

A Polyrhythmic Sense Grammar of Historical Materialism in  
Lugones, Lorde, Sontag, Anzaldúa, Benjamin, Nancy, Bergson, and Didion

from Devotional Friendship and “World”-Traveling to Aesthetic  
Transparence, Invoked Art, Erotic Materialism,  
Process Metaphysics, Being Singular Plural,  
Qualitative Heterogeneity, Self-Respect, Creativity,  
and Transformative Consciousness

or

the Madness Mixtape: who am i?

the Work of the Intellective Soul on the “I” [not i]

or

Bebop Practices and Survival Strategies for Tantric Vajrayana Buddhism

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November 20, 2022 — November 26, 2022

*I am no doubt not the only one who writes in order to have no face. Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order. At least spare us their morality when we write.*<sup>1</sup>

November 20, 2022: *Write. Write. Write. It's coming out, it's coming back, it has to come out.*

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Joan Didion writes to us from Hawai'i in 1969:

*1969: I had better tell you where I am, and why. I am sitting in a high-ceilinged room in the Royal Hawaiian Hotel in Honolulu watching the long translucent curtains billow in the trade wind and trying to put my life back together. My husband is here, and our daughter, age three. She is blond and barefoot, a child of paradise in a frangipani lei, and she does not understand why she cannot go to the beach. She cannot go to the beach because there has been an earthquake in the Aleutians, 7.5 on the Richter scale, and a tidal wave is expected. In two or three minutes the wave, if there is one, will hit Midway Island, and we are awaiting word from Midway. My husband watches the television screen. I watch the curtains, and imagine the swell of the water.*

The bulletin, when it comes, is a distinct anticlimax: Midway reports no unusual wave action. My husband switches off the television set and stares out the window. I avoid his eyes, and brush the baby's hair. In the absence of a natural disaster we are left again to our own uneasy devices. We are here on this island in the middle of the Pacific in lieu of filing for divorce.

*I tell you this not as aimless revelation but because I want you to know, as you read me, precisely who I am and where I am and what is on my mind. I want you to understand exactly what you are getting: you are getting a woman who for some time now has felt radically separated from most of the ideas that seem to interest people. You are getting a woman who somewhere along the line misplaced whatever slight faith she ever had in the social contract, in the meliorative principle, in the whole grand pattern of human endeavor. Quite often during the past several years I have felt myself a sleepwalker, moving through the world unconscious of the moment's high issues, oblivious to its data, alert only to the stuff of bad dreams, the children burning in the locked car in the supermarket parking lot, the bike boys stripping down stolen cars on the captive cripple's ranch, the freeway sniper who feels "real bad" about picking off the family of five, the hustlers, the insane, the cunning Okie faces that turn up in military investigations, the sullen lurkers in doorways, the lost children, all the ignorant armies jostling in the night. Acquaintances read The New York Times, and try to tell me the news of the world. I listen to call-in shows.*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Michele Foucault, "Introduction," *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith, 17.

<sup>2</sup> Joan Didion, "In the Islands" in *The White Album*, Part IV / Sojourns (New York: Farrar, Stroux, and Giroux, 1979), 133-34. Emphasis added.

And elsewhere, in “Why I Write”:

When I talk about pictures in my mind I am talking, quite specifically, about images that shimmer around the edges. There used to be an illustration in every elementary psychology book showing a cat drawn by a patient in varying stages of schizophrenia. This cat had a shimmer around it. You could see the molecular structure breaking down at the very edges of the cat: the cat became the background and the background the cat, everything interacting, exchanging ions. People on hallucinogens describe the same perception of objects. I’m not a schizophrenic, nor do I take hallucinogens, but certain images do shimmer for me. Look hard enough, and you can’t miss the shimmer. It’s there. You can’t think too much about these pictures that shimmer. *You just lie low and let them develop. You stay quiet. You don’t talk to many people and you keep your nervous system from shorting out and you try to locate the cat in the shimmer, the grammar in the picture.*

Just as I meant “shimmer” literally I mean “grammar” literally. Grammar is a piano I play by ear, since I seem to have been out of school the year the rules were mentioned. All I know about grammar is its infinite power. To shift the structure of a sentence alters the meaning of that sentence, as definitely and inflexibly as the position of a camera alters the meaning of the object photographed. Many people know about camera angles now, but not so many know about sentences. The arrangement of the words matters, and the arrangement you want can be found in the picture in your mind. The picture dictates the arrangement. The picture dictates whether this will be a sentence with or without clauses, a sentence that ends hard or a dying-fall sentence, long or short, active or passive. The picture tells you how to arrange the words and the arrangement of the words tells you, or tells me, what’s going on in the picture. *Nota bene:*

It tells you.

You don’t tell it.

[...] Until I wrote those lines I had no character called Victor in mind: the necessity for mentioning a name, and the name Victor, occurred to me as I wrote the sentence. *I knew why Charlotte went to the airport* sounded incomplete. *I knew why Charlotte went to the airport even if Victor did not* carried a little more narrative drive. Most important of all, until I wrote these lines I did not know who “I” was, who was telling the story. I had intended until that moment that the “I” be no more than the voice of the author, a nineteenth-century omniscient narrator. But there it was:

“I knew why Charlotte went to the airport even if Victor did not.”

“I knew about airports.”

This “I” was the voice of no author in my house. This “I” was someone who not only *knew* why Charlotte went to the airport but also knew someone called Victor. Who was Victor? Who was this narrator? Why was this narrator telling me this story? Let me tell

you one thing about why writers write: had I known the answer to any of these questions I would never have needed to write a novel. [CLOSE PIECE]<sup>3</sup>

Okay, but you're right: this is a philosophy paper [HA!], and it's [normally] absurd to start out with two pages of single-spaced quotes. But I am working something out, and I do not plan to turn around. This is festive resistance. I plan to fold back in, over and over again, to keep us "on-task" in this murky endeavor. I plan to run away from us, to elide our moment only to open it further. I hope you can start to get the picture. The shimmer. This was where the shimmer began for me, so this is where I can begin. That's all there is to it. This is an exercise in laterality.

But perhaps I should tell you other things first as well before we can really get started. Perhaps I first need to convince you that the particulars of this "I" necessarily and inextricably articulate through every sentence, inescapably. Particulars matter. Fullness matters. Perhaps there are things I should tell you *simply because I want to, because I want to be seen and heard*. Perhaps I should tell of where I am, and where I have been, and where I hope to go. I hope to be your friend. I hope you will be my friend too. I hope we can love one another and make art together and try to fix some of these problems we share today. I hope we can be vulnerable with ourselves to really address our disharmonies. Well, that's one of three, where I hope to go. But where have I been? And don't I know that philosophy papers don't start sentences with conjunctions, or use contractions, or talk to their audience as if they're a friend? Yeah, I do. But philosophy and strict grammar are where I've been, and this essay is my chance to figure out where I'm at.

I have been other places too, beyond grammar and rigid logics. I have been in love. I have been in cabins in forests. I have been in seminars, been at campfires and protests, rodeos and church plays at Christmastime. I have been on horseback, and I have thrown haybales in the middle of the summer night. I have stood in between my parents fighting as a teenager, and I have stood as a child at my mother's knee in the middle of the night on my grandmother's porch, the insects swarming in the humid Texas swelter, because my dad was angry again. I have since learned to understand why he was angry. I have eaten oatmeal once a day to keep myself moving when my will proved insufficient to force my body to stay awake. I have rationed. I have seen evil. And I have *been* evil. Perhaps the unknown "I" writes great novels, but it also makes mistakes. I take responsibility for my, our, mistakes. In my life, an ignorance plea has never saved me from hell.

I write to you from the borderlands; I am not being dramatic or purely experimental. This essay is half a year late, and this was the only way that it could come out. I write to you from my desk in Crown Heights, Brooklyn in November of 2022. The weather has turned cold in the past few weeks, after an absurdly warm September and October. We are now in the 30s, and I have been asked to leave my apartment within the next two weeks. I will be flying back to Texas to find some respite with family members while I establish a personal safety net moving forward. I will figure it out. I am not worried. This episode in my life, of returning to New York to finish my Masters' program — to the battlegrounds where I survived a global pandemic with my ex-partner — has always been a borderland, a place in-between, a pilgrimage beyond the "worlds" with which I am most acquainted. The diversity of New York is beautiful like that. I have

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<sup>3</sup> Joan Didion, "Why I Write," *The New York Times*, 1976. First emphasis added.

traveled a lot this year, and I am grateful. And despite these stressors and exhaustions, I feel playful. I think you and I can be little kids here, childhood friends.

*You remember how we used to run back to my house and play pirates?  
Wendla Bergman, Melchior Gabor, you, and I?*<sup>4</sup>

Wasn't that you, and I? Wasn't it always you, and I? Who are you?

*I cried, for I didn't think it could be true  
That you and I might have always known one another  
And that we could not only evoke, but conjure a place of our own  
And that everywhere, that has ever existed  
It was all in service of our dream  
Now please, hear what I hear  
Let me explain  
This ugliness, this cruelty, this repulsiveness  
It will all die out  
And now, I cry for all that is beautiful.*<sup>5</sup>

A dream, a "world."

*We didn't need a story, we didn't need a real world  
We just had to keep walking  
And we became the stories, we became the places  
We were the lights, the deserts, the faraway worlds  
We were you before you even existed.*<sup>6</sup>

How are you? Has anyone checked in on you lately? Hello, friend. How are you? What are you feeling? Where are you? What has been going on in your corner of existence? Tell me your stories. I want to hold them for you. I want to know that your stomach is full and that you're hungry for good work. I want to know that you're spending time with friends but still enjoying your time alone. I want to know about your favorite meals, because we all have to eat, and the animals you keep company around, because we all have old friends.

*To my beloved Major Gilbert. How are you? Is everything well with you? Where are you right now? Is there anything causing you problems? Spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Many seasons have passed, but I am still waiting / for the one where you return.*<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> 'Ilse,' in "Don't Do Sadness / Blue Wind" from the musical *Spring Awakening* (Off Broadway, 2006), play by Frank Wedekind, book and lyrics by Steven Sater, music by Duncan Sheik.

<sup>5</sup> Porter Robinson, "Fellow Feeling" from the album *Worlds* (Astralwerks, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> M83, "Intro" from the album *Hurry Up, We're Dreaming* (POD, 2011). Cf. Whitehead on actual occasions of experience.

<sup>7</sup> "Violet's Letter" in *Violet Evergarden*, S1E13, timestamp 19:25. Score by Evan Call.

Hey friend. Do you want to hang out?

*I felt like lying down by the side of the trail and remembering it all. The woods do that to you, they always look familiar, long lost, like the face of a long-dead relative, like an old dream, like a piece of forgotten song drifting across the water, most of all like golden eternities of past childhood or past manhood and all the living and the dying and the heartbreak that went on a million years ago and the clouds as they pass overhead seem to testify (by their own lonesome familiarity) to this feeling.<sup>8</sup>*

I *feel* by some intuition built upon my dissatisfaction and distaste for my “world” that I have reincarnated an extensive number of times, or perhaps begun to inhabit a cultural subjectivity constructed upon millennia of philosophy and distilled cultural wisdom. Metaphysically, I feel like I have learned enough moral and karmic lessons through extensive reincarnation that I am ready to remedy this “world.” I am nobody. I am eliding. I am still practicing. I am not even yet Buddha. But no one will stop me from healing us. No one will control and limit my subjectivity to forget this fact, this endeavor, this passion. this existential necessity of my being. I am not your savior. I am I. We adapt to energy through co-regulation and shared belief systems, shared mediums of communication. Sometimes one of us can get away long enough to transform, to heal themselves and bring something back. But in engagement with society from that point forward, we heal together. A central thesis is that the particulars of each “I” are truth, sufficient justifiers of sense cohered by a body. Narratives are inadequate distortions of a polyvalent Real, but self-narrative allows some degree of organization necessary for communication. Even when I cannot explain the particular sense I am working out or how it is produced, by giving you all the pieces I can instead assert the existential truth of the historicity of the perspective of each “I.”

*It is difficult to know how to approach it. What do you do with a book that dedicates an entire chapter to music and animal behavior – and then claims that it isn’t a chapter?  
[...]*

*“Philosophy, nothing but philosophy.” Of a bastard line.<sup>9</sup>*

<sup>10</sup>*Oh, you worried ‘bout a critic? That ain’t protocol.*

## Introduction

Teachers have told me an introduction is supposed to funnel the reader into your point of discussion — start big, hook them on, reel them into whatever domain of discourse is on the stovetop today. This is what Didion means when she says that writing is inherently a violent act. But it is self-violence too. Starting big reins in the thinking of the writer as well as the thinking of the reader. “I” become through writing, because writing shapes my thinking, gives it a road to

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<sup>8</sup> Jack Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums* (yet unknown), p. yet unknown.

<sup>9</sup> Brian Massumi, “Translator’s Forward” to Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (London & New York: Continuum, 1988), ix.

<sup>10</sup> Kendrick Lamar, “N95” from the album *Mr. Morale & the Big Steppers* (pgLang, 2022).

travel down — allows it to keep moving along mediums. If the goal is to keep moving, then utilizing the frameworks provided to us by history's traditions *can* help us to habituate and spend less time on the base aspects of writing. I will not be asked to delete everything above; I will clean it up and fold it in (but only to curdle-separate it even further). You needed to know where I was coming from just as much as I did. I am trying to give you the whole picture. I am trying to bring you to my “world.” I am trying to help you see me, really see me for my seeing. “I” am my “world,” my distribution of attention over a lifetime. I am trying to remember all of my different “worlds.” I am trying *not* to edit them out and censor them.

This essay is about being new and loving your friends. It is also about a mess of other things. I watched a video earlier today about a man kneading dough for homemade artisanal bread in a Dutch oven. In the description he wrote, “It’s gonna look crazy sticky and unmanageable but don’t worry, simply trust the process and fold it over on itself towards the center of the doughy mass until you have a more uniformed shape (no more than 10 folds).” I will keep folding back, but these pieces arise in my mind with a shimmer for a reason, and I want to write a collage of impressions, the way David Lynch talks about each scene in a movie as being a single idea and a whole movie as being about sixty to eighty flashcards of scenes. That was it for Lynch. That is a movie. Not a narrative, not a plot, not characters. Scenes. Experience. Image. I want to write like this, a multiplicity from the ground up, but my body has to give it a spine with which to cohere.<sup>11</sup>

At present, I can merely provide you with the general course of our thinking together in this essay, as well as my current projections for theses. I cannot tell you, determinately, which theses I adequately advance. I find myself understanding less and less what a thesis is, in earnest. These days it seems like something emphasized solely to the exclusion of other points, hence my emphasis on laterality. I’d rather make lots of points. Every sentence a point. Pages and pages of transparency — arguments that just are what they are. How can I turn a paper into a thesis sentence? It’s a whole lot sillier than hanging out as friends and seeing what we can work out.

This essay moves from devotional friendship to an erotic-esthetic sense of being-with, a felt sense that blends subjectivity between inner and outer. As such, this essay pokes around with some of the metaphysical possibilities implied by curdled subjectivity while also attempting to get clear on, for lack of a better phrase, an embodied being singular plural with emphasis on localized, lived experience. We can provisionally propose, as a filthy thesis, that devotional friendship undergone for its own sake produces this erotic-esthetic-moral-romantic-intuitive-emendatory-energetic sense of being-with others, Nature, God, existence, the origin, oneself, experience, and/or sense itself. To propose less, I argue that devotional friendship, motivated by the erotic and necessitating a practice of resisting interpretation, opens the subject-position onto metaphysics through a production of intuition engendered by “a long comradeship with [reality’s] superficial manifestations.”<sup>12</sup> That is, I argue devotional friendship opens metaphysics, especially process metaphysics.

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<sup>11</sup> Molly Zuckerman-Hartung, *Comedic Relief* (Houston: University of Houston Blaffer Art Museum, October 31, 2021 – March 13, 2022).

<sup>12</sup> Henri Bergson, “Introduction to Metaphysics” in *The Creative Mind* (unknown; working from partial PDF), 177.

Right now I am working with María Lugones, Audre Lorde, Susan Sontag, Gloria Anzaldúa, Walter Benjamin, Jean-Luc Nancy, Henri Bergson, and Joan Didion. Devotional friendship and transparency run the gamut of this paper, providing a double-toned spine upon which we can continually fold these thinkers. Further, the problem with explicating the benefits of practicing devotional friendship is that it begs the question unless we articulate not only the mechanisms of devotion but also the mechanisms of friendship, since much of what devotional friendship produces is asked of us in loving friendship itself. As such, our plan is to set up María Lugones's conceptual, multi-level theatre in "Playfulness, 'World'-Traveling, and Loving Perception" as our base of operations for conceptualizing friendship, out from which we can build. "World"-traveling, "worlds," seeing resistance, and loving playfulness are our starting points for playful friendship. Together, they begin to stitch the shimmering image. This section of Lugones allows us to establish friendship. We can incorporate Audre Lorde's sense of the erotic from "The Uses of the Erotic" to flesh out what we mean by sharing, "world"-traveling, and feeling-with, as well as to argue for a source of energy and decision-making power that is nurtured by the loving company of friends. However, only *devotional* friendship can produce the requisite understanding of another's "world" that would then reveal the transparency of the other, the bare *how* of the other in motion. Devotion is thus an essential aspect of friendship. To develop this, we return to Lugones, on "Purity, Impurity, and Separation," to examine the curdling that is common between people in a shared "world," as well as the way that this curdling deconstructs the dominant purity logic of the metaphysical Real. Instead, *devotional* friendship asks us that we adapt and remain connected in experimentally new modes of being while resisting interpreting the other and while relinquishing our core sense of self in order to sustain the curdle. Sontag's essay "Against Interpretation" helps here. Sontag emphasizes invoked art versus interpreted art, immediately sourcing a distinction between form and content, respectively. She draws a very nice bifurcation for us that cleanly maps onto Bergson's distinction between intuition of the Absolute and analysis of the relative, while also making clear that *not interpreting* the being in question is most important to what Sontag calls an erotics of art, in place of a hermeneutics, as well as an experience of sense that is intrinsically good — i.e., sufficiently good in the experiencing of it, without expectation of payoff or reward — which is essential for friendship, for romantic love, and for Buddhist enlightenment. We cannot address the latter tradition herein, but I wish to do so when time permits. Rather, we can summarize this initial movement thus far as leading us from devotional friendship to transparency, or to an erotics of art, or to an erotics of friendship. In short, devotional friendship opens transparency and process metaphysics through favoring the *how* over the *what* of being, by disrupting a stable sense of selfhood and by resisting monological understanding.

