

GEORGES BATAILLE



JAMAIS ÉCRIVAIN N'A
PORTÉ SI BIEN SON NOM

PUISQUE JE TROUVE QUE RIEN
N'EST PLUS NÉCESSAIRE ET RIEN
N'EST PLUS FORT EN NOUS QUE
LA RÉVOLTE !

1897

1962

SALOMÉ LAHOCHÉ

After a brief stint in the seminary,
he renounced God to embrace excess and defilement.
With him, transgression is not the negation of the forbidden,
but its transcendence.

POWERS

- Explore taboos (sexuality, death, the sacred) to reveal that they lie at the heart of our relationship to the world, even though society seeks to conceal them.
- Blur the boundaries between reason and unreason, between good and evil, to invite a mode of thought that embraces excess. After all, contradiction and irrationality are integral parts of being human.

Sacrificial Feast

Excess, luxury, and sacrifice: to activate the Bataille card, you must willingly discard 5 cards from your own deck. This feast offered to others brings you nothing but the pure joy of waste and a slight dizziness.

CRÉATURE

JACQUES LACAN



1901

1981

SALOMÉ LAHOCHÉ

As irascible as he is brilliant, he bursts onto the scene in his Peugeot 403 to hold up a mirror to you. Beware, this reflection could become your prison.

POWERS

- Think of the unconscious as a language: our desires, dreams, and slips of the tongue follow rules similar to those of language, with metaphors and shifts in meaning.
- Make us realize that our identity is built through the gaze of others: what we believe to be the "self" is always a reflection, never a stable entity.
- Consider desire as eternally unsatisfied, always aiming for something else.

The Ransom of Desire

Like his legendary psychoanalysis sessions (hours of waiting for minutes of consultation, billed at full price), to activate the Lacan card, you must pay up by discarding 3 Land cards.

Skiping a Turn

When the topic of homosexuality arises, the card reveals its dark side (Lacan speaks of a "failure in the relation to the father"). It's better to skip your turn.

CRÉATURE

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR



1908

1986

SALOMÉ LAHOCHÉ

A powerful and fearsome card: her writing is a weapon of vengeance – against everything, and especially against those who would reduce women to servants. She knows no inferiority complex. Her complex is everyone else's.

POWERS

- Develop the idea that freedom lies at the heart of human existence, but that this freedom is limited by social norms and imposed
- Reveal how women have always been defined as “the Other” in relation to men.
- Support the struggles for women's rights as well as decolonization and social justice movements.

Feminist Indignation

If any player refers to Simone de Beauvoir as “Sartre's wife,” they immediately lose the game. This effect cannot be countered.

CRÉATURE

JEAN GENET



1910

1986

VINCENT NEVEUX

This card is a knife that tears through veils. Jean Genet rejects the laws of others. He makes words dance to build a world where being an outlaw is considered sainthood.

POWERS

- Celebrate marginalized figures – thieves, sex workers, traitors – to reveal their beauty and subversive potential.
- Politicize desire by turning it into an act of resistance against dominant norms.
- Stand with those the world refuses to hear: the Black Panthers, the Palestinians, and the excluded.

Permanent Betrayal

Each turn, Genet may steal a card from another player — no reason needed, just panache.

If that player complains, they are called a “filthy warden” and must give 3 cards to the player with the fewest.

CRÉATURE

FRANTZ FANON



J'AI UN PEU ENVIE
DE DIRE : NIQUE LE
SYNDROME DU COLON
IRRITABLE.

1925

1961

SALOMÉ LAHOCHÉ

This card is a struggle, a revolt, a drive toward total freedom. A psychiatrist, essayist, and militant, Frantz Fanon rejects the colonial world: he doesn't just say "no" to the colonizer – he says "no" to his own enslavement.

POWERS

- *Reveal how colonialism infiltrates bodies, languages, and psyches, producing inferiority complexes and internalized violence.*
- *Transform anger into political power: he values revolt as a necessary step toward liberation, framing the violence of the oppressed as a response to colonial violence. "Revolution is not a dinner party."*

Double Standard

With the Fanon card, the same attack against a Land may earn you either a standing ovation or a storm of criticism, depending on who benefits from it.

Fanon is criticized for having advocated armed struggle against colonialism in his involvement with the FLN, yet no one questioned his use of force when he helped liberate France from Nazism.

CRÉATURE

MICHEL FOUCAULT



1926

1984

SALOMÉ LAHOCHÉ

A solitary mage with a head as smooth as a mirror of truth, Michel Foucault explores asylums, prisons, cellars, and dungeons to show us how power shapes our lives. This is a formidable card: he brought back leather and turtlenecks – and turned freedom into a practice of resistance.

