

**After the Unspecial Education:
Poétigogies from the Interstices**

Lea Rackley Ehret

Department of Integrated Studies in Education

McGill University, Montreal

April 2023

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree
of Ph.D in Educational Studies

©Lea Rackley Ehret 2023

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	6
Poetics, 0: Holding a Thought.....	11
Introduction.....	14
Interference 1: For Attention Abundance: The Radical Empiricisms of ADHD.....	30
Chapter 1: Life in its Pedagogy.....	36
Chapter 2: In Excess of Methodology	62
Chapter 3: Poetics of the Kitchen.....	78
Chapter 4: Poetics	
Poetics 1: The Preacher's Son (A Pathology).....	113
Poetics 2: Starter.....	113
Poetics 3: Body and Bread.....	115
Poetics 4: The Taste of Ethnography.....	120
Poetics 5: Refusal.....	122
Poetics 6: Misunderstanding the Assignment.....	123
Poetics 7: Eating our Words.....	125
Poetics 8: Requiem for Instant Ramen.....	127
Interference 2: Play.....	131
Poetics 9: Baba.....	134
Poetics 10: Pandemia.....	136
Poetics 11: Hallway.....	137
Poetics 12: Potluck.....	139
Interference 3: Love.....	141
Poetics 13: Changing Planes.....	143
Poetics 14: Missed Trains.....	148
Interference 4: Noise.....	150
Poetics15: Mango 1, or <i>Laranja</i>	154
Poetics 16: Mesa 1.....	156
Poetics 17: Chuva.....	159
Poetics 18: Massa.....	159

Poetics 19: Commencement Address.....	162
Poetics 20: My Mother is a Fish.....	166
Interference 5: Canibalismo, or Mango 2.....	167
Poetics 21: School, escola, escolha, or Mesa 2.....	171
Poetics 22: Love and Study.....	175
Ongoing: After the Unspecial Education: Poétigogies from the Interstices.....	176
References.....	189

ABSTRACT

This thesis refuses the distinction between Special Education and its presupposition, Unspecial Education, arguing that we should refuse to become Unspecially Educated. It moves through the poetics of relation to experiment affective, processual, relational, and collective modes of study. Examining normativity as a perceptive tendency which orients knowledge production and value frameworks within the social sciences and education and literacy research, it contributes a theory of “attention abundance” as a mode of study which has been misunderstood as “attention deficit”. Deviating from the framework of diagnosis and the certain track of methodology, attention abundance as an uncertain wandering presents an ethics of study that is radically empirical and speculatively pragmatic. Taking an interest in the ethical and relational stakes that emerge in between pre-given research aims and institutional learning models, the thesis explores poetic deviations between the ordinary proceedings of several empirical research fieldworks across secondary schools, a youth center, a writing workshop, and a pedagogic exhibit in a museum, across Canada, the United States, Australia, and Brazil. As education and literacy research awakens to the ethics of wandering off the track of the colonial errand of research, toward the surplus value of our thinking communities and the more ethical entanglements they invent, we need more ways of attending to this abundance. By asking how to develop new pedagogical sensitivities, how the poetics of relation seeds new ways of thinking about collective study, how cracking normative assumptions about knowledge production and value might truly engage the risk of thought in education and literacy research, and how the poetics between these questions exceeds the presuppositions of an Unspecial Education toward more special ways of living and learning together, poétigogies from the interstices are tentatively invented and lived.

ABSTRACT (FR)

Cette thèse refuse de différencier entre l'enseignement spécialisé [special education] et ce qu'elle présuppose—une éducation non-spéciale—et défend que nous devrions refuser de devenir éduqué en non-spécialité. Elle trace, à travers une poétique de la relation, l'expérimentation de modes d'étude affectifs, processuels, relationnels, et collectifs. En examinant la normativité en tant que tendance perceptuelle orientant la production de savoir et les schémas de valeur dans les sciences sociales et les recherches en alphabétisation [literacy studies], elle propose une théorie « d'abondance d'attention » en tant que mode d'étude, mode trop souvent mal-compris comme « trouble de l'attention » [attention deficit]. En déviant du cadre diagnostique et du parcours trop-certain de la méthodologie, l'abondance d'attention comme errance incertaine présente une éthique de l'étude radicalement empirique et spéculative-pragmatique. Prenant un intérêt dans les enjeux éthiques et relationnels qui émergent entre les objectifs pré-donnés de la recherche académique et les modèles d'apprentissages institutionnels, cette thèse explore les déviations poétiques qui entrèrent en jeu lors du processus ordinaire de plusieurs études de terrains, à travers des écoles secondaires, un centre de jeunesse, un atelier d'écriture, et une exposition pédagogique dans un musée, et les géographies du Canada, de l'Australie, et du Brésil. Alors que l'éducation et l'alphabétisation se réveillent à l'importance éthique d'un abandon du parcours colonial de la recherche et d'une déviation vers la plus-value créée par nos communautés de pensée et leur invention de modes d'imbrication qui seraient plus éthiques, il nous faut créer à notre tour plus de façon de cultiver cette abondance. En demandant comment se développent de nouvelles sensibilités pédagogiques, comment une poétique de la relation peut semer de nouvelles façons de penser l'étude collective, comment le morcèlement des présupposés normatifs sur la production du savoir et de la valeur pourrait entrer dans un engagement réel avec

le risque qu'est la pensée dans les champs de l'éducation et des recherches en alphabétisation, et comment les poétiques entre ces questions excèdent les présuppositions d'une éducation non-spéciale en courant vers des façons plus spéciales de vivre et d'apprendre ensemble, une poétigogie de l'interstice est inventée, et vécue.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For my family. Thanks for holding onto me. I'm holding onto you, too. I love you.

For Bronwen Low. You make it look easy, you make it go down smooth. You teach me vital gestures and bring beauty into my life so casually, like it's just what we do for each other. As it should be. Thank you. Now that this is over, I'm honored to be your friend.

For Erin Manning. Thanks for bringing me back to life. Thanks for teaching me how to make a world. Thanks for how hard it was; I can handle anything now. You're never too far from my biggest questions, my conceptual knots, my aching heart. Hell—you're right down the street.

For Brian Massumi. Thanks for bringing me in from the cold and making me a cup of tea on a frightening day. Thanks for teaching me how gentle and sweet philosophy can be.

For Jessica Ruglis, Jennifer Rowsell, Carrie Rentschler, Kevin McDonough, Mindy Carter, and Boyd White. Thanks for your generosity. It's been such fun thinking with you, I am lucky.

For Christian Ehret. To think that I first discovered process philosophy with you. Thanks for the glimmer in time when we were family, for each intensity we shared. It was real. I'm wishing you well.

For Donna Alvermann. Your enthusiasm for my enthusiasms changed my life. It's just good pedagogy, but from you, it's magic. We're all trying to learn how to give it as generously as you do. I'm so grateful to you. Thanks for your favorite word: Onward.

For Peter Smagorinsky. Smago. Smags. Papa Pedagogy. Thanks for more than a decade of mentorship. Thanks for getting me to use my attitude.

For Alexis Milonopoulos. We've been through a lot together, amado—Eu sei que você sabe que nós sabemos! Thanks for being my friend. Estou orgulhoso de você. Estou orgulhoso de nós.

For Emma Flavian. My brave and brilliant friend. Thanks for being in this with me. I'll be in yours with you. Thanks for all our walks and talks and theoretical obsessions, always. I love you.

For Csenge, Mariana, Cadu, Flo, Diego, Andre, Erneste, Julia, Sebastian, Halbe, Mayra, Rodrigo, Emma, Kelann, Lili, Catharine, Khadija, Esthel, Val, Jehlanni, Mattie, Lone, the Andrews (Murphie and Goodman), Anna, Tessa, Lucy, Indira, Come, Renae, Matisse, Ben, Anouk, Leslie, Celine, etc. Thanks for all the thinking and wild living we've shared.

For Sitio Piraquara. For Thomizitcho, Melitta, and Ati Kunze. For Tati, Laura, Gabi, Victor, Bia, Mari, Paulo, Leo, Quesinho, Gyzelia, Camilla, Luis, Enzo, Nina, Pipoca, Gaia, Trovão, and the chickens. Obrigada por compartilhar um momento muito precioso na vida comigo.

For Athanase and Eliane Milonopoulos. Obrigada por me ensinar sobre família radical. Amo vocês.

For Neka Menna Barreto. Minha fada madrinha. I love you. Thanks for teaching me that I have gold right here [hands on chest.] And for Tati Toffoli, irmã do meu coração. Thanks for teaching me Portuguese at the breakfast table. Saudades de você.

For Flo and Mils Dacy-Cole. Thanks for your tenderness and sweet sweet love. I learn so much from you.

For the womxn of Pixelles. What a joy it was to sit around the writing table with you. And For my fam at “Centre des Jeunes”, you know who you are. I love you.

For Demetrius Peairs and Tishawn Bradford. You mean the world to me. Thanks for teaching me how to live.

