Introduction

Tinted Glasses, Unit Thinking, and Coherants

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TECHNOLOGIES OF VISION

We used to see fairies and angels, ghosts and Santa Claus. Some of us still do. Not literally, but in other ways. What does it mean to "see" things? More importantly, what does it mean to see things that others do not and vice versa? How do such visions affect our relationships to others, to our surroundings, to things we purchase and use, and to our daily communications? This book investigates such politics of vision in various contexts, seeing the ghosts of samurais in the descendants of peasants in Japan, angels in West African children in poverty, transformative adventures in foreign countries, an enemy in someone with different political opinions, rejection or invitation to learn in a poster written in language we do not know, sweatshop workers in a "good buy," and potential robbers or future friends in strangers. This volume seeks to understand the politics of vision by offering various ways of seeing and suggests ways to proactively engage in transforming society for the better.

We see the world through tinted glasses. Gaining new sets of tinted glasses opens up a new world to us. When we learn to drive, we see the world in a new light—we can read all the road signs and realize how drivers are directed to see and do certain things. When we learn how to read clouds and what they mean meteorologically, the sky becomes a book for us to understand what is happening with the weather.

While allowing us to see certain things, such tinted glasses also keep us from seeing other things. Tinted glasses that push us to focus on visuals right in front of us are one example. Seeing only nicely packaged beef in supermarkets keeps us from seeing cattle on farms or in sheds, their living conditions, and their slaughter. Seeing only a beautiful cotton shirt prevents us from seeing the chemical fertilizers and pesticides used to farm the cotton or the labor conditions of those who created the fabric and sewed it into a shirt.

Throughout our lives, we acquire various kinds of tinted glasses. Some tinted glasses become obsolete and abandoned, while others stay with us for a long time. The tinted glasses we grow up with become so naturalized that we sometimes do not even realize that we are seeing through them. Such mundane experiences that became automatic and habitualized can be brought back to life by being "defamiliarized" by literature: new sets of tinted glasses. This is the working of literature that Viktor Shklovsky ([1917] 1988) calls "making objects unfamiliar" that is achieved by avoiding using the name for the phenomenon and instead describing it in detail and at length as if they are encountering it for the first time.

Some call tinted glasses "culture," which gives us ways to interpret things, such as what is "beautiful" and what is "gross." Others have called these tinted glasses "language" or vocabulary through which only certain things can be conceptualized (Plummer 1995), such as "poetic justice" or "passive aggressive." These concepts emerge in specific sociocultural environments that are conducive to them, in turn perpetuating them (McDermott and Varenne 1995).

Theories are sets of tinted glasses. They often allow us to see the world in new ways, uncovering things that were obscured by other tinted glasses. This book offers diverse kinds of theories in order to understand and analyze certain topics. I revisit my past ethnographic research in various sites—the United States, Sierra Leone, New Mexico—and reinterpret what I observed there with new tinted glasses, which allow us to see things that were not apparent earlier.

This is the first aim of this book: to suggest diverse tinted glasses for seeing the world. Throughout the volume, I engage with five theoretical notions. The first is "tinted glasses" I have described above and will discuss further later. The second is what I call "unit thinking": a common set of tinted glasses that depicts the world as consisting of bounded, countable units that are thought of as internally homogeneous, despite the world being made up of spectrums. Later in this chapter, I illustrate this with examples of common unit thinking pertaining to race, culture, and language. This volume focuses specifically on the unit of "nation" and other related units, which are developed and sustained by the nation-state ideology of one nation, one

people, one culture, one language, one territory. The binary oppositions promoted by unit thinking between "languages," linguistic groups (chapters 2, 6), developed and developing countries (chapters 3, 7), study abroad students' host and home societies (chapter 4), the politically opposed left and right (chapter 5), and "races" (chapter 8) will also be discussed.

The third notion is what I call "coherants": ideas, discourses, vocabularies, physical setups, devices, institutions, political processes, and theories that cause fragmented, continuous daily experience to cohere into bounded units (I use an *a* to spell the word "coherant" to show that it is an agent that turns fluid things into solid units, as in "coagulant," with the appearance of coherence). Throughout the book, I suggest that various coherants have developed and continue to sustain unit thinking. They include notions around language, institutional setups in schools, narratives and plots in films (chapter 2), various discourses and available narratives (chapters 3, 4 and 8), political issues and parties (chapter 5), class project itself, language signs (chapter 6), capitalist systems (chapter 7), and federal policies like redlining (chapter 8). These chapters show that these coherants push us to see nations (and their various groupings such as developed versus developing nations and host versus home countries), political left versus right, linguistic groups, and race as bounded, internally homogeneous units.

These first three notions allow us to unpack the processes by which a coherant mobilizes a set of tinted glasses that push us to see the world as consisting of bounded, countable units—unit thinking. The fourth and fifth notions this book engage in—the "optical unconscious" of Walter Benjamin (1999) and the "fetishism" of Slavoj Žižek (1998)—relate to the second aim of this volume, which is to complicate the straightforward understanding of seeing through tinted glasses by drawing on discussions of the politics of vision. As will be discussed in depth in chapter 1, both these notions suggest the importance of seeing beyond what is apparently visible. While the notion of the optical unconscious illuminates technology's role in our ability to see beyond the readily visible and its potential for creating social transformation, Žižek's notion of fetish suggests that we may see both simultaneously, producing various effects. Throughout, this book engages with these notions, some chapters applying, some critiquing, and some adding to them.