At this point, I invoke Anzaldúa's writing on invoked art, the *nahual*, and *la facultad*; Invoking a blooming present is a necessary aspect of opening sense, as it helps us to close the content-form dualism. From there, the experience of transparency in the context of devotional friendship reveals something about the communication of sense itself, a certain *weighted grammar* or *prominence* of sense-rhythms. To unfurl the details and implications of this felt intuition, I work through Benjamin on translation and the communion of material sense, or sense as matter transparency; Nancy on an affair with the origin, or being as existential transparency; Bergson on intuition, on the Absolute, and on qualitative heterogeneity, or sympathy as interpersonal transparency; and Didion on self-respect as moral transparency, a moral transparency which opens onto moral sentimentalism à la Shaftesbury, Hume, and Bergson. However, all of these transparencies fold around a model of subjectivity that necessitates being-with, interbeing,



interpersonal experiences, and friendship, and that disrupts purity separation conceptions of metaphysics. To close this second movement, I reflect on Didion's "Why I Write," Lugones's "I," and Descartes's *cogito* with emphases on process subjectivity — arguing for transparency as a development of clarity and distinctness. I also argue for intuition, desire, transparency, and sense polyrhythms as erotic sources of information of the Absolute, as well as access to it, vectorized in action and movement, that can inform our behavior toward our personal, particular Good. I call this sense-practice *listening*. I also include a collection of poetry at the end which approaches devotional friendship from a different genre, one with different rules and permissions. Many of the ideas herein began there. Personal reflections throughout also allow me to state intuitions and behavioral changes for which I cannot argue. Ultimately, I am trying to write and be beyond the subject-object distinction.

I remember my first semester in philosophy, when a professor edited one of my essays and suggested that I reread Hume because, "well... I don't want to poison the well." In other words, though we have this path, our 'guiding' lamp, this shimmering cat, I still do not quite know where we are going. We are streetwalking. We have tactics and rearranging grammars of resistance and sharp corners and narrow alleyways. I do know how to write a philosophy paper properly, but I am experimenting with avoiding that mode of linear thinking. I am concerned with how it dominates and restricts my being. I will not tell us where we are going because doing so changes our path, our grammar. I am lying low, letting the cat shimmer. To rewrite everything isolating only this one thesis would be to sacrifice our polyrhythmic grammar of lateral multiplicity in favor of dominator linear thinking.<sup>13</sup> I do attempt to maintain a linear flow herein, but not as much, and really only necessitated by the confines of the form of writing. Changing the spacing between lines also changes the pace at which one reads/scans, forcing a lingering over individual words that seems to poison the big picture thinking. This is how it is folks.

I wish I could also include work on John Dewey, Baruch Spinoza, Alfred North Whitehead, Julia Kristeva, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Karl Marx, Louise Althusser, Jacques Derrida, Luce Irigaray, Immanuel Levinas, Aristotle, and Wassily Kandinsky. I will explain their connection to my thinking once the picture is more clearly laid out. For now I am still swarming, and "I" (i.e., this body, this concretization) am the only thing holding this swarm together. I have to be careful to avoid changing my grammar before the shimmer is lost forever.

*Our translators have a far greater reverence for the usage of their own language than for the spirit of the foreign works. . . . The basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue.<sup>14</sup>*

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Tim Ingold, *Lines*, on types of traveling (if I recall correctly, wayfarer and tourist/destination traveling; the key takeaway is in the difference between a ground-up, moment-to-moment presence versus flying to a destination, popping in and popping out without integrating the horizontality of the experience), and *The Life of Lines*, on "to human is a verb."

<sup>14</sup> Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," *Illuminations* (Boston & New York: Mariner Books, 2019), ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn, 24.

Moreover, the above thinkers feel to be at a superorder to our discussion at hand, a level beyond. We still need the inner skeleton, and it needs to be put together carefully, *tantear*, feeling in the dark. Not too little, but not too much either; just the modest structure of a papier-mâché god.

<sup>15</sup>*And all that was left was His love.*

I want to be clear about what you are getting. You are getting a curdled subject-position who can no longer keep the borders separate. You are getting a multiplicity. You are getting a being stripped of everything except for their self-respect and moral sense. You are getting someone who no longer cares about *making* sense or being understood. You are getting a shapeshifter, a trickster, a snake-swallower. You are getting a sword-swallower, a *nahual*, a storyteller. You are getting a thief, someone who is only interested in what they can get away with saying, what small iridium dazzling truths they can pull out of long searching paragraphs. You are getting someone who can no longer afford to worry about the sanity of their reception. You are getting *writing* for itself. You are getting Vajrayana and a crying Earth — and those with ears that do not hear can only feel alarm at the buzzing, cannot tune in, cannot shimmer, cannot repair. You are getting a long text, a scroll. You are getting someone who will try to keep it folded in but who desperately needs the freedom and space to work out the whole problem. You are getting unhinged, a coalition of multiplicities coalesced in a single subject-position who has needed to find its voice for far too long now. You are getting an animal, its growl, the parts you don't want to read, a wild tongue. You can't cut it out because we'll swallow your sword, drink up the poison. You are getting this "I," this "we." Call me crazy, and let me write. (I hope you know I'm talking to myself, trying to free myself. I hope you know I'm only angry at the writer's block, the self-limitations. I reach my fingers deep into my gums and my cheeks and my gills to force my fish-throat open, to force out the work. I reach. Foucault and Emerson tell me, respectively, that I can't go mad even when I'm no longer 'within the true' and that if I don't say it soon someone else will. We need to give ourselves permission to think freely, figure out which modes of being open up new discourses, help us carve our "I," each time for each one. It's almost like we've anesthetized the exercise of our First Amendment rights. It's like secularism and objective analytic science kill imagination.) Insanity is resistance. Resistance is sane. Insanity cannot be expressed. Insanity is only in the pure differend of silence. These are its interstices. I am disrupting your narrative, myself.

*Hey, I made you a mixtape.  
Because when I feel you, I feel me,  
<sup>16</sup>and when I feel me, it feels good.*

## Excursus I: Madness and Spirits

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<sup>15</sup> Chance the Rapper, "Finish Line / Drown" from the album *Coloring Book* (CRC, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> FKA twigs, "ride the dragon" from the album *CAPRISONGS* (Young; Atlantic, 2022).

*My whole wretched life swam before my weary eyes, and I realized no matter what you do it's bound to be a waste of time in the end so you might as well go mad.*<sup>17</sup>

Go mad. Maybe Kerouac felt the multiplicity, understood that you can't cut out a wild tongue.

*And if— the other thing I would say is that if you feel safe in the area that you're working in, you're not working in the right area. Always go a little further into the water than you feel you're capable of being in. Go a little bit out of your depth, and when you don't feel that your feet are quite touching the bottom, you're just about in the right place to do something exciting.*<sup>18</sup>

Something exciting, something erotic. Something. Something, something with Sounds.<sup>19</sup>

*That's crazy man. In my opinion the only hope that we kinda, have left is music, and, and vibrations. Lotta people don't understand how important it is. Sometimes I be like, get behind the mic and I don't know what type of energy I'mma push out, or, or where it comes from. Trip me out sometimes.*

*"Because its spirits. We ain't even really rapping, just letting our dead homies tell stories for us."* [Tupac Shakur, sampled by Kendrick Lamar]

*Dam'. I wanted to read one last thing to you. It's actually something a good friend had wrote, describing my "world." It says,*

*The caterpillar is a prisoner to the streets that conceived it.  
Its only job is to eat or consume everything around it  
in order to protect itself from this mad city.*

*While consuming its environment  
the caterpillar begins to notice ways to survive.  
One thing it notices is how much the "world" shuns him,  
but praises the butterfly.*

*The butterfly represents the talent, the thoughtfulness,  
and the beauty within the caterpillar,  
but having a harsh outlook on life  
the caterpillar sees the butterfly as weak  
and figures out a way to pimp it to his own benefits.*

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<sup>17</sup> Jack Kerouac, *On the Road: The Original Scroll* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2000 [1959]), p. yet unknown.

<sup>18</sup> David Bowie, Interview, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7HqTQyQ6wc0>,  
<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/9040046-if-you-feel-safe-in-the-area-you-re-working-in>.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Wassily Kandinsky, *Sounds* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1981), trans Elizabeth R. Napier. The copyright questions involved in this style are interesting. I am trying to write the cultural mind; who owns that? I am trying to write what I see as *culture* asking itself, us, to help it express *how* we are.

*Already surrounded by this mad city  
the caterpillar goes to work on the cocoon  
which institutionalizes him —  
he can no longer see past his own thoughts; he's trapped.*

*While trapped inside these walls, certain ideas take root, such as  
going home, and bringing back new concepts to this mad city.  
The result?  
Wings begin to emerge, breaking the cycle of feeling stagnant.*

*Finally free, the butterfly sheds light on situations that the caterpillar never considered,  
ending the eternal struggle.  
Although the butterfly and caterpillar are completely different,  
they are one and the same.*

*What's your perspective on that? 'Pac? 'PAC? 'PAC.<sup>20</sup>*

Saxophones and piano keys, background breathing and slithering whispers — they writhe and wriggle in and out beneath Kendrick's voice. A rising hi-hat, roll on the cymbal, building death.

*God help us / help us lose our minds  
These slippery people / help us understand*

*What's the matter with him? (He's alright)  
I'll see his face (the Lord won't mind)  
Don't play no games (He's alright)  
Love from the bottom to the top / Turn like a wheel (He's alright)  
See for yourself (the Lord won't mind)  
We're gonna move (right now) / Turn like a wheel inside a wheel*

"I," recombinator, *nahual*. "I," multiplicity of horizons. "I," coalesced coalitions. "I," actual occasions of expanding and contracting polyrhythmic experience. "I," witnesses to a shared, polyvalent grammar. "I" → we.

### **Lugones: Traveling, "Worlds," Seeing Resistance, and Hanging Out in Loving Playfulness**

*"I am busy" she said, when they brought out the electro-shock machine, "I am busy." In a repetitious chant that we (not they) could understand, a busying of the mind that disrupts the brutal meddling, reminding oneself, after all, that one form of efficacious resistance lies in not being open to being "cured."<sup>21</sup>*

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<sup>20</sup> Kendrick Lamar, "Wesley's Theory (feat. George Clinton & Thundercat)," from the album *To Pimp a Butterfly*, 2014, closing track, closing lines, closing seconds. Cf. Lamar, "Rich Spirit" from the album *Mr. Morale & the Big Steppers* (pgLang, 2022): "Spirit medium, I don't rap, brotha."

<sup>21</sup> María Lugones, *Pilgrimages / Peregrinajes* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003).

Lugones tells us immediately that she is interested in a collaborative, liberatory “practice of *tantear* for meaning, for the limits of possibility,”<sup>22</sup> where Lugones uses “the Spanish word ‘tantear’ both in the sense of exploring someone’s inclinations about a particular issue and in the sense of ‘tantear en la oscuridad,’ putting one’s hands in front of oneself as one is walking in the dark, tactilely feeling one’s way.”<sup>23</sup> Thank goodness; I thought I was alone in this darkness. This ‘feeling forward’ liberates. This freedom of continuity absolves self-doubt and self-criticism in favor of increased movement and activity. I find that juggling is easier if I keep both hands moving. As long as they are moving, they seem to be exactly where they need to be in order to harmonize perfectly with my environment. I never drop the ball when I *keep moving forward with continuity*. This is the imperative: some generative impulse as an existential creative principle of consciousness. This is intellection and health as *Vorhabe*: it must be ‘grasped’ at, gone after, engaged with, and geared into. But the *engrenage* is also a metaphysical principle.

As I am sitting at my desk, I close my eyes and stretch my arms out around me, into the open air. I want to know how it feels, how my hands feel in the darkness. I feel the arms of the chair in which I sit, as well as the underside of its seat. I know where I am. I feel the underside of my desk. I move slowly, not wanting to break anything. I feel my bookshelf to my left. I remember a student I tutored at the writing center at my undergraduate university, four years ago. He was probably in his fifties or sixties. I think he was a history or political science major if I remember correctly. I think I remember working on a history paper with him. I think his name was Henry, or James, or something strong and quiet and kind like that. I think he told me that he wasn’t born blind. Usually he just needed my help setting up the screen reader, “Shark-something,” so he could listen to his texts and type in the proper place. He was so kind and peaceful, so beautiful. With no vision. What did he see? Ya know, like, how? How was he so content without vision? What wisdom permitted this? I am not downplaying the weight of the suffering. I am emphasizing it. I feel like maybe I’ve begun to understand his “world” — like that’s why I remembered him in this moment — but I also feel like I have no awareness of the extent of what he goes through, like I shouldn’t even talk about these things as if I do. I revere his “world,” his yolk. I fall silent under the weight of his “world.”

*Can you see [him]? I want you to picture [a man]... Now imagine [he’s] white.*<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Lugones, 1.

<sup>23</sup> Lugones, 1.

<sup>24</sup> *A Time to Kill*, directed by Joel Schumacher (United States: Warner Bros., 1996), timestamp yet unknown. In the film, this phrase is used to affect shock in the jury during the defense’s closing argument for a case in which the all-white jury could not empathize with the situation of the Black American defendant. The film is set in the southern United States, in the fictional town of Clanton, Mississippi, in 1984. Ultimately, this scene crystallizes a shock affect meant to disrupt the prejudices of listeners’ consciousnesses, à la Benjamin and Spinoza. I have worked on critical sociopolitical aesthetic shock in Justin Hill, “Absorption, Contemplation, and Affection: Benjamin, Adorno, and Spinoza on Critical Aesthetics,” *Dialogue: Journal of Phi Sigma Tau*, Vol. 62, no. 1, October 2019, 58-64.

I'm sorry. Am I interrupting us? Am I being disruptive [to our cognitive dissonance]? Making us *hesitate*?<sup>25</sup> Oh, so sorry, let me just—

*We want to be seen unbroken, we want to break cracked mirrors that show us in many separate, unconnected fragments.*<sup>26</sup>

I try to listen for Lugones. I try to listen for her shimmer. I read, knowing this book is my only connection with her energy, her affect. I touch the page, trying to find the grounded sensation in the shimmer, knowing that this touch is my connection to a wonderful friend that I fell in love with too late. María Lugones passed away last year. I realize she did not know me. I wonder if she may have seen or heard about the event I put on for my undergraduate philosophy honor society, where we went over her “Playfulness[...]” essay. It always shimmered for me. But she almost certainly did not hear of it. I feel now as if I did not actually understand or see her for years. I remember also when Thich Nhat Hanh passed away in early January, a few days before my flight back to Brooklyn. I cried all morning. I would have liked to have met Ginsberg and Whitehead too. And Plath. And Didion. Biographies always do that to me. Make me feel like I know the person like a friend. I think this happens (arises?) because I have traveled through their art, their work, their expressions, to come into contact with their “worlds.”

You can only know traveling by arriving.<sup>27</sup> “World”-traveling is transformative. To travel “worlds” is to be changed, to be transformed, to become more multiple, wider before going deeper, to become laterality itself, a qualitative manifold. Traveling is vulnerability to being transformed, a surrender, a laying down of who you thought you were before the experience, the event. This is Anzaldúa’s “work of the soul.” The soul transforms itself through a process – of harmonizing and stabilizing its multiplicity – that is always oriented toward truth and restoration.

It is important that we begin our social ontology with traveling instead of with “worlds.” If we begin with “worlds,” we beg the wrong question, immediately misstep in our premises. “Worlds,” though dynamic, are at any given moment a stabilization, a *what*. Instead, if we begin with traveling, we start with a verb and a *how*, a process. Only by beginning with traveling can we open up conceptions of “worlds” that are particular, dynamic, local, and *how-not-what*. Each “world” is *how* it is, not *what* it is. *What* it is changes each emerging second as it refreshes its grammar. We must begin with the traveling. Pilgrimages and traveling are at once political, practical, existential, spiritual, metaphysical, scientific, and tantric. These two notions of transformational activity work on many levels, to many affects, and practitioners must attend to these sensitivities and levels without neglecting others. I repeat. The political is inherently existential, tantric, practical, and spiritual. Or rather, work that may not seem to be political is always politically engaged with varying levels of oppression and resistance, some of which are not always apparent to those who are not being attentive.

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<sup>25</sup> Alia Al-Saji, “A Phenomenology of Hesitation,” in *Living Alterities: Phenomenology, Embodiment, and Race*, ed. Emily Lee (New York: State University of New York Press, 2014), 133-72.

<sup>26</sup> Lugones, “Hablando Cara a Cara/Speaking Face to Face: An Exploration of Ethnocentric Racism,” 42-43.

<sup>27</sup> Lugones, “Introduction,” 1-7, 16-20.

