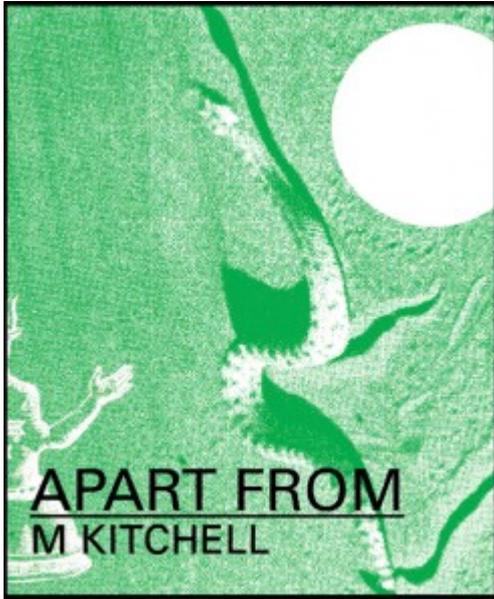


Language in Place of the Body: A Reading of M Kitchell's APART FROM

written by Guest Contributor | April 6, 2015



Apart From by M Kitchell
Solar Luxuriance, 2014
88 pages – [Solar Luxuriance](#)

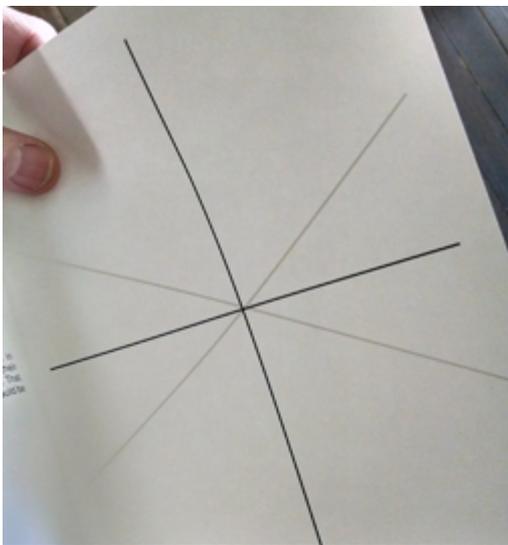
Why all this? M Kitchell's *Apart From* has an aura.

There is the book, and the aura is something else. Aura is not mystique or cachet. The aura exists because the book exists in a stratum the world does not require, the true meaning of subcultural. It is not a product. It is cast into the universe expecting not to be consumed – devilishly abject in a different way than the book that is calculated to be consumed but ends its life stripped in a dumpster. Like a soul pregnant in tissue, the work would not exist but for its aura. It is this aura that connects the book's discrete and paratextual facets into a complete body. In the worrisome manner that rationality justifies irrational behavior, the auric work legitimizes the intractable corpus of the mind's secrets by not acknowledging us.

The aura of *Apart From* is existent as much in its physical form as in its subcultural presence. However, like a fetish object, it should be read in print; it should be a thing near the body. *Apart From* harbors the cryptic mysticism of a myth while remaining hermitically tangible.

The first pages are solid eggshell black. Our oily fingers stain the pages. The oils build a patina and this patina is something in relation to the book and in relation to ourselves and our unctuousness. Out of that contingent black veil emerges a series of images obscured in the grain of the mind's censorship over clarity in the face of trepidation. And a bright white light

is shown. A pristine page is marked recto and verso with paired ciphers. The first cipher, a "+", oddly tall – aspect ratio 1.077:1 – is read against the opacity of the remaining volume, and then lifted to the light, becoming translucent, the second cipher materializes, a somewhat burdened "x" – aspect ratio 1:1.715 – registered at its crossing with the + to illustrate the accuracy of the interaction, as well as its transience. The page is set down and the x remains, but not without recalling the +. The mold is unable to be viewed without its positive. The target is never without the ordnance. Thus a cryptic language is paved: darkness and light, physical geometry and arithmetical abstraction. The +, the positive, the giving of one to another, the addition, the and, is also the symbolic end-view of a line without dimension, is also the crosshairs mediating the target from a distance. The x, the multiplication, the proliferation, is also the ex, the struck-through, the void, the from, the imposed blankness, the cavity. The + and the x unified with the page aloft, or untethered with the page flat, are given meaning only through the ritual of turning the page.



Registered Ciphers, APART
FROM, M Kitchell

These repellent poles inextricably bound to the same magnet are the overture of *Apart From*. Following this overture the book is divided into three zones: Myth, Text, and Voice. The overture sets the stage for the manner that *Apart From* develops its complex and contemporary understanding of myth. That is, that myth is both a frame and a center. What appears to corral all possibilities into pat impossibilities is also a center from which radiating variations emit. The myth promises that what exists outside it is necessarily greater, more expansive, more complex, more contradictory.