The optical unconscious—the fourth notion—was discussed when Benjamin (1999) analyzed the effect of technological innovations. As will be detailed more in chapter 1, Benjamin argued that the technology of the camera allowed the masses to see what the naked eye could not see previously: an optical "unconscious" similar to the unconscious suggested by Sigmund Freud. Benjamin suggested that seeing optical unconscious changed the way they saw the world. Some chapters in this book reveal the optical uncon-

scious and utilize it to further analyze the situation (chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5) while other chapters critique the notion (chapters 6, 7, and 8) in light of my ethnographic fieldwork analyses.

The fifth and the most vital notion this book engages with is that of the fetishism suggested by Žižek (1998), who argues that it hides complexity behind a simplistic façade, even though we are aware of that complexity all the while, as will be detailed in chapter 1. Drawing on this notion, which complicates the Marxist understanding of fetish, the chapters in this volume explain how such a fetish develops (chapter 2), how fetishes can push individuals to do certain things (chapters 3, 4, 5, and 7), and how fetishes allow people to connect with each other beyond difference (chapters 2, 5, and 8) at a respectful distance (chapter 6) without anxiety (chapters 3 and 7) and to imagine a nation that acknowledges diversity but also celebrates unity (chapter 8). In doing so, these chapters not only apply Žižek's notion of fetish to ethnographic analyses (chapters 2, 3, and 8) and class projects that encourage students to see the world in certain ways (chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7) in order to analyze various politics of vision in context but also contribute a new understanding of fetishism as productive, in that fetishes push people to act (chapters 3, 4, and 7) and be united (chapters 2 and 5).

Besides these five main theoretical notions, other tinted glasses used to analyze specific cases of various chapters include linguistic theories with specific foci such as language standardization (chapter 2), minority language politics, and linguistic landscape (chapter 6) as well as theories in cultural politics with foci such as Noble Savage and exoticization (chapters 3 and 6), cultural relativism, and multiscalar networks (chapter 5) and cultural geography of race (chapter 8). I also draw on theories about neoliberalism, positive psychology, happiness studies (chapter 3), study abroad, and narrative studies (chapter 4). I moreover suggest theoretical concepts of my own (besides "tinted glasses," "unit thinking," and "coherants" that I use throughout the book) specifically for some chapters, such as "contextual momentary relationality" (chapter 7) and "interpretive physicality" (chapter 8), which will be explained later in this chapter.

In short, building on the politics of vision, which complicate our understanding of seeing, understanding, and acting in the world, this book offers sets of tinted glasses that spotlight the processes through which unit thinking has been developed, sustained, and complicated, as well as the ways we can challenge it. This is the third aim of this volume.

Seeking to apply this approach in practice, I suggest what I call "spectacle pedagogy." It is a pedagogy that incorporates the politics of vision in teaching, analyzing theories as tinted glasses for seeing the world, and seeks to transform society for the better. The world can be understood from di-

verse angles, yet each set of tinted glasses gives the viewer but one angle to see the world. This pushes students to approach theories with analytical eyes by examining effective as well as problematic aspects of each theory. Trying on various sets of tinted glasses and, more importantly, becoming aware that there are spectrums of color and shade of tinted glasses out there, not just a single set of glasses that gives you the "absolute truth," is what spectacle pedagogy seeks to teach students to do. With this humility, we want to encourage students to proactively transform society, though with some uncertainty and awareness that their design can be improved, which may then keep them open to new suggestions from others. This book seeks to introduce this new way of teaching various theories as sets of tinted glasses that allow us to see things that may have been hidden in plain sight and increase our awareness of these meta-perspectives through proactive actions.

With this engagement with the world beyond the classroom, this book is part of a tripartite project that addresses the politics of vision and unit thinking to three overlapping different audiences: academic, general public, and children. This book is the main basis of the project that describes and discusses in detail and in depth the theoretical grounding of the issues at hand. For general public, this project will suggest the idea and concepts introduced in this book but with less theoretical discussion and more suggestions for application, with this book serving as further reading. It will take the form of handbooks for practitioners, podcasts, blog posts, short stories, songs, and articles on the website of the Institute I founded called NERIKO Institute (NERIKO Institute 2022a; 2022c; 2022d). For children, some of the ideas discussed in this book will be made into picture books and toys (NERIKO Institute 2022b). It is designed to expand the audience and avoid "preaching to the choir," my suggestion in chapter 5 put into practice.

In what follows, I will first discuss in detail the notion of tinted glasses and then that of coherants with some examples. I finish this introductory chapter with an overview of the structure of the book. Deeper discussions of the notions of optical unconscious and fetish will be done in chapter 1.

TINTED GLASSES

Noticing Difference

We are different in many ways—how we stand, walk, eat, talk, work, relax, and so on. However, only certain differences are highlighted and thus become consequential. Race, culture, language, class, gender, and sexuality are examples of the "differences" that are often marked and noticed in the United

States where I live and work. Ray McDermott and Hervé Varenne (1995) demonstrate this point using the example of deaf people. We notice deaf people because we live in a society where verbal communication prevails. If society were organized so that everyone always used sign language to communicate, people would not notice who was or was not deaf, because differences that do not matter are not marked. They therefore argue that we should not start the discussion by asking how a certain group is "different," but by asking what sociocultural environments make us notice certain groups' "difference."