*Subjectivity: a back-and-forth lattice structure. Writing: slats, assertions. Effete slats. Analyses, pieces. Slats and more slats lacking the unity you will have to bring to this.*

Let's just try to be as clear as possible. Traveling transforms. We can identify *having traveled* by a change in our self-perception, in our perception of the "world," and/or in our quality/intensity of sense. More pragmatically, we can identify having traveled by the sense that a new chapter has opened, by the feeling that one has gone through a liminal period, or by the awareness that one has separate senses-of-self tied to different "life chapters" (memories of being different at other times or in other "worlds"<sup>28</sup>) We can also recognize traveling by certain personality switches — when different social interactions construct vastly different, often conflicting, subject-positions and interpersonal phenomenological structures.

*The shift from being one person to being a different person is what I call traveling. This shift may not be willful or even conscious, and one may be completely unaware of being different in a different "world," and may not recognize that one is in a different "world."*<sup>29</sup>

Some structures are less humane than others insofar as they leave less room for feeling-intuition to check in with its moral sentimentalist compass. Audre Lorde confirms this when she explains that we dissociate from the erotic because turning toward its awareness and power would disrupt our current social structures by demanding more from our lives and our experiences.

*I think I understand where we are going now. But I can't tell you. I'm sorry. I can't tell myself. You have to see the middle through with me. You have to understand how we got here, how we get here. You have to come here too. I cannot show you the sketch of Paris without first taking you to Paris. I can perform Paris for you. Please: come to Paris. It coalesces. It calls you in. We must stay in the middle, the middle way. Lie low. Shimmer.*

"Worlds" are incessantly, actually lived. "Worlds" overlap, coincide, and are sometimes shared. A single body may inhabit and embody multiple "worlds." "Worlds" express particular beings.<sup>30</sup> Any and all spatialized instantiations of being are "worlds."

**world** — Originally "life on earth, this world (as opposed to the afterlife)," sense extended to "the known world," then to "the physical world in the broadest sense, the universe" (c. 1200). In Old English gospels, the commonest word for "the physical world," was Middangeard (Old Norse Midgard), literally "the middle enclosure" (see **yard** (n.1)), which is rooted in Germanic cosmology. Greek kosmos in its ecclesiastical sense of "world of people" sometimes was rendered in Gothic as manaseps, literally "seed of man." The usual Old Norse word was heimr, literally "abode" (see home). Words for "world" in some other Indo-European languages derive from the root for

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<sup>28</sup> Lugones, 91.

<sup>29</sup> Lugones, 89.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Heidegger, *Da-sein* [being-there, possibly a mistranslation], and cf. Nancy, *Mit-sein* [being-with].

*"bottom, foundation" (such as Irish domun, Old Church Slavonic duno, related to English deep); the Lithuanian word is pasaulis, from pa- "under" + saulė "sun."*<sup>31</sup>

Thus, we can also conceptualize “worlds” as permeable enclosures of sense / of actual occasions of experience, à la Nancy and Whitehead respectively. Perhaps transparency expresses the extent to which the being in question is a “world” unto itself. “Worlds” pop into and out of existence, as they are constructed and deconstructed in perceptual feedback loops between inner and outer. Conceiving of “worlds” in this way places us between subject-object, between body-environment, and between mind-body, to stay in the middle.

*I have stopped purchasing animal products for cooking. I feel the distinct, inexplicable sensation, am convinced, that the chicken and the cow do not die until I actualize their corpses in front of me at the grocery store. I am not turning a blind eye. I am changing my “world.” I am changing what is in it and what is not. I have the distinct sensation that certain pasts are actualized out of necessity based on certain decisions I make and actions I take in the present. My understanding and my sense stabilize (Generate? Emanate?) my reality. Or these are all the things I wish I could claim. If you want me to remain a philosopher, all I can report from the field is that I’ve stopped purchasing animal products but will eat them when they are presented to me by a shared “world.” I remind myself to read more Deleuze, on singularities and the transcendental field. I am nauseous from hunger and have lost my appetite.*

*I can no longer eat greasy foods. Even if the present does not actualize different pasts, present grammar does determine a future, invisible-yet-felt grammar which produces a super-ordered, visible logic — shadows of the future Real latent underneath the present.*

I encountered “world”-traveling on six fronts this year: (i) New York, with its new set of housing problems and safety concerns; (ii) a bilingual home “world,” or, the experience of living in a building where all of my roommates were visiting from Mexico, where only some of them spoke conversational English, where only one or two every few months have also read the things I would normally be interested in talking about, and where none of my friends at home in the building, over ten months, could sustain in-depth theoretical discussions, which had been my primary mode of being all my life; (iii) graduate seminars, with the difficulties of expression entailed by heightened esthetic taste and greater refinement of ideas, as well as trying to remain focused despite the demands of the other “worlds,” which was a new task, and a growing suspicion of traditional, monological modes of argumentation; (iv) my friendship with Noa, which required devotion and repeatedly empathizing to attempt to understand their feelings and their confusing, often rapidly changing and incongruent behaviors; (v) working part-time while in school, which I had done previously during undergraduate study but underestimated the co-demands during graduate study; and (vi) bussing in high-volume restaurants, while not simultaneously in school, a role typically performed by immigrant and migrant workers with limited English-speaking skills (it is easy to think one empathizes with this world because one hears the rhetoric about doing so and because one visits restaurants; but witnessing a “world” is very different from inhabiting a “world”). These “worlds” bleed into and construct one another.

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<sup>31</sup> Online Etymology Dictionary, “world” entry. <https://www.etymonline.com/word/world>.



They connect causally. Moreover, all of these experiences promoted empathy and growth. I do not advocate for violently forced traveling, or for pushing yourself further than you wish to go, but I do advocate for willful traveling, just like Lugones.

An apology I wish I could send:

*Man. We were always way too hard on each other.  
“Please don’t text me any more deconstructions of our past.”*

So I put it here instead. This whole work, an apology. Desire longing for mending. An old poem:

*can you see the rainbows  
the way the emotions refract  
blend in from one another  
depend on experiences contrasted  
  
now empty your pockets of where you’ve been  
we’re doing something new here  
  
gaze horrified at these ruins and cracked ice  
brutal houses sanded down from storms  
sink in memories of snow queen lakes  
not very often — empty your pockets  
  
wherever you go, remember, Life has the quality  
of being both a memory already traveled and  
a playfully responsive dream, dancing in step  
so remember — and walk with grace  
  
floating, fleeting birthday thoughts  
and where I’ve been today<sup>32</sup>*

Through desire. This is our path: desiring intellection.

*I took a break from writing to try to acquire some boxes from the liquor store for packing and moving. It is Thanksgiving Day, 2022. I had a lovely breakfast this morning with my roommate. She shared a bit of her sausage with me, after discussions about devotional friendship, transparency, “self”-healing as “world”-healing given the microcosm-macrocosm analogy,<sup>33</sup> “worlds,” the diffusion of “I,” and my aversion to purchasing meat and otherwise introducing it into my “world” of arising phenomena. I was grateful. I used some of the butter in the fridge that I had bought a few months ago, along with the leftover grease in the pan, to toast a cinnamon raisin bagel. It kept me full for about seven hours. The liquor store did not have boxes for me, though I could clearly see them*

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<sup>32</sup> Justin Hill, “rainbows and pockets: a memory, a dream,” unpublished. Written September 26, 2021. 26th birthday.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Plotinus.

*through the glass. They could not explain why I could not have them or what they would be doing with them instead. I could not make sense of it [at the time].*

What was this resistance I was meeting with? From where did it arise? I could feel, sense, and mentally map/image the closure I was encountering, but I just could not understand it.

*Being is a transcendental field. We share and loan energy, cycling our erotic resources.*

This is my closure. I have accumulated an immense multiplicity of thinking and creative, potentiated affect (it's tearing at the seams of this text) through a process of consuming thought and broad cultural *media*,<sup>34</sup> and this affective power is needed back in the "world" through art, philosophy, and wise, practical labor (i.e., practical labor within a broader economic social axiology that recompenses value to our "worlds"<sup>35</sup>). This is my work, *the Work*. I have to learn to share and be vulnerable.

*Am I a rhizome yet? Not the author's body; I as in me, the work [of consciousness? its creative production?]. AM I a rhizome yet?*

Acquiring a second language exposes the prominence of sense, or language as sense, but really only if you are immersed in an environment where learning happens from the ground up, from listening and clinging onto the textures of the sounds and words. I notice I begin to understand the conversations without translation back into English. My brain is not wired predominantly on English. It is wired on sense. But this listening depends on an exposure to a material Real which comes prior to my being able to reduce and conquer this motile Real into discrete meanings. Process is the only thing that doesn't eat itself.

*I was invited to Thanksgiving dinner by my roommates. I had gone out of my way to try to be more friendly today, for my own wellbeing and out of self-awareness, and they warmly insisted that I join them for two types of pasta with two types of sauce (Carne con salsa de los tomates y maíz; y crema con champiñones [o se llaman angos]), chips, and Little Caesar's pizza. We played Uno afterward (fotocopia y silencio). Mourning leaving them next week. Grateful for today. More tomorrow morning.*

Rest.

*And we heard he's on the mend.*

*Find a little space, so we move in-between  
and keep, one step ahead, of yourself [...]*

*Take a look at these hands  
They're passing in-between us*

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<sup>34</sup> I wish to emphasize here the parallel of *media* with experience and sense as various communications along various mediums.

<sup>35</sup> I do not mean "myself" by "my 'world'" — this "world" is only *mine* in the sense of consistently enmeshing with my experience, but it is not *mine* in the sense of my body or my own accumulation of {value}-{capital}-{affect}-{karma}-{self-respect}-{self-assertion}-{belief}-{charisma}-{a constitutive, underlying, expressed sense structure produced through [along?] being-with}. Cf. Karl Marx, *Capital*.

*Take a look at these hands  
Take a look at these hands!  
You don't have to mention it  
No, thanks<sup>36</sup>*

*I found the Talking Heads while training as a bartender. I really connected with my trainer David. We were both quiet, kind, and focused — primarily interested in doing the job accurately and efficiently. I actually really enjoyed bartending. It was nice to maintain an area's cleanliness and to run a section without mistakes. I also felt the weight of a long tradition of mentorship in the hands that showed me how to make the drinks. I felt like that was what David Byrne meant. You don't have to mention it. No, thanks. 'Hey man, don't mention it. No problem. I'm here for us.' Gosh, I am not even making up that they are both named David. Weird.*

We can collapse our metaphysical considerations of closures into a political pragmatics of action, so long as we retain a sensitivity to the possibility of yet misunderstood causal, metaphysical phenomena, such as the self-expression of karma through one's unconscious "world"-structure (i.e., how a given subject constructs their "worlds," informed by how they are constructed in the "worlds" of others, as well as how this impacts how they present themselves and these "worlds" to others — that is, the "world" as a present self-grammar and a sufficient justifier of sense).

Or maybe we cannot collapse this multiplicity.

*Curdle-separation is not something that happens to us but something we do. As I have argued, it is something we do in resistance to the logic of control, to the logic of purity. Though transparents [distinct from Sontag's notion of transparence] fail to see its sense, and thereby keep its sense from structuring our social life, that we curdle testifies to our being active subjects, not consumed by the logic of control. Curdling may be a haphazard technique of survival as an active subject, or it can become an art of resistance, metamorphosis, transformation.*

*I recommend cultivating this art as a practice of resistance into transformation from oppressions as interlocked. It is a practice of festive resistance:*

*Bi- and multilingual experimentation;  
code-switching;  
categorical blurring and confusion;  
caricaturing the selves we are in the worlds of our oppressors, infusing them with ambiguity;  
practicing trickstery and foolery;  
elaborate and explicitly marked gender transgression;  
withdrawing our services from the pure or their agents whenever possible and with panache;  
drag;*

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<sup>36</sup> Talking Heads, "Born Under Punches (The Heat Goes On)" from the album *Remain In Light* (Sire Records Company, 1980).

*announcing the impurity of the pure by ridiculing his inability at self-maintenance;  
 playful reinvention of our names for things and people, multiple naming;  
 caricaturing of the fragmented selves we are in our groups;  
 revealing the chaotic in production;  
 revealing the process of producing order if we cannot help producing it [perhaps as a phenomenologically constitutive or enacted structure];  
 undermining the orderliness of the social ordering;  
 marking our cultural mixtures as we move;  
 emphasizing mestizaje;  
 crossing cultures;  
 etc.<sup>37</sup>*

I am writing like this because you are not allowed to ignore this body, this I. Not this “I.” This. I. I. Because this I, this mind, is not allowed to ignore this historicized body. You are [I am] not allowed to ask me to remove the I and give you only the disembodied thought, just the “on-topic” experience and discourse. I have teeth. I bite back. You [i] can close me. You [i] can stop reading me. But I get to be here. I have a right to be here, right here, I in this writing. Here I can be, and you can start to read my “world.” But you can only read the *I* that I am willing to allow myself to be. I have to be, emanate. You(I) have to be, emanate, for me to travel to your “world.” The problem is that phrases like “be yourself” and “I’ll be me, and you be you” don’t properly express the self-assertion, self-respect, and self-emanation necessary for this I. Each of us must assert the particulars of their history as well as their right to take up space, especially to ourself.

‘I’ says, here is a body, here is a “world.” Here is a perspective. Come see what it’s like.

*I speak of promised lands  
 Soil as soft as mama’s hands  
 Runnin’ water standin’ still  
 Endless fields of daffodils and chamomile  
 Rice under black beans  
 Walked into Apple with cracked screens  
 And told prophetic stories of freedom  
 Found warmth in a Black queen  
 for when I get cold like Nat King  
 I’m doing the dad thing  
 I speak of wondrous, unfamiliar  
 lessons from childhood  
 Make you remember how to smile good*

[...]

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<sup>37</sup> Lugones, “Purity, Impurity, and Separation,” p. 145.

*I speak to God in public.*<sup>38</sup>

This is not really a philosophy text. I don't pretend to understand it anymore. I'm writing a vision for a better future. I don't think I can write without blacking out. (I don't drink.) I am speaking phenomenologically here on the elision of thought in the movement of the expressive act of writing, when the "I" dissipates into activity. This is why we must surrender. Surrender the self to continue moving in the groove, slotted harmoniously into materialism's sense rhythms. It's thoroughly terrifying. I want to lay back down. "*Write. Write. Write. It's coming out, it's coming back, it has to come out.*" So no, I don't know what this is. But I do know that

*I got some ideas you gotta see. Ibid.*<sup>39</sup>

I wonder about forgiveness. Derrida says that forgiveness is a gift and something we can't ask for, so perhaps we should consider what it even means to offer an apology. I wonder about how we can learn to offer this gift to ourselves. It has to be the work of the soul, but I do not understand it. Devotion to ourselves, as ontological pluralism, sustains this.

*Day seven of writing. I feel like Jonah anytime I try to step away. I need to repaint my nails. I don't.*

I may not be saying anything new here. The real work may lie in articulating the particulars of each multiplicity, in critiquing each manifestation of monologic as well as attesting to the richness of the multiplicity of particulars which each monologic covers over.

*I am busy, I repeated. I am busy holding analysis at bay. I am busy holding myself at bay. I remind myself that writing madness's rhythm is a form of expressing its conditions in a dialectic back-and-forth tension of structure/anti-structure. Am I providing the structure of anti-structure? The grammar of madness? Am I writing the purity of impurity or the impurity of purity? Both mixtures yet neither one? Does saying this conquer madness and miss the point? Does madness 'anti-structure' [as verb] order, logic, and purity? What does it mean to give ontological priority to anti-structure? Do we then begin with difference? The difference in the spacing of transformational traversal as first philosophy? As ontic ground? The difference of time's movement? The second order difference of feeling as affect of affect? The qualitative difference of concrete duration?*

This is hopeless. You cannot experience my sense. My words can only fall through grafted slats. Devotional friendship full of patience, grace, and forgiveness is the only practice we can offer to each other as a mutual path forward toward intuition.

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<sup>38</sup> Chance the Rapper, "Blessings [Reprise] (feat Ty Dolla \$ign, Raury, BJ The Chicago & Anderson .Paak)" from the album *Coloring Book*.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. ibid ibid ibid ibid. A footnote on an ibid-reading-ibid referencing a different ibid.

*I think it's time we blow this scene. Get everybody and the stuff together. OK. 3 2 1. Let's jam!*<sup>40</sup>

Kendrick Lamar opens his 2022 album *Mr. Morale & the Big Steppers* with a staggering, driving, erratic, syncopated piano and drum polyrhythm so fast and faltering that it feels like its running forward while stumbling over itself. I cannot properly speak on the depth and texture of Lamar's music; it must be listened to, experienced. I love his work.

*They must create new dreams and films by breaking traditional styles. They are sick and tired of conventional fixed style jazz. ...the work, which becomes a new genre itself, will be called COWBOY BEBOP, will play without fear of risky things.*<sup>41</sup>

Instead, I can note bebop and improvisational jazz threads as promising avenues for being new, as well as perhaps simply a model for the metaphysical play of the Real.

*As bebop was not intended for dancing, it enabled the musicians to play at faster tempos. Bebop musicians explored advanced harmonies, complex syncopation, altered chords, extended chords, chord substitutions, asymmetrical phrasing, and intricate melodies. Bebop groups used rhythm sections in a way that expanded their role.*<sup>42</sup>

So when I talk about “worlds,” what I mean is that I, each time for each one, I am a flowering fruit on the Universe's tree, and I never fell to the ground. The continuity of my concrete duration came before me and will go on after me — well, after me-in-this-body (there is nothing beyond this; no “I-not-in-this-body,” no “I-in-that-body”; only the *cogito*, each time for each one, in a shared “world” mediated by multiplicities of congealing sense. Strictly speaking, I am Nature. This body is not all of it, nor is yours, but *I* am Nature and so are you — but that's the same, I've already said *I* am).

