

# FOR THOSE SPIRITED AWAY

**Making Sanctuary as a  
Vocation of Exile in  
Restless Times**



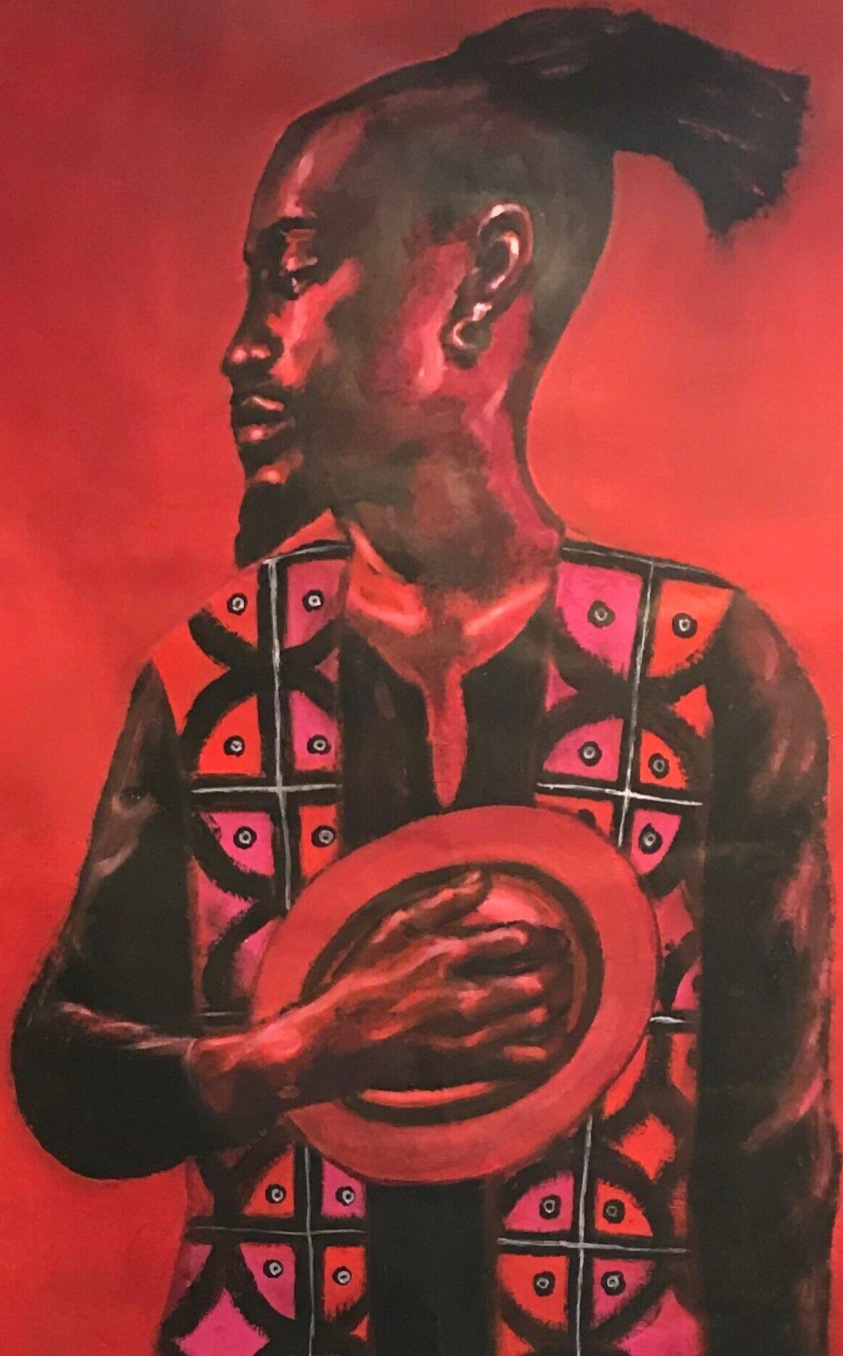
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Some time ago, a friend asked me what I thought to be the most compelling story of these times – considering all that was going on in the world.

*My response was: “Embarkation”*

**Embarkation:** The dynamic bio-necro-iatro-political processes at work and mass disabling gestures in the more-than-human that renders white stability inhospitable to modern bodies. The spiriting away of the citizen-subject, the erosion of the conditions of respectability.





- ***A figure of embarkation and exile returns to our reckoning.***
- **Esu steals away.**
- **The exilic is a generative space.**



- **Visiting Ghana**
- **The Door of No Return at Cape Coast Castle**
- **Metaphysical ships of some kind are pulling up to the shores of white modernity - and we are losing stability, the accommodations of our home forged in blood, steel, and tears.**
- **We are being spirited away.**

# *The Slave Ship didn't disappear*

- Technologies of capture in the Age of Sail
- Bodies crammed into tiny spaces (“3 feet 3 inches high”)
- Never really disappeared: became the shore
- Against the popular anthropological, moralizing accounts of the transatlantic slave trade, I want to suggest a new materialism of winds to make the case that the ship is still present.