In this book, I use the analogy of tinted glasses to theorize this insight. When I was a junior high school student, I used a self-testing device comprised of a red marker and a green-tinted transparent plastic sheet. I used the red marker to color words I wanted to memorize (usually definitions, key concepts, etc.) from a particular text. Then I read the text through the green-tinted sheet (like using tinted glasses), which rendered the red-highlighted words unreadable because the red, when seen through the green, turned black; this way, I could self-test to see if I knew what the hidden words are. Although I used a tinted sheet to hide words, we can use it to reveal things as well.

How we notice certain differences is similar to this, like using such tinted sheets (i.e., social institutions and conventions, such as how we communicate) and looking at variously colored dots as in a colorblindness test. Depending on the color of the tinted sheets, only certain colors stand out in contrast to others and reveal certain letters. For example, if you use a green-tinted sheet/glasses, red and black will look the same and reveal certain shapes or letters. But if you use a yellow-tinted sheet/glasses, other colored dots stand out and yellow dots become invisible, revealing other shapes or letters.

This book suggests that the world can be understood in a similar way—humans and phenomena are like the colored dots, while social institutions, discourses, ideologies, and theories serve as tinted glasses. Consider, for example, our manifold diversities. We may be grouped differently (e.g., as left/right-handed), depending on the color of the tinted glasses. That is, our "difference" is not universal or objective but something that gets highlighted, depending on which tinted glasses—social institutions, discourses, or ideologies—we use. Therefore, instead of starting our analyses with our "difference" seeing it as a static quality of ourselves, we need to analyze the tinted glasses themselves, which mark only certain differences, not others.

Researchers have discussed the constructedness of social categories such as nation, race, class, gender and so on, and how we get entangled

in them. For example, Louis Althusser (1971) used the notion of "systems of categorization" to talk about ideology and how individuals are *always already* interpellated or positioned within such systems of categorization. Individuals are "hailed" (i.e., interpellated) in these categorizations, with their turning around in response to that hailing—the double notion of the Subject, who is subjected to authority but also acts as the "subject" or author of their actions. Other researchers modify this approach by giving individual subjects more agency to choose or *cite* categories in certain "matrices of difference," which has a sedimenting effect (Butler 1993) and resist interpellations (hooks 1992), by suggesting a possibility of differential interpellations by the same act depending on the individual's subject positions (P. Smith 1998), by pointing out the articulation of difference via the intersections of various "systems of signification" (Hall 1985), and by emphasizing the multiplicity of such systems and the prescriptive aspect of it with the notion of "regimes of difference" (Doerr 2009b).

These theories, however, often help sustain these categories, serving as a part of the *citing* and sedimenting process (Butler 1993) and perpetuating unit thinking based on these categories. That is, as will be discussed later, theories can become not only tinted glasses but also coherants that connect various dots and offer ways to see the world. The next subsection expands this discussion.

Theories as Tinted Glasses

Theories push us to "see" things we might not see otherwise. Theories challenge "common sense" that may have been formed through mere impressions or worse, prejudice or unproven assumptions, and alert us to things based on data. But seeing the world informed by theories is not mere "decoding" of hidden signs. Rather, theories explain workings behind what is readily visible and often connect them to wider structural forces historically and currently.

A theory, however, can also create a universe of its own that operates according to its own logic and politics, making it difficult to be tested. Michel Foucault (1972a) pointed out the "regimes of truth" that allow people to recognize only some kinds of evidence as supporting a construction of "truth" about something. Each academic discipline has its own regime of truth that is reflected in the data required to consider a work "academically rigorous." For example, case studies of three people, together with ample discussion of the "subjective" experience of the ethnographer, are well accepted in cultural anthropology, but not in other fields such as study abroad research. Re-

sults of a multiple-choice survey of two thousand people may be accepted in sociology, but in cultural anthropology they may be considered superficial and lacking context. Ethnographic data from ten years ago can be published in an anthropological journal, but in an education journal those same data would be considered obsolete.

In other words, research is not "objective" revelation based on "facts" but a way to understand phenomena from a specific angle—a set of tinted glasses. Research and theories developed from it is merely one take on a phenomena—"partial truth," as James Clifford (1986) called it—gained from just one viewpoint (although Clifford is talking about ethnography). Just as we can understand a person better from various angles that illuminate their diverse characteristics—their self-narrative, others' narratives about them, their output (e.g., artworks, writings, and musical performances), anecdotes about them, their qualifications judged in particular settings, their interactions with various people in various contexts—nothing that happens in the world can be understood deeply from a single angle. And just as our understanding of a person often remains elusive, leaving us unable to confidently say "I get this person," what researchers seek to understand is elusive as well. We need, then, to continue seeking different ways of understanding phenomena by drawing holistically on various fields and disciplines upholding numerous "regimes of truth," without claiming to explain it all. This is the basic standpoint undergirding this book.

