

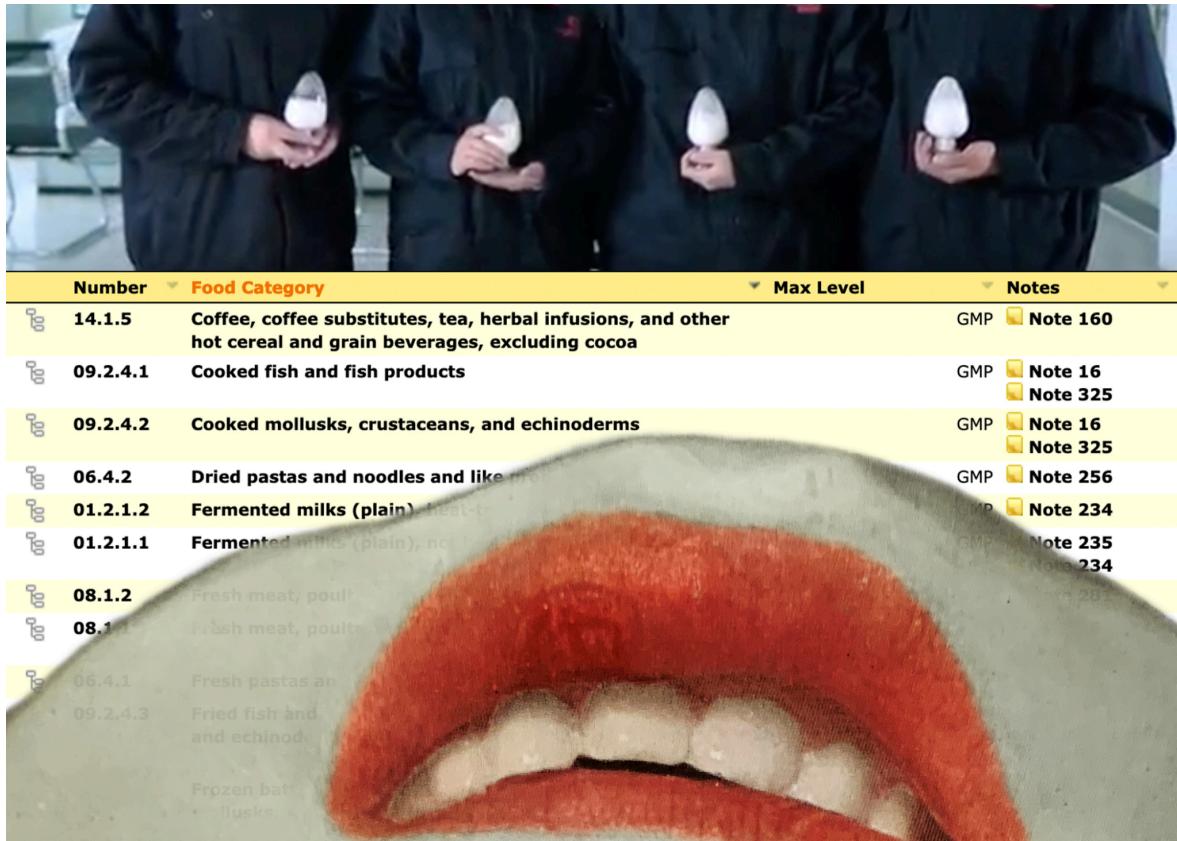
Keeping the dead wet: Morality production as a humectant

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Love is a Boundary Object. Paper assemblage. 2025.

Part 1: The executor and a pleasuring implement



Number	Food Category	Max Level	Notes
14.1.5	Coffee, coffee substitutes, tea, herbal infusions, and other hot cereal and grain beverages, excluding cocoa	GMP	Note 160
09.2.4.1	Cooked fish and fish products	GMP	Note 16 Note 325
09.2.4.2	Cooked mollusks, crustaceans, and echinoderms	GMP	Note 16 Note 325
06.4.2	Dried pastas and noodles and like products	GMP	Note 256
01.2.1.2	Fermented milks (plain), heat-treated	GMP	Note 234
01.2.1.1	Fermented milks (plain), not heat-treated	GMP	Note 235 Note 234
08.1.2	Fresh meat, poultry, game, game birds, and offal		
08.1.1	Fresh meat, poultry, game, game birds, and offal		
06.4.1	Fresh pastas and like products		
09.2.4.3	Fried fish and fish products, including mollusks, crustaceans, and echinoderms		
	Frozen battered fish, fish filets and fish products including mollusks, crustaceans, and echinoderms		
	Liquid egg products. Cream analogues. Distilled spirituous beverages. ¹		