POWERS

- Show that power is not limited to central authority (the king, the state) but is exercised diffusely through institutions, discourses, and actions.
- Reveal that knowledge is never neutral but always entangled in power relations. Medical discourses on madness or sexuality are not merely descriptive – they produce what they name.
- Stand alongside prisoners, migrants, the sick, and homosexuals “We must listen to those who are never heard.”

Opposition with Derrida

If the Derrida card is in play, Foucault loses his ability to stabilize a Land. For Derrida, Foucault’s thought is a “new form of totalitarianism of discourse.” **Psychedelic Burst**

If the Foucault card is destabilized, he can activate the Psychedelic Burst effect: The LSD limit-experience opens his mind to expanded horizons of truth, individuality, the body, and self-care. You may then draw an additional card.

CRÉATURE

JACQUES DERRIDA

TOUT LE MONDE
AIMERAIT CONNAÎTRE
LA MARQUE DE MON
SHAMPOING MAIS LAISSEZ
MOI PLUTÔT VOUS EXPLIQUER
POURQUOI JE TROUVE
QUE LA PHÉNOMÉNOLOGIE
C'EST DE LA MERDE.



SALOMÉ LAHOCHÉ

1930
2004

If his wild mane appears through the smoke of his pipe, it's already too late: your certainties are about to be deconstructed.

A difficult card – you don't understand Derrida.

At best, you survive his reading.

POWERS

- *Reveal the hidden cracks within texts. Nothing is ever stable: every word carries other meanings that overflow it. This is "deconstruction".*
- *Summon the specters: the past, the absent, the excluded, and all that we believe vanished continue to act and haunt the present.*

Derrida fears only one thing: Michel Foucault, his soulmate, his greatest rival, who accuses him of being too focused on words and not enough on power.

("Deconstruction is a tool to shake certainties, but power does not just speak: it acts, imprisons, kills." — Foucault)

Today, Derrida's spell is misused by heterosexual men who claim to be "deconstructed" simply because they wear nail polish.

CRÉATURE

PIERRE BOURDIEU



LES GENS SONT INFINIMENT
MOINS LIBRES QU'ILS NE
LE CROIENT.

SINON, QUI AURAIT ENVIE DE
SE FAIRE CHIER À JOUER
AU BRIDGE ?

1930

2002

SALOMÉ LAHOCHÉ

In kingdoms frozen by habit and heritage, an alchemist with a slight lisp sees the invisible: the rules of the game that no one names but everyone endures. A very powerful card, almost invincible. The only spell that can weaken him: inviting him onto a TV talk show.

POWERS

- Reveal the "habitus": the set of invisible habits each person acquires within their social environment, often without realizing it.
- Decode how inequalities between social groups are transmitted, especially through education, always favoring the dominant classes.
- Root oneself in reality by denouncing the violence of colonization and supporting student and labor movements.

The Loop of Reproduction

When a player loses a card, Bourdieu can force an immediate redistribution: the stolen or lost card is returned to the player with the most cards, illustrating the reproduction of social structures.

CRÉATURE

GILLES DELEUZE & FÉLIX GUATTARI



1925
1930

1995
1992

SALOMÉ LAHOCHÉ

This card has no beginning and no end – only vanishing lines. When this unlikely duo appears, their entangled roots disrupt the board: all directions become possible, and no path remains fixed.

POWERS

- Blow up rigid structures: against fixed and hierarchical models, they propose a networked way of thinking (rhizome), where ideas and practices intertwine like underground roots.
- Invent new becomings: becoming-animal, becoming-woman, becoming-revolt. It's not about imitation, but about escaping social codes, exploring other ways of feeling, acting, and living. To think is to metamorphose.

Floating Roots

After playing this card, you will have become animal, child, imperceptible, even vegetal... but what will you have really accomplished?

Bourdieu criticizes this duo for losing those who seek to make a concrete impact on reality. The metamorphosis is total, but the power to act may dissolve.

CRÉATURE

AIMÉ CÉSAIRE



1913

2008

His mouth is the mouth of those misfortunes that have no mouth. An incandescent poet, he sets consciousness ablaze with verses where revolt and dignity intertwine in the face of colonial horror.

POWERS

- Forge the concept of *Négritude* with his wife Suzanne Césaire: making Black identity, African and Caribbean cultures, a source of pride and resistance. "My *Négritude* is not just a color – it is a struggle."
- Transform poetry into a political weapon: a song that galvanizes the anti-colonial struggle as much as it enchants.

Le Boss. An almost invincible card. His power barely wavers when the Glissant card comes into play: while acknowledging the decisive contribution of *Négritude*, Glissant feared it would essentialize Black identity. A positive essentialism, certainly, but a cage nonetheless.