For Luka Čiklovan. We were a great team. Thanks for our data-debrief car podcasts, for all the times you drove me home.

For Curran Jacobs and Daniella Birlain D’Amico. I started this process with you. We’ll always have that dank basement lab at McGill. It was perfect.

For Ana Christina Iddings, Kevin Leander, Ty Hollett and Karen Hollett. For Stephanie Shelton and Dawan Coombs. Thanks for your love and support. And for Sarah E. Truman and David Ben “Shanny” Shannon. You inspire me— more Oblique Curiosities, forevah.

For the goodly folks at Bishop. Especially Morgan O’Leary, Mart Cobban, Rachel Greenwood, Nathan Sword, Dirk Puge, Andrew Aiken, Nick Campbell, Callum Pfohl, Lily Bennett-Scharf, Joey Shanahan, Megan Turcotte, and Matthew Doyle.

For Gus Padovan, Ana Carolina, and Csenge Kolozsvari. You give me life, macaquitas!

For Cory Legassic, Daphne Chalmers, and Julia Norcross. Oh how I love our reading group.

For Marta Kobiela and Michael Lariviere. No one in this department does nothin without y’all.

For Matthew Blair. Met you just in time! I love that you’re “not a foodie” ;)

CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHORS

Parts of the section *The Way Life Studies* in chapter 2 and the section *Interference 2: Love* originally appeared in *Love and poetics: Black life beyond literacy research as we know it* (Rackley, Bradford & Peairs 2021). *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 31(1-2), 67-79.

Parts of the section *Interference 2: Play* originally appeared in *For a fugitive game studies: Female life's break from game culture and black-queer-neurodiverse-postcapitalist revaluations of game study*. (Ehret, L., 2020). In *Maker Literacies and Maker Identities in the Digital Age* (pp. 167-186). Routledge.

Parts of the section *Interference 4: Noise* originally appeared in *Joyful noise and abatement: idle chatter and the undercommons of oracy education* (Rackley & Bradford, 2022). *Literacy*, 56(3), 191-198.

NOTE ON AUTHOR'S NAME

This is my last publication as Ehret. Publish me in your veins as Rackley now, again. However, it remains that most of the working/dancing/suffering of study in this text was undertaken by Rackley Ehret. *Consent à n'être pas un seul* / Consent not to be a single being.

Dedicated to:

My mother,
Kathy Paul Rackley

“Nosso tempo é especialista em criar ausências: do sentido de viver em sociedade, do próprio sentido da experiência da vida. Isso gera uma intolerância muito grande com relação a quem ainda é capaz de experimentar o prazer de estar vivo, de dançar, de cantar. E está cheio de pequenas constelações de gente espalhada pelo mundo que dança, canta, faz chover.”

“Our time specializes in creating absences, from the meaning of living in society, from the very meaning of the experience of life. This generates a great intolerance toward those who are still capable of experiencing the pleasure of being alive, of singing and dancing. And it's full of small constellations of people around the world who dance, sing, make rain.”

Ailton Krenak, 2019, p. 13 (translation mine)

Poetics, 0: Holding a Thought

I can't think.

And to think how often it stops there.

I CAN'T THINK without this blanket crocheted by my sister. There is no precedent for the way this matters, but it does. I can't think without thinking about her making this, maybe the act of bringing things into being with our hands becomes possible again when I look at this blanket. But I don't think that's it. Maybe the colors connect to my body in a certain way. It has a blue, yellow, and pink that blend into each other in a way that does not remind me of anything else, does not suggest the other blues I've ever blueed before, does not carry with it the other me's with other thoughts in other blues. But it's not exactly that, either. There is something in the existence of this blanket that throws life into a fresh combination, and it helps me think. I can't think without my sister herself, who can kind of gather me back into a shape precisely because I can gather her back into a shape too. We grew up to understand our symbiosis well enough to mutually facilitate. We know not to put each other back into old shapes. We know how to hold each other's edges wherever they happen to actually be. The last row of stitches on the blanket is shorter than all the rest, so the corners curl in and won't lay flat. But I like it like that, my sister says, because it holds you.

I can't think in the presence of this old painting hanging on my wall in a gold frame, of two giraffes and a deer in front of a red background. I think I've just looked at it too many times throughout my life, so that when I look at it now it carries traces of too many different me's who have looked at it within too many different systems of thought across too many different lives and worlds. If I glance at it now, I look away really fast before it overcrowds the thing that this

me was just trying to think within this system of thought within this world right here just now. The painting was given to my dad by a dentist in Florida who was also a painter, as a gift because my dad, a dental technician, had painted a crown tooth for him that he thought was exquisite. But I always thought the painting had been a gift from our relatives who were missionaries in Japan, and my dad told me the other story while we were having breakfast together a few months ago. I can't think without the little breath of life of having had that breakfast with my dad and trading our versions of the story, so sometimes I sneak a little glance at the painting to see if the breakfast is there too, to see if this time the painting works in a different way.

I can't think without my mother, mainly because I don't exist without her. She surrounds me nonconsciously, carries over in my gestures. The worlds I think are always worlds that have her in them, worlds that proceed from her in the same way that they proceed from the earth. She is atmospheric in me, like the weather, and can swell up from everywhere at once. Sometimes I can't think because this overwhelms the me who was just having some other thought in some other universe, but that other universe already had her in it somehow anyway. All this was true before she got sick, but now its atmosphere is a hailstorm. It rains down the shrapnel of a world undone.

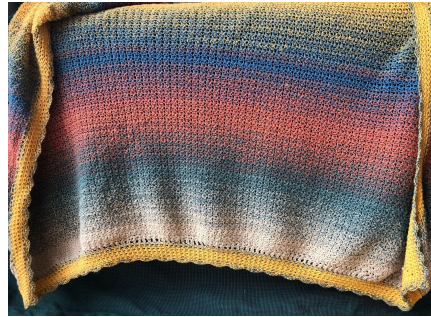
I can't think without this shiny little feeling that came from reading Leanne Simpson (2013) in a reading group with my friend Diego a few weeks ago, plus the walks that Emma and I take through Outremont at dusk, plus these beautiful songs that Morgan¹ writes, which play in a gentle crystal blue in my body. A thought gathers from the shiny little feeling of all of this in me, and it thinks itself back out into the world, carrying Morgan's song that plays itself out silently in

¹ See: Pallice: <https://open.spotify.com/artist/21yReijgtUbbY5R0cKucCz?si=fanpcAUGT3SCJ57if5o4Fg> [Retrieved on November 23, 2022]

the way that I relate to the Leanne in Diego, which goes with me for a walk and relates to the dusk as it sets softly in Emma's gestures, which all gathers and spreads its multiple powers, not least of all in the me my sister thinks of when she drops a stitch on the blanket and creates a new holding, not least of all in the holding as it gathers the edges of my thoughts into new formations when I glance to my dad in the dentist's painting, not least of all in the glance as it holds on suddenly to my dad holding on to my mother, to my mother holding on to my sister, to my sister's new holding as it teaches me how to hold the atmosphere of my mother holding everything in the universe together, as I hold this in the writing which holds you now in the reading, so that my mother is holding you now, and in you she goes on to hold everything that you hold, and that is how she holds everything in the universe, and that is how we all hold each other, and how we all come back around to hold each other again.

I don't think without you, because we exist together. We make each other possible. Life in its pedagogy is the you within me where we think something together. "You and me" being this radical "we" that includes everything and excludes nothing. Everything in the universe is a singular expression of everything else in the universe (see, i.e., da Silva 2016, p.65, citing Leibniz, 1646-1716). A body is a connection of a connection of a connection, as Diego (Gil, 2019) would say. A process of a process of a process. A thought is a relation of a relation of a relation, where we hold something between us, between everything else. We never think alone, because we never exist alone. The irreducible sociality of thinking is an expression of the irreducible sociality of living. And it needs a new holding. Not held in place by an Education, not the hold² it has on us. But gathered into new worlds by all of our arms, into new ways of noticing how we're being held.

² We're holding Harney & Moten's concept of "the hold" (see: Harney & Moten, 2013, p. 12). We'll come to it again.



new holding, with Katie DeCoudres, 2022. Photo by Lea Rackley

Introduction

[...] the talent for having ideas of all kinds must be rigorously curbed by the spirit of science; not that which glitters, shines, excites, but often insignificant seeming truth is the fruit he wishes to shake down from the tree of knowledge.

Nietzsche, 1996, p.125

If something truly special happens under the surveillance of an Education, it is diagnosed. If it is not diagnosed, then it is graded, which is the same thing: it is evaluated for how normativity might put it to use. When met with a creativity, Education extracts a skill, works it for the world-as-given, and discards the significant excess that, in its incommensurability with the existing guidelines for knowledge, is a bit dangerous for its suggestion of other possible worlds. There is no such thing as unspecial existence, and yet our institutions are consigned to upholding an image of Education so anesthetized to possibility that it needs the category of *Special Education* to contain life beyond its normativity, and so antiseptic to creativity that it needs neoliberal *specialization* to contain thought into the certain track of capitalist production. All that which is truly special threatens to end Education as we know it, as an institutional force which siphons potential into the reproduction of the dominant world as we know it. If we want a better suggestion of a world, we should bring the unspecial Education to an end.

