

the Unessay

Abstract

UN - BUILD A Phenakistoscope THAT RUNS ON
THE INPUT OF AMBIENT SOUND

What is an (Un)essay?

A

The short answer – An *unessay* is a writing project done for the purpose of exploring questions and ideas of interest to the writer and not for the purpose of learning a narrow and static set of "rules" (ex: don't use "I," use 5 paragraphs, MLA format, etc.).



The "Un"...

...indicates that in order to become better writers we are going to have to "undo" the potential damage done to the spirit of the essay (and most real writing) by the many approaches to teaching writing that frame essays (and most other forms of writing) as a set of rules to be mastered in order to not lose points.

wait...

what

is

PURPOSE

AUDIENCE

The slightly longer answer – There's a good chance that you've come into this class with the expectation that you will be writing something called "papers" or "essays." Great! Essays, as I hope you'll experience them in this class are wonderful things. However, my experience also generally shows me that students come into an English class with the idea that these things called essays (or papers) are unwieldy, inflexible, rule-bound monsters. For example, if you've been told never to use the personal pronoun "I" in an essay or that an essay should always be 5 paragraphs, you've experienced this "essay as rule-bound monster" approach to writing.

an

TEXT

CONTEXT

UNESSAY?

??

riot errr

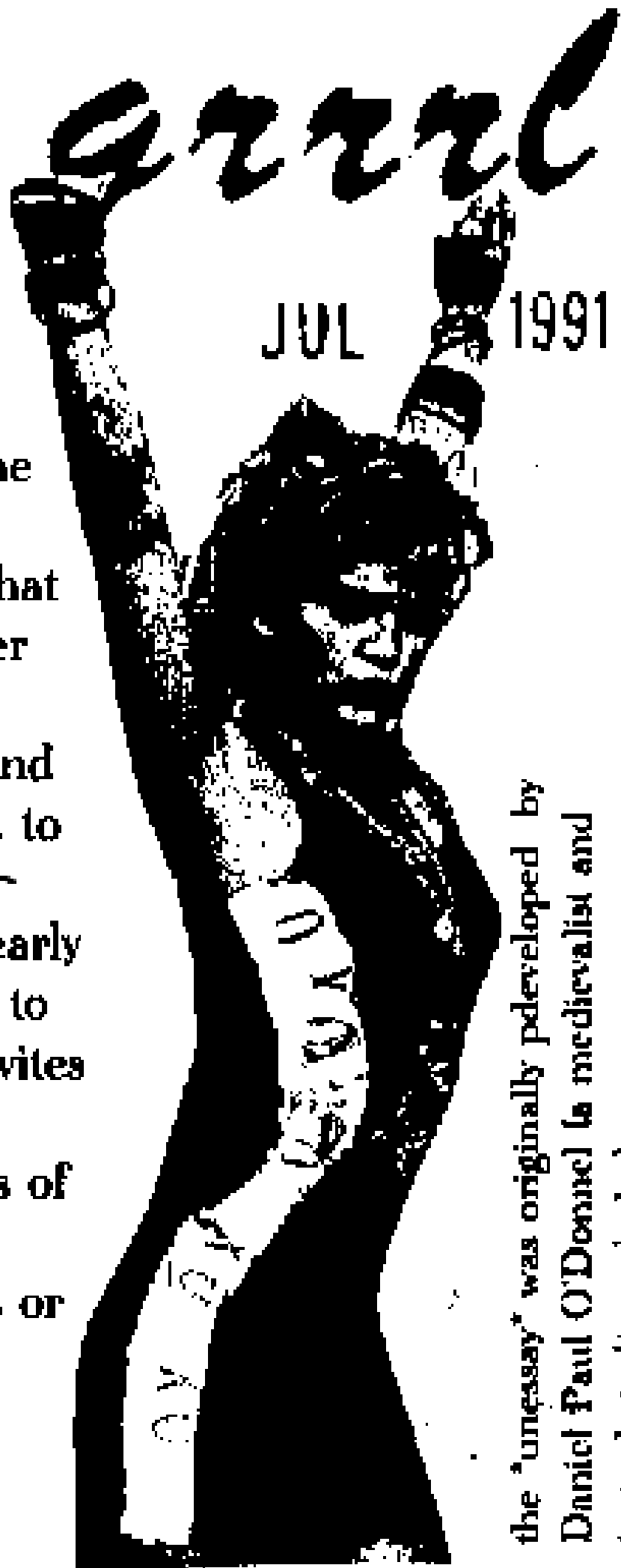
P.1

JUL 1991

XO XO
As a writing project the
"unessay" calls our
attention to the idea that
essays (and many other
forms of writing) are
actually very flexible and
open and can be used to
explore and discuss —
take action on!!!! — nearly
any topic that matters to
you. The "unessay" invites
us to resist overly
prescriptive definitions of
what an essay ~~X~~ or even
writing ~~(g)~~ in general -- is or
can be.