CRÉATURE

MONIQUE WITTIG



PROBABLEMENT QUE
LA RÉVOLUTION AURA UN
MOUSQUETON COMME PORTE-
CLEFS ET ÉCOUTERA
CHAPPEL ROAN.

1935

2003

SALOMÉ LAHOCHÉ

Monique Wittig is not a woman, she's a lesbian. And for this theorist, lesbianism is not a sexual orientation but a revolutionary political force that will lead to collective emancipation for all. Let's go lesbians!

POWERS

- Break the construction of the heterosexual system that defines "woman" through her relationship to man. Lesbians, by refusing this relationship, escape this oppression. Hence her famous phrase: "Lesbians are not women."
- Turn language and culture into subversive weapons to invent new ways of life beyond patriarchal norms.

Delayed Effect

The impact of the Wittig card is only triggered after 5 turns. Long overlooked, Wittig is now so essential that it seems difficult to find a young contemporary artist who does not refer to her in their work.

CRÉATURE

ROLAND BARTHES



A meticulous semiologist, always dressed to the nines, Roland Barthes lives for two things: the pleasure of the text and his beloved mommy. The rest of the time, he dissects wrestling, the Citroën DS, and steak-frites with unshakeable seriousness.

POWERS

- Decipher the signs and myths hidden in everyday life: how images, words, and objects carry invisible messages that shape our perception of the world.
- Highlight the plurality of readings and the subjectivity of meaning: texts and images are always open to multiple interpretations.

Detached from Reality

Arguably the most refined card in the deck, but not the sharpest knife in the drawer. His friend Derrida criticizes him for lacking grip on reality: while some are preparing for revolution, Barthes tinkers with fragments of thought.

Marginal Note: An expert in signs and hidden meanings, Barthes nonetheless missed the most obvious one: looking both ways before crossing the street.

CRÉATURE

JULIA KRISTEVA

1941



VINCENT NEVEUX



This card is a journey to the furthest reaches of your inner self, where the subject dissolves into terror. Psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva reveals the desires and abjections that language attempts to conceal. Rumor has it she was an Eastern spy, but perhaps that's just a ruse to frighten her opponents.

POWERS

- Explore the unconscious of language through the notion of subjectivation: language isn't rational; it expresses our drive and abjection (everything that threatens social order, from death to bodily fluids).
- Conceive of the subject as multiple and fragmented: human identity is always in flux, torn between the social, the symbolic, and the instinctual.

When the Irigaray or Spivak creature cards are in play, Kristeva gets -1 Subversion. Irigaray criticizes her for being too attached to the patriarchal framework of Freud and Lacan's psychoanalysis. Spivak attacks her essay *Des Chinoises*, accusing it of "appropriation of otherness" and producing a monolithic image of "Woman."

CRÉATURE

ÉDOUARD GLISSANT



1928

2011

VINCENT NEVEUX

This card exists only in contact with other cards. It is relation. Poet, novelist, and philosopher, Édouard Glissant celebrates the unpredictable weaving of identities and cultures. He teaches us that we have the right to be ourselves—that is, multiple.

POWERS

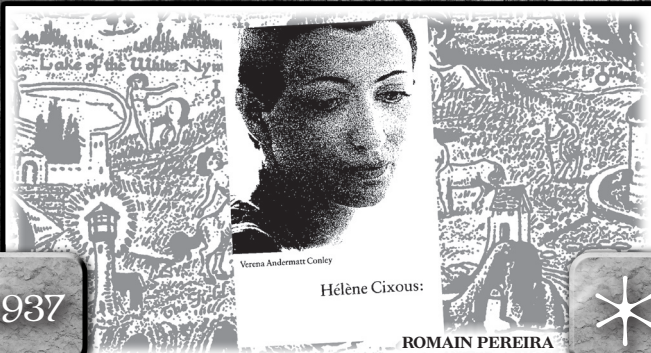
- Enchant identities by making them fluid: not a fixed essence nor dissolution, but infinite creolization.
- Develop the concept of the Tout-Monde: a planetary vision where cultures do not clash but intertwine.
- Oppose single roots with the power of rhizomes and archipelagos, multiple and connected.

Right to Opacity

Once per turn, you may play a card without announcing its effect. For Glissant, Western modernity sought to make the Other “transparent” by locking them into universal categories. Conversely, he claims the right to opacity, to preserve an irreducible part that escapes understanding.

CRÉATURE

HÉLÈNE CIXOUS



1937



This card has the power to release buried voices. Hélène Cixous turns the pen into a revolutionary force against patriarchy. She teaches us that by writing, we all become witches – we hold the power to transform the world through words.

POWERS

- Invent “women’s writing” to transcend dominant phallogentric language. A freer, more creative form of expression that conveys the specificity and power of the feminine (note that this doesn’t mean a fixed, essentialized, or biological notion of femininity).
- Make writing a political and liberating act – a way to resist both patriarchal and colonial oppression.