*When I experience my “world,” I want to be able to say that it is wholly mine, even when you are in it, without collapsing or reducing you to something less than the kind of sovereignty over consciousness which I experience. I want to be able to say that if I die, you might die too, or you might pop out of existence, or maybe you and I are each in multiple co-lateral non-overlapping, non-touching worlds.*

*A Spinoza scholar that I worked with used to tell me “there is no state within a state,” meaning that being is not necessarily some subset or independent sovereignty apart from Nature. Maybe awareness frees us from Nature's determinism by widening open the limen to allow our determined body to, if not be free, then at least act upon the widest set of desires and concerns. We were reading Aristotle's *De Anima*, Book III, especially on the aspectual entanglement between perceiver and perceived and between knower and known. This idea developed into aspectual personhood, or a conception of affective*

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<sup>40</sup> Seatbelts, “Tank!” from the album *COWBOY BEBOP* (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack).

<sup>41</sup> *COWBOY BEBOP*, recurring title card theme text.

<sup>42</sup> “Bebop,” *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bebop>, accessed November 25, 2022.

*subjectivity as a historicity of entangled perceptions and of concrescences of 'homemade' environments — that is, lived-in worlds cohered by a body.*

It takes moving beyond a body's local subject-identity into sense, feeling, and intuition to identity the continuity of Self beyond this body. Each being is its own blooming universe, arising as a presenting of concrete duration. But this doesn't quite go with what I was saying before. This part is from Bergson, on the extension of concrete duration beyond my local being. Perhaps we are working out two separate models: one for consciousness and one for physics. How do they come together, in something akin to a Bergsonian synthesis? Intuition. Soul. Intellect. Multiplicity. Multiplicity. Multiplicity. Multiplicity. Multiplicity. Multiplicity. Multiplicity.

*THE REST REMAINS UNWRITTEN THE REST REMAINS UNWRITTEN THE REST*

Each one of us, little infinities. Each of us, a genre itself. Our own grammars. Each one of us, the whole thing, each time. Wow. Absolutely marvelous.

*Whenever you feel lost and oppressed, just hang out for a bit. Play with your friends. This madness is just play.*

*i will trust myself enough one day  
to let our madness safely play  
i will remember from the first discernment  
no one taught me to love, singularly wondrous  
enmeshed ebb and flow  
<sup>43</sup>ancient call i've always known*

Seeing resistance requires seeing oppression. I just thought we should state that one clearly. Resistance is purposely unintelligible to those who do not need to be made aware of its work. We have to identify our global cultural values, with local networks sensitive to differential cultural particularities, à la Germanic common law, to then determine how best we can move forward as a *demos* constituted by ontological pluralism. And we urgently need to address the climate crisis.

We need to attune our sensitivities toward the natural "worlds" and toward what we are losing in our evolutionary history due to anthropocentrism.

*Or maybe some degree of destruction is essential for creation.  
Shiva is the Hindu god of destruction and re-creation,  
and Shiva is also a ritual grief period in Judaism, which  
regulates and enforces the ex-pression of grief and the experience of "world"-traveling which  
would otherwise still be embodied but also repressed and ignored  
to great detriment and discomfort.*

*Deer overgraze upstate New York, and they already exist, consuming resources. Waste is a real problem, and for example, cattle livestock require, comparatively speaking, a lot of grain and water, over a long time. They also take up a lot of land and their bloated*

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<sup>43</sup> Hill, "the first discernment," written October 20, 2021.

*population is coupled with the necessity of keeping cattle bred in order to produce milk for the dairy industry. So we need to rethink our relationship to milk in order to stop introducing extra cow 'being' to suffer [as a blossoming actual occasion] and to inefficiently consume resources on our dying planet. Deer, however, are a sacred gift. We have to survive. We have to survive. 'I am sorry, child, we have to survive. We cannot go to the beach because there might be a tsunami. There was an earthquake.'*——

*Maybe labor builds the "world" you want.  
Maybe imagination constructs the "world" you want.  
Maybe the work makes the "world" you want. The work of what? The work of the soul. The work of being, as Nancy put it. What was it again? being makes Being?  
Sense makes the "world," and the "world" makes sense.  
More down the road. Stay (at)tuned.*

*I find it easier to write when I fast. Feeling full tends to make me feel complacent, content, and thoughtful — reflective without a need to move in order to think. I wonder about the relation between fasting, and similar religious practices, and the production of divine sense-place. I wonder if my "world" is a long film in tantra practice, in connection, love, effort, diligence, ethic, growth, endeavor, and striving. I remind myself to take it slow, to not rush the lessons, to enjoy the passage of growth.<sup>44</sup>*

*rest.*

When Lugones talks about seeing resistance and seeing oppression, I am not sure that she has in mind such metaphysical notions as structural closures and openings, spaces for possibilities, but she might be talking about the same sense experience, the same raw information. She might be talking about structural closures and openings as concrete pragmatics, rather than referring to some 'underlying' structure of the world. She might be positing the affective field as concrete and as entailed in the materialism of bodies, with varying degrees of imbuelement and inscription.

She may also be deeply open to these perceptions being metaphysical perceptions, senses, and sensitivities, given her emphasis on multi-level thinking. Might we call these perceptions simply attenuations? Does experience not attenuate, flatten, or harmonize an incoming multiplicity? Attenuate here means to reduce the intensity of a wave-force upon introduction into/along a medium — think of sunlight becoming less intense through the medium of sunglasses. Is consciousness a medium itself? Is it the same medium as reality, as the rest of experience? I do not yet know. The fact that consciousness brings in a field with an extra dimension and experiences it from a particular vantage of one dimension lower is a dimensional attenuation, not unlike the relationships between integrations, derivatives, and anti-derivates. Areas under lines, and the relationship of each dimensionality being etched along the medium of its higher

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<sup>44</sup> Cf. Jean-Luc Nancy, "Of Divine Places," trans. Michael Holland, *The Inoperative Community* (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), pp. 110-50.



magnitude manifold, like a line on the edge of square or a cube, or a square on the face of a cube. It is incessantly mereological, perhaps fractal even when considering Leibniz's "Monadology."<sup>45</sup>

We get all sorts of valuable information through experience, especially experiences which push the limits of our understanding and ask us to be devoted to a practice or node within experience. (Perhaps this 'node' is God, or faith, or truth, or something, but some common, universal ineffable aspect *is* clung to in any form of devotion. Perhaps this node is the self-aware intuition of concrete duration, à la Bergson.)

*I-I-I'd say you look tired  
Si-i-i-ng my secret choir  
Sa-a-a-alt my scrapes and sleep tight  
<sup>46</sup>Si-i-i-ng my brave acolyte*

The important point in considering Lugones is that we learn to *see* oppression, and this can most readily be identified by talking to others' feelings of their experiences, as well as by checking in with our own moral and gut reactions as we witness the interactions and engagements of others. I am not suggesting a sort of paternal saviorism here; but I am suggesting that there are instances of deep abuse and self-minimalization which do not allow the oppressed to see their own immolation and molestation, such as the Stockholm Syndrome of the captive or such as the excusing and enabling behavior common in those with abusive domestic partners or parents — most often situations where bodily survival will not allow one to rethink the conditions, qualifications, merits, and costs of their present stability (which may not be very stable at all). Man, this one is tough. These statements can be especially threatening to a subject-position actively resisting certain destabilizing insights. I am sorry.

*Every other day  
the same long road to  
the old man down the street.  
Neither one of you knows  
what the flowers in your hand  
are supposed to mean.  
Help! My uncle's gone insane,  
in his room he sits  
shaking a geranium!  
Outside, the old dog, resigned,  
leaves heavy tracks for the father  
dragging the rifle to find.  
Every other day the same  
long road to the old man down the street.  
Do you think someday, through all the flowers,*

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. Gottfried Leibniz, "The Principles of Philosophy known as Monadology" trans. Jonathan Bennett (Early Modern Texts, 1714), <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/leibniz1714b.pdf>.

<sup>46</sup> Jake Ewald of Slaughter Beach, Dog, "Acolyte" from the album *Birdie* (Lame-O Records, 2017). Acolyte: noun, religious devotee.

*your eyes finally will meet?*

*Where he'll tell you, "Honey, you know I had to shoot that dog you loved so much. You know I had to do it. Aw, honey you know I had to shoot that dog you loved so much, you know I had to do it."*

*"Yeah, I know you had to shoot that dog I loved so much I know you had to do it."<sup>47</sup>*

That same Spinoza scholar used to repeatedly emphasize that *humans cannot know their own good*. Seems pretty awful in retrospect, but there was an element of gnostic mysticism to it that really piqued my interest; I tried to leave the *you don't know your own good* and hang onto the *I don't know my own good*. I was especially curious about the mechanisms of production which might be dependent on this interest or pursuit, even if there was no final truth to be uncovered, no secret to be found. Just the pursuit for itself, the seeking of unknown knowledge, the prying of hands ripping the subway doors open, refusing closure. I refuse.

Beauty [a pseudonym for a friend, a multiple naming] mentioned to me once that they thought it was always silly to say “well, isn't X in so-and-so an example of Y.” We were speaking on a tendency in seminars to simply link the history of ideas, in a move that simultaneously shuts down the intrinsic-ness, the internality, or the intuition of any given text or topic, or put differently, a tendency to suggest relations between ideas and thinkers rather than diving into, engaging, blossoming, elaborating, and what Donald Landes calls *engrenage*, which involves a *gearing into*. Note the process. Note the increase in internality, in intensiveness, and in what Bergson calls sympathy with the Absolute, i.e., that which is uniquely and internal to a given object, thing, study, or concrete accretion, and especially the intuitive accretion of all concrete accretions, with the Absolute Real being something both common and different. Connecting ideas is an example of what Bergson calls analysis, which I am doing in this sentence to make it clear for you. That sentence was not written from a place of intuition; this one was; this one has a shimmer; this one falls off and hangs; this one told the author how it should be written.

*Bloom where you're planted.*

I agreed with Beauty. In general we agreed that this movement, while interesting to some extent, still closes discourse and absolves the reader from any requirement to actually engage with a thinker on their own terms. Interestingly, there is a level of intuition in the associations themselves, and by critique the practice as a tendency, I was also shutting down intuition of this method in class. Critique is important, but so is changing one's own grammar to seek a positively flush manifold of overlapping aspects, theories, and metaphors for the Real, for navigating life and surviving. As a practice of thought and writing, it is always better *to open*: to open the discourse, the conversation, the questions; to open the experience. But as a practice of sense, being opened is impossible. One can only *continue* opening, and even this must be continuously reengaged. One cannot continue opening *from* or *on* or *along* the same opening. All present openings subside and become closures unless your hands repeatedly pry at the door. We must oscillate between erotic engagements and dances with accesses to the origin — in my

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<sup>47</sup> Francis Quinlan of Hop Along, “Sister Cities” from the album *Painted Shut* (Saddle Creek Records, 2015).

experience, commonly found in interpersonal connections and artmaking practices, as well as the feelings, desires, and strong pulls which I feel in pursuit of these endeavors.

*Are you going to change yet again, shift your position according to the questions that are put to you, and say that the objections are not really directed at the place from which you are speaking? Are you going to declare yet again that you have never been what you have been reproached with being? Are you already preparing the way out that will enable you in your next book to spring up somewhere else and declare as you're now doing: no, no, I'm not where you are lying in wait for me, but over here, laughing at you?'*

*'What, do you imagine that I would take so much trouble and so much pleasure in writing, do you think that I would keep so persistently to my task, if I were not preparing – with a rather shaky hand – a labyrinth into which I can venture, into which I can move my discourse... in which I can lose myself and appear at last to eyes that I will never have to meet again. I am no doubt not the only one who writes in order to have no face. Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order. At least spare us their morality when we write.'*<sup>48</sup>

For me there seems to be an element of abeyance in the Real, a sort of keeping enlightenment at bay in order to elongate and prolong *the* experience, as if Enlightenment collapses my bubble universe, my pocket “world,” my unstable, curdle-separated, tantric, metaphysical emulsion of being. I must keep myself and my own listening in abeyance in order to critique its mechanism, in the Kantian sense of communicating the conditions for a given phenomenon. The phenomenon in question is the experience of an idiosyncratic sense which I propose exists in each of us that, if we *listened* to it, would allow us to each heal, and then from there to heal as a society in order to keep surviving while nurturing the fullest and richest life possible for us. But I am holding this in abeyance for myself intentionally so that it can be communicated. I am taking my own healing slow so that I can show us all the pieces and the changes. I am layering them over one another and not always putting them in the most organized place as a tactic for disrupting and for performatively, autologically communicating this abeyant, disruptive, polyvalent Real.

*None of this will make sense to you as a reader if you cannot see it as resistance, if you cannot see that, what are we on now, page twenty-five? that this laterality is resisting your domination. This is an invitation for us to work with ourselves about how we approach ourselves and our work, how we might try to control and dominate ourselves, or reduce ourselves to make us more manageable. This is praxis. I am resisting the monologic that I see as responsible for so much death and destruction in this world. I am relinquishing it within myself to see if somehow that makes a difference out there, if we can somehow please just stop hurting each, stop taking advantage of each other, stop doubting each other, stop resenting each other. It's all so puzzling and painful, and it has*

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<sup>48</sup> Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 17.

*been for so long. I am asking us to heal. I am trying to help us to hear us. I resist purity. I go crazy. I resist discipline. I stand in my corner. I have self-respect. I stand by my I.*

I experiment to find ways out of these mechanisms of control and oppression, these levers and deadlines. I seek the playful company of other resistors, insulators, transients [*my whole being, transient – “a momentary variation in current, voltage, or frequency”*], other curdle-separators.

*But then I ask myself who my own people are. When I think of my own people, the only people I can think of as my own are transitionals, liminals, border-dwellers, world-travelers, beings in the middle of either/or. They are all people whose acts and thoughts curdle-separate. So as soon as I entertain the thought, I realize that separation into clean, tidy things and beings is not possible for me because it would be the death of myself as multiplicitous and a death of community with my own. I understand my split or fragmented possibilities in horror. I understand then that whenever I desire separation, I risk survival by confusing split separation with separation from domination, that is, separation among curdled beings who curdle away their fragmentation, their subordination. I can appreciate then that the logic of split-separation and the logic of curdle-separation repel each other, that the curdled do not germinate in split separation.<sup>49</sup>*

I need to move forward and establish another lateral rhythm. As such I will now try to really focus us into Lugones. María Lugones has taught me so much. She was an incredible and beautiful person, and I am both unfortunate to have not known her personally and beyond profoundly lucky [to have traveled to her world in some small way], breathe through this, there is so much work left to do. So many beauty particulars to parse and experience. I just feel so far behind and with absolutely no resources. I have so much faith and effort and energy and remorse and penitence and integrity and self-respect, and so i have being and so I have Being.

*The spiritual benefits of fasting may really only be noticeable at the point at which the body truly has little sustenance left. Weeks with very little eating. Days of rationing. No body fat left to self-consume. No room left to self-destruct. Pure survival. Pure intensity. Intensity of feeling and experience that translate directly into the grammars of expression across a variety of mediums. At this point I would choose all of this suffering to feel this. I resist solutions and calming techniques, resist eating the food in my pantry because today in particular I am fasting. This spacing of hunger and desire promotes thought. I will not console or rationalize this work. I will not ground myself. I will not tell myself it is sane (it is, I have my citations, my references, my papers in order). I will sustain this opening, repeatedly in order to continue writing, to find this work that I have hungered so long for. Food and nutrition are crucial for presence. Safety is crucial for health and presence. In both of these, in presence, reflective thought is closed as the sense-“world” can no longer be held in abeyance. This nourishment and presence is important for many careers and modes of survival. Creativity and spirituality may not be within that domain. I mean I do have some degree of stability. I have been in this room for about five months now, and I have not been working another job beyond this writing for about a month now. Due to*

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<sup>49</sup> Lugones, “Purity, Impurity, Separation,” 133-34.

*this spacing, I have been able to absorb myself in writing, planning, rationing, research, and local survival. I have also been more creative about meeting my needs. Regardless, some adequate mixture of stability and instability must be achieved for human-being as transparency under homeostasis. I had{ate} half of a bagel this morning. Good and bad are both valuable spikes in intensity, in terms of my experience. I cannot speak for your experience or recommend seeking. Even I do not recommend seeking for myself; seeking is still a form of clinging and of escaping the present, i.e., the presently becoming groove. Further, doing bad is very much still possible. It reflects in the “world” and in one’s affective-hermeneutic (at a base level of resonance) perception of the polyvalent Real. Doing bad has repercussions, and so it is still quite possible. However, experiencing bad is something entirely ontologically questionable altogether. There is a certain grace built into existence, a metaphysical theodicy, which mediates this contradiction between doing and experiencing. Where else does this doing-experiencing dichotomy lead? It’s peculiar. Is the doing Real and the experiencing not? Are they both separate aspects of the Real, entangled but with differing laws? Does Being have moral laws in the guise of causal necessity? As for the proper mixture of stability and instability, it is a matter of eating just enough and nothing more. Thanks Aristotle. For creativity in particular, I believe it is a matter of eating even less than normal, in order to eventually depend upon some alternative wellspring of energy that cannot be explained away by matter and nutrients. Writing is a spiritual practice. Creating is a spiritual practice. It is devotion. It is beauty. Co-creation, co-production of existence, of the Real, is an affair with the origin.*

Keep in mind this is festive resistance.