Frozen battered fish, fish filets and fish products including mollusks, crustaceans, and echinoderms. Liquid egg products. Cream analogues. Distilled spirituous beverages.¹

Sodium Carboxymethyl Cellulose—or cellulose gum—is a widely used additive across various industries. In the food industry, it acts as a stabilizer, thickener, and moisture retention agent. There is a polyvalency in globalized economies. Food, of course, is adhered to trade; adhered to standards; adhered to governments; adhered to corporations.

The shifts of moral alignments are synthesized and embedded in the materiality of brand allegiance. The banality of this grows murky, as coagulated values entangle within the pragmatized interiorities of fish sticks and digestion tracts, which are then projected outwardly in a gripping dependency on “social order”.

¹Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). (n.d.). *Global standards for food additives (GSFA) online database*. Food and Agriculture Organization. <https://www.fao.org/gsfaonline/additives/details.html?id=51>

A fact is born in a laboratory, becomes stripped of its contingency and the process of its production to appear in its facticity as Truth. Science as an ideology legitimates many other activities, thus becoming a fluid, embedded authority for rationalization, sexism, racism, economic competitiveness, classification, and quantification.²

Jining Fortune Biotech is the world's largest supplier and manufacturer of this cellulose gum. They distribute smaller quantities of cellulose gum in glass laboratory bottles, which have an uncanny resemblance to that of the common butt plug. But at its scale, the possibility for this pleasuring implement suggests its intention to be more for the advanced users who seek to push their own limits of pleasure and pain, rather than just a little titillation.

The pleasuring implement-like vessel can be read as a queer interjection or rupturing of the mass production of normative processes. Its recursivity brings forth an unacknowledged invagination, as if to say, "*We know it's there, but to acknowledge it would give it power.*"

Improvement. Suspension. Retention. Binding.

These properties between policies and regulations act as humectants, moisturizing the surfaces of the body politic, where interiorities and exteriorities are one in the same—a moebius strip of devouring possibilities. There are multiple forms of caretaking/caregiving here; like the executor's obligation to the maintenance of production and recovery processes of those localized at positions of affective witnessing.

There is a type of nourishment that keeps the dead wet, meaning bodies are captured in the labor invested in the production of producing. It is the self-determination of the executor to keep the operations of producing sated. To let them breathe as they keep the operations of production alive as the *true* body, the *absolute* body, the body that contradicts and feeds off the earthly bodies.

Here is a possible point of departure: as "I" becomes "we", recalcitrance grows in this relational dynamic toward the operations of production. "We" can be the embodiment that slips in between disobedience and through the selves that take care of that which exists because it was produced before us. Because we were thrown into its substance, yet simultaneously, we are the emulsifier, the stabilizer, the humectant; to see one another by using our words intentionally. A walking with words. A discussion to protect our language.

²Star, S. L. (1999). *A sociology of monsters: Essays on power, technology, and domination* (pp. 268–275). Routledge.

Part 2: People against lectures, a cumulative mess trajectory



Codex Alimentarius, knowledge suitable for nourishing.

Horizons of possibilities. Horizons of limitations. Horizons of illuminations. Horizons of restrictions. Horizons centered in a picture frame, centered in a book, centered in the word knowledge, centered in the molecular structures of paper pulp. Centered in the space in between space. The center acts as a direction, a directive, a motioning toward a locality in between space(s).

The center of something is a point seen, representing all that is unseen at that point. The image is symbolic. It is the moment described as knowing something, grasping something. At that moment, that center has an elusive liquidity which mutes knowingness and sublimates into a passing breath, becoming devoured into a proximal zone and regurgitated into the outer grips of horizons.

The thickness of the line between spaces is defined and monitored by committees at the center of knowledge. Communicating through disputes, trading bits of language for agitation, and agitating language in small or large amounts fuels the economic pulses between the *here*, the *there*, the *now*, and the *when*.