The Medusa’s Bitter Laugh

If a player summons their Foucault card to present power as an “abstract and diffuse system,” you may counter by invoking Cixous: power takes shape in the concrete, lived violences experienced by women.

CRÉATURE

LUCE IRIGARAY

1930

THIS SEX
WHICH IS
NOT ONE
LUCE IRIGARAY

ROMAIN PEREIRA



Banished from the Freudian school after daring to challenge the mage Lacan, Luce Irigaray rises from the ruins of psychoanalysis to shatter the phallogentric mirror. She invents a language in which the feminine thinks itself.

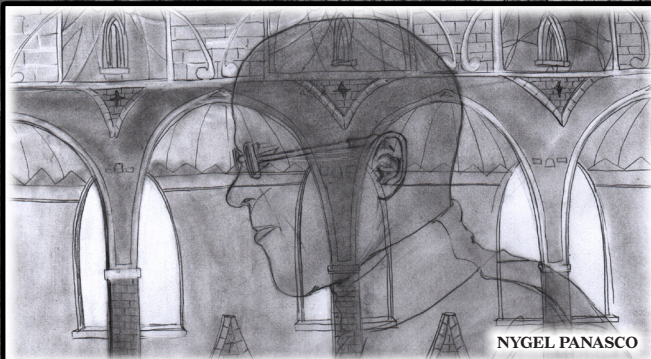
POWERS

- Expose how Western thought has been built by and for the masculine: Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hegel, Freud, and Lacan all conceptualized the feminine by associating it with nature, the body, or silence – always in relation to man (as lack, mirror, or devalued double).
- Develop a language, imagery, and practices that express women's subjectivity without resorting to masculine codes.

Irigaray has at times been criticized by feminists aligned with Simone de Beauvoir for essentialism (placing too much emphasis on biological or sexual difference). Irigaray, for her part, believes that Beauvoir underestimated the power of the masculine symbolic order and that by seeking to erase difference, she risks perpetuating the invisibility of the feminine.

CRÉATURE

STRUCTURALISM



ASSOCIATED CREATURES

Michel Foucault (archeology period) · Jacques Lacan
Roland Barthes (first period) · Rosalind Krauss

POWERS

- Uses linguistic tools (grammar, oppositions) to reveal the invisible rules that shape our narratives, actions, and traditions.
- Shows that things only have meaning in relation to other things: it is difference / differentiation, not identity / similarity, that creates meaning.
- Demonstrates that our choices are not entirely free: we follow internalized social rules.

Some frameworks are too rigid and crumble at the slightest tremor. Derrida and Foucault (genealogy period) criticize structuralism for explaining everything through fixed rules and stable structures, even though these are also subject to tensions and power relations. If the Deconstruction card is played, this land gets -1 toughness.

LAND

DECONSTRUCTION



NYGEL PANASCO

ASSOCIATED CREATURES

Jacques Derrida • Gayatri Spivak • Hélène Cixous
Julia Kristeva • Sylvère Lotringer

POUVOIRS

- Blurs ready-made binary oppositions (man/woman or nature/culture): these are not natural truths, but social constructs.
- Shows that “obvious” categories (gender, identity, origin) can be transformed, shifted, and reinvented.
- Reveals the multiple meanings of a text or story. These are spaces of play where nothing is ever fully fixed, neither true nor false.

Warning: the blurring can create fog. When everything cracks into a thousand possible meanings, it becomes hard to find your way. This land gets -1 power as long as the Critical Epistemology card is active. Bourdieu criticizes deconstruction for focusing too much on texts and signs, overlooking real power relations (economic, social, institutional).

LAND

CRITICAL EPISTEMOLOGY



NYGEL PANASCO

ASSOCIATED CREATURES

Pierre Bourdieu · Michel Foucault (genealogy period)

POUVOIRS

- Reveals the invisible workings of knowledge: what we call “truth” is often woven from power relations. We always see through a lens shaped by heritage, body, and history.
- Exposes the spells cast by institutions (schools, museums, the state...), which claim neutrality but often uphold privileges.
- Combines social analysis with the power of political critique: understanding is already a form of resistance. An intellectual must be a engaged figure, at the heart of struggles.

This land risks turning creatures into mere products of power structures, denying personal experiences. As long as this card is on the battlefield, allied creatures get -1/-0. Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic approach, by emphasizing networks, opposes the idea of fixed social structures and rigid reproductions analyzed by Bourdieu.