XO

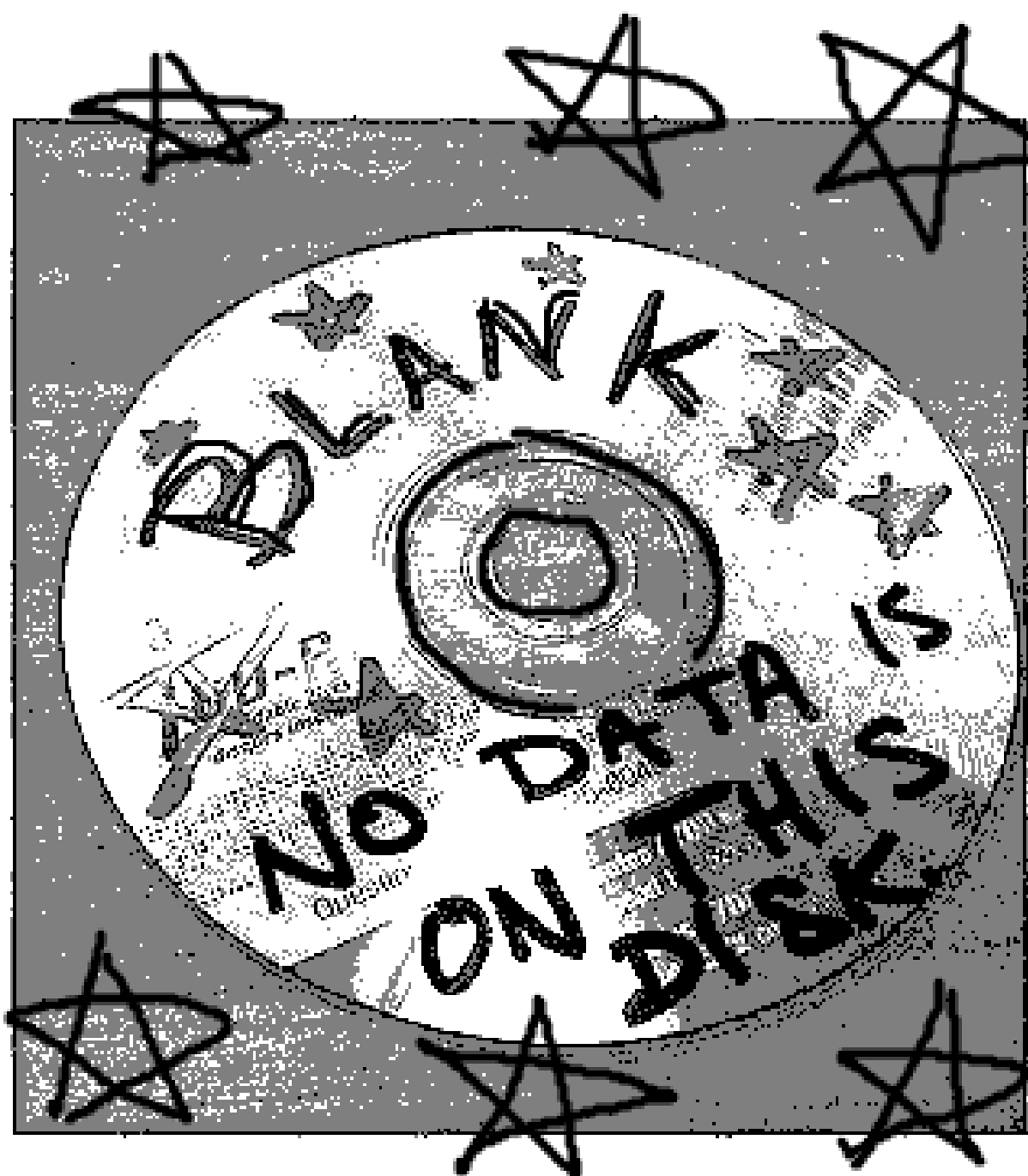
XU



the "unessay" was originally pdeveloped by
Daniel Paul O'Donnell (a medievalist and
textual studies scholar).

and other forms of writing can

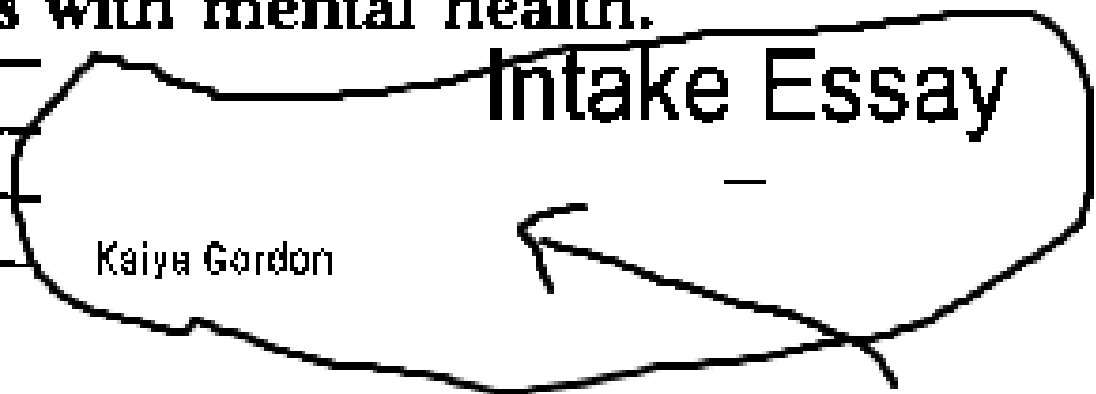
what do you mean that essays



be OPEN and FLEXIBLE ?

This means that there are no formal requirements like MLA Format or page length or even that your writing project has to be words on 8.5" x 11" paper. If you can accomplish your purpose in 5 pages, great. Or maybe you need 8 pages. If your writing will be more effective by incorporating images and other media into your work, then do it. Maybe your project is best presented as a video or as an audio essay or an interactive webpage. Then use video, or sound, or other forms of multimedia. Maybe you speak another language or even multiple forms of English and using this language in your work will be effective – do it.

Kaiya Gordon's "Intake Essay" plays with the "intake form" in their essay to explore personal struggles with mental health.



MENTAL HEALTH INTAKE FORM

Please complete all information on this form and bring it to the first visit. I may seem long, but most of the questions require only a check, so it will go quickly. You may wish to ask family members about the family history.

google this...