# *Anemopoetics*

- **Anemopoetics** is the investigation of how winds in their emergence shape (and are shaped by) material worlds, politics, technologies, human individuals, futures, and worlding possibilities. It is a new materialism that considers winds in their aeolian dynamics and sedimentation as agential 'actors' that shape worlds.
- **New materialism of winds:** Considering winds not just as physical phenomena, but as agential forces that shape material and social realities. Recognizing winds as carriers of memories, cultures, and potentialities.
- Winds brought in the ships and carried them away with indigestible Africans in their belly.
- Winds are implicated in the formation, formulation, and operationalization of the slave trade.
- Winds are bearers of trauma, memory, and loss.



# *Anemopoetics*

- **We live in a wind-shaped world.**



# *The Anemopoetics of Exile*

- **The wind is the carrier of exile – and this wind now blows through white modernity.**
- A strange vocation of exile animates every project of settlement (paratheological). A sidling gesture, an “outside”, an impossibility, a glitch in colonial closure.
- **Exilic as generatively incapacitating:** Reframing exile not just as a state of displacement, but as a condition that disrupts normative capacities and opens up new possibilities. The incapacitation here is 'generative' - it's not just a loss of ability, but a reconfiguration of potentials.
- **Milieu of loss and fugitivity:** Understanding loss not as an absence, but as a generative space of potential.
- Fugitivity as a mode of being that resists capture by dominant systems, always in movement.

# *The Anemopoetics of Exile*

- **How is the exilic blowing through the city?**
  - When knowing what to do doesn't really help.
  - When we are besides ourselves and the lines no longer make divisions
  - When the way we address the crisis becomes the crisis.
  - When getting rid of the problem reinscribes the conditions of the problem.
  - When morality is – from a creolized perspective – noticed as a colonial/racialized burden heavily subsidized by invisible under-worlds.

# *The Anemopoetics of Exile*

- **How is the exilic blowing through the city?**
  - When *making room* is no longer adequate to the dynamics at large.
  - Making room is not *making sanctuary*.

I want to think of a vocation of *making sanctuary* as gestural, speculative-pragmatic, ontofugitive practices of co-inquiry, experimentation, and failure that are potentially emancipatory within colonial captivity.