LAND

RHIZOMES & ARCHIPELAGOS



ASSOCIATED CREATURES

*Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari · Edouard Glissant
Sylvère Lotringer*

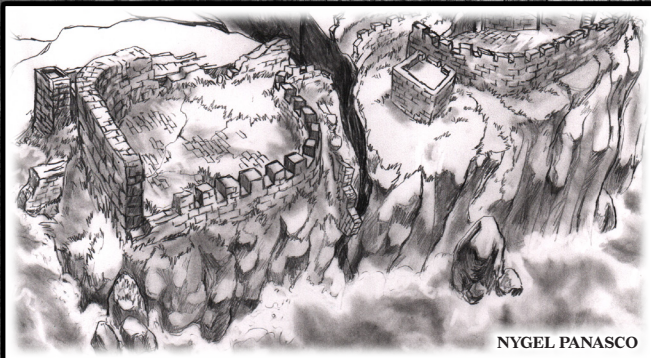
POWERS

- *Unfold thought like an underground network, without hierarchy or center, connecting ideas, actions, and experiences unpredictably (rhizomes, Deleuze & Guattari).*
- *Weave identities and cultures like an archipelago, connected yet distinct, valuing creolization and diversity of viewpoints (archipelagos, Glissant).*
- *Blend art, politics, philosophy, and desire into a single flow, refusing to compartmentalize domains.*

Even the freest roots can lose their footing. Bourdieu criticizes Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomes for eschewing all hierarchy and structure, making their concepts difficult to apply in practice and risking alienating those who truly want to impact the real world.

LAND

ANTICOLONIALISM & POSTCOLONIALITY



NYGEL PANASCO

ASSOCIATED CREATURES

Frantz Fanon · Aimé Césaire
Édouard Glissant · Sylvia Wynter · Gayatri Spivak

POWERS

- Questions the persistent traces of colonization in knowledge, bodies, and systems of thought.
- Amplifies decentralized, diasporic, archipelagic voices—those long silenced.
- Carries the living memory of slavery, exile, and resistance, not as a burden, but as a power to be passed on.
- Invokes creolization: a moving, unpredictable, and fertile weaving where identities mingle without dissolving.

The fortress is riddled with fine cracks that threaten its unity. Glissant subtly highlights the risk of essentialism in Césaire's call to return to African roots, reminding us that identities are woven, shift, and intertwine.

LAND

ABJECTION



NYGEL PANASCO

ASSOCIATED CREATURES

*Julia Kristeva · Georges Bataille
Jean Genet*

POWERS

- Ventures into dark zones where words can no longer speak: blood, death, overflowing bodies.
- Scrutinizes what society rejects, pushes away, and buries beneath the threshold of cleanliness: disgust, shame, impurity.
- Reveals that the “abject” is hunted by power because it poses a threat.
- Questions the boundaries of humanity, where the animal, the divine, or the monstrous come to crack our certainties.

By venturing too deep into the abyss of horror, this land risks trapping you in abjectness and diverting you from concrete political struggles. As long as this land is in play, allied creatures get -1/-1 to power and toughness.

LAND

CRITICAL PSYCHOANALYSIS



NYGEL PANASCO

ASSOCIATED CREATURES

Jacques Lacan · Julia Kristeva (*partiellement*)
Deleuze & Guattari (*par critique*)

POWERS

- Unravels language as a gateway to the unconscious: each word slips, escapes, betrays more than it reveals.
- Summons the traces of the repressed within speech – of what has been forgotten, denied, or silenced.
- Reveals the subject as split, haunted by inner conflict – never whole, always in tension with itself.
- Explores the force of fantasy, silence, and speech as magical powers that shape our identities.

Gets -1 to power as long as Critical Epistemology (Foucault) is active. Foucault exposes psychoanalysis as a tool of social control and normalization, restricting the freedom of subjects by constraining them within norms.

LAND

FÉMINISMES



NYGEL PANASCO

ASSOCIATED CREATURES

Simone de Beauvoir · Hélène Cixous · Judith Butler
Monique Wittig · Luce Irigaray · Gayatri Spivak

POWERS

- Reveals that “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (de Beauvoir): gender roles are constructed, not an essence.
- Explores the performative dimension of identity: gender and roles are constantly reenacted and can be disrupted, subverted.

There are as many feminisms as there are feminists. For materialists, patriarchy is a system of exploitation comparable to capitalism. They seek to abolish the political construction of “men” and “women”, which they see as the root of oppression (Wittig). In contrast, differentialists (Cixous, Irigaray) affirm the value of feminine difference — a stance that horrifies queer witches (Butler, heir to the breach opened by de Beauvoir), for whom gender is a performance. And for intersectionalists (Spivak, Hooks), all of these debates fall short: as long as feminists ignore racial issues, they will reproduce the very exclusions they claim to resist.