What if we decided to fail the “[e]valuative assault” (Harney et. al, 2021, p.63) of an Education that is in every way failing us? What if this is an ethical response to a *world* that is failing us? If life was never unspecial to begin with, then in us it is always exceeding any possible interest in the knowledge economy’s project of policing normative value, regulating production, and pathologizing difference in order to subdue the threat of invention. We are nowhere short on that which glitters, shines, and excites, those small and sincere expressions of what else thinking is and what else it can do. We’ve just been asked so many times to deliver our soft sweet thinkings to the encyclopedia of knowledge of the world as-given that this successfully numbs our belief in the inventions that might render that whole apparatus extinct. We are used to Education as a force which decreases our powers to act, so much so that it’s almost naive to remind anyone that it’s meant to promise just the opposite.

Is it okay, Academy, if we cry real tears for an Education that thinks life was not meant to be special? They are not new tears. They are very ordinary. In the incommensurate scale of how we are all together differently, this is a holding for any small way that Education fails to hold us, and fails to understand how we hold each other. Imagine how Education loses the whole universe when she leaves the university. How it doesn’t know that she’s inventing a world when she says the poem is beautiful and the professor says she is naive. Education doesn’t know that she takes the beauty in the poem into the world with her when she leaves, that she is studying beauty when she makes me a velvet cape for my twelfth birthday, that I carry her with me when I arrive to the unspecial Education to pretend as far as I can pretend, behave as far as my wild body can behave. Education will congratulate itself when the university drapes my body in velvet, but it won’t matter because she did that first. It is her in me that kept holding the beauty all along, and the university will drape her body in velvet, her body in my body, which is already draped in its own

poetics, softer than velvet and more fiercely intellectual than the analysis of the unspecial. It is “receptiveness to beauty” that moves thought, even though Education has taken up “scraps of information” and “inert ideas” that have nothing to do with it. It’s the universe in her that says that, but we cite Whitehead for it (1929, p.1). Education got us to wonder about our deficiencies, making us deficient in its analysis of the unspecial, but we knew that life is beautiful and it was not meant to be as unspecial as Education, and we could feel it, and between us we held onto it.

What might it mean to make common cause with all the ways of thinking and being that the institution of Education excludes, that through its normative logics of inclusion it subdues? How might we increase our powers for collective invention here, towards the better suggestions of worlds that grow between us? This is a call for radical pedagogies. It is a call for undercommon study (i.e., Harney & Moten, 2013) that exceeds institutional parameters. It is a gesture of the neurodiversity movement as “a platform for political change that fundamentally alters how life is defined, and valued” (Manning, 2016, p.5). It is a mutual inclusion of all of life’s diverse expressions of existence. And yet our holding here is a recognition that neurodiversity is already doing important work elsewhere³. Our philosophical curiosity does its work on normativity instead. In solidarity with Mukhopadhyay (2015), who decided to study the neurotypical in a parody of the scientific violence routinely applied to Autism, here we wonder

³ We are held by the work of:

DJ Savarese: <https://www.djsavarese.com/> [Retrieved on November 28, 2022]

Ralph Savarese: <http://www.ralphsavarese.com/> [Retrieved on November 28, 2022]

Adam Wolfond: <https://milkweed.org/author/adam-wolfond> [Retrieved on November 28, 2022]

Estee Klar: <https://www.eesteerelation.com/dissertation-neurodiversity-in-relation-an-artistic-intraethnography> [Retrieved on November 28, 2022]

Chris Martin:

<https://www.harpercollins.com/products/may-tomorrow-be-awake-chris-martin?variant=39813830770722>

[Retrieved on November 28, 2022]

Erin Manning (2016; 2020)

Melanie Yergeaux (2015)

David Ben Shannon (2020)

And, and, and...

how normativity sustains itself. We see what can wiggle there, believing that even normativity can shake with supernormal potential in spite of itself.

To get beyond Education as we know it, the unspecial must lose its grip as a perceptive tendency. To get beyond the violence of disregarding the surplus value of life, we can learn to hold for each other the space for thinking within new valuations⁴. “The risk of thought,” as Glissant (1997, np) puts it, is that it inspires the imaginaries of peoples, in all of their poetics, and through them spreads out into the world as transformations. What transformations await within the ordinary borders of existence, and how can new modes—and even radically ordinary modes—of collective study nudge us there? The mode of perception for our study—all that which is unquantifiably special, which moves learning forward on its own—is not asked to account for itself too squarely. “Special” is a word that’s been made to hurt or made to trivialize. Or else it’s been corrupted with individualist exceptionalism. Believing in it anyway is already an act of courage. Think of the special here as the surplus value of life, which is lived for its own sake. The surplus value of life is:

“something that is a value in and of itself, in the unexchangeable ‘currency’ of experience. A life-value has value to the exact degree to which it is incommensurable with any other experience. It is the singular color of an experience, such as it is, all of its own, that makes of it a life-value. In fact, a quality of life has value in exactly the way we say a color or a sound has a value. It has the value of the qualitative character of its own occurrence.”

Massumi, 2018, p. 25

How would it be different to think of *a way of knowing* within the quality of its own occurrence as such? What modes of collective study might facilitate our relations between the

⁴ See, ie. Massumi’s (2018) exploration of the surplus value of life as a postcapitalist manifesto.

singular colors of experience? Can we learn to give the perception of that which is special back to each other's experiences, as a mode of study which brings us back to life? This is a question of increasing our powers for collective invention, curiosity, play, potential, even love, in exactly the way that life has already provided the terms for it through its own qualitative occurrence.

Increasing our powers for collective invention is an affective matter. This goes through Spinozist affect: the variations produced as one body acts upon another, or what Massumi (1987) describes as “the passage from one experiential state of the body to another [...] implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act” (n.p.). Seigworth (in Dernikos et. al, 2020) teaches us that affect is pedagogy's first lesson, or pedagogy is affect's first lesson. The question of what a body can do—the signature question in studies of affect theory—“is fundamentally a pedagogic matter”(p.87). Further, Deleuze and Guattari (1996, p.12) think of philosophy itself as a pedagogic matter. In describing philosophy as the work of concept-creation, they explain three ages of the concept: 1) the encyclopedia, full of post-Kantian universal claims, 2) a pedagogy of the concept as a “more modest task” (p.12), and 3) the commodity of the concept, hijacked by marketers, advertisers, brand ambassadors, and so on (p. 10). They tell us that only the second, pedagogy, “can safeguard us from falling from the heights of the first into the disaster of the third—an absolute disaster for thought whatever its benefits might be, of course, from the viewpoint of universal capitalism” (p. 12).

The philosophical-pedagogical work of following collective thinking as the soft ongoingness that belongs to our bodies below knowledge production's performative forms is a modest task, an earnest one. It refuses the assignment of the knowledge economy by refusing the individualism it propagates. Our pedagogies for collective thinking are moved instead by the poetics of relation (Glissant, 1997), which is affecting and being affected by others through the

mutual transformations of our encounters. Therein, “[S]ingularity and collectivity are no longer at odds with each other” (Seem, in Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. xxi). The ways in which we make each other possible gather from a force of learning that I am calling *life in its pedagogy*.

This is radically political. It refuses the assignment of an unspecial Education to frame experience through the presuppositions of imperialism, neurotypicality, whiteness, heteronormativity, and the capitalist constraints they re-feed, and refuses still to take up the narrowness of the negative image of these presuppositions, whereby we become a reaction to it – or as Harney and Moten (2013) would say, it refuses the choices as offered (i.e., p.8). We don’t yet know how to unstick the identity politics⁵ that keep us in a constant conjugation with oppressive outlines of existence *while at the same time* caring for the violence of its effects that continue to play out. It’s a truly generative problem, worth asking into the poetics of relation as we dream and fabulate the other ways of living that we need. Harney and Moten’s (2013) concept of study as a gesture of being “with and for” (i.e., p.5) each other is an essential movement here.

“Special Education” exists because it has been asked to do its vital work as an exclusion from the presuppositions of a normative Education. This sustains again and again a normative world in which all that which is special in a body is excluded from the conditions we provide for existence. We must refuse the choice between Special Education and Unspecial Education because we must refuse to become Unspecially Educated, and it is the mission of becoming

⁵ By “identity politics”, I am referring to the organization of political movements around given identities—women, racialized groups, religious groups, LGBTQ community, etc—rather than around political issues themselves. The concept of the subject as-given with a set of political attachments inspires much debate over how this organizes the potential of our bodies. We get Butler’s critique of the modernist subject, we get the postmodernist substanceless subject, we get the question of whether to populate politics with multiple identities or to remove the concept of identity from politics. Hekman (2016) paints it broadly for us. Mainly, we get the problem of how people are oppressed *through* identity formation while finding resources for change in those same identities (see: Valverde, 1999). Understanding the body as a set of relations, I go with Moten here, in his experiments with “consent not to be a single being” (i.e., 2017).

