1. [Thoughts on Watershed:](https://deeptimeamericas1.wordpress.com/2024/05/10/thoughts-on-watershed/)

When I was reading “Watershed” by Tracy K. Smith for this week’s assigned reading, I was instantly hooked. I really enjoy it when poetry and prose have an unconventional structure and/or format, which is probably why this piece instantly caught my attention. It was so interesting and unlike anything I’ve ever seen before to see how Smith intertwined and intentionally placed poetic bits in between exposing the companies that poison/pollute the water, and what the horrible effects of PFOA or perfluorooctanoic acid are. And, after reading the poem a few times through, I realized that the italicized parts when read altogether (ignoring the regular text) tell a story of its own that show how she learns that water is life.

The italicized parts compare the water and associate it with religion and divinity. The poisoning of the water by the companies is essentially poisoning people’s connection with God and blaspheming a place of “worship” in a sense. It is not just simply polluting the water, it is so much deeper. Smith is essentially saying that water is life; it is, intrinsically, in everything. With the disrespect to the water the energy of the Earth and the concept of love weakens, and there weakens the people, their spirits, their souls.

1. [3/14 Class Discussion Thoughts:](https://deeptimeamericas1.wordpress.com/2024/03/24/3-14-class-discussion-thoughts/)

I was very intrigued by our class discussion on 3/14. Someone brought up the novel “Tender is the Flesh”, and how in it a group of humans known as the “head” are deemed as being less than the rest of society, and are now allowed to be eaten. This also brought up the concept of “Caste”, and how there is an inherent hierarchical structure within our society. It reminded me of the movie “Origin” which was directed by Ava DuVernay, and was based on a book called “Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents”, by Isabel Wilkerson. I feel like both pieces correlate to this course and its contents, especially since the main premises is that race and caste are not two separate concepts but are intertwined and feed into each other. The concept of caste exists virtually everywhere in society, whether it is through conscious effort or not. The notion of having one race being more “superior” than others, is just reinforcing the idea of caste, excluding people, having hierarchies, and contributes to the dehumanization of a group and the normalization of it. This notion of caste is present even today, especially in current events with the oppression of people in countries such as Palestine, Congo, and Sudan. Because one group/country has decided for whatever reason that a population of people is below them, they seem to justify the oppression and suffering that they facilitate by dehumanizing these people and referring to them as terms like “animals” or “savages”.