*Destruction leads a to a very rough boat  
but it also breeds creation  
and earthquakes are to a girl’s guitar  
they’re just another good vibration  
and tidal waves couldn’t save the world  
<sup>50</sup>from Californication.*

We have, more or less, established or developed or danced around traveling, “worlds,” curdle-separation, and seeing resistance so far, but we still need to address playful friendship, the multiplicity and nonessentialism of selfhood, and arrogant versus loving perception. One at a time, please, polyrhythms. Both of the latter rhythms converge in playful friendship, so we could either start there or begin separately and unite them. We could begin with playful friendship, diverge into analysis on multiplicity of selfhood and arrogant versus loving perception, and then circle back again. This method would be the most thorough.

*I change. I shapeshift. I have a plan, so I return to the being who can only see and discuss one thing at a time. I make this concession willfully. I must make my way back afterward, to the polyrhythms. Food for now, just enough to clarify.*

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<sup>50</sup> Anthony Kiedis, Chad Smith, Flea, and John Frusciante of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, “Californication” from the album *Californication* (Warner Records Inc., 1999).

*A pre-food insight: the polyrhythms fit incredibly well into the plush grooves of the spacing of the origin, as Nancy meant it. This groove is both the fierce territoriality of habit as well as the spacings of its openings for resistance and being new.*

*Feeling incredibly grateful for vegetables and spices. After eating, I feel truly insane and wish to delete this whole document. I do not. I am puzzled by this switch. Disconcerted. It had closed down a very rich world of sense and intuitive assurance/belief built upon a very dense, web-like accretion of thinkers, texts, and references.*

Playful friendship, especially playful queer friendship, allows us to resist oppression by experimenting with our senses of self while also developing a certain tolerance for the self's nonessential, changing nature. Moreover, this internal tolerance for our own multiplicity, as well as the awareness that most of 'my' behaviors and actions are not intimately linked with anything core or essential about my being, especially through a practice of devotion which comes prior to communicable understanding of intellection, produces loving perception through a practice of resisting interpretation. I have, I think, said this numerous times already. This is tantra practice.

*I remember that my counselor told me last year, when I tried to quit cigarettes for a week and walked more than ten miles each day to busy myself, to resist, to drink plenty of water when I'm quitting nicotine. I am out of tobacco and money and probably lungs too.*

The most important survival strategy: make sure that you drink plenty of water, that you eat enough food, and that you breathe through the changes. And type everything for yourself. I am not giving you every single aspect of my being. I simply cannot, no matter how experimental or performative I manage to make this work — or this work manages to make I.

*I give up the claim that the subject is unified. Instead, I understand each person as many. In giving up the unified self, I am guided by the experiences of bicultural people who are also victims of ethnocentric racism in a society that has one of those cultures as subordinate and the other as dominant. These cases provide me with examples of people who are very familiar with experiencing themselves as more than one: having desires, character, and personality traits that are different in one reality than in the other, and acting, enacting, animating their bodies, having thoughts, feeling the emotions, in ways that are different in one reality than in the other. The practical syllogisms that they go through in one reality are not possible for them in the other [does Lugones mean reality literally? metaphysically? literally and metaphysically concrete?], given that they are such different people in the two realities, given that the realities hold such different possibilities for them. If one can remember the intentions of the person one is in the other world and tries to enact them in the other, one can see that many times one cannot do so because the action does not have any meaning or has a very different sort of meaning than the one it has in the other reality.<sup>51</sup>*

I reflect on gathering as a historically feminine mode of being. The practice entails discernment (i.e., clarity of thinking), discrimination (e.g., Good or Bad, Healthy or Unhealthy, Poison or Not Poison), and distillation (Good *if used in this way*, or Good *after processed in this way*). I reflect

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<sup>51</sup> Lugones, 57.

also on growth as rhythm of expansion and contraction. Perhaps this text asks of some contraction.

For Lugones, playful friendship is our opportunity to really love, cherish, and see another human being and another “world,” perhaps many multiplicities of “worlds” embodied in and inhabited by a single body. Our friendships, when animated playfully, with experimentation and with openness to an unfolding moment without predetermination as to how that moment *should* or *ought to* unfold, allow us to practice existential goodness through the intrinsic value of each other’s company and time spent together. In this way, playfulness simultaneously allows us to adapt to a changing present that we can no longer elide while still resisting our utter lack of agency in this life, our utter lack of being, our existential nothingness. This is *the* resistance, à la Bergson, for whom we potentially held some small measure of freedom and health within determinism, some clinamen. I do not have time here to research and properly express Bergson on this point. Still, the abstract point stands. Playful friendship resists a certain metaphysical discipline or law while still revering and upholding it. It resists the metaphysical law that the self is an illusion, that human beings are consciousnesses which are primarily *how-s* with the reflexively adaptive feature of self-awareness. Self-awareness is a tool for co-habitation, and playful friendship is a pseudo-stoic survival strategy. Or perhaps we share a universal metaphysical consciousness. I can’t defend that here. But I think it’s probably true. Fun.

Playful friendship, then, deconstructs the essential nature of selfhood through a repeated practice of experimentation with selfhood, perhaps initially as political resistance but ultimately, in my case, as existential resistance.

*There are “worlds” we enter at our own risk, “worlds” that have agon, conquest, and arrogance as the main ingredients in their ethos. These are “worlds” that we enter out of necessity and that would be foolish to enter playfully in either the agonistic sense or in my sense. In such “worlds,” we are not playful. To be in those “worlds” in resistance to their construction of ourselves as passive, servile, and inferior is to inhabit those selves ambiguously, through our first-person memories of lively subjectivity.*

That is, we cannot elide the transformations when survival necessitates them, but we can remain playful, at least to ourselves, in this survival. Resistance and biting back, within certain confines of reasonable acceptability, can become playful. Little resistances. Little bites from big teeth with a clean moral conscious, whatever that means for them. I cannot outrun myself.

*But there are “worlds” that we can travel to lovingly, and traveling to them is part of loving at least some of their inhabitants. The reason I think that traveling to someone’s “world”*

Arrogant perception is monological, meaning that it only sees one side of a situation or one interpretation of an event. It may also apply linear logic instead of allowing for lateral thinking. In short, in the case of friendship, traveling, and “worlds,” arrogant perception occurs when the perceiver reduces the “world” of the other to some narrow interpretation or structure in an effort to control it or make it more manageable to the arrogant perceiver’s simplified psyche. Loving perception requires work. Loving perception, in contrast, requires us to see the other as other, to travel to their world, to remain devoted, and to use intuition in repeated encounters in order to

accrete some sympathetic understanding, some creative dilation of the mind, by which we can be transformed by having traveled to their “world.” In the context of friendships, “worlds” are shared. In particularly experimental friendships, over the course of months or years, especially with little interaction in-between, each encounter may produce remarkably different “worlds” of sense and being. A city like New York also seems to have this effect, to the extent that one allows it to transform them. Working as a busser can feel like a very different world from being a student, or from being an artist, or from being a barista. And each location of being and of inhabitation [including workplaces] in the city has such a different feeling, while still feeling connected thanks to walking and using public transit. Mindfulness is both natural in and produced by New York City. Thus, it’s no surprise that a queer friendship in New York City would produce such drastically experimental, intense, and rhizomatic changes in my thinking while deconstructing any lingering notions of an essential self — a point that I had theoretically understood but still needed to continue developing in practice and sense.

The limen is our last element in Lugones. Playful friendship takes us underneath the traveling and into the limen in order to allow us the freedom to take measure of our entire being across our entire life [lives?] in order to determine with the fullest measure of freedom what we desire for ourselves, how we can get there, and what resources we have at our disposal to do so. The limen is utter survival in the richest and most meaningful sense of the word because it also promotes health, flourishing, and emendation.

### **Lorde: The Felt Sense of the Erotic and Presence to Feeling-With**

*You want a better story. Who wouldn't?*

*A forest, then. Beautiful trees. And a lady singing.*

*Love on the water, love underwater, love, love and so on.*

*What a sweet lady. Sing lady, sing! Of course, she wakes the dragon.*

*Love always wakes the dragon and suddenly*

*flames everywhere.*

*I can tell already you think I'm the dragon,*

*that would be so like me, but I'm not. I'm not the dragon.*

*I'm not the princess either.*

*Who am I? I'm just a writer. I write things down.*

*I walk through your dreams and invent the future. Sure,*

*I sink the boat of love, but that comes later. And yes, I swallow*

*glass, but that comes later.*

*And the part where I push you*

*flush against the wall and every part of your body rubs against the bricks,*

*shut up*



*I'm getting to it.*<sup>52</sup>

Man, Siken has a shimmer. My whole “world” vibrates when I read him. A plane flies overhead. The lines won’t focus [I know you haven’t read about it yet, it comes later, but I incurred a traumatic head injury at a young age]. My “world” vibrates in the moment I read him; perhaps I am experiencing a semi-seizure and hallucinating. I tend to think hallucinations are realities for local “worlds.” I tend to think material realities conflict in a monadological web of “worlds.” Again, I can’t argue this. It’s metaphysics. It doesn’t even make sense to me why I am trying to write it down, but there it is. Have at it. Have at me.

But the erotic might be phenomenological proof of our nature as energy, of being as energy and affect. Philosophers have had a few different names for it, but I think affect, being, energy, intensities, rhythms, and vibes are the most prominent. Spinoza, Deleuze, and Massumi write on affect. Heidegger and Nancy write on being. Dewey and other American pragmatists write on rhythms and energies. Deleuze and Guattari write on rhythms and intensities. My coworkers and friends talk about vibes. Didion writes on vibes. Bergson would call these metaphysical records, so to speak, evidence<sup>53</sup> for which our theories must be able to account. I am well-positioned.

*What in this case matches the notes and documents of the literary composition, is the collection of observations and experiences gathered by positive science and above all by a reflection of the mind on the mind. For one does not obtain from reality an intuition, that is to say, a spiritual harmony with its innermost quality if one has not gained its confidence by a long comradeship with its superficial manifestations.*<sup>54</sup>

For Audre Lorde, the erotic is a felt sense of power through presence to feeling-with friends. She cites experiences of artmaking and political resistance as being profoundly transformed by routine intimacy, platonic friendship, and non-platonic romance. I leave open the possibility for conceptualizing an asexual, existential, platonic romance. This makes sense to me. Lorde additionally argues that the erotic, as a source of power, has been neglected, abnegated, feared, chastised, dismissed, and avoided, for it is radically capable of exposing injustice, challenging the current social structures, and demanding a higher degree of excellence in our activities. This is the promise of listening to the grammar of the “world,” primarily informed by a sense that can only be called erotic. Art is erotic. It is enlivening. Life is erotic because erotic has always been a reclamation of sexuality away base pleasure and into a diversity of quality and a sensitivity to intensity in and for itself, while also highly valuing interpersonal connection and learning.

*The erotic is intensity itself, movement itself, Itself itself. The energy from The Pixies’s “River Euphrates” coagulates with the energy produced by my insight. I vibe; my body starts moving. I have to get back inside and write this down. I keep dancing as I start walking. I am moving, trancing, dancing, stepping, not walking. I am not walking. This*

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<sup>52</sup> Richard Siken, “Litany in Which Certain Things Are Crossed Out” in *Crush* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p. yet unknown.

<sup>53</sup> Possibly “evidences,” if multiplicity is countable.

<sup>54</sup> Bergson, p. 169.

*cannot be called walking anymore. I am moving in pure force with the energy itself — not just the energy of the song but the energy of the truth of my moment, the grammar by God!*

I wrote that three or four days ago, while I was still writing in Lugones. It still holds true, though right now I have had Chance the Rapper's *Coloring Book* on repeat. There is something erotic and divine about this album that I find comforting and focusing — comforting because it helps me retain the spiritual groove and sense of being in the middle that is so important to seeing this work through. For some reason it promotes the multiplicity. There are particularly excellent polyrhythms throughout, and the themes are on topic for my considerations.

*“Food only tastes as good as the amount of love you put into it.” Cooking is then an example of the unfurling of the erotic kernel, insofar as the presence and slowness required in preparing food opens sense onto the eating experience.*

I wrote those lines even earlier. When I was still sketching and putting heads and notes down, before I'd even pieced together the preface, not even the introduction, certainly not the outline.

I wish to presently elide discussing sexual experiences because I feel that they are beyond the appropriateness of this text. However, a more discrete work would be able to draw useful insights about the nature of existence, the erotic, energy, and metaphysics through referencing sexual experiences, particularly whether different types of orgasm promote different types of consciousness with varying degrees of healthfulness. This research would be absolutely essential for addressing misuse and abuse in our sexual relations, which is often reflected in the misogynistic folding away of sexual partners upon personal fulfillment. This does not end at the bedroom threshold, and this is why I am writing on it, despite feeling it to be a mature topic.

This sense of feeling in friendship and art is shared and in-between subjectivities, in the same way that playful “world”-traveling exposes the shared, co-constructed nature of identities and senses of self. Following it also leads to bodily health. The erotic is very similar to intuitive impulse, à la Dewey, in this regard. After COVID, a lot of people experienced lingering brain fog. I read online that the best way to overcome this is just to follow your dietary cravings, since they reflect all of the tastes and nutrients that your body is missing. It's incredible. Desire is homeostatic and therefore healing. Importantly, we have to identify what biochemical, behavioral, or habitual mechanism is being operated upon in a specific desire, in order to creatively solve its call. For example, if I am craving meat or bananas, I am likely low in protein, iron, and potassium. In fact, these are the nutrients my own body is most low on right now. Oats are a remarkably cheap source of protein and iron, and pumpkin seeds are also a very cheap source of iron and potassium, though they are also high in fats. Of course, bananas tend to be cheap as well, ranging from twenty-nine to eighty-nine cents per pound at some local supermarkets, depending on the sale and the benevolence of Providence.

*It strikes me deeply that Nature's most affordable, sustainable, and vegan food group is called pulses — the seeds or edible plants of the legume family, such as beans, peas, lentils, and peanuts. Pulses. Just like my blood. Life pulsing through Nature. Electricity pulsing. The erotic pulsing. Experience pulsing. There is an immaculate diversity of color and nutrients in these pulses too. Stock photographers have even been kind enough to*

*array some really gorgeous arrangements of bowls of pulses too. The diversity, richness, and simple existence of pulses are profound to me. They are so sufficient to our healthy being and so affordable and just such an utter blessing from the universe. Pulses pulse me, in the middle of Nature, an erotic feedback system. Pulses do not begin or end.*

Okay, but why is devotional friendship necessary for this erotic experience of mutually nurtured feelings, feelings which often produce profound political resistance and artistic projects?

*“Why?” you ask.*

Because love curdles, and because none of this text makes sense without devotion, and moreover because devotion is tantric and spiritual, and even still further because Bergson describes intuition as a “spiritual auscultation,” i.e., spiritual listening.

*I found my old selves in the limen. I’ve grown a lot. I’ve forgiven myself and them.*

*Spoke with the super outside on the stoop about my plans for leaving. He explained that the Dollar store always has tons of boxes for free. Now I understand what the people at the liquor store were trying to tell me, and I feel silly or stupid. Some form of stupid without blame. Just young and confused I guess. Something with patience.*

### **Lugones: Curdled Love, Showing Up, and Curdle-Separation**

**6** Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. <sup>7</sup> The Seraph touched my mouth with it and said, “Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.”<sup>55</sup>

I was raised Baptist, and I was a very religious and mystical teenager who was always very critical of the public church as well as far more charismatically inclined in religious services than southern Baptists typically allow. I would often listen to worship music at home and dance on my own. In retrospect, I was tantrically trancing. I do this with other music now. I hear God everywhere (I do not hear God). This was also why I taught myself guitar, my first and most obvious foray into artmaking as a religious experience. Wow. I did not see that thesis coming when I began this reflection. I am telling you: devotion to the multiplicity of unknown thought unlocks some fascinating conclusions.

Such fruits of intuition attest to the importance of devotion. Attesting is a very useful verb to us in making metaphysical assertions without using linking verbs, i.e., variations of “to be.” Be-verbs are often too ontological for anything other than critique. Avoiding be-verbs allows us to unfurl a manifold of poetic description around metaphysical phenomena, which à la Bergson, paint pictures for intuition in ways that analysis and conceptual linking cannot. In fact, analysis is so often merely self-reference. The points linked are so often merely *my* signposts. They are my roadmap, and hopefully they help you too. Pictures and positive descriptions with active verbs promote intuitive grasping. They also groove on the page. Editing poetry refines this visual sense of grammar. Sometimes sentences pop apart from each other too, create spacing

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<sup>55</sup> Isaiah 6:6-7, New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition.

between themselves in the transference of their individual constructions and of the cohesiveness of their ideas.

*Today's stars chart: "All friendship is political." Yesterday: "Actually show up."*

I reflect on reading as an act of friendship — reading what one has expressed, that is. Reading what one has packaged together released *to be read*, for the intentional purposes of being read. I wonder if I write to read myself, I wonder if we all are trying to make and express and understand ourselves, even if only because existence is a really hard *ask* for the universe to give us sometimes without some kind of meaning like that.

*The universe seems to have this way of trapping you or slowing you down until you open to wonder, after which point it seems to open up and relax too.*

*Separar* — *to separate*. Lugones works along two senses of *separar*. First is the sort of separation in separating the egg yolk from the white, which is an example of purity-separation. The second sense is curdle-separation, such as when an emulsion between oil and water destabilizes, as can happen with making mayonnaise. Lugones examines the differences between purity and impurity as well as the role of the political activist or the philosopher (properly speaking, they should be one and the same) in mixing both purity *and* impurity to distill some communicable aspect of being (as sets of particulars and therefore *not* Being). Moreover, she advocates for practicing curdle separation, as we noted previously, in sustaining and maintaining relationships between what we might call curdled subject-positions. Curdled beings excel at promoting flourishingly creative curdles of continuing connection despite not conforming to traditional strictures or past experiences of connection.

