

# This is not the world we were promised and demands our refusal to accept it

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## Abstract

it is the world of lines,  
thin, rigid, dividing,  
where either/or reigns,  
splitting breath from body,  
spirit from soil,  
as if we were meant  
to live in pieces.

## Citation Link

Erin Manning reminds us,  
in the clearing,  
“the line is an invention,  
but it does not hold.”  
still, they draw it,  
a fortress against what moves,  
what flows,  
what cannot be named.

Karen Barad whispers:  
“the space between is not empty,”  
yet still they fill it  
with binaries,  
with borders,  
with rules that reduce.

on the land,  
Leanne Simpson reminds us,  
“the earth speaks,  
it teaches,  
it resists being divided.”  
but they split the rivers  
from the fields,  
the seeds from the sun,  
and call it progress.

at the table,  
Audre Lorde warns,  
“the master’s tools  
will never dismantle  
the master’s house.”  
but still, they craft their syllabi,  
their theories,  
their maps,  
like knives.

Paula Gunn Allen hums in the distance,  
her words weaving the fabric of stories:  
“we are the land.”  
not separate, not above,  
but of it, in it, breathing with it.  
our knowing is the knowing of rivers,  
of cedar trees, of the wind  
that carries the songs of ancestors.

and Gloria Anzaldúa steps forward,  
speaking the borderlands:  
“this border, this thin edge of barbwire,  
separates but also unites.”  
she invites us to see  
that the wound of separation  
can also be a site of creation.  
her nepantla calls us to live  
in the in-between,  
where the binaries dissolve.

Sara Ahmed reminds us,  
in her phenomenology of whiteness,  
that privilege moves like a shadow,  
hugging the contours of space,  
shaping what we see,  
and erasing what we do not.  
“whiteness,” she says,  
“makes the world an inheritance  
for some, a barricade for others.”  
this world of binaries  
belongs to that shadow,  
that inheritance.

Eli Care whispers of bodies  
marked as too much or not enough,  
of navigating a world

that fears what cannot be confined.  
in *exile and pride*, he asks:  
“how do we embrace difference  
as a source of connection?”  
and he shows us  
that disability is not a lack,  
but a world-making force,  
a way of becoming otherwise.

queer lives light the margins,  
where Adrienne Rich reminds us  
of the “dream of a common language.”  
here, the binaries falter:  
woman/man,  
right/wrong,  
real/unreal.  
here, love refuses the rules  
and blossoms in the cracks.

James Baldwin warns,  
“you cannot fix what you will not face.”  
and so, we turn to the borders,  
to the wounds, to the ghosts  
that linger where binaries divide.  
we face them, and we listen.

Denise Ferreira Da Silva calls us  
to the “black feminist poethics,”  
to undo the colonial logics  
that separate, categorize,  
reduce. she writes:  
“to know is not to grasp,  
but to dwell.”

how can we grow here?  
how can we breathe here?  
if all they give us  
is either/or.

but Erin Manning shows us,  
in the clearing,  
“worlds breathe together,”  
that what lies beyond the binary  
is not chaos but creation.  
in this space,  
we find new rhythms,  
new ways of being with,

beyond the lines  
they told us we needed.

in the drumbeat of the ancestors,  
we hear the call  
for both/and.  
Malidoma Somé says,  
“ritual is how we remember.”  
so we remember:  
our bodies are soil,  
our voices are rivers,  
our stories are the bridge  
over every border  
they’ve ever drawn.

Lucille Clifton would say,  
“celebrate with me  
that every boundary is a lie,  
and we,  
we are infinite.”

So we live it.  
we say no to the lines,  
we bring the spaces to life.  
between land and sky,  
past and future,  
me and you,  
both and all.

this is not the world  
they promised,  
but it is the world  
we will make.

### **About the author**

**Julia Jude**, DProf, is a systemic therapist, supervisor, tutor, artist, filmmaker, and advocate for social justice and equality. Through this plurality of roles, Jude committed to creating spaces for doing difference differently without separation and participating in practices that are drawn to inquiry around what it means to live in the places we live and labour with human and non-human.

### **Julia Jude Academia Page link**

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