Unspecialy Educated that I wish to shake here. We must refuse a normative logic of inclusion⁶, which assumes the same framework that makes exclusion possible to begin with– to *include* precludes the understanding that we are inseparable to begin with. Massumi (2014) calls this *exclusion within the act of inclusion* (i.e., p.68). Ferreira da Silva (2016) would call us to think about *difference without separability*. What is truly special about life is that *we are all here*, the exact degrees of difference between us are the qualitative conditions by which we co-constitute each other. To be *with and for* each others' lives, as a movement inseparable from the constitution of our own wellbeing, is the symbiotic gesture of learning that the Unspecial Educations's false separations has misunderstood.

Refusing the choices as offered, refusing the assignment as such, This is essentially a meta-study on how learning deviates outside of the parameters of the Unspecial Education. We could almost call it a schizoanalytic case study, which goes with the drift beyond a set of normative discourses around knowledge production. *Schizoanalysis*, by way of Deleuze and Guattari (1983), follows deviations towards the new modes of existence they may express. We are about to follow an unspecial education losing its grip. By the time we reach the *Poetics* section, our anxious ADHD researcher will hurl us through a tussle with various pathologies around the concept of education, stuck in the closed binary circuit of either trying to squeeze into the script of an education as given or doubling down on its powers for harm by reacting against it. The necessity of a third option, where deviations break loose from the circuit altogether to invent on their own terms, is worked up in the gasps for air between this pressure. Though we are studying study itself, curious about how the catch uncatches between the track of neurotic

⁶ In Education, we come to the problem with the concept of inclusion, again and again, in different ways. See: Bossaert et. al, 2013, for the question of whether students with special needs are “truly included”, and how such a term actually operates within schools, how it is largely a synonym for students' relationships and interactions with peers and acceptance amongst social groups– a question which structural supports for students with special needs may not actually address.

normativity and the tracklessness of the desire for learning, we're bound to be curious about our neurotic researcher herself as well. I've given her in this paragraph as a little character and now I'll all but take her away: we're not studying her, but we are studying *with* her. I don't know who she is except that she used to be me, or various me's. In the social sciences and literacy research, we'd tend to narrativize her and grasp for traditional interpretations along the stakes of her wandering paths. In process and affect philosophy, we'd probably go a bit further in the other direction, to de-center her. Why not work from between, as an honest engagement with how the question of subjectivity stirs? Moten's *consent not to be a single being*, elaborated from Wink's translation of Glissant's *consent à n'être pas un seul* (in Moten, 2017, np.), is a call to escape with the deviations of our neurotic researcher, neurodiverse graduate student, grieving daughter, teacher, child philosopher, nomad, as more than a single being. We will escape the codes of a single narrative, at the same time perhaps as wanting or expecting that structure. Studying together this way, studying *study* together this way, is itself a poetics of relation.

Our mode of study here flows from an *attention abundance* that has been misunderstood as "attention deficit". I work by enabling attention abundance as a collective holding of thought. We will dodge the unspecial Education's diagnosis and allow our wandering attentions to invent. This experiment in attention abundance is radically empirical and speculatively pragmatic (i.e., James 1912), and it has exceeded the aims of several empirical research studies in order to discover alternative aims of collective study. Speculative Pragmatism, by way of James and Whitehead, is pragmatic in the sense that it is earnestly engaged with all that bears "some particular consequence in our future practical experience" (Perry in James, 1996, p.xvi-xvii), and speculative in the sense that it is completely open to ways of shifting those consequences toward their immanent potential. I will allow attention abundance to argue its own case for the interest in

immanence and “speculative middles” (Springgay & Truman, 2018) that has emerged in the social sciences and education and literacy research over the past few years. Through its own arguments for relational, ecological, affective, and superabundantly ongoing study, we will follow the pedagogical-conceptual inventions of this multiply attentive study across its interferences with the ordinary proceedings of several research fieldworks. As the radically ordinary work of learning to trust life’s pulls beyond the frame of the guidelines as given, our mode of study is equally capable of frustrating itself through reductions to anxious normativity⁷ as it is capable of gathering its powers to act from an irreducible sociality of thought. Crafting the conditions for the latter—even out of the pressurization of the former— is the radical pedagogy that is experimented here.

In the interstices of perfectly good ethnographic and research-creation fieldworks across secondary schools, a youth center, a writing workshop, and a pedagogic exhibit in a museum, across Canada, the United States, Australia, and Brazil, we won’t be able to help but deviate off the paths of the research as-given. We will find ourselves in the excess of predefined objective, following the force of immanent study as it gathers momentum from seemingly insignificant marginalia and flings its thought potential toward the suggestion of other possible worlds. Sometimes our study pressurizes through its own self-confinement to anxious normativity, and thereby cracks itself into new deviations again. The university fieldworks themselves are but a footnote to us here.⁸ They will join, by stray detail and affective jitter, the mosaic of conditions

⁷ We could speculate endlessly about how, why, this happens, about how a narrative of education as-given becomes a pathology, for example. We will allow this to play out in earnest and see what we learn.

⁸For more on my work with Pixelles, a narrative video game writing workshop for womxn in Montreal, see: Ehret, L, 2020; For more on my ethnographic work in an after-school drop-in center for youth in Canada, see: Ehret, Ehret, Low & Ciklovan, 2019; For more on my collaborations with the late Senselab (which died in parentheses, just like Mrs. Dalloway), which was an international collective for art, philosophy, and neurodiversity seeded at Concordia University, see: Manning, Munster & Thomsen, 2019. For the Senselab pedagogic exhibit at La Trobe Art Institute, Bendigo, in 2019, see: <https://www.bendigoregion.com.au/explore-bendigo/whatson/senselab-exhibition> [Retrieved on November 17, 2022.]

that make other pathways of thought available to us. The deviations we take are not oppositional to those studies themselves, but rather indicative of their surplus-value for inventing more than the set of their aims. As education research awakens to the ethics of wandering off the track of the colonial errand of research (i.e., Snaza & Weaver, 2015), toward the surplus value of our thinking communities and the more ethical entanglements they invent, we will need more ways of attending to this abundance.

You do not know what to expect from a study drawn entirely from the incommensurate excess beyond the institutional parameters of multiple research fieldworks. That is the point. We may be aware of the ethical necessity of seeing past the narrowness of a good methodology, as Whitehead (1929) might put it. We may be aware of the violence of “methodocentrism” (Weaver & Snaza, 2017) as it predetermines the value of our work and steers the procedural back towards the knowledge economy’s presuppositions. But the beauty of not knowing what else to do provides us with a moment for real creativity. Laying down the cause of the godlike knower, armed with the tools to produce the same colonial image of knowledge a thousand times, what does it actually feel like to engage the speculative practice of unknowing as a more ethical and relational way of living and learning?

Across the excess of our really very good empirical work and its really very nice outputs, we will spend most of our time here in the kitchen. In the interstices of any research fieldwork, there is the part of experience where our thoughts come home with us to sit in our kitchens. There is the part where we take a break from whatever we’ve been doing together at the youth center—the part we think of as *the work*—to microwave ramen noodles and stand around chatting idly together. These are the more than special parts of life in its pedagogy, where collective thought gathers from radically ordinary relation. In *Poetics of the Kitchen*, we will traverse years

of collective study, learning, relation, and transformation in the background of the fieldwork, classwork, reading, and taskwork that is usually foregrounded as the site of study.

As discussed in the chapter titled *In Excess of Methodology*, the “mosaic philosophy” (James, 1912) of our radically empirical attention abundance is allowed to experiment with techniques that arrive through the process’s own inventions. Allowing a process to think, as our hyperactivity of thought will experiment, exceeds method’s colonization into a single tendency. Poetics help us meander through our nonlinear, rambling, excessive study without calling it to order. For Glissant (1997), relations “do not add up to anything clear cut or easily perceptible with any certainty” (p.173). Poetics make incommensurate connections between particular experience and “all possible particulars” (p. 32). There are moments when our mode of study relays between poetics and idle chatter, between play and love. These relays elaborate an irreducible sociality of thought in which study is dissonant and continuous (i.e., Harney & Moten, 2013, p.9). Our interest is in what else collective study can be, and we experiment in earnest, elaborating different ways of doing it along the way. Taking radical empiricism seriously, all the parts are not asked to add up to a universalizing whole. Each piece enters a mosaic of thought, glittering and shining in its own right, suggesting its own ongoingness and building little worlds within a world.