Is it policy or good practice for the bricoleur to be writing and compiling evidence for a dossier? There are many ways to find out, but it depends.

Who is on this global accountability tour where declarations of interest can be felt through an integrity hotline?

Let us begin to diverge from the spectra, including its variations. Its limits are at the bookends of opposites.

Polarity
on/off
open/close
A left-to-right binary search.

Let us allow the spectra to expand their multiple axes, forming matrices more suitable for visualizing and describing the complex meta-materiality of intersecting conditions and formations.

A dynamic systems framework moves beyond the nature /nurture debate, which assumes a contrast between internal and external factors. Those who stay within that model imagine that the inside is not formed in part by the outside—that is, by interaction—even though concepts such as self-organization, complexity, embodiment, continuity in time, and dynamic stability all encompass multiple levels of biological and social organization. A dynamic systems framework considers embodiment not as a discrete and bounded phenomenon, but as the effect of a complex set of interactions between an organism and their environment(s) over time.³

A confluence of events and the emergence of amalgams.

We are, so to speak, inside the structure of standards, inside the data of the database used to cross-check the confirmation of adherence.

³ Anne Fausto-Sterling as cited in Butler, J. (2025). *Who's afraid of gender?*. Random House. p.189.

For a moment, we can capture the inside and outside as a singular site. A space where, only momentarily, we are on the inside of outside of the inside of the outside of the inside of the outside of the inside of the outside, veering into a tangential meandering of dimensions.

Isn't the problem with gender that it imposes an artifice on a material reality, substituting a falsehood for something durably true? In fact, the term gender does not deny the materiality of the body, but only asks how it is framed through what media is presented and how that presentation affects what we understand about it? Is it ever known to be immutable without being established as such?⁴

Everything is always moving. Change is constant; constantly transcending temporality and materiality with variable vibrancies.

Provisions are functional by class, described in an annex.

Processed comminuted meats. Prepared foods. Sauces and like products.

When is [something] no longer like [something-else]? Always. Sometimes. Often.

This is the *Codex Alimentarius* standard for *quick frozen fish sticks or fish fingers, fish portions and fish fillets—breaded or in batter*. This document is a boundary object. Its constituted language has an intended emptiness to supply all possible users with spaces to inject nuance and semantic shifts of fiscal desire, to move commodities across political boundaries.

The *Codex Alimentarius* is a partnership committee between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization.

This is the *Codex Alimentarius General Standard for Food Additives* online database as a nonfunctioning map, cumbersome in its navigability.

It features a series of doors one can enter but not exit. There's no ceiling in this labyrinth, so using the back button on your browser, you can at least climb over the wall of the door frame to revisit the previous page. A gappy path and a series of linkages proximally referred to as a reference.

⁴ Butler, J. (2025). *Who's afraid of gender?*. Random House. p. 112.

Quick frozen breaded or battered fish sticks (fish fingers) breaded or battered fish portions and breaded or battered fillets shall be prepared from fish fillets or minced fish flesh, or mixtures thereof, of edible species which are of a quality such as to be sold fresh for human consumption.⁵

What qualifies as edible species?

What and who are allowable to be eaten, when we mostly consume with our eyes?

Off in the dissonance, the distance between auditory amalgams of production, vessels burping in and out of ports, is shrinking before it swells. It appears a laughing gull is approaching the North Atlantic coastline of the United States. Here is the intersection between the laughing gull's beak and minced fish flesh. When its belly rumbles, it rummages the sea and earth in search of crustaceans, insects, fish, earthworms, snails, and refuse.

What is refuse, if it still has a nourishing and nutritional value? Or is it just empty calories being consumed to displace an anxiety? A vanishing caloric density, simply craving a crunch, turned to mush.

In the late spring laughing gulls gather to eat the eggs of horseshoe crabs. Even sometimes they will devour the young of other birds, especially royal terns. Further, it wouldn't be much of a leap to suggest the laughing gull has also acquired a taste for leftover quick frozen breaded or battered fish sticks.