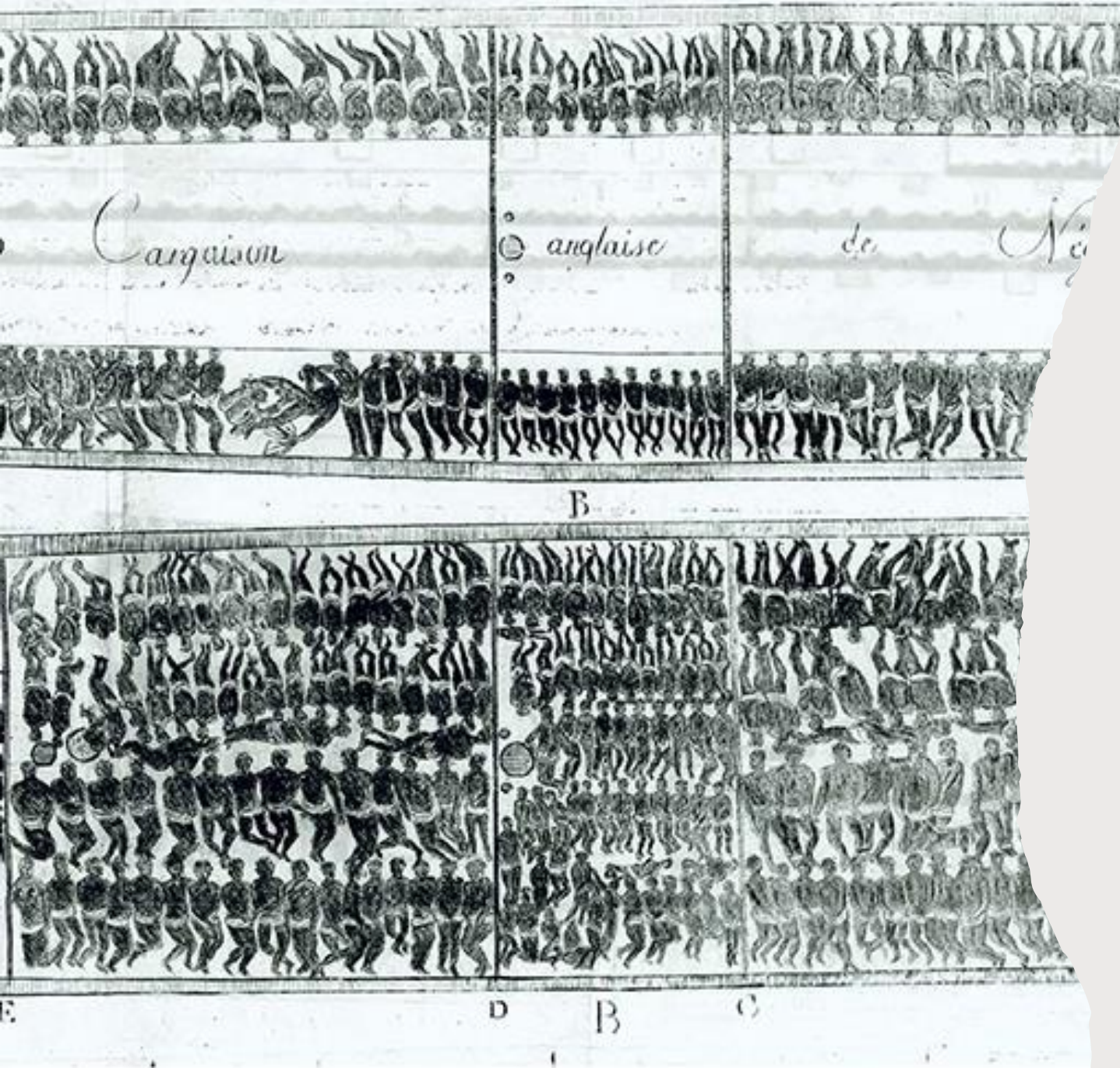












# *The Belly of the Ship*

- **The belly of the ship resembles politics**
- Foucault's biopolitics and Achille Mbembe's necropolitics
- Akomolafe's iatropolitics
- The story of 38<sup>th</sup> and Chicago



# *The Depths of the Sea*

- **The depths of the sea resembles an infrapolitics**
- James C. Scott: forms of oppositional politics that eschew direct engagement.
- Can the subaltern speak?
- The story of the cakewalk
- An infrapolitics may yet lend itself to the neurotypical commitments of its epistemological conditions.





*The  
Unknown  
New Land*

- **The unknown new land gestures at non-legible futures**
- Pedra de Xango in Bahia
- The limitations of freedom
- Turning to minor gestures

# *Making Sanctuary*

- When justice gets in the way and kneels on our necks
- When being good reinscribes conditions of oppression
- When care begins to feel carceral
- When our anti-racism, anti-capitalism, anti-work misses out on the leakages and spillages that make for new possibilities
- When clarity and more data lose their generativity
- A geophilosophy (pedagogy and parapedagogy or guided-guidance) of exile when home and its accommodations no longer serve.

# *Making Sanctuary*

- **Vocation of the exilic:** Making Sanctuary as a vocation of the exilic is a calling that emerges from displacement and loss, rather than a chosen profession or practice.
- **Beyond human intentionality:** Making Sanctuary is not reducible to human intentionality or method; it marks the limitations of anthropocentric approaches.
- **The thick middle:** Positioning Making Sanctuary in the "thick middle" rather than at the beginning or end of a sequence of actions is a powerful way to conceptualize it. It suggests an ongoing engagement with complex, often contradictory conditions rather than a linear process of problem-solving.

# *Making Sanctuary*

- **Care as carceral and amniotic:** This paradoxical framing of care captures the complexity of Making Sanctuary. It suggests that the very structures that confine us might also be the source of new potentials or forms of nurturing.
- **Anemopoetic winds:** The idea of being "spirited away" by anemopoetic winds beautifully captures the sense of being moved by forces beyond human control or comprehension.



# *Making Sanctuary*

- **Cultivating attunement:** Developing sensitivity to the subtle shifts and flows in our environment, both material and social.
- **Embracing uncertainty:** Letting go of the need for predetermined outcomes or clear methods, remaining open to emergent possibilities.
- **Dwelling in tension:** Learning to inhabit the contradictions and paradoxes of our current condition without seeking to resolve them prematurely.

# *Making Sanctuary*

- **Nurturing minor gestures:** Attending to and amplifying the small, often overlooked moments of possibility within seemingly fixed structures.
- **Fostering collective sensibilities:** Creating conditions where new forms of perception and relation can emerge, without dictating what those forms should be.
- **Reframing loss:** Finding ways to engage with experiences of loss or displacement as potential sources of new forms of relation or understanding.

MOST ESPECIALLY,  
the monster is the 'focus' of making sanctuary. The  
monster is not an object, a thing. It is a mode of  
encounter with the latent potentials in neurotypical  
forms of perception, in the dominant grammar of  
the body.

Making sanctuary is always about tending to those  
perceptual eruptions.