Attend to our structural expectations throughout. My neurodiversity and my philosophy—between which I make no real separation— does not parse into discrete categories things like theoretical frameworks, literature review, methodology, discussion, and so on. The mosaic form here is very honest to how the whole system thinks. It behaves pretty well, with its introduction and lit-heavy pedagogy chapter and methodology chapter, its kitcheny conceptual framework and its juicy nonconcluding discussion. Its parts do all the work that the given form

needs them to do, and yet there is a surplus share of energy where these parts all relay each other's work. You will find little theory dives throughout the poetics. The pedagogy is everywhere. You could call the kitchen chapter a theoretical framework, but you'll find extra work (do I get extra credit?) on poetic thought there which is an excess of the excess of methodology. What pedagogical work is already underway between you and me, as we figure out how to relate beyond a given legibility? Again, we're doing that poetics of relation right now.

Fred Moten (2017) holds our poetics from all sides. When it feels impossible for you to read all this rambling and scrapping around and trying to scratch at the unscratchable, when the good reader in us wants to order it all into a universe that already knows what kind of universe it is, when the good learner in us wants to already put a finger on a unifying universal of what it is that we are supposed to learn, Moten might remind us to believe in unlikely juxtapositions and unfree associations which "unsettle normative ways of reading, hearing and seeing, re-ordering the senses to create new means of knowing" (np). Our mode of attention abundance experiments this past the comfortable limit, as life itself does.

It's going to take a few years to get to our *Poetics* section, where shiny bits of experience come into contact with each other. You might get bored of looking in the refrigerator⁹ with me and forgetting why we walked into the kitchen. Study is like that. It really is. Very often its rigor, life's own rigor, exceeds our capacity to faithfully attend to whatever it is that's going on. We want to get to the point, and we make little disasters by rushing to it¹⁰. We do that because we care. Sometimes we miss almost everything that experience has to offer because we were too busy caring in some specific way. Come with me and forget why we walked into the kitchen. See if we can do that together with some kind of radical presence, a holding that isn't rushing

⁹ My friend Alexis—who cooks with us here, in the interstices—says: open a fridge, find a world (Milonopoulos, forthcoming.)

¹⁰ For more on "rushing to application", see: St. Pierre, 2017

anywhere else. This is a poetics of relation that will change us along the way. Study teaches us that “you are always already in the thing that you call for and that calls you” (Halberstam in Harney & Moten, 2013, p. 7). Every moment that we aren’t sure of what we are doing, the radically ordinary ways in which life is more special than our aims is doing its work. When life’s own pedagogies catch us by surprise, in transformations that we didn’t know were underway, we may find that the ingredients for that change came from everywhere at once. We may not know what life is making with us through our study here, or what it will go on to make through us next, but we will remain quietly faithful to the radically ordinary work of feeding each other and believing in the potential that is always nourished there.

Our process deviates from time to time into *Interferences*. It’s fun to think of these as moments which “prevent (a process or activity) from continuing or being carried out properly.”¹¹ Each interference is a conceptual vector capable of reorienting the stakes of the process. The first interference, on ADHD, is the one that interrupted altogether the thesis I thought I was writing. (In this sense, the thesis itself is an interference). The others—*play*, *love*, *noise*, and *canibalismo*—are shares of shared thinking that went out into the world as-given through academic publications or public artistic events. They make themselves vulnerable to the way they may be read by the encyclopedia of knowledge of the world as-given, and also make themselves sensitive to new collective possibilities by interfering there. If you go find some of these pieces in the form of their academic publications elsewhere, they stand alone to be devoured by the given world’s editorial. But life in its pedagogy is always up to more than that. The speculative pragmatism of allowing our thoughts to be devoured by the encyclopedia of knowledge of the world as-given is that if it shits them out, even shit is a way of planting seeds and it’s one of the most basic ways

11

<https://www.google.com/search?q=interference+meaning&oq=interference+meaning&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i512l9.7723j1j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#dobs=interfere>

that our species participates in life's ecology. The risk of thought is believing in life's own ways of seeding things. This is especially felt in thought's own risks of coming into relation with what Glissant calls "the other of thought" (p.154). All together the *Poetics* create unpredictable points of contact in the relation between incommensurate experiences, which have the potential to produce weird knots and tensions as much as new portals and expansive releases. Unforeseeable motors for thought fly off in every direction. We consent to all of life's inventions here as immanently valuable to our collective study.

The immanent value of our play and noise speaks for itself. While play has always been interesting to pedagogy even if its true powers are lost on standardized Education (see, i.e., Thiel & Wohlwend, 2021), its place in philosophy—and in life— as a vital gesture (i.e., Massumi, 2014) is of singular importance here. Ailton Krenak,¹² indigenous movement leader in Brazil of the Krenak people, teaches us that "life is not meant to be useful. We have to have the courage to be radically alive, and not just to negotiate survival." All that which is truly special about our capacities to think together, as a radical pedagogy in itself, is a plea for vitality and a politics against the small sufferings that add up to a world in which greater suffering is allowed.

You need to know what my questions are. You need to know them right now, because this is the rational place to provide them. We could never live in the itch of not knowing. We're not prepared to live in the ongoingness of questioning's itch. We definitely cannot pass a thesis that doesn't already know what it's questions are, though of course speculative pragmatism is teaching us to bow humbly before life's abundant creativity for showing us that if we think we already know what the questions are, we're going to miss the other questions that beg to be attended to along the way. I'm just playing with you! Of course, I am writing to you after a long speculative process that has already brought many unexpected questions forward. To say that a

¹² Krenak on *Roda Viva*, 19/04/2021. Translation mine. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BtpbCuPKTq4>

lot of uncertainty has been experienced along the way is hilarious in its understatement. I say this simply to underscore the fact that a process can seem rational from the outside once it's arrived at a form and can lay itself down into words. I can give us a question now, as if it always existed in this form, and we can make the habit of streamlining all the speculative work here as if its unfolding was not given in the first place by the capacity to be unsteady and uncertain. We can mistake deviation for intention, post-factum, because the encyclopedia of knowledge has trained us to always put a volitional spin on the colonial errand of discovery, while of course discovery is largely the non-volition of being let in to how vastly things exceed us, how much the world glitters, shines, and excites beyond our knowing.

I'll give you the questions, and grant the attention abundance of assuming they are not the only ones. We'll call the administrators of nonsense to grant us infinity questions. You will read without knowing what you're looking for or what you'll find, you'll ask your own questions about pedagogy into the pages, bringing your curiosities in as a mode of immanent study, inhabiting the thesis as relation-production rather than knowledge-production, the process not foregone but always ahead of us in the next things we will be able to think. Ok, blah blah blah. You're about to call the bureaucratic theater of the world as-given to make me get to the point¹³. Here are the questions:

- 1) How can we develop new sensitivities to life in its pedagogy? How might this tune our practices of research, learning, and literacies toward their immanent potential?
- 2) How does the poetics of relation seed new ways of thinking about collective study? What are the pragmatics of elaborating these ways of thinking through our share in life's pedagogies?

¹³ Bronwen, ever the wise mentor and editor, says I seem to have interpellated a demanding reader in these last two paragraphs. She's right, of course. This is not the last time you'll see the unspecial education as a narrative pathology in my body, something I fight with even if it's not there. I'd rather edit it out, but I'll lay it bare so we can see what it's doing.

3) What would it mean to truly engage with the risk of thought in education, research, and literacies, towards the production of other worlds?

4) How does the poetics between these questions exceed the presuppositions of an unspecial Education, and how are more special ways of living and learning—poétigogies—invented there?

What would happen if a thesis showed bare the humble process of learning as it is actually formed and gathered from experience? If writing shows not finished form but the force of form, what could it teach us about new forms, new ways of knowing? Our study here is radically honest in its paths. It is soft in its elaborations of thought, pure not in the sense of formal purity but in the Jamesian sense of pure experience. Bare. It does not perform its knowledges. If it comes into an idea shakily, unexpectedly, or sideways, it's because study does that, turns us unexpectedly on our side. When the stakes seem to change, it's because that is what learning does. It changes us. When we fail to focus, when we wander off the track, call it *not being able to focus on the wrong thing*, though sometimes it is something trickier: pathologically focusing on the wrong thing until we explode into a new mode. The colonial errand of knowledge production fails. Through this we learn. The more we deviate, the more we learn. We learn together. We will hear Krenak plea that we must have the courage to be radically alive, and not just to negotiate survival. We will not merely survive the unspecial Education here—we will hold each other through the moments when it seems like we won't survive it. We will give each other the courage to learn how to be more radically alive.

Interference One

For Attention Abundance: The Radical Empiricisms of “ADHD”

“Sensitiveness to immediately exciting sensorial stimuli characterizes the attention of childhood and youth. In mature age we have generally selected those stimuli which are connected with one or more so-called permanent interests and our attention has grown irresponsive to the rest.”

James, 1890, p.417

Attention is the act of applying the mind to something. This is broadly understood as an act of selective narrowing¹⁴. In *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), William James describes attention as “the taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought.” This is the work of executive function to choose, from all available stimuli, one object to apply the mind’s focus to. In a lifetime of finding it rare to focus on just one thing at a time, one might never think to characterize this experience as “attention deficit” if it is experienced, on the contrary, as attention abundance.