A fish stick (fish finger) is the product including the coating weighing not less than 20 grams and not more than 50 grams shaped so that the length is not less than three times the greatest width. Each stick shall be not less than 10 mm thick. A fish portion including the coating, other than products under section 2.1.1, may be of any shape, weight, or size. Fish sticks or portions may be prepared from a single species of fish or from a mixture of species with similar sensory properties.

Fillets are slices of fish of irregular size and shape which are removed from the carcass by cuts made parallel to the backbone and pieces of such fillets, with or without the skin.

⁵Codex Alimentarius Commission. (1989). *Codex stan 166-1989: International food standards for quick frozen fish sticks (fish fingers), fish portions, and fish fillets—breaded or in batter*. FAO/WHO.

The name of the food to be declared on the label shall be "breaded" and/or "battered", "fish sticks" (fish fingers), "fish portions", or "fillets" as appropriate or other specific names used in accordance with the law and custom of the country in which the food is sold and in a manner so as not to confuse or mislead the consumer. The label shall include reference to the species or mixture of species.⁶

Following these descriptions is an exhaustive list of food additives, extracts, and chemical compounds which are permitted for use in every quick frozen breaded or battered fish fillet or minced fish flesh. They are categorized by their properties.

Humectants, antioxidants, acidity regulators, thickeners, raising agents, flavor enhancers, coloring agents and emulsifiers.

There, listed under thickeners, is our old friend, *sodium carboxymethyl cellulose*. It is allowed for use as a thickener in breaded or battered coatings to increase the viscosity of the batter, in effect producing an idealized quality for the final product.

When food became commodified it was stripped of all its nutritional value. Its ingredients could be regulated and patented. As a commodity, food became property, and as property acquired a new kind of value.

*How do fictions communicate truths we could not understand through other means?*⁷

If you can ask a question, the positivist responds with a definition and a unique code which constitutes an answer, or a war. To document a breaded or battered fish fillet or minced fish flesh in this way establishes a truthfulness, as its truth and effectively as the truth. It's defined as what is real and what is not-real. The standard affirms its facticity, in opposition to what does not qualify as such and can thus be subject to a fine, surcharge, tariff or death.

⁶Codex Alimentarius Commission. (1989). *Codex stan 166-1989: International food standards for quick frozen fish sticks (fish fingers), fish portions, and fish fillets—breaded or in batter*. FAO/WHO.

⁷ Butler, J. (2025). *Who's afraid of gender?*. Random House. p. 150.

Part 3: Movements of economic lubrication and financial hydration, a logistical slip-n-slide

Approach. Priorities. Solutions.

Enter the aggregate and implement technical cooperation activities.

Seeds of capital colonize the soil and drift into the ocean. Nurtured by the sun and unexpected microbes, they stick to the sides of freight movement. They fuck things up and then manage the crisis. They procure their neighbors, teaching the fundamentals of mercantilism, a forcible stuffing of coercive and manipulative gestures. An ecology of nonconsensual codependency is created, packaged as *community, as family, as faith.*

We didn't ask for any of this stuff, for all this stuff. But we've got this stuff now, so we have to use it. Because stuff, like us, has been thrown into being and we ought to make meaning out of it; the materiality we play with. And even though I don't necessarily want this stuff or desire this stuff, I see that this stuff matters because it *is* matter. The mattering of stuff.

We are all looking, all the time, through tubes and scanning surfaces, always squeezing at the rods and cones. If you close your eyes, you're still looking, just somewhere else.

Absorbed in time.

Surveilling.

Watching movements.

The delicate, the abstract, the literal, the violently swift and violently languid. We are looking away from each other, measuring the measurers' measure.

Daydreaming belongs to those who have time, to those that can hold time from atop this mountain of stuff. Surveilling is a means of protection from those looking back. We are all looking and rummaging through the landscapes of digitized harmonies of chaos. It's a manageable chaos, from this vantage.

Strategy and governance.

A logical slip, and a logistical slide.

Infrastructural inversion means recognizing the depths of interdependence of technical networks and standards, on the one hand and the real work of politics and knowledge on the other. It foregrounds these normally invisible Lilliputian threads and furthermore gives them causal prominence in many areas usually attributed to heroic actors, social movements, or cultural mores.⁸

There are infrastructural inversions, and then there was infrastructural collapse: at 8 miles per hour, the morning the neoliberal circulatory system was dealt a mild heart attack.



