

Daniel Morris

What I Learned Theorizing Museums from Candy, the Student in My Intro to Poetry Class Who Doesn't Just Dislike Me or Ignore Me or Think I'm irrelevant or Over Her Head or Beneath Her or Quirky or Preachy but Who Really Hates My Guts and Everything (She Thinks) I Stand For and Wants Me Axed for Insubordination Even Though She Knows I Have Tenure and I Know it Would be Next to Impossible for Her to Fire Me Even with Extremely Low Course Evaluations Due to the Zeros She Marks on Each Question

Candy went from Lafayette IN to NYC to see the Hip Hop exhibit at MOMA
Before we happen to be discussing Sherman Alexie's lyric rant about the (I believe) Mythical Buffalo Bill Museum as a form of Colonialist rape. My argument extends
Beyond Alexie to a wider critique in which museums murder culture period.
I go so far as to argue there is "no way" to put Hip Hop into MOMA
Without altering its street cred. In fact I questioned how anyone who dug
Hip Hop enough to drive to NYC from Northwest Indy could unambiguously
Marvel MOMA because, as Alexie demonstrates, what was once Subversive/underground or
of otherwise revolutionary potential is infected
Like a virus or absorbed to inoculate with the mainstream acknowledgement
A threat in the cordoned off and controlled environment of sanctioned
Visibility and what Pierre Bourdieu has termed cultural capital -- the museum space MOMA or
otherwise. Was I proclaiming anything new or controversial? Think Elgin Marbles. Does
anyone still pray to Athena? How about I.M. Pei's
POMO museum in Cleveland where George Thorogood
Admitted Chuck Berry inked every rock song before 1960,
Or the maps, flags, letters, and numbers of Jasper Johns, as described in a famous
Critical Inquiry essay by Philip Fisher entitled "The Making and Effacing of Art,"
Or James Young's recent work on Holocaust memorials in Berlin as a form of amnesiac
Forgetting rather than remembering, or the Athenian warrior's helmet with the pinprick Hole,
signifying the terrifying transition from spears to bullets
Now encased in the Worcester Museum of Art as described in a lecture
On Book Three of *The Iliad* by Professor Grossman at Brandeis in 1991.
Candy was PISSED OFF, acting as if I wished in front of peers to colonize her

Travels, exploit her participation in the death ritual of her identificatory adventure;
On the verge of tears (of rage?) she stood to say well maybe
Greek pantheon or the Holocaust or even Jasper Whoever are dead
But you just couldn't be more off about MOMA Hip-Hop because
The many young idealistic rappers from Jamaica Queens to Jamaica Jamaica,
A mosaic of all races, creeds, sexual preferentials, and ethnic backgrounds wearing
Really rad bag rags are alive, hopeful Hip Hop Is bonified Art art, not kids'
Stuff toasting the dozens, MOMA was breathing monster Kulcha
Mr. Morris a living legacy to Grandmaster Flash, Lovebug Starski, Kurtis Blow, and Coke La
Rock while you glare up there with your b.o. 5 o'clock shadow and pot belly leaning Over your
platform or lectern or whatever you call it where you pontificate
Theorize speculate under cover of your PhD authority as Doctor of Modernist Poetics
Claiming you don't but really do relish your ability to grade us and tell us when we can
Break into groups to discuss sestinas we don't care to discuss and when we
Must zip it and listen to you like you're some Oracle at fucking Delphi just because While you
pretend to be this rad instructor because you let us keep a diary and don't Call it a journal and
you don't require MLA documentation or any formal papers
And you play us "Tambourine Man" and tell us about acid and grammar doesn't matter And
show us hush hush the lesbian subtext of Gertrude Stein's tender buttons when
The God's honest truth is you fear the implications of MOMA's decision
To feature Hip Hop because you know they are the taste arbiters
Not little old you hiding out here at Purdue in Northwest fucking Indiana cornfields
And you realize if EVEN MOMA is going Hip Hop you are so so frigging far behind
Even though you look pretty young with your goatee you are nothing
Othe than another skanky dinosaur profs we all dread getting who shoves
Samuel Johnson and Ben Jonson and Alfred Lord Tennyson down our throats
Are you so different with your Ass-berry and Gins-bork and Sex-Town
And because you fear the future is now you hide behind your theories
About "museum culture" because you can't admit to us students
Can't admit to yourself that something is happening (as your own
Rad poet Bob Dylan might say) where happening things happen in places like
The Big Apple things deafening and rhythmic and multicultural things beyond
Your expertise of what is and what isn't poetry for I am sure
You would not consider Hip Hop poetry since I didn't see any of our stuff
On your syllabus and I am sure that is not because you were afraid
You were going to kill it Sherman Alexie's Buffalo Bill poem notwithstanding.