*I think what I'm really trying to say is that we are already in Heaven if we just heal whatever \*gestures broadly\* this existence thing is. Whether it's me or us or I or you, I think that's a praxis we can all agree on intuitively. That means each of us individually taking responsibility not only for ourselves but for others too. That takes a lot of maturity and wisdom. A lot of responsibility and showing up. A lot each day. I'm okay with that. I wonder if I am the one slowing us down, if I am not listening to my own beliefs.*

The *nahual*, storyteller.<sup>56</sup> I am weaving our future. I am writing how we could make it be. I am rewriting our narrative. I am walking us to the future shore. I have had so much privilege in my life that I often limited myself because I thought it did not make sense for me to be special. It doesn't. I'm not. But I am trying to say what no one else has said (I haven't said it yet), that still needs to be said. I am trying to find the future. I am in my room with the lights off and the curtains drawn and the music blocking out everything beyond the bedroom walls, all with some childhood faith that I can time travel into some better "world" with far less hatred and violence and war and abuse.]

*My "awakened dreams" are about shifts. Thought shifts, reality shifts, gender shifts: one person metamorphoses into another in a world where people fly through the air, heal*

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<sup>56</sup> Gloria Anzaldúa, "Tlilli, Tlapalli / The Path of the Red and Black Ink," *Borderlands / La Frontera* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987), 88.

*from mortal wounds. I am playing with my Self, I am playing with the world's soul, I am the dialogue between my Self and el espíritu del mundo [the spirit of the world]. I change myself, I change the world.*<sup>57</sup>

I cry and I cry, and I cry, and I have cried over this “world” for so long. I don’t understand some of you. And when I do, I realize that we’re all completely screwed by histories of affect, and that just hurts man. It hurts. I am trying to sit down and talk with you all and ask you to stop this. To please heal and love and be better. Please. My whole heart is here. Please. Weigh it. Vajrayana and a crying earth, a crying “world.” Maybe I’m just not talented at the things I love. Maybe I can only change myself; I don’t understand why I meet so much resistance in everything I love.

*I feel some sense of responsibility to communicate for matter, to be matter's mouthpiece so to speak.*<sup>58</sup> *I catch a glimpse of nonexistent movement out of the corner of my eye, a glimmer in the light on a small, uncleaned stain on the spine of my copy of Benjamin's Arcades Projects. My mind has the above intuition, of needing to communicate a certain grammar (that is, of finishing The Arcades Project's autological itself, of finding and effectively communicating pure language in flux, material flux, sense flux). Of course this grammar is an internal resonance of my own being-with the sense of the world, or perhaps my being and sense and world are all completely entangled. Maybe consciousness is not a “representation” of anything.*

Ragged. I feel ragged. I am not trying to arouse sympathy. Or am I? Am I not trying to evoke sympathy, intuition itself? Arousing sympathy is a primordial logical fallacy — appeal to emotion. God. What a magnificent stunt of philosophy, to cut us away from intuition at the start. Ragged. I feel ragged, unless I turn toward the erotic, get it out in writing, let it flow through me, keep moving my body, keep moving along mediums, keep moving along the material Real. I am here. I am writing. I am-ing. Descartes mis-stepped after the cogito or, rather, miscommunicated the cogito. Any present progressive gerund suffices to arouse the clear and distinct intuition of concrete duration. Thinking is everything. The erotic is everything. Material is thinking. Thought is material. And the mysterious connection between the two is erotically tantric, erotically curdle-separated and held in an abeyant emulsion. Have fun with this one, quantum mechanists. I don’t want to run experiments. I want to meet people and make art and nurture our health. I want to make amends as well as to earn enough money to support myself and to limit my harm. Self-care has been a practice of harm reduction.

Devotion is, surprisingly, about responsibility, showing up, and self-respect as well then. One must show up to be held accountable. I think I’ve already discussed this above.

Curdle-separation is an artmaking practice that we cultivate. Curdle-separation, *as an artmaking practice*, is not a luxury. Curdle-separation, I argue, is necessary for healthful survival. Every single curdle in this text was and is necessary for healthful survival. I am idiosyncratic. I am surviving. You must do the same. I hope your journey is smoother. I chose Vajrayana.

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<sup>57</sup> Anzaldúa, 92.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Benjamin, “On Language as Such and On the Language of Man.”

Curdle-separation is necessary because separation is an actual reality. “Worlds” diverge in this shared reality. The metaphysical emulsion of “worlds” is only ever temporary. We are raised in and by other “worlds,” but we eventually leave these “worlds” in order to build and care for our own. Company along the way is absolutely delightful and, simply put, an existential gift. We must cultivate the proper attitude within ourselves to not be selfish and depend on the gift of companionship, mistaking it for the ownership over another “world” or the right to their time, longevity, or futurity. We must adapt our own “world” to its individual rhythm and mutually seek and find ways of still coming together without cleanly cutting away contact or memory.

We must sustain the curdle because people change, and love persists, and because we all really and truly deserve the freedom to be new, to actually be better, do better and receive better for it. I am not the same person who made so many mistakes in so many past lives. I carry this body and these repercussions, and I have self-respect to stand by my consequences. But I want to be new.

*Fare forward, you who think that you are voyaging;  
You are not those who saw the harbour  
Receding, or those who will disembark.  
Here between the hither and the farther shore  
While time is withdrawn, consider the future  
And the past with an equal mind.  
At the moment which is not of action or inaction  
You can receive this: “on whatever sphere of being  
The mind of man may be intent  
At the time of death” – that is the one action  
(And the time of death is every moment)  
Which will fructify in the lives of others:  
And do not think of the fruit of action.  
Fare Forward.<sup>59</sup>*

I want to be new. The Secret Gift of it All, the Absolute intuition of the existential present, is that I already am, and so are you, if we let go of our past selves and choose healthy habits of love, sustainability, and sympathy. Destruction breeds creation and freedom. Go and be new. You are forgiven. (Clearly I’m deconstructing my own Christianity here.)

## **Excursus II: The Pizza Effect and Arrogant Perception**

*The two of us wrote Anti-Oedipus together. Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd. [...] To reach, not the point where one no longer says I, but the point where it is no longer of any importance whether one says I. We are no longer ourselves. Each will know his own. We have been aided, inspired, multiplied.<sup>60</sup>*

“I” am two. “I” am an intersubjective structure of Self-Other utilized by a body to navigate a “world,” for this body’s [this live creature’s] survival. The unanswered question is whether this

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<sup>59</sup> T.S. Eliot, “The Dry Salvages,” *The Four Quartets* (Boston & New York: Mariner Books, 1943).

<sup>60</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, “A Thousand Plateaus (London & New York: Continuum, 1988), 3.

intersubjective structure is a model that this body uses to navigate reality or if this intersubjective structure is a facet of reality itself. The latter conclusion would have implications for quantum mechanics and the hard sciences and would open new avenues of thinking and experimentation.

The pizza effect refers to a cultural feedback loop by which an aspect of one culture is estranged and exported to a foreign culture, and is then modified, repackaged and sent back to the originary culture. This often surprises the originary culture because it was not what they had made or meant at all. This happens at a basic one-on-one interpersonal level as well. In friendship, we continuously co-create and reshape each other through instantaneous, adaptive feedback loops. This happens in our daily lives with each other because it is a metaphysical feature of the material Real.

This applies to everything, from Plato's Cave to Sartre's gaze. You can either look at something with love and wonder and openness to its intuitive beauty, or you can close it down with analysis. Thus it is a matter of articulating the experiences and practices of lovingly perceiving every aspect of our being and lives together.

*Some things I can't forget  
Lord knows, I've tried my best  
You said it's not my best  
I came up out my flesh  
Some things I must confess (ayy, ayy) (and I'm trippin' and fallin')  
Spoke my truth, paid my debt (ayy, ayy)  
Can't you see I'ma wreck? (ayy, ayy)  
Let me loose, I digress (ayy, ayy)  
This is me and I'm blessed (ayy, ayy)  
This is me and I'm blessed (ayy, ayy)  
This is me and I'm blessed (ayy, ayy)  
This is me and I'm blessed (ayy, ayy)  
Anybody fightin' through the stress? (ayy, ayy)*

<sup>61</sup>*Anybody fighin' through the? [sounds of tap dancing as the song fades out, curtains close]*

### **Sontag: "Against Interpretation" and How to Give a Reading**

<i>the marrow</i>	<i>She has this fear</i>	<i>that when she does</i>
<i>reach herself</i>	<i>turns around to embrace herself</i>	<i>a</i>
<i>lion's or witch's or serpent's head</i>		<i>will turn around</i>
<i>swallow her and grin</i>	<i>She has this fear that if she digs<sup>62</sup></i>	

I think we all fear being abandoned by those we love and depend on, maybe even abandoned by ourselves. Diverting from interpretation, as Sontag suggested, helps us to stabilize relationships despite behaviors conflicting across "worlds." For example, interpreting this text as a process of healing undergone by a body (perhaps a mental cultural thermometer) attempting homeostasis,

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<sup>61</sup> Lamar, "Count Me Out" from the album *Mr. Morale & the Big Steppers* (pgLang, 2022).

<sup>62</sup> Anzaldúa, "*La harencia de Coatlicue* / The Coatlicue State," 65.

that is, as a process or a *how*, should sustain our friendship despite any inclinations or uneasiness about this text's content. The form itself is remarkably experimental, for which Sontag argued.

*Attenuation is the human process which closes the wonder of being in order to navigate materialism. But energetically, survival also requires moments of enlivening opening. Such is our necessarily expanding and contracting rhythm of liminal limbic experience.*

In "Against Interpretation," Sontag cites the loss of experiencing art as incantatory as the culprit in dividing form from content and the consequent devolution into interpretation as a necessary defense for the justification of the labor involved in art, as well as the morality of its reception.<sup>63</sup> This division between content and form also mimics the distinction or 'turn' that Nancy emphasizes from presented to presenting in being and from meaning to sense.

*I am involuntarily struck by a reflection on engrenage as a necessity for "world"-traveling. Being transformed requires engagement, and moving to a new path in life, or differently put to a new self in a new life, requires a capacity for imagining what living that life would actually require. We often think of this as being able to do the job, but it has become less clear to me whether or not I am undergoing an existential endeavor in a fluid "world" which generates the necessary Real depending on my capacity to imagine its being as well as my capacity to operate within it, never allowing me to take on more than I can actually imagine withstanding, imagine actually engaging with, and actually navigate. In short, I make real.*

I think, with this work, I wanted to show you how I heal myself, given our current times, some rather traumatic experiences, and incredibly confusing philosophical, existential, and metaphysical considerations. I hope that this can help you too. It entails a lot of patience for and acceptance of my own multiplicity.

*I pick beans in the kitchen and remember my Pappaw saying, "Well, if you don't like it, that's okay, just throw it out." I realize now that all of those chores growing up, all of that work, was about learning how to take care of myself. I realize that the adults in my life will want to work with me because we understand this about each other. I'm not as picky as I used to be. I don't de-gas the beans sufficiently, but the bloat sates me.*

I realize, rather slowly, that I had worked out the intuition-analysis distinction, to some extent, nascently, in my research on Benjamin, Adorno, and Spinoza. Absorption and contemplation, respectively, provide us with an additional manifold to add to our textural understanding of the colors of our multiplicity of the intuition of the qualitative heterogeneity of the Real in concrete duration.

Engrenage invokes a work or other body in order to move into it in a sympathetic movement which simultaneously unfurls and develops it. I suppose I have Benjamin in mind here as well as Don Landes. Plato's theory of Forms suddenly makes far more sense to me, but I definitely have

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<sup>63</sup> Susan Sontag, "Against Interpretation," 1-2.



no way of fitting Plato into what we're doing here. Rather, I have a newfound appreciation and love for engaging with his thinking.

For Sontag, this invocation of a present moment – particularly conceived of as instantiating a full-bodied, immersive experience and engagement with something external to oneself – resolves the need for abstract art to defend itself of its merit absent representation, as well as even for representative art to defend itself after photography — a trend that Benjamin picks up on, but one which is already deconstructing its very idea that it needs a foundation as representation; this seeking of a foundation is what Sontag wants to critique. Specifically, she argues that it is this model of art as a representation of something other than what it is as itself (*as itself not in itself*) which results in seeking to ground or justify art with extensive interpretations. She notes that some artworks experiment with form in escape of and resistance to this overbearing tendency to be interpreted. We should remember that people made those artworks; humans were resisting interpretation, or resisting being expected to be the same for too long, or to cohere a body of work at all — to be rid of the expectation for the present 'me' to mesh with and make sense with the narrative trailing behind it. There are other times when a work simply *breaks through*, emerges as a being as it is, a *transparence* as Sontag calls it, a rhizome for Deleuze & Guattari, a true act of living, breathing, emerging creativity in flux, in the interstitial spaces of Nature as It is *still, still, still* trying to say something new.

*Ideally, it is possible to elude the interpreters in another way, by making works of art whose surface is so unified and clean, whose momentum is so rapid, whose address is so direct that the work can be...just what it is. Is this possible now? It does happen in films, I believe. This is why cinema is the most alive, the most exciting, the most important of all art forms right now. Perhaps the way one tells how alive a particular art form is, is by the latitude it gives for making mistakes in it, and still being good.*<sup>64</sup>

The work asks: *am I a rhizome yet?* It is so interesting to me that Sontag emphasizes aliveness and vitality with the domain of art and transparence. We have already established the importance of liveliness or vitalism in the erotic as a felt energy source. Sontag is here doing the same. She further argues that the bombardment of sense from an increasingly stimuli-plush “world” dulls our senses and our capacity for appreciating art. This is again right on par with Audre Lorde.

*I reflect on rationing, on being content with less and tasting more in the process. I reflect on the state of affairs where we all seem to be going through a recession together, where the outside is so often a reflection of my inside. I reflect on reducing stimuli, global consumption, and international trade, and I recognize the power of the erotic as a dismantler of this international house. Capitalism depends on want. We can only afford to want enough and only enough in our current “world.” Environmentally, we are running out of time. And we are truly losing something valuable in the natural world.*

Mirroring our distinction between analysis and intuition, between purity- and curdle-separation, between strategies and tactics, between presented and presenting, and between content and form, Sontag closes her essay with the simple tenth thesis, a tenth commandment.

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<sup>64</sup> Sontag, 7-8.

*In place of a hermeneutics we need an erotics of art.*<sup>65</sup>

We can, thus, transform Benjamin's *Arcades Project*, which was already a developmental or a fleshing out of ahistorical materialism worth its salt, from one of a *hermeneutical* materialism to one of an *erotic* materialism in a communicative, divine, co-creative field of transparency, sense, and what Nancy calls the infinitude in finitude, or the complete prominence, exposure, or 'hanging outward, toward me' of concrete sense.

'I' am a narrative and an organizing principle (and so I can be deconstructed). Instead, we can conceive of Being as an actual occasion of experience rather than a narrativized self. In particular, Sontag's sense of transparency allows us to identify the *how*-ness of Whitehead's process metaphysics in our own lives.

So yes, we must return to incantatory art, especially incantatory art as an intuitive, accretive, transformative while not synthetic, multiplicitous, attentive *engrenage* (literally "gearing" as a noun; emphasizes depth; translation becomes a circle, a revolution, a spiral, a blossoming, a Nancean  $1=1+1$ ; Benjaminian pure language, in linguistic flux, each time for each one, requiring a sharing and mentorship entailing co-engagement and co-construction of Heideggerian *Vorhabe* [*foreknowing, know how*]),<sup>66</sup> i.e., a built-up process of repeatedly self-constructing understanding through repeated partial and aspectual engagements (i.e., *engranages*) with the Real and Its great teachers). In other words, we are always translating [*engaging*] a multiplicity through a mental medium of feeling, or the *how* of consciousness. Feeling is motility, a slope, a rate of change. Feeling is always the feeling of feeling, or the affecting of affecting. Feeling and awareness arise from the difference between states, always a *how* between non-stationary points of reference. So it is this sense of engagement, of development, of diving in, and of *engreneage* as Donald Landes so helpfully puts it, that I have in mind when I speak on incantatory art as well as how we might learn to practice experiencing art in this spiritual, present, blossoming way.<sup>67</sup> Invoked friendship would be healthy and just, then, and would involve feeling-with. That is it. Lorde's suggestion to be present to feeling with our friends is how we invoke this monistic erotic art of being. I am also trying to perform this text in such a way that it naturally invokes itself for you upon reading it. Hopefully its transparency breaks through. We have some really cool ideas on the origin, material communion, and the felt, polyrhythmic grammar of sense coming up too, as well as existential practices for engaging these elements in our daily lives.

In particular, the transparency of the Real, promoted through devotional friendship and most readily apparent in the necessity of not interpreting our friends in order to best sustain good continuing relations with them of any sort, reveals the shared communion of materiality and

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<sup>65</sup> Sontag, 10.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Thomas Kent, "Paralogic Hermeneutics and the Possibilities of Rhetoric," *Rhetoric Review* Vol. 8, no. 1 (Autumn, 1989): 24-42, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/465679>.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Heidegger on the opening and flourishing of the hermeneutic circle thanks to a certain elliptical, eliding, gradual opening out.

sense. I have both Walter Benjamin and Michele Foucault in mind here. Later, I could also incorporate Deleuze's *A LIFE* and Marx's species-being on these points, but not yet.