Numerous audible alarms.

Steering commands and rudder inputs.

A call for tugs.

Drop port anchor with additional steering commands.

Sounds consistent with collision.

They advertise a vicarious fascination of participation, to peer into the crisis and risk management which drains into investment portfolios, resuscitating all the little empires within empires within empires.

It's the big event. The plot is "the plan", starring the main squeeze. A real polyvalent fuckfest.

Exhausted and desperate, seeing the world with no gleam of hope arose a social type of administrators, executives, organizers, labor leaders and intellectuals. Their primary aim was not a world revolution. They wished to build factories and power stations larger than all others which have been built. They aimed to connect rivers, to remove mountains, to plant from the air and to achieve these they wasted human and material resources on an unprecedented scale. Their primary aim was not war. But war as a

⁸Bowker, G. C., & Star, S. L. (2000). *Sorting things out: Classification and its consequences*. MIT Press. p. 34.

subsequent extension as crisis management. It was not dictatorship. But this form of governance is again an extension of the management of fictions and realities. The goal was and still is the Plan. In pursuit of what they call planning the economy they depopulate tens of millions of workers and officials so that it seems as if some pestilence sweeps periodically across the country. In pursuit of their plan, they have placed and displaced, removed and upgraded, written over and renamed.⁹

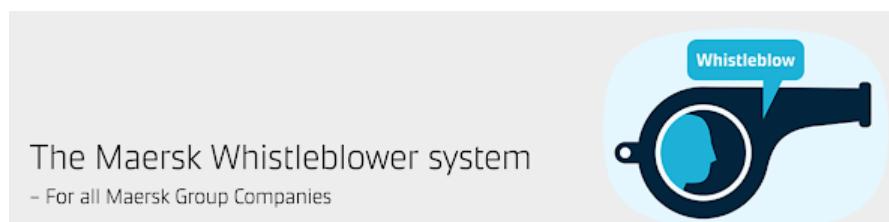
And so here it is, the constant within measuring and managing instantaneous change. Marvel at the reproduction of the production reproduced.

Children used to be sexualized from the moment they were given an assignment at birth. An assignment for consumption. An assignment to reproduce trauma, because reproducing trauma keeps the family bigoted and racist, keeps the family enshrined in bloodshed, keeps the family grinding away at itself, endlessly slipping from quenching its thirst for organ-slushed baptisms.

It's just a conviction toward a series of lifelong distractions steeped in the abysmal rank bog of delusion toward dignity.

Now children are sexualized while they are merely ideas in a lab. All under the guise and determination of pure innocent life. They just want a sustainable future for their little empires and their little groping armies of retention agents. They drive a relentless sustainability campaign which demands protection from gelatinous conditions and their perverse visions of foreign flesh abnormalities.

Come and build your little empire inside our big empire! invites the company policy and positions section of the website. *Help us lead the way in filling the oceans with gasoline and radioactive isotopes to make the impossible possible, to burn water!* And turn a blue planet red. Regardless of color we're all on the same team now. The fictitious myths of power allude to a function that confuses and conflates the difference between *us* and *them*, *me*, and *you*, *I* and *we*, beating nuance to an inhuman slop; simultaneously disappearing difference. A phantasmagorical unravelling and reconstituting of identities renders an already tirelessly frail body comatose.



⁹James, C. L. R. (2001). *Mariners, renegades, and castaways: The story of Herman Melville and the world we live in*. UPNE. p.14.

We are mostly water, and we mostly need water, and no system of power will be complete until all water is under its control, even if it means removing it from existence. Or at least separating it by siphoning it into some inaccessible cloud storage.

Though naturally reckless, the concern is a façade carried safely and effectively. They are constructed networks of windows belching the anthem of truly integrated logistics. Sustainability is an economic practice that doesn't need an earth when it imagines building planets on a tightfisted budget, to salaciously fulfill its "driven with purpose" power grab.