What is new in the approach I suggest in this book based on these understandings is threefold. First, this book considers the effects of the theories themselves. Viewing theories as tinted glasses that allow us to see certain differences by luring our attention to the very categories they discuss—what Judith Butler (1993) calls "citational" practices, that is, performative acts of repeating them as meaningful, resulting in sedimented effects—I examine their effects. The aforementioned researchers trace the ways certain categories, such as race, came to be socially constructed in intersection with other kinds of categories. I suggest that such tracing operates as tinted glasses that make us notice and focus on these categories, further reinforcing their meaningfulness and thus their importance, and often strengthening the unit thinking this book seeks to challenge. I will introduce some examples later in this chapter. In other words, theories, when regarded as tinted glasses that allow us to see fragmented things in particular ways, can work as coherants that produce various effects, including reinforcement of unit thinking, along with other ways of seeing the world, like the multiscalar networks I will discuss further in chapter 1.

Second, this book adds the idea of a politics of vision to the understanding of theories seen here as "tinted glasses." Drawing on Žižek's notion of

fetish, I argue that theories may allow us to see complexity behind the simple façade of things, yet we still hold on to the façade views, sometimes simultaneously, other times going back and forth, as I will discuss in chapter 1 in detail and in chapter 7 with examples. I show how learning new ways of seeing things via theories can have diverse effects, including unexpected, problematic interpretations of the situation (chapter 6) or the willful ignorance that pushes one to act, despite awareness of the problems behind a phenomenon (chapter 7). This complicates our endeavor to introduce tinted glasses of theories.

Third, with these politics of vision in mind, this volume also proposes a tactile approach inspired by Benjamin's arguments and suggests various ways of bringing about understanding and social transformations by way of spectacle pedagogy. By anticipating various responses to physical setups, or what I call "interpretive physicality," which will be discussed in detail in chapter 8, this volume seeks ways to theoretically create tinted glasses and also engage in physical setups that guide our practices and thinking. Identifying tinted glasses one was not aware of can lead to understanding the sociocultural conditions that created those tinted glasses—such as common robbery in the neighborhood creating tinted glasses in its residents to see strangers as potential robbers, in contrast to a perceived "safe" neighborhood creating tinted glasses in its residents to see strangers as potential friends. I argue for, if necessary, working to change such socioeconomic conditions so that tinted glasses the residents hold can also change, as discussed in chapter 8.

In short, chapters in this book reanalyze my previous ethnographic fieldwork through new, differently tinted glasses in order to reveal the processes by which unit thinking are reproduced and challenge them with reference to insights gained through the politics of vision.

COHERANTS

Daily life is a collection of fragmented experiences. They come to make sense and become legible when we find narratives and concepts that help grasp, understand, and express it as a coherent story (Plummer 1995). Words help cut out parts of the spectrum of things and give them a shape as units, which helps in making sense of our experiences. I coined the noun "coherant" to describe such catalysts in the process of making fragmentary things "cohere" in order to create meaning. As mentioned, I spell the word "coherant" with an *a* to show that it is an agent that turns fluid, fragmentary things into solid units, much in the way a coagulant causes fluid to become solid and recognizable. In the following subsections, I discuss this with some examples to clarify this process.

Narratives as Coherants

Existing narratives allow us to make sense of our fragmented experience. No individual exclusively creates their own unique words nor narratives; rather, these are social constructs created collectively. Even narratives about ourselves are constructed collectively rather than revealing the "truth" about ourselves, Ken Plummer (1995) argues. The narrated self is a "socially constructed biographical object" created not only by the narrator but also by coaxers and the audience and existing narratives and vocabulary.

Coaxers guide the storyteller to tell a certain kind of story. Examples of coaxers include lawyers questioning a person testifying in court, ethnographers asking questions during their fieldwork, job interviewers asking candidates questions to see if they are qualified for the job, detectives interviewing a person at the police precinct about their alibi, and talk-show hosts, such as Oprah Winfrey, drawing stories out of their guests on TV: they all ask specific questions to arrive at certain types of narratives. One person, for example, may say different things about what they have done, depending on who the coaxers are.

The audience also affects how someone tells a story. A judge and jury, family and friends at home, other job interviewers, interviewees competing for a job, additional detectives, the unknown people who will be watching the video recording of the storyteller's narrative, or a large TV audience all influence how people tell their stories.

Apart from the contextual aspects of self-narratives that make them collective, there are also existing narratives and vocabularies that shape one's narratives. Listening to others' self-narratives helps our own fragmented experiences cohere into intelligible experience. Plummer argues that the existence of publicly available coming-out stories or the experience of victimhood via sexual assault prompts many to better understand their often traumatic and confusing experiences and relate them in a coherent way. The #MeToo movement is a good example of providing a narrative that persuaded many to speak up and narrate their experience for the first time in their lives.

Listening to others' narratives not only allows one to understand and tell their own experience coherently but also guides their future practices. For example, hearing others' coming-out stories may push one to come out. Similarly, seeing photos shot at well-known landmarks in specific ways (e.g., pretending to hold up the Leaning Tower of Pisa) or seeing others posting their breakfast on social media can urge one to take similar photos and post them on social media. That is, existing stories provide one with models for ways to do things and talk about them, thus generating more such stories.

Some stories are accepted more than others. Certain stories are dormant because society is not ready to hear them; they have to wait for their time. Stories of victimization by sexual assault are one such example that has come to be heard more often in recent years (Plummer 1995).