**Anzaldúa: *Nahual*, the *Coatlicue* State, *La Facultad*, Invoked Art, and the Work of the Soul**

*There is no history, there's no expectation  
Just warm, yellow light on my skin  
And I'm blessed by my mother though I'll never know her  
And I'll never be lonesome again<sup>68</sup>*

I write for an audience with God. I do not hear God talking to me. God never speaks back. But I can tell when I'm writing, expressing, and doing the right things, when I'm fully in the groove. *IF, IF, IF* we can hear God in this life, it is only through prophecy. Nature speaks to us through our own mouths. God uses us to tell each other Being loves us. I really prefer 'Being' to 'God.'

*I take a break to simmer black beans with vegetable broth and Being. I wish to rest.*

*When the monitor goes off in this body  
I'll have to pick up my work elsewhere  
in another life, in another of my lives  
I am trying to remind you who you are, who I am, who we are*

*I am trying to say what your defense mechanisms do not want you to hear.*

Why do imagination and memory feel like the same thing? What does it mean to imagine other lives and feel as if they are memories rather than fictitious best estimates? Existence feels like instantiations of a unified Being, which is simply enough a reflection of formal logic principles (i.e., instantiation is the existential principle). Existence instantiates the Absolute. But that means that 'I' have lived *all* of the lives (should I say it again: *all*). 'I' and 'you' are only subject-positions, not ontological distinctions. And because feeling is so often prejudiced against as a valid source of information, let us not forget Bergson's emphasis on intuition and sympathy — *not* analysis, linkage, or identity. *A movement of feeling, a creative dilation of the mind.* All of our lives, all mine, ours — in solidarity and fraternity, and in the personal sense of communism birthed without theory. But man, 'I' have made a lot of mistakes, and I in this body have a lot of work to do. Understanding why I write means self-respect, and self-respect means taking infinite responsibility for this I's (*my*) closed system, which is the entire "world". I can never go beyond my "world." My "world" can only change by being introduced to the "worlds" of others, who are I think also I — at the very least we share the *cogito*, even if we don't instantiate from Being.

Why I Write: I write to be confronted. I write for an audience with God. I put things on a page to be confronted with what I still do not understand, what I am grasping for beyond my horizons of sense, beyond how well and how far I can see, and how well and how far I can hear. I write to carve the I out in the spaces remaining to be said by the others in my "world." I do not individuate until I write, and I am a fleeting impression upon a page, something captured by a Kodak at the beach or a child at the department store feistily held in place long enough for mom and the photographer to be satisfied. I am movement itself. Or rather, being is movement.

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<sup>68</sup> Laura Stevenson, "L-Dopa" from the album *The Wheel* (Don Giovanni Records, 2013).

Fingers move. *This experience, this activity, this singularity, moves.* When it is moving, there is no I.

*Fasting is productive for creativity because we sometimes eat merely for boredom or contentment – to become full – when we in fact still have sufficient energy to produce work. Instead, we are hungry for novelty, for creativity, for co-creation. Eating to fullness, perpetuating contentment, and stuffing the groove of moving creativity with stifling, clogged arteries masks this existential, erotic, desirous, self-sustaining life-energy. This is why stimuli dulls the erotic, for both Lorde and Sontag. And then other times we do need to eat, and the erotic and desire can be useful sources of information about what our body needs in order to achieve homeostasis and survival. But sometimes this survival entails a constriction or a suffering in order to produce self-understanding of the working of the erotic so that it can be perpetuated and lived up to in times of comfort. I am surprised to find that I have actually put on weight since I began writing.*

The self-contradiction of communism is that it perpetuates itself as a reaction to capitalism and so can never actually welcome capitalism's structure, being, and operatives into the fold of a global interbeing prioritizing survival, i.e., communism. Communism as a theory can only be a second shore. Critique as a method is a sort of accelerationism meant to collapse all avenues for capitalism's self-sustenance and evasion, but it has to be let go of eventually as well in order to achieve communism, i.e., harmonious collaboration and co-creation.

*"I" is a portal, a stable reference point by which we can 'take up' one another through writing and communication. This I. That I. Those "I"-s. Except it's always this I. Always. That's the only way the magic works. From this I to this(that) I. From this "world" to this(that) "world." "I" says, here is a body, here is a "world."*

Does anything escape the soul? Does anything leave consciousness? Does anything leave the "world"? Is my being, my "world," an accretion? I do not think it releases anything back out. I feel that I have attenuated my entire past. I feel that I will continue to attenuate new environments into my being. I see no room within my experience for anything to leave or be lost. It is also an increase in my being, my "world." I do not understand, then, how we entangle "worlds" without releasing, "worlds" which are each time for each one independent accretions and accesses to the origin, to the groove of the being, the slat of the "world," the interstices left for my being. The space for, not my solo, but my co-harmonic rhythms. The "co-" is a necessary spacing, the same in kind as the creative abeyance of spoken on thus far, the fasting, the confusion, the madness.

*denying the presence of meaning affirms that one knows what meaning would be, were it there, and keeps the mastery and truth of meaning in place [...] The contemporary discourse on meaning goes much further and in a completely different direction: it brings to light the fact that "meaning," used in this absolute way, has become the bared [denude] name of our being-with-one-another. We do not "have" meaning anymore,*

*because we ourselves are meaning — entirely, without reserve, infinitely, with no meaning other than “us.”*<sup>69</sup>

This is what I “mean” when I say that a “world” is a sufficient justifier of sense and truth. Sometimes a subject-position suffuses with an overbearing contradiction of “worlds.” Understandably, madness ensues. This madness is a homeostatic process of figuring out how to keep moving without “meaning” proper, left only with the sense (sensation as meaning) of experience and a historicity within a local subject-body to congeal any kind of coherence in activity and perception, in “world”-making and “world”-building (entirely different concepts). Making is something that the work does. Building is something that we engage with in consciousness. Consciousness makes the Real through *my* building with it.

*Wonder, then, does not appear as some ignorance to be overcome or as an aporia to be surmounted, which would be a situation wherein one science could not really be distinguished from the others; instead, wonder appears as a disposition toward sophia for its own sake. Wonder, then, is properly philo-sophical. One could even appeal to this interpretation in saying that wonder is already, by itself, found within the element of sophia or, in a parallel manner, that sophia holds within itself the moment of wonder. (In the same passage, Aristotle declares that the philomuthos, that lover of myths and their astonishing wonders, is also, in some way, a philosophos.) In as much as it is contained within sophia and not suppressed, the moment of wonder is that of a surprise kept at the very core of sophia and constitutive of it, insofar as it is its own end. [...]*

*Thus, the surprise of the event would not only be a limit-situation for the knowledge of Being, it would also be its essential form and essential end. From the very beginning of philosophy to its end, where its beginning is replayed in new terms, this surprise is all that is at stake, a stake that is literally interminable.*

*Again, it is necessary to stay precisely within the element of wonder — that is, within what could never properly be made into an “element,” but is instead an event. How is one to stay in the event? How is one to hold onto it (if that is even an appropriate expression) without turning it into an “element” or a “moment”? Under what conditions can one keep thinking within the surprise, which is its task to think?*<sup>70</sup>

*The rhizome asks you, AM I an event yet?*

I am an event for this I when I write this. You [*I*] must find your [*my*] fit, our groove. Then vibe. Dance. Ride life’s mediums. Conjoin with aspects and environments to co-create, and then move along and keep co-creating with new particulars.

*Continued difficulty consuming meat.*

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<sup>69</sup> Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 1.

<sup>70</sup> Nancy, 166.

*Roommates were gifted a tray of pork. I heated corn tortillas on the stovetop. Did you cook this? 'No, it was a gift.' A gift presenting to me. I picked out a few small pieces that I thought I could stomach. Not too much, and not the fatty parts.*

*Two tortillas, only enough meat for one taco. I can put the black bean massaman curry on the other tortilla. They brought me salsa and a lime. I'm sorry, I just can't. I thought I could stomach it, but I just can't eat meat anymore. I used to eat it all the time but I just can't now. I return the lime. I'm trying to quit cigarettes too, but I'm still craving them, despite stretching and reducing my consumption. I gracefully realize that I won't be able to stomach them when it's time for me to quit smoking. I no longer fear Nirvana. I no longer understand how I could possibly ever be in the wrong place at the wrong time.*

*even when I cannot see the local homeostatic perfection of my position. Adaption, change, and growth must happen organically through homeostasis. A different roommate shared milk, and I gratefully ate the cereal I'd craved all week.*

*I feel that I am trying to remind myself that I have lived too many lifetimes, that I would choose to exit Samsara if I could just remember this one small thing I've forgotten. It's melancholic because I believe that the intrinsic value of hanging out with friends is energetic vitalism's defense against nihilism and existential suffering.*

I wonder how my life would have turned out if, like Didion, my parents had shown me how to journal at a young age instead of medicating my attention neurodivergence. I hear the voice of my mother in my mind reminding me to *stop throwing a pity party*. No sympathy there. *Stop being dramatic. Toughen up. Get over it. Move on. Grow up.* It all makes me so angry. Men hear these things all the time, but geez, what an awful thing to tell someone. What an awful way to raise a child. So hateful and callous. I leave this part in the text for all children who would be freed by journaling.

Hanging out in playful, devotional friendship resists the existential meaninglessness of sense materialism. Avoiding interpretation is essential to devotion and hanging out. Hanging out involves laterality, increasing ambiguity, and elongating a temporal experience. Hanging out, breathing in and out, attenuates. This is how one grows to become more creative: surrendering to the multiplicity and wonder of interbeing.

*Coatlalopeuh, local Coatlicue, Creator Goddess.*

*That woman is a changeling, always shifting shape.  
Just when you think you have it figured out something new begins to take.  
What strange clothes are these, scratching at my skin?  
I never knew my killer would be coming from within.*

*I am no mother. I am no bride. I am king.*

*I need my golden crown of sorrow, my bloody sword to swing.*

*I need my empty halls to echo with grand self-mythology.*<sup>71</sup>

N. sent me this song. Makes sense. It definitely fits her. That fierce, living, breathing *Coatlicue*.

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*nota bene:* OUTLINE FOR REMAINDER OF ANZALDÚA SECTION

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the *Coatlicue* state as a state of being, state of Nature, state of existence, and state of perceptual carving

karmic experience of samsara constructed by/in/with a personal “world” of sense

attenuating, turning toward (Lorde) and opening onto (Nancy; openings with repeated closures and re-openings to continue attenuating) the political and practical instability of public life as well as the epistemic, metaphysical, and sensorial instability of the material Real. Practice of acceptance of the transience of phenomena and literal reality.

invoked a blooming present

the sense of the material Real as syntheses of instantiated blooming “worlds” of actual occasions of experience — or is the actual occasion of experience shared in a third person sort of way?

*[Intra-sectional excursive asides on Nancy on wonder and opening sense but which relate to the transformational power of devotional friendship via wondrously appreciating one’s friendships, connections, loves, and intimacies]*

*wonder and appreciation and gratitude*

*wonder for friendship, appreciation for friends, wonder for people, includes admiration and awareness of not fully understanding*

*wonder for alterity (curiosity and an affair with the origin)*

*curiosity is a desire for the unknown*

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<sup>71</sup> Florence Welch, of Florence + the Machine, “King” from the album *Dance Fever* (Polydor Records, 2022).

*wonder for the present moment*

*wonder for existence*

*wondering after the difficulties of wonder, of keeping it open and of its metaphysical causal properties, might be a useful totem, node, or psychic anchor for meditating upon in order to keep open the wonder and abeyance necessary for thought, creativity, desire, gratitude, and health*

*Devotional friendship unlocks the grooves of (meta)physico-material wonder. I can't keep chunking this without losing clarity on the particulars and their interrelated workings.*

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## INITIAL SKETCH FOR EXCURSUS ON THE INNER SANCTUARY

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### **Excursus V: The Inner Sanctuary**

*I know that knock, come on, I just put on the coffee.  
 I know that knock, do you wanna come inside and speak with me?  
 At the door came a knock. The witness just wants to talk to you.  
 The witness just wants to talk to you. The witness just wants to talk to you.<sup>72</sup>*

It can take you in at any moment. It can call to you. You can feel the swell of the wave, the coalescence and concrescence of whole experience, tantra between inner and outer. It can take you in. It asks you to come in and talk with it, to speak with the witness. You are the witness. This is your guilt, your mind, your interpretation of your "world." You must carry your weight. You cannot outrun your psyche, your awareness of your own faults. The only thing that you can do is learn to meet your own expectations. Even trying to lower them will make you feel like a washed-up failure. You must show up. You cannot escape yourself, your "world."

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<sup>72</sup> Francis Quinlan, of Hop Along, "The Knock" from the album *Painted Shut* (Saddle Creek, 2015).



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INITIAL SKETCHED OUTLINE FOR EXCURSUS ON POLYRHYTHMS

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**Excursus VI: Polyrhythms and the Groove, or, Being-Along Mediums**

*Take this brother. May it serve you well.*<sup>73</sup>

Polyrhythms

Bootsy Collins

The White Album

Fela Kuti

The Pixies

Born Under Punches by The Talking Heads (esp. the live version) — conflicting movements in different parts of the body when listening

drumming and adding layers, complexities and other additions little by little, poco y poco, as habituated, embodied polyrhythms

Seeking lateral sense can slow down our perception of time, our inner-time consciousness.

Thinking greases time. Thoughts may take extended moments to produce themselves, and if our awareness is not adeptly on the steady, subtle modulations of our present, then moments or hours may pass without much awareness of duration — somewhere off, lost in thought.

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SKETCHES FOR BENJAMIN SECTION ON MATERIAL COMMUNION, TRANSLATION,  
LANGUAGE AS SUCH, AND POLYRHYTHMIC SENSE GRAMMARS, OR

THE WEIGHTED GRAMMAR OF THE “WORLD”  
IN COMMUNICATIVE SENSE PROMINENCE

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<sup>73</sup> The Beatles, “Revolution 9” from the album *The Beatles* [i.e., *The White Album*] (Apple Records, 1968).

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Sense is autological. It is a medium that expresses a property that it also possesses. The Absolute is autological. The relative is heterological, expressing a property that does not apply to itself. The Absolute and sense are self-evident.

When I say weight, I mean it the same way that Didion means the shimmer. It's like a piano. Each strike on the keys has fuzz introducing its arising and telling you goodbye out the door of its event, its occasion, its coming into being and going out. The shimmer and the weight denote *prominence*. There is something about this weightiness which seems to hyper-modally explode outward beyond the edges of the concrete object, in all directions, like a congealed mass spilling out from itself somehow, like the Mona Lisa leaning out into the gallery to meet in the middle.

The really interesting thing, I think, is that if material sense speaks to me through sense, transparence, and prominence itself, as autological emanations, then how can I learn to speak back with it? Intellection, if it is a blooming of my being, expresses my sense in the same transparence that I receive the material sense. Learning, wisdom, and the emanation from imagination into intellection are how I can speak back to Nature in the way that it wants me to, how I can dance with it all. Expressing these transparences through artmaking practices would also be communication. Creating beauty is important to our romance with existence. Experiencing beauty is more important though. We communicate with Nature by being Beauty — not by *being beautiful*, which is worth discussion and merit in itself, something like moral transparence in Didion, but by being Beauty, something entirely different, something falling off a long sentence, something met in the middle, something lateral, something cohesive. Experiencing transparence communicates reciprocally in a touch, a sense contact.

Choices change the grammar. Listening lets you change the rhythms before they get too loud and change the grammar. Grammar pulls you. At every second, the grammar builds around you. Meditation within the limen can help you widen your field of awareness onto wider grammars, but the grammars are still present and what they are in that moment. They may be conflicting too. The grammars of the rhythms may introduce certain contradictory prominences too, like when your body is telling you to sleep but you've missed the light switch twice now and you also feel wide awake, like you're wired with ideas and connections. The grammar of creativity and truth can fuel itself. But I still need sleep. Expressing the rhythm in some way tends to release its energy, but doing so simultaneously springs forth more energy to continue exploring the idea. It writes itself. It tells you. You don't tell it. I've already closed my laptop once trying to go to sleep. It makes you. It makes your sense of self.

The rhythms don't really overlap either. I mean obviously they do, but in prominence it's more like islands in an archipelago, or scenes in a Lynch film — a collection of little vignettes, side by side in a horizontal plane. Or mountaintops along a range, like Derrida's aporias.

The weight is like masses with varying gravities in an energy field-fabric. Did Einstein separate the objects producing gravity from their fields of gravity? It makes sense to have a unified conception across objects that relates their mass to their gravitational influence as amplifications or diminutions on their surroundings, structuring reality itself. The question is whether mass structures gravity or if gravity structures mass. Spinoza claims instead that essence and existence

arise in simultaneity, since the essence of Being is to exist or since, to reverse the justificatory direction, the transparency, the ‘suchness,’ and the concretion of existence are its ‘essence’ (i.e., another Ontological argument).