LAND

DISSEMINATION



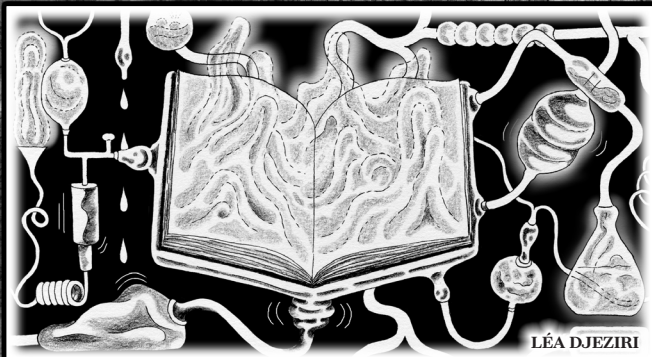
Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, 1972

When you cast this sorcery, each word you read transforms into a floating seed. Meaning no longer follows a single path – it scatters, multiplies, sometimes gets lost, and sprouts differently depending on the reader, the moment, and the context.

This powerful spell from Derrida shatters the illusion of fixed meaning and opens the text to an infinite proliferation of interpretations. Reading becomes a fertile act: each reading gives rise to new ideas and new worlds.

RITUAL

DESIRING-MACHINE



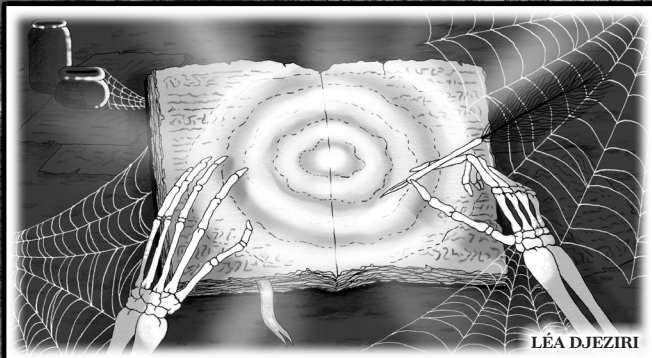
Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 1972

When you cast this sorcery, you raise the temperature of the battlefield by a few degrees. You transform all your urges and impulses into creative engines: each desire becomes a flow, connecting, multiplying, intertwining with others, spreading in unexpected directions.

This spell cast by masters Deleuze and Guattari breaks with the Freudian idea of desire (as lack, a frustration). Instead, desire becomes a productive force – machines that connect bodies, flows, objects, and ideas. Reading, thinking, and acting become shifting experiences where the political, the erotic, and the imaginary merge into an uncontrollable force.

RITUAL

THE DEATH OF THE AUTHOR



Roland Barthes, *The Death of the Author*, 1967

This card regrets to announce the death of the Author. Their “intentions” are divided equally among all their readers.

By casting this ritual, you shatter the illusion that a book has a single fixed meaning set by its writer. The text becomes an open space where each reading brings forth new worlds. Here, true power lies in the hands of the reader: the author dies so that the reader may be born.

RITUAL

ABJECTION



LÉA DJEZIRI

Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, 1980

Close your eyes and cover your ears. This card plunges you into the thrill of what both disgusts and fascinates. Blood, corpses, forgotten remains. Playing this card means welcoming the abject into your game: it makes you shiver or vomit, but it strengthens your identity by marking what belongs to you and what threatens to dissolve you. Remember, individuals and societies build themselves by pushing away what threatens or repulses them. If you find yourself loving corpses a little too much, it might be time to seek professional help.

RITUAL

GEOMETRIES OF THE NON-HUMAN



Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 1950

When you cast this ritual, the polished humanist façades of your opponents begin to crack.

This spell by Césaire reveals that colonialism did not simply exploit lands and bodies – it dehumanized, turned the Other into a thing, into a non-human. Europe, so proud of its values, tolerated barbarism as long as it was practiced elsewhere. And what it cannot forgive Hitler for is bringing its own colonial methods home.

To play this card is to shatter the colonial geometry that draws lines between “men” and “sub-humans”, and to remind us that any such hierarchy always carries within it the very demon it claims to exorcise.

RITUAL

THE CRITIQUE OF INSTITUTIONS



Pierre Bourdieu with Jean-Claude Passeron, *The Inheritors: French Students and Their Relation to Culture*, 1964

When you cast this ritual, you reveal the invisible rules that govern schools, media, museums, and even ways of speaking and thinking. Institutions are not neutral: they produce hierarchies, privileges, and forms of domination that often go unnoticed. They define who holds power, who is seen as legitimate, and who remains at the margins.

This spell, drawn from Bourdieu, shows that power not only resides in governments or laws, but in the everyday practices and discourses that shape our lives. Playing this card lets you see beyond appearances, grasp the mechanisms of social reproduction, and open pathways for transforming existing structures.