Vocabulary also helps us comprehend our experiences and talk about it. Recently formed words like "passive aggressive" or "gaslighting" give shape to experiences that were difficult to pinpoint, even notice, and allow one to communicate them. Exoticizing words, such as "mystical" or "ritual" can make ordinary practices archaic, as Horace Miner demonstrated with his classic piece called "Body Ritual among the Nacirema" (1956). Chapter 4 of this book shows this in the context of study abroad, where daily experience tends to be narrated with vocabulary that highlights adventurousness and self-transformation; applying the same vocabulary in mundane life "at home" can make it appear exciting and self-transformative. Words like "race" also guide us to see the world in specific ways—unit thinking and more—as will be discussed later.

In short, existing narratives and vocabulary serve as coherants that arrange fragmentary experience into a coherent, intelligible story, although they do not necessarily create unit thinking. In the next subsection, I illustrate the unit thinking being created by various daily taken-for-granted devices that act as coherants.

Daily Coherants

We perceive our surroundings and daily routine—our daily world—through units of things. However, these units are created by various devices we use in daily life, turning spectrum into bounded units. Unit thinking is so naturalized that we do not even think of units as an arbitrary division of spectra. Devices are created based on such unit thinking but also perpetuate it, acting constantly as coherants.

One example is color, which itself is a continuous spectrum. We use words to categorize color into a certain number of countable color units. However, perceptions of divisions between colors are cultural, hence not universal (Roberson, Davies, and Davidoff 2000). These divisions are created and perpetuated by various devices. For example, a paint wheel often works as a coherant to suggest unit thinking, dividing the continuum of color into bounded units of colors, sometimes six or twelve, other times, twenty-four or a hundred forty-four. Crayons and colored pencils are also coherants that teach us from an early age how to perceive color as bounded

units, usually twelve of them but also twenty-four or more, depending on how lucky you are to get a bigger collection.

Watercolor or oil paint subverts this although tubes are divided into units of color—you can mix the color to see how color can go beyond the units these tubes suggest. Paint, however, produces this perception that "mixing" starts with something "pure"—bounded units that are internally homogeneous—(though paint for painting furniture, etc. has different dynamics because mixing happens at the store, often in front of you, to produce a unit of color) as seen in notions such as "hybrid," "mixed-race," "code-mixing," and "translanguaging." These concepts seem to suggest going beyond unit thinking yet remain bound to unit thinking because they rely on the existence of units to highlight its subversion, rather than moving away from unit thinking altogether, as will be discussed later.

Musical notes are another example. Sound is a continuum, as we hear when a violinist slides a finger on a string. "Western" musicians choose twelve points out of an octave as separate "notes," five of them conceived as "sharp" or "flat" and seven as "full notes" named in alphabetical order from A to G. Musical instruments like the violin or cello allow for the continuum of sound, leaving it to the player to play with units of notes. The same stringed instrument, the guitar, has frets that let players play only the "full notes," if tuned. So does the piano, which offers the player no choice but to hit the keys that divide the continuum sound into "notes." The coherant here is the instruments that let the player play only bounded units of sound.

Regarding time, a digital clock is a coherant for unit thinking, whereas an analog clock is not. The digital clock displays the internally homogeneous notion of the "unit of time." For example, on a digital clock face, 3:10 p.m. stays the same for 60 seconds and then changes to 3:11 p.m., as if that minute were an internally homogeneous unit. By contrast, an analog clock with a second hand and a minute hand depicts a continuous flow of time as the second hand visibly moves continuously while the minute hand moves slowly between the tenth and eleventh minutes. Time really is a continuum that flows continuously, as the analog clock shows, but the digital clock makes time appear constituted by discontinuous blocks that change every minute as a unit (though the motion of a digital clock with the digit for the seconds or for the tenths of a second looks more continuous because the transition between the numbers is so fast). Here, the coherant is the digital clock, portraying time based on unit thinking and perpetuating that unit thinking. By extension, the concept of "date" is also based on unit thinking, dividing a continuous flow of time into bounded units of a day. We experience this when the clock hits midnight and the date changes yet nothing has drastically changed, because that transition of 11:59 p.m. to

12:00 a.m. in experience is not that different from the transition between 11:45 to 11:46. This was clear in the transition of the century—from 11:59 p.m. of 31 December 1999 to 12:00 a.m. of 1 January 2000: a big change in our head conceptually, but not in the flow of time (although the intense attention on the flow makes the time seem to flow slower).

Although the unit thinking that constitutes our daily life may seem harmless, there is other unit thinking that can advantage some and disadvantage others, with various political, economic, and other consequences, which I turn to now.

Political Contexts as Coherants

Race, culture, and language are all conceptually similar in that they are all spectra (and also always changing, increasing the complexity beyond what colors and musical notes can impart). Human beings are a spectrum. Everyone is different from each other. Culture is a spectrum. When we apply the notion that "culture" means everything we do, think, and have, even family members differ in terms of what they do, think, or have. Language is a spectrum. Everyone speaks differently, with different vocabulary and pronunciations, a fact that some linguists describe using the notion of idiolect. And they all change, albeit at different speeds and degrees. Yet, despite the manifold complexity of race, culture, and language, unit thinking pushes us to see them as constituted of internally homogeneous units.