We have collected a troubling bifurcation across numerous thinkers now. Can we claim that the particle-wave simultaneity phenomenon is of the same ontological nature as our propensity to analyze instead of intuiting, to find a monologic instead of a polyrhythm, to plan instead of playing it by ear on the street, to seek the relative instead of the Absolute? Can we set up a theoretical metaphysical connection between the hard sciences’ domain of the relative, which begins to peek into its wave-intuition-grammar-shimmer-polyrhythmic dual-aspects, and the Absolute, sympathetic movements of the grammars of philosophy, art, process, form, etc., which do still need aspects of clear logical thinking? For Kristeva, this distinction is found between the symbolic-semiotic, between the paternal-maternal, and between the monological-polylogical. For Lugones, it arises on multiple levels in multiple contexts: arrogant perception versus loving perception, strategies versus tactics, bird’s eye view versus streetwalker theorizing, purity-separation versus curdle-separation, unitary-self (as a fiction built on cognitive dissonance) versus the multiplicity of selfhood. Importantly, these bifurcations in Lugones always bloom on the side of curdling. Neither dyad is allowed to be thought separately, with Lugones consistently instead asserting a synthesis in the middle in a pattern we might call qualitative heterogeneity, if we properly understand that term to be capable of expanding upon contact with new qualitative heterogeneities. We seem to also be working at the bifurcation of unity-multiplicity, or the one and/or the many, or the “and” and/or the “or” (i.e., the conjunction ‘and’ implies One/unity; multiplicity/many imply disjunction, and we often assume this to be an exclusive disjunction; ‘yes’ and ‘no’ also begin to fold into this distinction, respectively, but keep in mind that curdling lands on the side of the “no-but-also,” or the “this-and-also-this-and-also-this-and-also-this-and-...,” a plenum [or with interstices?]; to ground this abstract discussion, we have in mind here matter itself<sup>74</sup>). I am inclined to propose that this sense of prominence, of actual occasions of experience and their constituent pieces as arising and dissipating, depends on an open awareness to the spatiality of the Real.<sup>75</sup> Place particularizes space by giving space its sense-medium, its groove along which it expresses, emanates, blossoms, and articulates its particular beings, in the same way that Experience articulates Being, à la Benjamin on the linguistic communicability of the mental being of the subject-position — that is, not in a strange unity but in a transformation or a translation (they amount to the same for almost all Being). Being, then, is *essentially* creative, and our personal firsthand Experiences of wonder, gratitude, beauty, and love articulate Being’s creativity (that is, produce a sort of novelty, causal divergence, or statistical unlikelihood into Being). They also *testify as witnesses* to Being’s creativity. If you turn toward Being in wonder, diligent striving, and presence to feeling-with, then Being (that abyss) turns to face and dance in step with you in articulation of this co-creative process. Another way of putting this is

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<sup>74</sup> And perhaps dark matter, if one understands such things. I don’t.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Edward Casey on “space” and “place.”

to say that the material Real reciprocally harmonizes in fluidity with the subject-position's local attention and intention.

Laterality across depth. Space could be a phenomenological structure of interbeing.<sup>76</sup> The separation of place from space mirrors the separation of content from form. Rather, space and place unite in the invoked present. What, then, is the unity of intuition and analysis? How do we curdle-separate intuition and analysis, since to curdle-separate entails, in some way, keeping things united and, in that sense, further entails some sense of connection between elements that otherwise seem disparate? Thus, curdle-separation also reveals the unity of concrete duration which, coupled with the multiplicity of concrete duration, sketches the intuition of the qualitative heterogeneity of concrete duration.

Through intuitive listening, mental being, à la Benjamin, begins to take on a spatialized stage similar to the noticeable "soundstage" one can hear through headphones listening to songs with high-quality, spatialized sound. The spatialization of sound is produced, to the best of my understanding, by a multiplicity of independent speakers in each headphone with varying particularities of production dependent on the mixing of the audio track by an audio engineer, particularly the soundstage-ing of distance, or the sense of how far away one is from the sounds, as well as audio 'imagining' which separates and 'places' the sounds as distinct from each other. Perhaps one can develop an intuitive sense of the metaphysical distancing with the concrete, material Real. One particularly uncomfortable feeling intuitively the entire sense—"world" as being compressed into my intuition, à la Kant's transcendental unity of apperception. The sublime, for me, has a *Coatlicue*-like hiss to its moments of sense transparency (i.e., the prominence I have spoken on, or *how matter communicates to us*). In particular, mental being's imaging is mapped through a serpentine expansion and attenuation of awareness across a greater laterality in order to experience and appreciate the blossoming of each particular incident or accident or 'mental' event or actual occasion of experience. We can also deconstruct our natural concrescence in order to appreciate the breadth and intricacy of intuitive interbeing more fully, particularly through attenuating a continually widening multiplicity of thinking across mediums. Again, when I speak of a blossoming sense, I have in mind this attention to and attenuation of the intricacy of our sense-imaging, which is not a representation but rather a carving in perception itself. That is, mental being perceives, and perception operates mental being, à la Merleau-Ponty.

A song comes up on shuffle that I don't know. I recognize the voice, but I can't quite place it. I cycle through possibilities. The National. One Republic. No. Switchfoot. No. (I rarely listen to these artists.) I recognize the quality of the voice, its distinctness, its how, its presenting as it is. I resist the urge to pull out my phone and *identify* the artist, which would foreclose my experience of their voice. I do not know, and because of that, I can hear the punctuated grammar how it is. I looked after it was over. Mat Kearney.

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<sup>76</sup> Cf. Phenomenology of Interbeing

louder than the rest, if you are listening (clarity and distinctness?); the fullness of experience (the erotic)

attention selects perception through weights

within even a wide field of perception, certain specifics can take on a stronger, more frontal weight

punctuations in rhythm, prominences in sense, communicating their how, their sense, their being, their experience, their shared metaphysical communion with us

this is a historical materialism worth its salt

openness

sometimes the punctuations are closures, which are always the opening space for something new

prominence and the itself

Lateral thinking and interstices between the grammar's punctuations.

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## SKETCHES FOR EXCURSUS ON SUNLIGHT VITAMINS AND WAVE-PARTICLES

### EXPERIMENTAL AND IN NEED OF TECHNICAL SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

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#### **Excursus IX: Sunlight Vitamins, Quantum Mechanics, and Chalmers on the Hard Problem**

Sunlight radiation converts certain particle chemicals in my skin into vitamins that I need to stay healthy. Acts of being, intermingled with the wave field of reality, harmonize together in homeostasis for our particular kinds of live creatures in *this* kind of reality. Since we are thinking unity-multiplicity together, I see no reason to assume that the wave → particle influence only works in this one direction. Can particles, actions, and punctuations change the grammar of reality in seemingly causally unrelated ways?<sup>77</sup> The ephiphenomenal solution to the hard problem of consciousness contends that brain chemicals and activity produce phenomenal experience, milliseconds before it is experienced. Neuroscientists also contend that neurotransmitters like dopamine and serotonin are involved in the production of sense.

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<sup>77</sup> Cf. Donald Davidson, "Mental Events."

Complex matter waves (i.e., compositions of overlapping sine waves) allow for the unity-multiplicity problem. Different combinations of harmonious waves interface to produce non-rhythmic, pronounced differences in matter and sense.

A particle is said to be in superposition across all places under its wave. Thus, a particle is an integration under the curve of its reciprocal wave. A wave is then the derivative of a particle or a body of mass. The brain receives numerous overlapping, conflicting wavelengths. Experienced sense is the stabilization of the Real as the integration or anti-derivative of the wave functions, as ordered and harmonized by the brain.<sup>78</sup> The brain's electromagnetic sine waves harmonize with reality's electromagnetic sine waves, stabilizing each other in a feedback loop. There is always a "FUNDAMENTAL" wave whose frequency is retained in the final wave. Perhaps "I" / concrete duration / inner time-consciousness are the fundamental wave stabilizing our experience in frequency of repetition. The important question for us in interrogating the "I" is to determine whether this fundamental wave might be supplied by matter exterior to our brains, or at least continuous beyond the contained matter limits of the brain. A brief aside: isn't it also strange to think that the brain is stabilizing itself into material existence? It reminds me of the *cogito*. Is it possible for 'exterior' electromagnetic waves (those supplied by non-human matter) to stabilize our existence? Is the brain the only electromagnetic wave with a stabilizing function? Probably, since scientists believe the thalamus to be responsible for filtering out the inconsistent information (i.e., the outlying positions where the particle extends beyond the curve of its wave).

The problem is that waves and particles are still just insufficient representations of an untamable materiality — *Coatlicue*.

The grammar can only be sensed when the brain's harmonizing function is disrupted, such that the single sin wave of experience (i.e., concrescence à la Whitehead) is differentiated into multiple overlapping polyrhythms. We can learn to differentiate and identify composite rhythms. Neurodivergent brains are typically stronger at identifying nuanced, overlapping rhythms.

How do "worlds" interface? Is there something about a physical space that allows affect, energy, and waves to come through where digital communication does not? How can I feel shared mirth in a recorded video or a phone call? Does it still transmit and convey energy? If so, then why do Zoom classes feel different than in-person classes? Because the multiplicity of energies must be actively attended to and synthesized. Digital experience then might allow us to different polyrhythms in order to learn to modify them.

Is it possible to time travel by confining sense structures? When I am in my room alone, and I really get my energy going with thinking and writing with my sense only touching the visual edges of my eight- by-ten-foot bedroom, thanks to my headphones and the Talking Heads. But in this confined space, does the rest of the "world," in relation to my "world," dissipate into a multiplicity of overlapping realities, stabilized only by my actions within this room? Do I come out onto different realities based on my unrelated actions herein? Can I deprive sense even

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<sup>78</sup> Cf. "Quantum and Electromagnetic Fields in Our Universe and Brain: A New Perspective to Comprehend Brain Function," <https://doi.org/10.3390%2Fbrainsci11050558>.

further, perhaps all the way back to the cogito, to reopen it onto a different “world?” I might be freed to approach the “world” with new principles. Can we associate the cogito with the limen? Can habituating a return to the cogito (as ‘how’) remind us to check in with the limen too?

Music is the wave, the harmony of the muses.

Nature speaks through me. Nature waves to you. Say hi. Where is my mind?<sup>79</sup>

*Your head'll collapse, and there's nothing in it.*<sup>80</sup>

So many affects from inanimate nature produce work.

Everything is your perception of it. The disparate pulses harmonize into your concrescent perception, losing their distinguishable shape in the process. External-internal experiences feel synchronous because their waves are within each other — constantly reinforcing feedback loops.

Can my waves, my resonance, influence the waves around me? Yes, if you are mentally intense. Aware. Present. Alert. Alive. Being.

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## SKETCHES FOR DIDION SECTION ON SELF-RESPECT AS MORAL TRANSPARENCY, CONVICTION, INTUITION, AND EMERSONIAN SELF-RELIANCE

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### **Didion: Self-Respect, Embodied Moral Transparency, and Charisma**

“What is REAL?” asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nana came to tidy the room. “Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?”

“Real isn’t how you are made,” said the Skin Horse. “It’s a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real.”

“Does it hurt?” asked the Rabbit.

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<sup>79</sup> Pixies, “Where Is My Mind?” from the album *Surfer Rosa* (4AD, 1988).

<sup>80</sup> Pixies, *ibid.*

“Sometimes,” said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. “When you are Real you don’t mind being hurt.”

“Does it happen all at once, like being wound up,” he asked, “or bit by bit?”

“It doesn’t happen all at once,” said the Skin Horse. “You become. It takes a long time. That’s why it doesn’t happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don’t matter at all, because once you are Real you can’t be ugly, except to people who don’t understand.”

“I suppose *you* are real?” said the Rabbit. And then he wished he had not said it, for he thought the Skin Horse might be sensitive. But the Skin Horse only smiled.<sup>81</sup>

Self-respect means scrounging forty-three cents to buy the biggest lime you can find in the basket. It means, *I did what I did; I said what I said; I have what I have; I play it as it lays; I stand in solidarity with this body.*

Self-respect means that you show up. You show up for work, even on days that you’re running three hours late, sobbing, and having a panic attack. You show up to be held accountable. You show up to hold yourself accountable. You show up to transparently admit the things you did, even when they might harm your image or how you’re treated in the future. It is embodied truth in pure expression, no longer even aware of its own intellection. Self-respect only happens when the ego is done away with, or, when the self gets out of Its own way.

Just as, for Lorde, desire can only be modified when it is acknowledged, for Didion behaviors can only be modified when we resolutely look ourselves in the mirror. I fired myself for being late, or, I fired myself from a job that was not meeting my erotic needs and filling me with motivating energy with which to complete the work and with engaged interest with which to show up on time, immersed in the work itself. I listened to the disharmony between my efforts and the ease of external timing, and in this disharmony, I accepted the unexpected, intuitive move, though I was only seven minutes late, of saying to the co-owner of the Mom-and-Pop, James-Beard Award Nominated, vegan, Ethiopian restaurant that you have been learning to bartend at, ‘Hey, I really respect your business and everything you’ve done to create this restaurant. [Restaurant] is really incredible, and I really admire your creativity. I know this tardy behavior has been a problem, and I just wanted to thank you for everything I’ve learned here.’ The co-owner smiled and just clarified that it was about upholding certain standards, including in ourselves. When I looked over afterward and saw the astounded look on the face of the bartender who had trained me and consecutively just witnessed my resignation, I explained that ‘I don’t know, it just felt right. I feel better, clearer now,’ he said, ‘Well, I respect that.’ Self-respect — not arrogance, confidence, entitlement, or assertion of rights — begets respect from others. Then, once you have taught yourself that you can never escape accountability because *you* will always

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<sup>81</sup> Margery Williams, *The Velveteen Rabbit, or How toys become real* (George H. Doran Company, 1922), p.



be there to hold yourself accountable, then and only then can you take full your responsibility over your behaviors and outcomes in order to modify them.

Practicing self-respect teaches you to see the course of an action across a large timescale. Self-respect means that, when you are smoking that cigarette reflecting on self-respect and your throat huts by the end of it and you think, ‘Oh, I can live with the consequences,’ that you then realize what the consequences are — a deathbed, and that you really cannot in fact *live* with them — and you immediately put the cigarette out. Self-respect is power, and it clarifies priorities across time.

Thus, self-respect also enlarges our power and capacity to be held accountable, which is another way of saying that self-respect enlarges our power because self-accountability listens toward intellection in an expanding augmentation of affect, by modifying behavior [i.e., action at the level of affects] while attending to conceptions of cause-and-effect analysis [i.e., the mind’s theories of these affects]. But it also means that we ask for more of our lives, our work, and ourselves overall. *I did what I did, and no one is going to do this work or take care of my immediate needs or solve these problems for me. Here I am before you, how I am; weigh my heart. Here it is. Put it on your scale. Put it in your “world.”*

But listening to the erotic and loving life are easy: you start with the shimmer and build out from there. That is, the visual shimmer around a memory or idea is the experience of the erotic highlighting the kernel to be unfurled. This shimmer is cohesiveness and transparency itself, but it refines itself in its production (à la Dewey), and the subject-position does not always know where we are going. Who is the other agent is this we? Justin does not know, but sometimes I write him, write his being. Sometimes the idea gets to take the driver’s seat and have its say. Surrender to being-with, to process, and to Nature’s desire to emanate truth from shimmering ideas.

Self-respect is what you arrive at and practice when you look at your being, your behavior, and your expressions (which all amounts to the same thing) as *being how they are — it is how it is, it becomes how it becomes*. In other words, self-respect can only be found in those bodies who are themselves an exposed (blossomed!), apparent, readily available consummation in flow with their environment — proper human *transparency*. Perhaps this transparency, which is already here like the clear luminosity of a Buddha-nature, is what many traditional Western philosophers sought in transcendence. However, there is no going beyond. There is no ‘beyond,’ not even a ‘beyond’ beyond the body. There is concrete presenting in felt experience across an always diffusing, expanding, and restructuring horizon of sense-perception. Growth, for its part, happens in this process of expansion and contraction, whether it be a body muscle or a field of expertise — and whether that expertise be expressed in formal language as a theory or in the body as labor, art, or craft.

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## SKETCHES FOR EXCURSUS ON THE SHARING OF THE UPS AND DOWNS OF FINANCIAL WELLBEING

### TRAUMATIC HEAD INJURY AGE 9

#### **Excursus X: Recession, Energy, Resources, Traumatic Head Injury**

I incurred a traumatic head injury around the age of nine. I collided with a brick mailbox at around twenty miles per hour without wearing a helmet. I was operating an electric scooter on my own, just playing as a kid. My face was split open from my lip, up the left side of my nose, up my forehead, and back through my hair. My skull was visible, I'm told. When my mother tried to wipe the blood away with a wet rag at first because she thought I was being dramatic, before she knew how bad it was, she accidentally peeled the skin back and of course freaked out, panicked, immediately put me in the car and took me to the hospital. My cousin was with us at the time. One of them held the rag to my face and one of them drove. They switched positions twice because my cousin wasn't driving fast enough and because he wasn't holding the rag well enough. I guess everyone was freaking out. I couldn't see. I was still crying and screaming and saying that I didn't want to die. They got me to the closest hospital, but they couldn't save me there. I needed to be life-flighted into Houston, but it was raining, and they couldn't safely operate the helicopter. I rode another hour in the ambulance.

They brought me Whataburger shakes after surgery, and all of my family was there to see me and tell me that they loved me. I guess. Why does my brain do that? I guess my family was the one to bring me shakes, but in my memory it was an abstract "they." The shakes were there. "They" brought me the shakes. It's eerie. It's like Didion's "I." Who is this "I" in our language? Who is this "they"? Are we trying to broach phenomenological questions on intersubjective structures? I guess we are. I guess. It's been almost eighteen years now. Sometimes I wonder if I'm still in a coma, a bald and frail body in a hospital, dreaming of this "world." Sometimes I wonder if I died, and my brain slowed down time into some alternate reality in my dying seconds, to let me live out the rest of the life I never had. Sometimes I don't know anymore.

*Oh I dream a highway back to you, love*

*A winding ribbon with a band of gold*

*A silver vision convalesced my soul*

*I dream a highway back to you<sup>82</sup>*

<sup>82</sup> Gillian Welch, "I Dream a Highway" from the album *Time (The Revelator)* (Acony Records, 2001).

"Convalescence — noun. time spent recovering from an illness or medical treatment; recuperation." In alternate refrains "A silver vision come and rest my soul" / "A silver vision come arrest my soul" / and "A silver vision come and bless my soul."