Date of Birth: 05/00/1994 Primary Care Physician: [redacted]

Name: Kaiya Gordon Date: _____

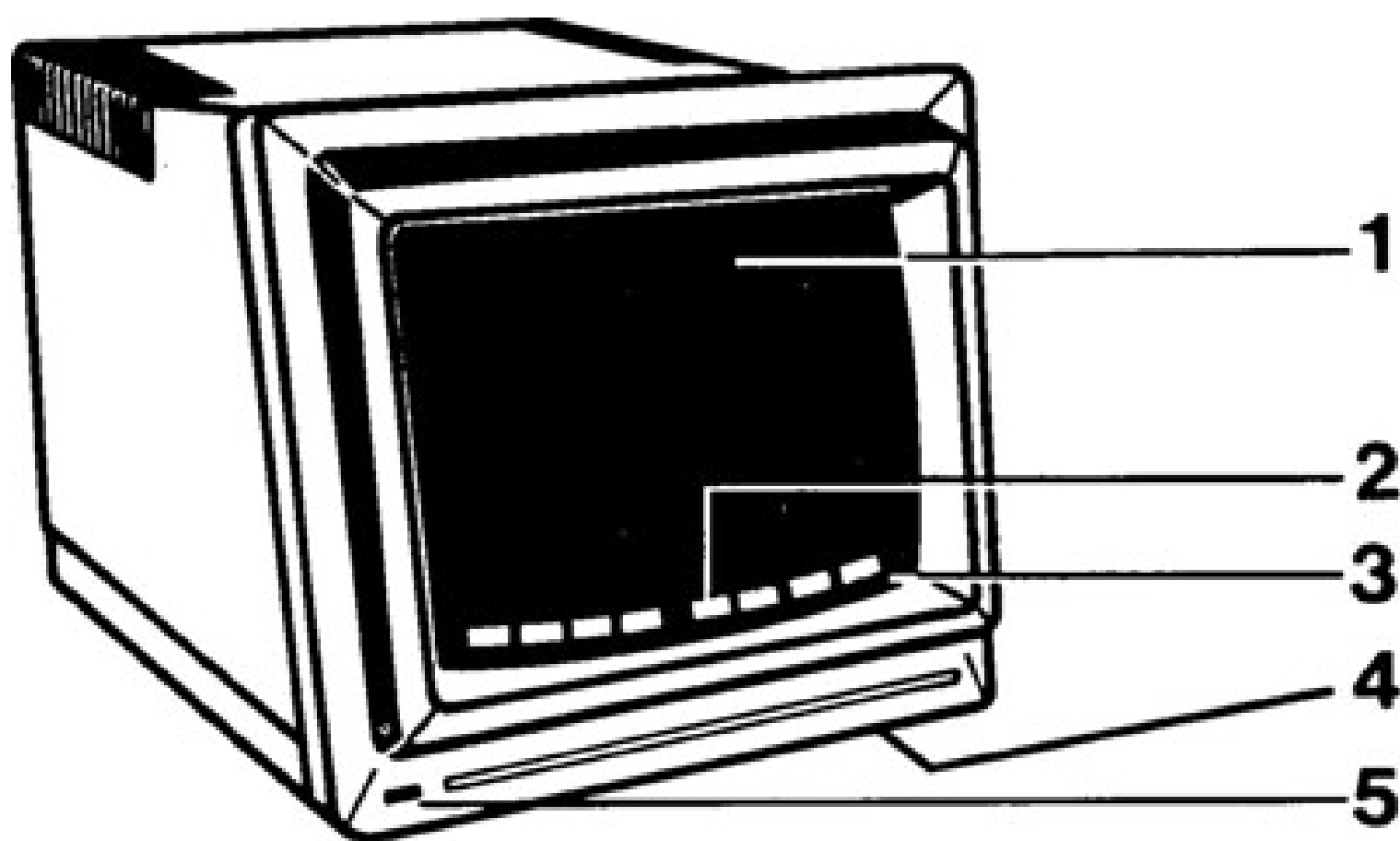
Do you give permission for ongoing regular updates to be provided to your primary care physician?