Political contexts often work as coherants to support unit thinking regarding people, culture, and language. The context of colonialism sought its justification in the hierarchy of races, pushing the construction of race, which are then fine-tuned in nineteenth-century anthropology (McClintock 1995). Anthropology in the early twentieth century adopted a notion of "culture" that challenged the biological criteria set for dividing people that informed Eugenics and related political movements. The notion of ethnicity emerged in the 1960s in the context of challenging the understanding of the "nation" as internally homogeneous (Wolf 1994). A group's need to prove its legitimacy in challenging the structure of nation-states in ethnic movements or to claim self-determination in indigenous politics was conducive to unit thinking (Babadzan 1988; Handler 1985). The notion of language that sees it not as a spectrum or as changing but instead as stable, discrete units also emerged in this context of nation-state ideology when a single discrete language was seen to overlap with the border of a nation in the nation-state ideology (Whiteley 2003; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). Currently prevalent discourses, such as that of globalization, also support these nation-state

units because the global is often defined as crossing national borders (Doerr 2018; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002).

Units of people (i.e., race), culture, and language have wider normative effects of hierarchizing people (as the race concept was originally conceived) and forcing people to conform (as in assimilation of culture or standardization of language). These categories are also more complex in that they are not only spectrum but also fluid and changing. Therefore, I call these cases "normative unit thinking," a specific kind of unit thinking that has deeper social impacts.

The shifting political contexts working as coherants also spawned theoretical concepts that are based and further perpetuate unit thinking, concepts themselves working as coherants. I will discuss this in the next subsection.

Theoretical Concepts as Coherants

Unit thinking, which perceives fluid spectra as named units shaped in its contemporary political context acting as a coherant, has influenced the development of theories in anthropology, sociology, and linguistics, among others (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). In turn, these theories help reinforce such unit thinking. In other words, even though the constructed nature of units like race, culture, and language has been widely discussed (McClintock 1995; Sakai 1997; Wolf 1994), existing theoretical notions continue to support the unit thinking that has already been deconstructed. That is, theories are also coherants. Below, I trace such processes regarding race, culture, and language, "normative unit thinking."

Race

Although researchers have argued that race is not biological but a social construct that artificially divides people up into units, notions like "mixed-race" perpetuates the unit thinking, as mentioned. It is because, by designating some people as "mixed-race" and identifying which races are "mixed," the notion of "mixed-race" assumes that there exist non-mixed races, or "pure" races, even though all people are found on spectra (Doerr 2017a). Therefore, even if it apparently sounds like defiance of the notion of "pure race," the notion of "mixed-race" acts as a coherant and perpetuates the unit thinking of race, basing itself on the notion of race as a unit.

Discussions around civic engagement, especially engagement in the form of service-learning, posit that experience as encounters with the un-

known, often with the notion of border crossing in terms of race and/or class. Such crossing is considered a resource for student education and is celebrated as an opportunity for students to gain awareness of different perspectives (Green 2001; LaDousa 2014), develop empathy for class and racial Others, and envision an alternative world (Jones, Robbins, and LePeau 2011; Taylor 2002). Such discourses around service-learning assume difference between those serving and those being served by portraying all students offering service as white and middle-class, thus erasing the work done by minority students or those within the local community (Coles 1999; Doerr 2018). In due course, discussions about service-learning reinforce the unit thinking of race and class by highlighting the difference between those who provide service and those who receive it and framing it in terms of race but also class differences.

Culture

As for culture, the notion of "hybrid" similarly assumes that there exists non-hybrid or "pure" culture as mentioned, even though culture is a fluid, ever-changing spectrum that cannot be grasped unless it is objectified for some purpose (Handler 1985). That is, unless we conceptualize culture as being always hybrid, the notion of hybrid sustained in contrast to non-hybrid culture perpetuates unit thinking about culture.

The notion of "multiculturalism" also views culture as countable and posits, based on the unit thinking about culture, that there exist "mono-cultural" situations. When done as prescriptive acts, such as enforcing the "multiculturalist norm" or "monoculturalist norm," or done as pedagogical approach, these notions actively create unit thinking of culture, though in various contours. Joe Kincheloe and Shirley Steinberg (1997) suggest four types of multiculturalism in the field of education. "Liberal multiculturalism" enacts colorblindness and enforces white middle-class norms as culturally invisible norms, whereas "pluralist multiculturalism" treats diversity as intrinsically valuable and promotes tolerance of different "cultures," yet does so by decontextualizing and objectifying them into a safe diversity of cuisine, art, and fashion. "Left-essentialist multiculturalism" focuses on self-assertions made by subordinated groups based on their essentialized identities and "cultures," viewed as unchanging "tradition." "Critical multiculturalism" views "cultural difference" not as a given but as constructed in relations of power, connecting cultural representations to their material effects, such as how resources are allocated. These last three types of multiculturalism perpetuate unit thinking about culture by celebrating safe differ-

ence (pluralist) or highlighting difference as a resource in a power struggle
(left-essentialist) or as a resource for understanding the workings of power
(critical).