RITUAL

INVASION OF DERRIDIUM & LACANIUM



ROMAIN PEREIRA

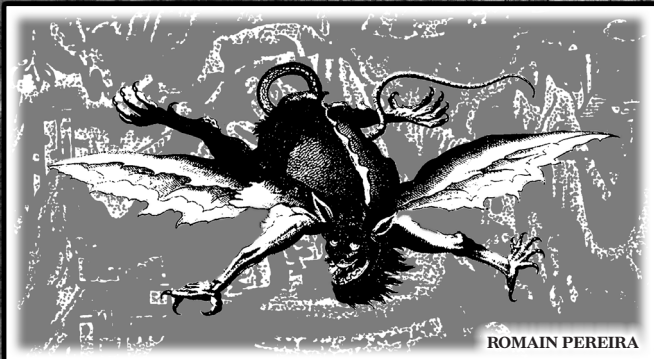
This dangerously addictive card has the power to get you hooked on poststructuralist philosophers, with an addiction worse than crack cocaine.

In the 1980s, French philosophers gained exceptional notoriety in the United States. Their concepts were grouped together as if they formed a single school of thought: French Theory. This decontextualization creates a fruitful disconnect, entering into dialogue with American feminist, queer, anti-racist, and postcolonial struggles. It becomes more than a philosophy reserved for a select few – it turns into an academic language used in the service of social and political critique.

The wave is so overwhelming in the U.S. that philosopher Bruno Latour famously compares France to a dealer of hard drugs, spreading Derridium and Lacanium across college campuses.

ENCHANTMENT

THE SOKAL SPELL



ROMAIN PEREIRA

This treacherous card lets you set a trap for your opponents: a hoax that casts doubt on the seriousness and scientific rigor of their theories.

In 1996, physicist Alan Sokal publishes a deliberately absurd article in the influential journal Social Text. The article mimics postmodern jargon, blending references to Derrida, Lacan, and Lyotard with scientific nonsense (e.g., quantum gravity as a social construct).

Once published, Sokal reveals that it is a hoax, intended to expose what he sees as a lack of rigor among certain intellectuals and the complacency of critical journals toward obscure language.

The affair sparks a scandal and becomes a rhetorical weapon against French Theory, accused of misusing scientific concepts. But doesn't it only prove that *Social Text* was a bad journal?

ENCHANTEMENT

UNIVERSALIST BACKLASH



PAULINE LECERF

This reactionary card has the power to sow doubt over French Theory and bring noble universalism back into the spotlight.

While Francophone thought shines brightly in the United States, its light begins to flicker in France as early as the 1970s, overshadowed by new philosophers opposing poststructuralist theories. The criticism is harsh: for Bernard-Henri Lévy, “all politics based on the primacy of difference are necessarily fascist” (*Barbarism with a Human Face*, 1977), while Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut attack the “philosophies of difference,” their “terroristic” approach and the unreadable “absurdity of these ‘philosophists’” (*La pensée* 68, 1986).

This card is weakened in the presence of Bourdieu and Foucault: Bourdieu accuses them of preferring the spotlight’s glare over rigorous knowledge; Foucault, of erasing power relations behind a universalism that is disconnected from social realities.

ENCHANTMENT

SYLVÈRE LOTRINGER

SEMIOTEXT(E) NEXT(E)



PANIC



SOVIETEXT(E)



NICE FICTION ANTHOLOGY



JAPAN

Semiotext(e) is published irregularly on topics of wide interest.

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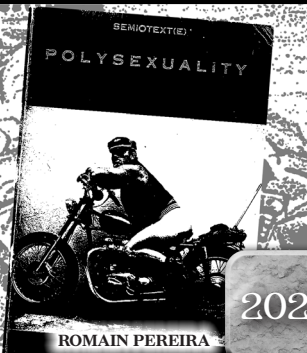
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1938



2021

An academic and publisher, he spread poststructuralist thought in the United States through its margins, via artistic and alternative circles.

In 1974, Sylvère Lotringer founds the journal *Semiotext(e)*, where he publishes translations of Foucault, Deleuze & Guattari, and Baudrillard—then unknown to the English-speaking public. These famously difficult texts are desacralized, wrapped in a punk aura. Bold graphics, affordable format, performance nights, pirate translations: the journal becomes cult, snapped up by students and activists alike. French Theory becomes trendy (much to Lotringer's regret), infiltrating the arts, electronic music, and even Hollywood cinema (the *Matrix* saga literally opens with Baudrillard's book *Simulacra and Simulation*, which might be the key to the film).

Lotringer emphasizes the subversive nature of these texts. For him, theory is a political weapon rather than an academic subject. "What matters is not what you are, but what you do."