The routine violence of the diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder as a biomedical function for pathologizing and policing the behaviour of children in schools almost needs no introduction. Sjöberg & Dahlbeck (2018) lay it out for us. Whereas “deviant” behavior has been medicalized in the Western world for more than a hundred years (Thomas et al. 2005, in Sjöberg & Dahlbeck, 2018, p.97), we are seeing an increased tendency for psychiatrization in which a vast spectrum of human behaviors are interpreted and pathologized as brain disorders under a biomedical lens (e.g. Mills 2014, in Sjöberg & Dahlbeck, 2018, p.97). This relies largely on understanding human behaviors at the level of the individual without accounting for the contributing effects of social, cultural, and institutional conditions (e.g., Timimi 2009, in Sjöberg

¹⁴ See: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/attention> [Retrieved on November 19, 2022.]

& Dahlbeck, 2018, p.97). It also tends to skirt the fact that psychiatric diagnoses are always influenced by political, economic and professional interests (Davies 2017; Frances and Widiger 2012; Göttsche 2015; in Sjöberg & Dahlbeck, 2018, p.98). ADHD is one of the most widely studied psychiatric diagnoses in the world, without any consensus on the nature of the disorder or its cause. Tait (2005) refutes that it is even a disorder: “ADHD is a product of social governance” (in Sjöberg & Dahlbeck, 2018, p.98).

Sjöberg & Dahlbeck point out that pathologizing children’s uncontrolled and immoral behavior is not a new phenomenon, and subjecting children to medical interventions for perceived problems in attention and levels of activity has been going on since the late eighteenth century (Lange et al. 2010; Rafalovich 2001; Taylor 2011; in Sjöberg & Dahlbeck, 2018, p.98). Yet schools pushing for performance and/or contending with increasing class sizes has resulted in an increase of adolescents and children all over the world receiving a diagnosis (Wedge, 2015, in Sjöberg & Dahlbeck, 2018, p.98). Sjöberg & Dahlbeck invite us to consider this from a Spinozist perspective on the production of health. For Spinoza, “mental health is not an internal feature of the mind but rather an effect of encounters with external bodies and ideas, whereof some are empowering (resulting in an increase in mental health) and some are debilitating (leading to a decrease in mental health)” (Sjöberg & Dahlbeck, 2018, p.100). Wellbeing “is never individually constituted or separate from the world, but is always constituted in relation” (p.102), meaning that from a Spinozist perspective, ADHD would be an inadequate idea because it fixes the universal concept of a disorder onto the body rather than asking how the body is affected by everything in the environment to produce certain experiences or potentials. A child is given a diagnosis, and it is used to organize their existence within the world. This stops short of asking how the world organizes around the child, what effects are produced beyond the narratives the

biomedical lens looks for, and how different ways of organizing the world around the child might throw the child's capacities into a new light and allow new experiences to emerge.

For a body's activity to be considered excessive, we'd have to stop to consider how the world has first confined the body to a desk, and how this has allowed for the perspective of what constitutes "excessive" to emerge. For a body's attention to be considered deficient, we'd have to ask if the world is applying the demand for focus too narrowly and too relentlessly in order for the perspective of a deficiency to emerge. For impulsivity to exist, we'd need to ask how our world has invested in a centuries' old image of human reason and its moral narratives in order to produce an imperative for rational forethought, which will take us later on down the line to Whitehead's (1929) critique of Kantian reason. For Adult ADHD to be anecdotally characterized by disorganization, problems prioritizing, and difficulty completing tasks before starting other tasks¹⁵, we would need to ask how the world has built this perspective out of the social governance of a normative logic allied with capitalist production, in which a linear, rational procedure of task-completion is the container that gives thought and experience its shape. In short, in order for disorder or deficiency to operate as a logic, we need to ask how normativity and neurotypicality have gathered the power to define the potential of our bodies (see, i.e., Manning, 2016). Which is to say that none of this suggests that my own hyperactivity-impulsivity of thought and abundant attentions do not exist, rather that institutionally we've never asked what else they can do.

James (1912) describes empiricism as "a mosaic philosophy, a philosophy of plural facts" (p.40). While rationalism emphasizes universals, making wholes prior to parts in the order of logic, empiricism goes to the parts so that the whole is understood as a collection and the

¹⁵ See, i.e.: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/adult-adhd/symptoms-causes/syc-20350878> [Retrieved on November 21, 2022]

universal is an abstraction. James proposes radical empiricism to attend further to the connections between the parts:

To be radical, an empiricism must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced, nor exclude from them any element that is directly experienced. For such a philosophy, the relations that connect experiences must themselves be experienced relations, and any kind of relation experienced must be accounted as 'real' as anything else in the system. Elements may indeed be redistributed, the original placing of things getting corrected, but a real place must be found for every kind of thing experienced, whether term or relation, in the final philosophic arrangement.

p.40

This is the reversal of rationalism's selective narrowing. Radical empiricism is an opening of multiple attentions, in which nothing can be discarded. While rationalism tries to "correct its incoherencies" by the addition of intellectual categories and unifications, radical empiricism "[takes] everything that comes without disfavor [...] each at its face value" resulting in "no such artificial correction" (James, 1912, p.40).

The universal of the diagnosis is not a direct experience, it is a category that selectively narrows the way that experience is understood, which has real effects on increasing or diminishing the powers of experience as it continues to unfold. Sjöberg & Dahlbeck (2018) point out that a diagnosis can be empowering for a body in the instances in which it provides frameworks or facilitations that do increase potential. But putting a diagnosis before all possible experience is a flattening universal that diminishes our collective capacity to facilitate a body's irreducible potential.

The direct experience of multiple attentions within a body that is, in fact, always, a connection of a connection of a connection, and the supernormal energetics of a body's capacity for thought, taken without disfavor, at its face value, with no artificial correction from the outside perspective of a rational universal, spreads out into the infinite possibilities of what a body can do. This is the essence of James' radical empiricism and Spinozist philosophies of affect and process (i.e., Spinoza, in Curley translation, 1985). We do not know what a body can do, and we would be continuously surprised by its potential if we did not cut into its processes of change with diminishing ideas. The radical empiricism of allowing attention to be multiple, allowing the hyperactivity of thought to expand, and discarding none of the experiences that become possible here, refuses Education as a mode of artificial correction under the social governance of the diagnosis. The multiplicities of a body, unnarrowed, begin to invent.

Without the selective narrowing along a rational guideline for what part of experience matters, the mind might, for example, apply its philosophical rigor, excessively, super-energetically, to the marginalia that outlies a given focus. It may take a sincere curiosity and interest in the production of possibility that is present within writing a grocery list as much as that which is present within writing a thesis. It may be equally moved by the noise in the hallway as it is by the lesson inside the classroom. These are both nonsense sidetracks from the one-track of the universalizing abstraction of education. Yet the multiple attentions here recognize that all possible parts of experience connect and relate to produce certain potentials, and none of this can be discarded. The thesis did not get written without also writing the grocery list as a little thing that keeps us alive, and the connections between these modes of thought and the way they co-create cannot be overlooked. The connections there might get us to think about how *the thesis is a salad!!!!*, each of its jewel-like components able to toss together in their own

arrangement, and this might give something new to the way of writing (it might toss the thesis! A thing that has never happened before because it doesn't sound like something that could possibly take itself seriously! Childlike impulsivity does not take itself too seriously, that is its philosophical strength.) The lesson in the classroom does not exist as a void emptied of noisy bodies, despite curriculum often seeming to guide it as such, and the tendency to discard the hallway noise bears the very real consequence of continuing curriculums that discard the potentials of actual bodies. The noise might suggest modes of learning, which we're drawn to excitedly for a reason outside of where we've trained ourselves to look for reasons.

Applying superabundant creativity to the grocery list may have a way of feeding some alternative pathways for thinking and making into other processes. It doesn't seem to matter how much this matters: capitalist normativity would call it an inability to prioritize. Attending to the noise from the hallway gathers new powers for collective thought through the sociality it makes available, through the urgencies of bodies elaborating their real stakes for collective study, but the tyranny of the lesson would call this an inability to focus. An interest in side-tracking is speculatively pragmatic.

Attend to the multiple attentions that will unfold here. Follow as they sidetrack into alternative modes of thought and alternative suggestions of worlds. Sidetrack the sidetracks into new sidetracks as much as you can. As we take everything that comes and allow a place for every kind of thing experienced, experiment with study that does not already know what knowledge is, and does not already know what a body can do, and therefore makes no artificial corrections upon the expressions of what could be. Study, inattentive to selective narrowing and hyperactive in excess of confinements, begins to *learn*.

It won't be hard for us to find a place for every kind of thing experienced—all the things our thoughts hold, all that gathers and holds our thoughts, all that glitters, shines, and excites, every sidetrack into the truly special. It's not actually hard to make room for everything in the universe. Life itself does it all the time.

My friend Emma taught me about the ADHD in my body on one of our walks, or maybe during one of our dinners in my kitchen. My walks with her are walking with us now. Emma walks with us. Her body is a citable body, I'm citing it now: Emma Flavian. Brilliant alter-administrator of multiple ways of knowing, ways of walking our knowings into ways of walking each other home.