The field of study abroad is also based on and perpetuates unit think-
ing about culture by capitalizing on encounters with difference, which are
viewed as resources for students by which to gain "global competence" and
become "global citizens." Through immersion in the life of the study abroad
destination, the students supposedly encounter different ways of thinking
and doing, which may disorient them but will result in students' understand-
ing about other cultures, culture-specific knowledge, foreign language skills,
and tolerance for ambiguity (Rizvi 2000; Skelly 2009) as well as learning to
relate and collaborate across cultures (Deardorff 2009; Hunter, White, and
Godbey 2006). This framework assumes the existence of difference between
students' home and host societies and constructs each as internally homo-
geneous by suggesting that every aspect of mundane life in the host society
is a new experience that constitutes learning for students (see Doerr 2013b).
Chapter 4 of this book discusses this further.

Language

Examples of unit thinking in the field of linguistics include Ferdinand de
Saussure's (1965) notion of *la langue* as well as more recent notions of "mono-
lingual," "bilingual," and "multilingual" that are based on the understanding
that there exist discrete, countable units of language. Notions like dialects,
though they seem to acknowledge diversity within the unit of "a language,"
also support unit thinking merely by suggesting the same kind of bounded
unit but on a different scale: language with many dialects inside. The dif-
ference between language and dialect is decided according to the political
dominance of the linguistic groups associated with them—what the domi-
nant group speak is "language" and what the politically dominated speak is
"dialect"—while keeping the same unit thinking intact (Calvert 1998).

The notion of "translanguaging" (Li Wei 2018) also assumes the exis-
tence of non-translanguaging, or "monolingual" practice, which assumes
the existence of internally homogeneous language units. Also, the judgment
of whether or not an utterance is translanguaging practice involves judg-
ment of what part belongs to which language. For example, the statement
"I ate a croissant at a restaurant" can be considered a monolingual English
sentence if you see the words "croissant" and "restaurant" as English words,
given that they are commonly used by English speakers. But if you see them
as French words, then the statement can be considered a result of translan-

guaging practice. These judgments are likewise based on the assumption that English and French are, consistent with unit thinking, two discrete languages, to which words can be assigned arbitrarily. Therefore, translanguaging is problematic as an analytical notion (also see Doerr 2020b; 2022) unless we are focusing on how the interlocutors themselves perceive their utterances as such (e.g., students consciously "mixing" language to subvert monolingualist norms, or teachers who allow students to dispense with common monolingualist norms in the language classroom). We thus need instead to see the notion of translanguaging as a folk term that people use to make sense of their practices by using unit thinking.

In sum, we believe we live in the world of units, an effect of unit thinking. Existing narratives and vocabulary as well as daily devices like digital clocks and pianos act as coherants, shaping the perception of our daily life. Based on such general unit thinking but also shaped by political and other contexts, theoretical concepts are developed and further reinforce unit thinking, especially those related to race, culture, and language, despite much research that suggests them as social constructs. Such unit thinking is one set of widely shared tinted glasses to see various facets of life. However, such visions are more complex, allowing us to simultaneously see and not see and creating diverse responses and contestations. The notions of optical unconscious and fetish that help us understand such politics of vision on the processes I described above will be discussed in detail in chapter 1. Below, I will introduce a brief summary of each chapter and describe the structure of this book.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

This book is structured in terms of the ways each chapter relates to Benjamin's notion of optical unconscious and Žižek's notion of fetish. Chapter 1, "The Politics of Vision and the Fetish beyond Optical Unconscious: Toward Spectacle Pedagogy," elaborates on these notions and describes how I apply these theories to my ethnographic works by introducing each chapter in relation to these theories. Chapter 1 also introduces some theories on the politics of vision, drawn from Surrealism, before discussing Benjamin's theorizations of seeing (phantasmagoria and the optical unconscious) and the notion of fetishism according to Karl Marx and Žižek.

From chapter 2, each chapter introduces data from ethnographic fieldwork, including that of my own class projects based on my interview of students who had done them. Though these works have been discussed and analyzed elsewhere (Doerr 2019a, 2021a, forthcoming a; Doerr and Kum-

agai 2022; Doerr and Lee 2013), they are all reframed and reanalyzed from the viewpoint of the politics of vision discussed in this and the next chapters. Throughout, these chapters offer tinted glasses that challenge unit thinking and its effect in various domains and seek to offer alternatives through spectacle pedagogy.

Chapter 2, "Seeing Failed Ninja, Ghost Samurai, and Last Samurai: Phantom Japan at a Weekend Japanese Language School in the United States," illustrates, using Žižek's notion of fetish as a set of tinted glasses, how optical unconscious is produced and how fetishism works to keep it hidden though people are aware of it in the context of the nation-state, a basic framework that supports current unit thinking. This chapter draws on ethnographic fieldwork carried out at a weekend Japanese language school in the United States. It discusses the production of Phantom Japan—a fetish—via processes of standardization that paradoxically illuminate the heterogeneity that the ideology of nation-state denies (i.e., Failed Ninja) in a transplanted Japanese public school, where its "elite" students coming to represent the entire nation (i.e., Ghost Samurai), and where complex axes of difference get simplified to portray Japan as a homogeneous samurai nation (i.e., as in the film *The Last Samurai* [Zwick 2003]).

