolatry and its ambivalent relationship to anthropomorphism. See Mitchell, "Empire and Objecthood," in *What Do Pictures Want?*, 149.

102 Rarey, "Assemblage, Occlusion," 21.

103 Latour, "On Technical Mediation," 36–37.

104 Chun, "On 'Sourcery,'" 304.

105 Chun, 309.

106 Latour and Stark, "Factures/Fractures," 26.

107 MacGaffey, "African Objects," 128.

108 Latour, "On Technical Mediation," 45.

109 Hecht and Edwards, "History," 619–639.

110 Herbert, *Red Gold of Africa*, 33.

111 McNaughton, *Mande Blacksmiths*, 3.

112 Cubitt, Palmer, and Tkcacz, "Introduction," in *Digital Light*, 16.

113 In particular, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw many people who were deeply embedded in empire purposefully identifying across "species" boundaries and pushing for an inclusive globalism. They generated early discussions of homosexuality, vegetarianism, and antiracism, as well as psychotropic drug experimentation and spiritualism. These histories give us our sights for an antibinary thinking, while binary thinking still characterizes much postcolonial discourse. For this history, see in particular Gandhi, *Affective Communities*.

114 Parikka, *Geology of Media*, viii.

115 Clark, *Farewell*.

116 Heidegger, "Question Concerning Technology," 39.

117 There are many conflicting and conflicted books and articles published on the topic of Heidegger's Nazism, but on the topic of how this relates to his philosophy of technology, I am convinced by Fuchs, "Martin Heidegger's Anti-Semitism," 55–78. This essay is not peer reviewed, and though this poses particular problems, it might also give him license to explore the *Black Notebooks*, a highly debated set of writings that Heidegger wanted published but which allude to a "World-Jewery" that was responsible for the deleterious aspects of capitalism, that is, its soulless mechanization.

118 See Bryan-Wilson, Cornell, and Kholeif, *Trevor Paglen*.

119 See Marks, *Hanan al-Cinema* and *Enfoldment and Infinity*.

120 Wise, "*Nyama* and *Heka*," 22.