Chapter One **Life in its Pedagogy**

“...the green of a mango when the fruit is first forming, the green of a mango fully formed, the greenish yellow of the same mango ripening, the black spots of an overripe mango—the relationship among these colors, the developing fruit, its resistance to our manipulation, and its taste. It was possibly at this time, by doing it myself and seeing others do it, that I learned the meaning of the word *squashing*.

—Paulo Freire, 1983, p.6

“Take it just as we feel it...”

—William James, 1912, p. 48

Learning always leads us beyond ourselves. That is its promise. We can ask learning to take up our tasks, mind our parameters, and produce our intentions, but if it has done its work of changing us along the way, it will overflow the governance of who we were at the beginning of the process and find us in the middle of wanting different things that flow from who we are becoming now. We can ask learning to be comprehensible, yet it will overflow into the invention of a thousand incomprehensible things. It will create its own ways of knowing from within its unfolding. It will carry its own unforeseen potentials, commensurate with the unforeseen

potentials of life itself. Learning will begin before we realize it's begun, it will continue after we think it's ended, and its most important work will happen at the edges of our perception, where we can feel all the difference it's made without being able to point to exactly what's happened. This is the ungovernability of process: life in continuous flux, a change connected to a change connected to oh, oh, oh!—another change. Imagine submitting to this chaos! Imagine pretending we can control it. Now imagine something else: being in it, composing with life's flux as it exceeds us, going with the drift of change, getting curious about what else is going on and where it could take us. Imagine *learning* as a relationship with life: the appetite for more life. Imagine *pedagogy* as life itself: in us, through us, beyond us—not ours to direct, but ours to feel.

One way of entering learning through the processuality of life is through philosophies of process. Carried in part by the work of Deleuze & Guattari (i.e., 1987), Whitehead (i.e., 1929), and Spinoza (i.e., Curley Translation, 1985), process philosophy seems abhorrently complicated when we don't want to let go of all the complications we've created ourselves, but it does just that: it lets go of ontologies that have complicated life. It re-connects the disconnections that have dominated Western thought¹⁶, especially Cartesian mind/body/world separations. It acknowledges that everything is always moving and changing in relation to everything else, and it puts us back into life's vast ecology in which everything makes a difference and we can trust that the slightest little thing around us is doing important work, producing affects that ripple far and wide. It de-centers us, so that we are not the directors of change but the receivers of the change potential around us. As an ontology of change, it focuses on how new ways of being are created, again and again, through relation with everything in the environment. It focuses on life

¹⁶ Why would one need a philosophy that reconnects the disconnections that have dominated Western thought? Why wouldn't one go directly to Eastern philosophy or Indigenous thought? What is the spiritual beggar to do here? For me, the ethics is to enter where I can. I am not an Eastern philosopher or an Indigenous leader. I am a disconnected white settler-colonial wanderer, and I think from the reconnection of my disconnections as the very thing that I could offer to a world in healing. To the ways of thinking I wish to see amplified in the world, I can offer my relation. I can only offer my relation by inhabiting it as it really is.

in-the-making beyond linear, rational, and representational accounts of how life unfolds or what matters in the unfolding and why. For James (1904), this is a world of pure experience, which attends to direct experience without abstraction, including all the connections and relations between experiences. It is radically empirical, which is to say that it takes life “just as we feel it” (p.22), without standing outside of experience and commanding it to fall within pre-given meanings.

This is a risk: it is capable of producing other worlds. When Glissant (1997) says that the risk of thought is realized when thought spreads out into the world, inspiring the imaginaries of peoples in all their poetics, rather than withdrawing into a dimensionless place where only the idea of thought exists (i.e., p. 1), he is speaking of the risk this poses to the dominant world that has shaped our systems and conditions for living. Thought in all its livelihood is a risk to the world as we know it. It is a risk to capitalism as a frame which sequesters all experience. It is a risk to whiteness as an ontology which oppresses other ways of being. It is a risk to the Human as the conqueror of the universe, which decides what counts as life and steps on any seedling deemed lesser than itself. Life in its pedagogy is obviously a risk to any ontology that has positioned itself against life.

Forged by these oppressive ontologies, Education is mainly the activity of containing the risk of living thought. While it is busy directing learning into the reproduction of the given world, it has left so many of us hungry for other worlds. Since before the “affective turn in Education” (i.e: Dernikos et. al, 2020), before we knew we needed to “bewilder education” (Snaza, 2013), before we took on fugitive planning through black study and the “undercommons” (Harney & Moten, 2013), before we began practicing the alliance between black study and neurodiversity (i.e., Manning, 2020), before we talked about eating the mango

(i.e., Freire 1983) through famines of body and soul, before we were “ignorant schoolmasters” (Ranciere, 1991) trying to get beyond discipline and punishment (i.e., Foucault, 1991) to take a hard look at the “aims of education” (Whitehead, 1967), we were simply staring out the window at the far end of the school cafeteria, hungry for more life in the interstices of Education. And in the interstices, life has always given us more. It’s clear by now that learning starves when it is asked to constrict its appetite to the guidelines of an institution built by an inadequate world, and it’s clear that this has disastrously stifled life beyond that limit. It’s also clear that we need the risk of thought and the imaginaries of peoples, we need *study* (i.e., Harney & Moten 2013) as a way of living and especially a way of living together. These days we are refusing the call to order (i.e., Harney & Moten, p. 8). We’re following pedagogy into the wild (i.e., Geerts & Carstens, 2021). We’re making it past the Anthropocene¹⁷, and not only is the mango the teacher now, but she always was. And guess what? Life is sweeter.

Now we’ve really bewildered the poor human teacher. Maybe she’s recognized the arrogance of our species, but still listening to a mango was not part of her settler colonial education¹⁸. Maybe she feels the limits and the consequences of making our Human selves and our pedagogies into the voice of Reason, Kant’s “godlike faculty which surveys, judges, and understands” (Whitehead, 1929, p. 4), but maybe she didn’t know that *reason* could simply be “the art of life” (id.) moving through us. Maybe she believes that Davi Kopenawa, Yanomami spokesperson and Shaman, is correct when he says “the white people, they do not dream as far as

¹⁷ There are many places to enter this discussion, such as this from Haraway (2016): “Maybe, but only maybe, and only with intense commitment and collaborative work and play with other terrans, flourishing for rich multispecies assemblages that include people will be possible [...] including the more-than-human, other-than-human, inhuman, and human-as-humus.” (p.160)

¹⁸ despite teaching poetry and magical realism! Despite believing in literary imaginaries as making a difference in how we can live! Our mantra again: we know how to do this, and we don’t know how to do this at all. Our world with its poetry and mangoes and magical writing really does have all the seeds it needs to grow other worlds...

we do. They sleep a lot but only dream of themselves.”¹⁹ And yet that is a nightmare that’s been given so far. Our ancestors²⁰ disrupted our indigeneity to the earth, as the very least of their sins; when they settled, they settled for so much less. But the answer here is given in the feeling itself: this feeling is not a lack, it is a capacity. This feeling is a relation with life, the appetite for more life. It is the voice of learning itself, calling for resonance with everything else in the universe beyond what we’ve been and done so far.

To believe that this teacher, a creation of Education as we know it, does not have the ontological bearings to enter life in its pedagogy, is to narrow the world again, to dream only of ourselves *again*, by believing that she is doing it alone. Meanwhile life is giving all the relations necessary to enter a constellation of shared dreams and shared worlds. We enter where we can, we just need to *enter*. For Glissant, the poetics of relation is entering “a world in which one exists, or agrees to exist, with and among others” (Glissant, 1997, p.114). And through relation we are changed: what has settled is unsettled, the trampled seedlings take to the wind again. Before we were teachers, and then bewildered teachers, even before we were “critters who were later named *Homo sapiens* [emphasis in original]” (Haraway, 2016, p.159), we did come from the same soil as the mango tree, and if the hungers²¹ of the inadequate world call us back to that earth, we can go. Not as if we never settled for less, and gave less, and took too much, and took advantage, but as if we were ready to listen to life now, as if we wanted to be part of the shared worlds that give more life to all of us.

Harney and Moten (2013) call this being “separate from settling” (p.11), which is a coalition of being “with and for” (p.5) better worlds, together. The bewildered teacher

¹⁹ See: <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/89/182928/editorial/>. Retrieved on August 16, 2021.

²⁰ Forgive me for talking at you like that, settler-colonial teacher. Maybe we consented already to not be a single being. But I do wonder how it feels to be addressed like this? How it feels for everything else in the universe that walks with us to see us singled out and made to take a certain shape?

²¹ For a philosophical exploration on the potentials of hunger, see: Milonopoulos, 2019

participates in this coalition through the very bewilderment of the subjectivities we've given her—for Krenak, “subjectivity is the only flowerbed for worlds²²” (translation mine). We produce the worlds we want and need by producing subjectivities and “outlines of reality” (Guattari & Rolnik, 2007, p.10) that are made of new modes of relation and new imaginaries of thought. New dreams. This is what learning does for us—it makes us so much more than ourselves—if only we can allow it.