Care or Treatment Counselor: [redacted] Treatment provider: WA

- This is how it goes, every time: I enter the hospital, sit on a bed down. The nurse hands me an intake form. I fill it out and hand it back. The doctor asks me questions. The doctor uses books general practitioners, psychiatrists, psychologists—they all has it every time. We use the worst file folders over-looked, unorganized, and am prepared to wait their best consequences for crisis, but the papers aren't that great either. Fill out a form, sit down—and repeat about once again, words written. I wish they'd let me read the sheets out or out, or at least let me check them because my every fingers as the doctor goes. Instead, they take my marks to file in a box's room—my finger's vulnerability, not a val of 50 checks, to be discarded.

Read this @
<https://trianglehouse.square.space.com/r/essay/issue-event/intake-essay/>

What about learning to write "real" essays? Isn't all this flexibility a waste of my time?



This is a good question. I don't have a better answer than O'Donnell, the originator of the unessay, so I'll use his words here (altered only slightly)...

NO!

UN!

About 128,000,000 results (0.37 seconds)

a prefix meaning "not," freely used as an English formative, giving negative or opposite force in adjectives and their derivative adverbs and nouns (unfair; unfairly; unfairness; unfelt; unseen; unfitting; unformed; unheard-of; un-get-at-able), and less freely used in certain other nouns (unrest; unemployment).

you are not going to be left unprepared for instructors who assign “real” essays. Questions like how to format your page or prepare a works-cited list (i.e. the kind of thing many students obsess about in such classes) are actually quite trivial and easily learned. You can look them up when you need to know them (that’s what I do, anyway). Increasingly, you can get your software to handle these things for you.

What your software, and
MLA handbook can’t teach
you is how to...

How to Cite Like a Badass Tech Feminist Scholar of Color

A citation zine by Rigoberto Lara Guzmán and Sareeta Amrute



rigo · Following

Published in Data & Society: Points · 5 min read · Aug 22, 2019



00%



1



This is the first post in our ongoing series Strategies for Unsettling Technology Research. The series aims to unsettle existing research practices by centering Indigenous, Asian, and Black feminist perspectives and unpacking technology’s myriad relationships to the historical, unfinished, and everyday effects of empire.

You are not going to be left unprepared for instructors who assign "real" essays...

the things you will be doing in an unessay will help improve your "real" ones: excellent "real" essays are about things writers are interested in, and emerge from the writer's sense of a rhetorical situation. If you learn how to write compelling and effective "unessays," you'll find it a lot easier to do well in your "real" essays. But more importantly, you might find yourself writing real "real" essays (i.e. essays that are true to the experimental and personal origins of the genre) instead.

Given a choice, most instructors would rather read those kinds of essays anyway.