The myth is the sanitized euphemism. Much in the book exists as surrogation. The text itself is by definition a surrogate of the myth. Facets of its imagery, "sidereal topography", "lens flare", "echo", "static", "wind" are surrogates. These things are less things than they are indexes. They are blunted. However, once the text itself begins to move out from the myth, because its connotations are of a shadow nature, it appears more fantastic,

more mythical than mythological. Utilizing unreliable apocryphal deferral much like *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, the text reenacts the myth in decaying practice.

When reading the text in relation to the myth, the binary contradiction of frame and center initiates a cycle. The text, black text on white pages, exists further constrained in black line boxes – aspect ratio 1:1.143, more balanced than the ciphers, but still prone to the horizontal which is silent, the horizontal of which Kitchell writes, “Movement only from left to right, right to left. The vertical cannot be staged. An unnameable, silent object” – that cascade, with the page borders, in a series of frames all the way out through the room. The text is always recalling the trap of space, the pressure of the form.

The figure is different from the form. Kitchell gives ritual power to the text by distinguishing it as the true body of the myth, as predating its transcription. A persistent question is how the myth is desecrated to become a body, a text. The answer is, of course, by being read. *Apart From* asks this question not only of itself, but of all texts. But the text in *Apart From* is not read, at least not in its own cosmology. It insists on its own silencing. It is in the text’s best interest. Like the spurious mercy of canonized Longinus, the text insists on deferral, but wonders why.



Saint Longinus, Gian Lorenzo Bernini

“The figural mutilation expanding the text. Corporeal push.”

The figure is the quantity, the object, not it’s quality, not it’s trajectory. The figure is the mark that stands in for a number of possibilities. It is the abstraction of bodies, of snakes in holes, of holes in the body. It is subject to change based on other quantities, other knowns, or other norms, other modes of operation. The figure is the text in the forest with no one to read it. The figure is the myth with no one to live it. The figure is Apollo’s chariot in the Arctic winter. The figure is

pomegranate arils at the equator. The figure is potentiality for the suicide. The figural is all of these things given a body that wears jeans. And that body is this book. And if this book is read by no one, if this book is beneath the rot coat of the forest floor, the myth is both doomed to silence, and eternal for never having been acted upon. Let us say we act upon it. Let us say that figure becomes form when the book forms a center within us. Then myth becomes applicable. It becomes an understanding. And then guilt intrudes. Did we really want to do this? Did we really fall into this eternal trope? And we erase ourselves. We place ourselves within a frame. We erase what the previous assertions have written for us, the ways they've described our bodies converging. We confuse ourselves with that abstraction and we believe ourselves eternal and without complicity in that guilt. But we are not that body. We read in silence.



Black page, APART FROM, M
Kitchell

In its final section, *Voice*, *Apart From* speaks for us in a song, the written form of the aloud. What has not been stated (by me), that *Apart From* describes a series of sexual relationships, or one idealized encounter, must close ranks here, with the enunciation. The uncertainty about the reality of, or the physicality of writing, is the uncertainty about the truth of touch, the necessity of a personal sexual mythos, the manner in which the touch, the geometry of the anatomy becomes privately sacred. If the myth and the text both transcribe the sex act and its constellation of movements, there is little alternative to the book itself being about sex. But *Apart From* is implicitly not about sex. It is about inevitability, even the inevitability of the impossible. Eons of texts and tales, whether veiled or explicit, waffle in their commitment to sex. *Apart From's* deferral to the elementary geometric purity, the symbolic Euclidean nature of sex, and the abstract religious nature of the geometric proof, makes the text not wholly about sex, or, at least not the human, or pre-human bestial imperative, but the post-human, Doric harmony of considering the act. But this is not sex. It is the

information of sex, what Kitchell calls “objective sensuality.” This connotes, then, something even more sordid, more upsetting about sex and about books, that is the source of *Apart From*’s aura, that the decadent ritualism of human relationships, the oscillation between commitment to the human touch, the emotional touch, and the abstraction of binary line and naught, lies in a terrifying territory in which something so banal and dismissed can escalate, like psychosis, into a consecrated realm beyond the sacred, the profanity of alien meaninglessness, more horrifying than human meat, is the geometry of the body. Geometry is always something else.

(*Note of Disclosure:* M Kitchell is a Contributing Editor with Entropy.)



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