ARTEFACT

ROSALIND KRAUSS

1941



OCTOBER

The First Decade, 1976–1986



edited by | Annette Michelson | Rosalind Krauss
Douglas Crimp | and Joan Copjec

ROMAIN PEREIRA

Behind her stern rectangular glasses hides a formidable strategist. Rosalind Krauss, known for her incisive critiques, connected French Theory to the world of art and the institution of the museum.

In the 1970s, she breaks away from Clement Greenberg's modernist aesthetics, which advocates for "pure" art, without external reference. Instead, she champions theoretical, conceptual art. In 1976, she co-founds the legendary journal *October* with Annette Michelson – a major platform for art criticism steeped in structuralism, poststructuralism, and psychoanalysis. Through this publication, she introduces American art criticism to the ideas of Bataille, Derrida, Barthes, and Lacan.

A powerful but demanding card: her dense vocabulary is sometimes considered impenetrable. Some artists criticize her for turning art into academic jargon, for privileging theory over aesthetic experience.

ARTEFACT

SYLVIA WYNTER

Sylvia WYNTER

NO
HUMANS
INVOL-
VED



1928

CARIBBEAN REASONINGS

After Man
Towards the Human

Critical Essays
on Sylvia Wynter



Edited by Anthony Bogues
ROMAIN PEREIRA



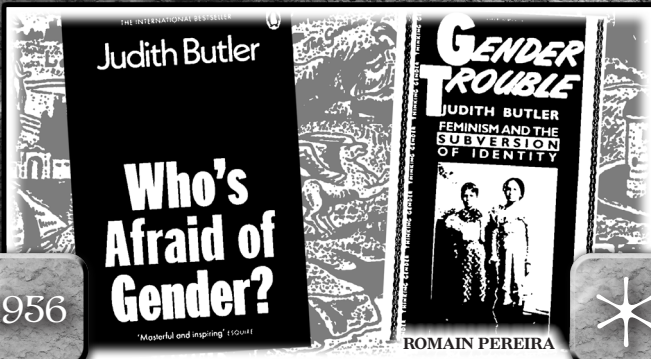
An academic, novelist, and activist, Wynter moves French Theory beyond its Franco-French circles to connect it with questions of race, colonization, and diaspora.

Wynter draws from Foucault the analysis of power systems that define humanity, and from Derrida the tools of deconstruction to dismantle colonial narratives. But she doesn't simply import these theories: she introduces Caribbean figures like Césaire, Fanon, and Glissant into U.S. academic debates. By mobilizing them in her own writing, she made it possible for them to be read not only as "literary figures," but as central thinkers.

Little known to the wider public, Wynter remains a rare card: a well-kept secret of the academic world, but one whose underground influence now permeates contemporary debates on race, humanism, and emancipation.

ARTEFACT

JUDITH BUTLER



This scholar imports French poststructuralism to the United States to transform it into a practical tool within the field of gender studies. They revolutionize contemporary thought: gender is not an essence but a performance (an idea that partly comes from watching drag shows). In 1998, they win first place in the Bad Writing Contest, which «rewards» the most obscure academic sentence. They take it with humor, responding that their complex style makes it possible to invent new ways of thinking.

- They draw on Michel Foucault to argue that sex and gender are not natural facts, but are produced by discourse and systems of power.
- They borrow from Derrida the idea that words «do» what they say, to shape their concept of gender performativity.

Butler brings together thinkers that France itself would never have paired—Foucault and Derrida, who had fallen out over their disagreement about Descartes (which is definitely more epic than fighting over vacation expenses!). Yet this unexpected collision proves fruitful: resonating with feminist, queer, and postcolonial struggles, their concepts—power, difference, deconstruction—become practical tools for emancipation.

ARTEFACT

GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK

GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK
**CAN THE
SUBALTERN SPEAK?**



1942

Jacques Derrida
**of
Grammatology**



Trans: ROMAIN PEREIRA



Spivak exports French thinkers against the backdrop of the struggles of colonized peoples. Her work opens new paths for thinking about voice, translation, and subalternity in a globalized world.

- She draws on Derrida, whom she is the first to translate into English, to show that language shapes and limits access to speech and recognition for the "subaltern" (marginalized social groups).
- She takes inspiration from Caribbean authors like Césaire and Glissant to think about how colonization and language structure subjectivity and resistance, integrating *Négritude* and *creoleness* into her postcolonial thinking.

Spivak helps shape what becomes known as French Theory by translating and adapting Derrida and Caribbean thinkers to the Anglophone context. She builds a bridge between literary criticism, postcolonial philosophy, and social justice, turning the concepts of deconstruction and difference into concrete tools for the emancipation of marginalized voices. Spivak observes that Derridean analysis remains confined within Western frameworks, unable to fully account for the exploitation of subaltern women or the realities and effects of globalized capitalism.

ARTEFACT