READ HANIF

READ HANIF

READ HANIF

READ HANIF



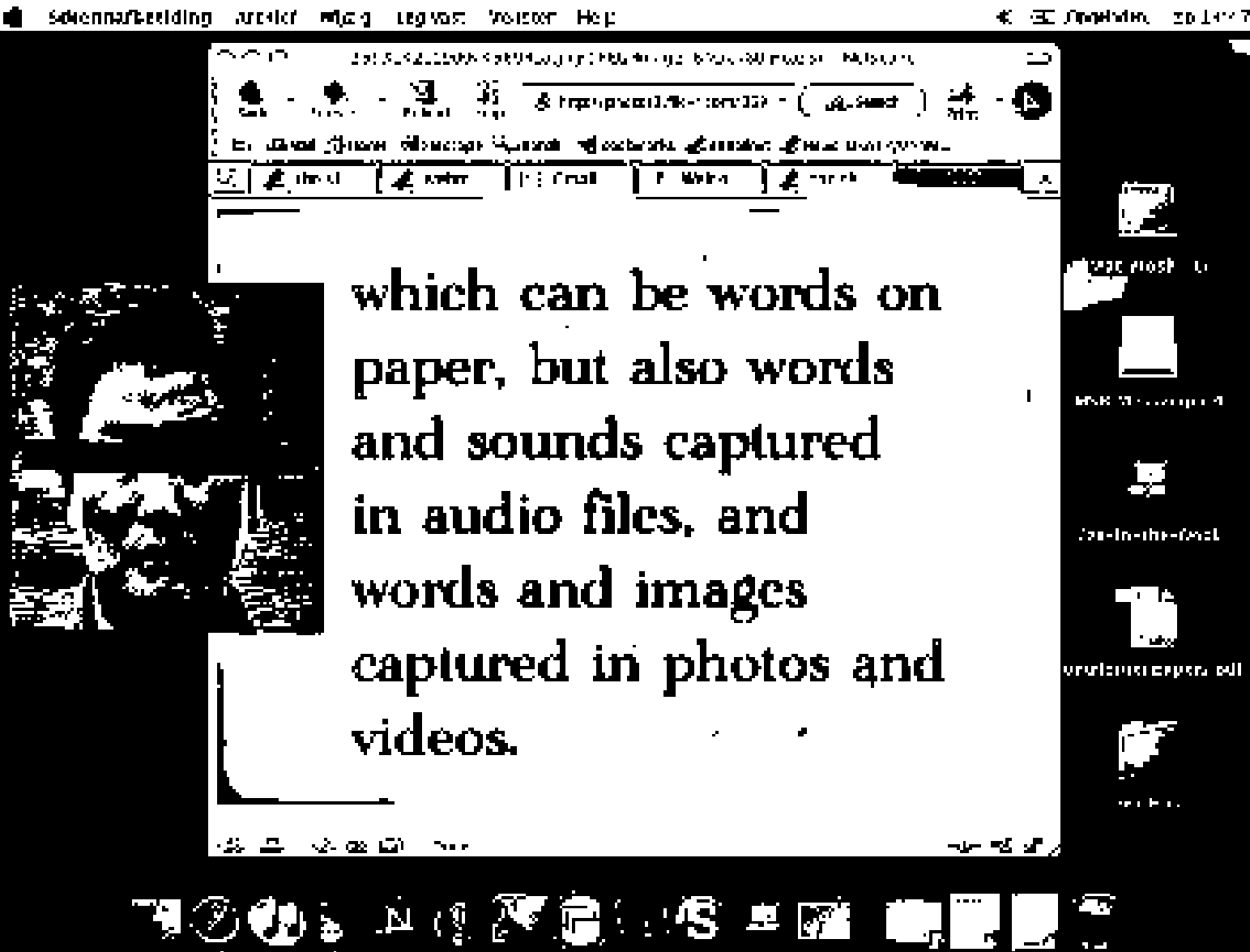
READ HANIF

READ HANIF

READ HANIF

READ HANIF

The "learning to write" is what will happen when you make choices about how to present your ideas in the medium of "writing"



What is most important is that the choices you make about the presentation of your ideas help your audiences engage with your work.

DR. CARMEN TEACHES

Writing critically with and from multiple, informed sources is perhaps the single, most common trademark for the kind of writing and thinking that is expected of you in the academy. However, this does NOT mean:

- * that you write about things you don't care about,

- * that you write as if you sound like an encyclopedia/wikipedia,

- * that you omit your own voice and perspective,

- * that you cannot be creative and energetic...

KYNARD

that you must sound like the type of person who might wear wool/plaid jackets with suede patches on the elbows in order to be taken seriously, that you cannot be everything that makes up your multiple selves, that you cannot be Hip Hop, R&B, Soul, Bomba, Dancehall, Soca, Metal, Bachata, EDM, or Rock-N-Roll, that you cannot have some fun with it!

You do not give up who you are to be an academic writer; on the contrary, you take who are even MORE seriously.

For more on the "Unessay" search the web...look out for names like Ryan Cordell, Cate Denial, and of course, Daniel Paul O'Donnel...

For more on zines search for --

POC Zine Project, QZAP (Queer Zine Archive), Brown Reeluse Distro, SUNY New Paltz Zine Library...

fuck...

just google "zines"...