Part 4: The meta chain between a body and a toilet



Chiseled cheeks shrubbed in a luscious silver beard. A tuft of a coarsely knit wool sweater blooms from his breast, wrapped in a PVC coated polyester cotton blend bib, jacket, and boonie, wrinkled and creviced in marigold. His knuckles bulge thick digits—seemingly breaded or battered fish fingers—which firmly grip a weathered wheel. Beneath the heavy rain-glazed outerwear, there is a secret: a spaghetti strapped silk slip draped over a hard torso, concealing a conical silicone bell form. Forming nature, forming a fullness within the interior of his rear gape.

The treachery of the voyage often requires that certain needs be met.

He is the economy. He is exclusive. He is in the zone of proximal understanding. He is the power of “*where*”. Navigating a vessel within a vessel. He’s dancing with the sea. Meditating on the love language of responsibility. The responsibility to keep the liberal in neoliberalism. To liberally coat the flesh of the people, measured and standardized. He is born of the committees of the sea, the laws of liquid, sloshing and dissipating the boundaries of this oceanic world.

His story is tied to the sea. He has been building trust for over 175 years, one fish stick at a time. The Gorton's fisherman is on a *responsibility journey* using the global language of business to unlock limitless possibilities for people and the planet.¹⁰

I solemnly swear to exercise in all loyalty, discretion, and conscience the functions entrusted to me as an international civil servant, to discharge those functions and regulate my conduct with the interests of fish sticks only in view, and not to seek or accept instructions in regard to the performance of my duties from any government or other authority external to the organization.

A denial of motion.

Our Gorton's fisherman suddenly fell ill, but it wasn't sea sickness. It would never be sea sickness. It was corporate and their litigation team, ushering in its corporeal reality, officially on the books. Corporate and their litigation team make ethics burp and vomit when they need to throttle down its mashing engine built of tumors, growths and polyps.

This always causes deep indigestion in the Gorton's fisherman. His flesh quivers and chills at the reminder that his journey is in vain. The consumer is always right until they are always wrong. The blandness of trends greenwashed the responsibility journey and it came to a head, side struck by two armchair semioticians.

What were they talking about? They collect pollock and cod pieces in a manner suitable for market sustainability. They move freely and regularly through the exclusive economic zones of New England waters. What could be wrong and why hasn't corporate sent an antacid, at the very least, to partially quell this guttural anxiety?

Chinese tilapia fish farms.

Ethoxyquin.

A big *maybe*.

You can't prove hearsay, but you can prove commitment. And Gorton's is commitment. These boat rocking consumers didn't want hush puppies with their filthy farmed flash-frozen freshwater fish flesh fingers. They just wanted hush money.

¹⁰ Gorton's. (n.d.). *Responsibility*. Gorton's. <https://www.gortons.com/responsibility/>

It was a complaint over how one responds to signs, signals, and signifiers.

A complaint over trending rhetoric and how reasoning by metaphor is or is not defined.

In their class action complaint, Spindel et al. versus Gorton's Incorporated, case number 1:22-cv-10599, the plaintiffs, among many things, asserted that the label of Gorton's signature grilled tilapia fillets as being "sustainably sourced" was misleading to consumers because a significant amount of Gorton's tilapia are reared and harvested in fish farms located in a big place called China and that the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch had specifically warned consumers to avoid tilapia farmed in China due to sustainability concerns.

Among the sustainability concerns, it was stated that generally, aquaculture is a dangerous practice in China and included the common use of ethoxyquin in fish feed.

Ethoxyquin, as described by the Food and Drug Administration,

Ethoxyquin, a preservative; or Ethoxyquin, added to slow or stop the oxidative destruction of carotene, xanthophylls, and vitamins A and E.¹¹

A quick search on the *General Standard for Food Additives* online database returns the message "*No records matched your search criteria. Please check your search and try again.*"

Quite strange at first, but that may be because the database is a global initiative, and the European Union has banned the use of ethoxyquin. Whereas in other industrialized countries, it is a matter of defining the line of tolerance—how much of a harmful substance to which the human body can reasonably be subjected. Pollution is colonialism as a business strategy¹² bathing in *logos* and *pathos*, exfoliating in *logos* and *kairos*.

¹¹ U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (n.d.). *Labeling and use of ethoxyquin in animal feed*. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. <https://www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/ingredients-additives/labeling-and-use-ethoxyquin-animal-feed>

¹² Liboiron, M. (2021). *Pollution is colonialism*. Duke University Press.