The two chapters that follow show the productive aspect of fetish—making people do things—adding a new angle to Žižek's discussion of fetish. These chapters also show how Benjamin's notion of optical unconscious can be used to analyze ethnographic data, as a set of tinted glasses revealing complexity behind the unit thinking of nation-states as well as developed versus developing countries, First World versus Third World (chapter 3), and study abroad students' home versus host societies (chapter 4).

Chapter 3, "Seeing Angels: The Fetish of Smiling Angels in the 'Poor but Happy' Discourse in Sierra Leone," analyzes the ways the discourse of "poor but happy" pushes students to continue to do humanitarian work. It was because the fetish of angels that the discourse made out of smiling children in poverty hid (1) processes of exoticization of cultural Others, (2) its function as reducing anxiety among the volunteers upon encountering poverty, and (3) the neoliberalist push that makes us manage our own emotions. Chapter 4, "Seeing Holy Mouth Man: The Fetish of Study Abroad Transformation Talk," examines the "transformation talk" in study abroad as a fetish that hides other kinds of transformative experiences through globalist framing and pushes students to want to go study abroad by presenting them with the illusion of a guaranteed transformation, in due course creating the binary of home versus host society based on the unit thinking of the nation-state.

Two chapters that follow discuss the pros and cons of revealing the optical unconscious. These chapters show varying contours of Žižek's notion of fetishism—revealing the optical unconscious (chapter 5) or keeping it dormant (chapter 6), with differing effects. Chapter 5, "Seeing Dr. Jekyll in Mr. Hyde: Political Others and beyond Polarization of 'Critical' and 'Uncritical,'" does this by analyzing political partisanship, based on the unit thinking of left versus right that works as a fetish to hide the complexity of individuals and their political affiliations. I analyze this through a class project on cultural relativism and by drawing on Ayse Çağlar and Nina Glick Schiller's (2017) notion of multiscalar networks. Chapter 6, "Seeing Fairies and Anti-Spectacle Pedagogy: Cottingley Photographs of Fairies and Linguistic Landscape Project," discusses the unexpected effects of the class project that sought to unpack minority linguistic politics using the tinted glasses of linguistic landscape theories. Although it was designed to create empathy and understanding toward marginalized groups, this class project unwittingly led students to consider a minority strategy as reverse racism as well to co-opt and exoticize minority language. This serves to critique Benjamin's homogeneous perception of the masses, as students reacted diversely to the revelation of the optical unconscious of minority linguistic landscape through the class project. It suggests the importance of instead keeping a "respectful distance" for allies to minority politics.

The next two chapters continue with the critique of Benjamin's homogeneous perception of the masses as having one sensibility per era corresponding to the advent of new technology. I critique Benjamin by suggesting two new concepts that serve as tinted glasses: "contextual momentary relationality" of the effect of seeing the optical unconscious (chapter 7), and "interpretive physicality," which adds to the tactile efficacy of transforming individuals through physical environment ("physicality") and the interpretive frameworks that tinted glasses provide (chapter 8). Each chapter furthers Žižek's notion of fetishism by discussing the efficacy of going back and forth between learning the complexity behind the façade of simplicity and continuing to remain in a state of willful ignorance, which is contextual, momentary, and relational (chapter 7), and the possibility of simultaneously suggesting unity (of physical setup that provides tactile experience) and diversity (of interpretations that can be guided or produced by maps), which overlaps with Žižek's notion of fetish's simultaneous simplicity (façade) and (hidden) complexity. The latter challenges the unit thinking of nation-states as well by acknowledging racial differences.

Chapter 7, "Seeing Santa Claus and Elves: Swinging between Fantasy-World-for-Escape and Scrutinized-World-for-Change," discusses the Com-

modity Project, a class project designed to challenge the perception of commodities as separated from human labor, fetishism. Examination of two students' projects and follow-up interview shows how learning about the production processes behind a commodity (i.e., residing in "Scrutinized-World-for-Change") did not necessarily affect daily consumption practice (i.e., residing in "Fantasy-World-for-Escape" of willful ignorance). This chapter analyzes the effects of moving between these two worlds and explores how to challenge the unit thinking regarding the nation-state, specifically of developed versus developing nations.

Chapter 8, "Seeing Robbers, Freaks, and Dirt: Seeing Maui's Fishhook in Scorpio and the Fetish of Us," challenges unit thinking of the nation-state by showing how the same physical setups—a hostel and nature hikes in New Mexico—that provided the same tactile experience created differing effects on two group of students with differing race and class backgrounds that acted as tinted glasses. Engaging Benjamin's notion of optical unconscious and Žižek's notion of fetish as discussed above, this chapter explores a new model of nationhood—"unity with diversity."

Chapter 9, "Conclusion: Continuing Dialogues," summarizes and synthesizes the discussions in each chapter along four themes: (1) coherants and ending unit thinking, (2) fetish and otherness, (3) tinted glasses, fetish, and relations of power, and (4) spectacle pedagogies and kinds of change they can create. It concludes the book by suggesting possible proactive projects.

Together, these chapters aim to suggest new tinted glasses to see the world, but also complicate them with politics of vision, ultimately understanding how unit thinking gets developed and how we can challenge it. The next chapter delves deeper into the main theme of the book, explaining the politics of vision by drawing on Benjamin's notions of phantasmagoria and optical unconscious and Žižek's notion of fetish.