If the mango is the teacher, if life is the pedagogy, if we are willing to learn how this can change us, we don't need to make it complicated. We don't need to stop, step back, survey, judge, and arrange everything into a shape we can live with as the people we are so far. What would happen if we could take learning just as we feel it, allowing life's pull beyond our knowing? What if we trusted the excess of everything beyond us to create the world we need, which is just that: a world *beyond us*? What if we learned what this flux needs from us, not our direction but our participation? What would life in its pedagogy make of us if we let it? These are not questions to be answered, but to be lived. We will take them into radical empiricism—“life in its philosophy” (James, 1904, p. 19), and into process as life's *ontogenesis*, or the becoming of being²³ (Simondon, 2009). And we will not work with abstractions, but spread our thoughts into the world: the mango is not a metaphor, it is a literal encounter and a real pedagogue, an actual taste and thought and experience that seeds affects and effects. Our learning and our thinking will not be separate from all the fruits that make us and feed us, all the seeds that sow our dreams and all the trees we dream beneath. This is study that is as rigorous, and as valuable, as life itself.

²² Krenak in Forum: *Novas subjetividades, novas possibilidades de existir e resistir*, October 11, 2019. <https://forum.ufjf.br/index.php/reetrospetiva/2019/1024-novas-subjetividades-novas-possibilidades-de-existir-e-resistir> [Retrieved on August 18, 2021]

²³ If from the perspective of biology, ontogenesis is the emergence and development of an organism, philosophically ontogenesis is concerned with the continuous emergence of being, how any form of life is produced anew again and again, which we will explore.

A Pedagogy of Pure Experience

“As coisas têm vida própria.”
“Things have a life of their own.”

Garcia Marquez, 1967, in Nepomuceno translation, 2021, p. 7
[English translation mine]

Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, first published in Portuguese in 1968, has been cited more than ten thousand times in academic texts, and much more than that in casual encounters. In the field of education and especially literacy education, a gathering of pedagogues often brings at least one passionate mention of Freire’s mango tree, and the phrase uttered so many times that we can almost smell it coming: we must read the word *and* the world. What has this meant, and what has it produced, within our hundreds of thousands of pedagogical yearnings? We can’t assume that everyone gets twinkly-eyed about that mango in the same way, but it’s clear how much it resonates. For one thing, it carries a way of grounding learning in experience: Freire, who learned to read under the mango tree in his yard in Brazil, asks how we could possibly understand the meaning of the word *squash* if we’d never squashed a squishy mango. But there’s also that bit about ways of reading the world: Freire is urging for critical literacies that make sense of the world-as-given and help us understand where the mango tree in the backyard stands within it, so that the oppressed might read the world well enough to gain the power to change it. A radical pedagogy for the teacher who wants to change the world starting from the backyards of her students; at least, that is one way of reading Freire.

What else moves through this? This is not a question heading toward critique. Not only is it uninteresting, and frankly ungrateful, to critique Freire, but it’s wildly beside the point. To come along, more than fifty years later, to say that gaining power in the world-as-given is not as radical a change as we could aim for now, is a false problem, meaning philosophically it is a

problem we already have the answer to. Further, it's a false problem because it's lost the exact specificity of experience that produced Freire's questions, which ironically is just the kind of specificity that his writing calls us to consider: Freire writes from Brazil at the beginning of a military dictatorship, just when taking back power was a necessary plea. Fruitless critique avoided—where do we go with the mango from here?

To ask what else moves through Freire's gift to us (how does the mango read *us*, for example?) is to dream alongside him from all the worlds within the world under the tree. Freire said that without critical literacies, we're subject to "magical" or naïve states of consciousness (i.e., 1972, 1976), and yet a necessary magic has moved through his thinking and has continued to move. I read Freire as a pre-service literacy teacher within a humanist tradition and drooled over that image of the mango for years to come. Then I began to think of Freire again while living on a farm in Brazil a decade later, as an apprentice in more-than-human pedagogies standing beneath a mango tree for the first time. I got curious about how the force of life in the mango itself stayed with me and transformed me beyond the meaning I had ascribed to the text. We can think of literacy as a way that humans make meaning, but everything around us makes meaning too. To ask how the mango reads us is to ask: how does the mango make us meaningful? There would be a thousand answers besides what the human comes up with, but it already changes us to wonder and wander after them. What if the mango made me meaningful as a teacher by filling me with an electric taste, a salivation, for pure experience as a force that moves through teaching and learning? What if the mango makes me meaningful on the farm by getting me to gather, tend, eat, plant, share, notice, by creating in me these ways of being? Maybe we have cited Freire ten thousand times because of his view of radical pedagogy within the humanist tradition, but I believe that we have also cited ten thousand times the taste of the

mango itself that we've kept drooling for, the freshness of life we've kept dreaming of. Our readings of those words were worldings, producing worlds in us beyond the dominant world we were conscious of.

Pure experience is the radical part of James' *Radical Empiricism* (1912). Remember how he describes it:

To be radical, an empiricism must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced, nor exclude from them any element that is directly experienced. For such a philosophy, the relations that connect experiences must themselves be experienced relations, and any kind of relation experienced must be accounted as 'real' as anything else in the system.

James, 1912, p.42

A mango fruit is one real thing, a thought about a mango is another real thing, the relation between a mango fruit and a mango thought is a third real thing, and a thought about someone else's experience with a mango fruit or a mango thought is its own very real thing with its own very real effects. This is what James means by direct experience: each experience I've just described is a unique experience in its own right, none of them can be abstracted to apply wholly to the others, and they all may connect and relate to each other in ways that produce yet more unique experiences. Ordinary empiricism, for James, "has always shown a tendency to do away with the connections of things" (1912, p. 43). We flatten experience if we separate it from all of the relations that constitute it. For example, we may feel that discussing Freire's mango in a windowless classroom is not real experience, because it is not the same experience as Freire sitting beneath a mango tree. Of course it is not the same thing, but of course it *is* an actual experience as real as any other—an experienced relation with Freire's mango—and it has real

effects. Radical empiricism holds all of these kinds of experience as important in their effects on everything else.

An abstract idea of what counts as experience and abstract accounts of how experience matters can lead us to overlook everything that happens in between. James would have us account for the exact specificity of what gets produced in the relation between every aspect of that windowless classroom and a thought about someone else's thought about a mango. If we lose any of that specificity, we're conflating it with a different kind of experience, and then we've lost the conditions for asking what that exact experience could produce. We end up generalizing about the mango tree, rather than getting curious about the longing for the mango tree that is produced by the feeling that this experience of discussing the tree in the classroom is not the same as being under the tree. We lose the chance to ask about the productive capacity of that longing. We also lose the chance to be attentive to all the stakes of building realities out of a longing for the tree—stakes which themselves cannot be abstracted as purely good or purely bad from outside of their unique unfoldings. James' attention to direct experience is a way of being completely faithful to how experiences unfold and connect to other experiences, without overlooking any of the differences that get produced in between. The mango in my hand and the mango in my thoughts are both equally real, they even both make me drool. And they are each a different experience, with different environments of relations, connecting to each other and disjoining: sometimes the mango tasted better in my mind, sometimes the one in my hand surpasses all previous thought.

If this seems complicated, imagine working with abstraction instead. James (1912) again:

The holding fast to this relation means taking it at its face value, neither less nor

more; and to take it at its face value means first of all to take it just as we feel it, and not to confuse ourselves with abstract talk *about* it [emphasis original], involving words that drive us to invent secondary conceptions in order to neutralize their suggestions and to make our actual experience again seem rationally possible.

p. 48-49

Imagine that we took Freire's mango not just as an example of experience but as a metaphor, used to represent the abstract idea of experiential learning: we would be saying that it is an object applied to a situation in which it is not literally applicable, that it is an abstraction of something else we're trying to get at. But of course, it *is* literally applicable: it is literally the squashing of mangoes that produces the squishy sound in the word *squash*, directly applicable to the experience of reading that word as Freire describes it. There is a mango experience there to be accounted for, not just the idea of a mango experience to be abstracted from. What are the consequences of abstracting beyond life, which is to say, regarding the thought as totally separate from experience²⁴? Well, there are many consequences: a relation with metaphor is as real an experience as anything else, and it produces its own realities. We could abstract, and abstract, and abstract, until we've withdrawn into the dimensionless place where only the idea of thought exists (i.e., Glissant, 1997, p.1), until "experiential learning" is something we know how to talk about but don't know how to do. *How* we think alters what kind of experience we have²⁵, and what kinds of worlds are produced. We can abstract until we're building worlds that only make

²⁴ It's important to note here that it is not abstraction itself that is a problem, it is only a question of what it produces. Massumi (2014) would have us note the creative potential of "lived abstraction" (p.69). This is abstraction that is not at a distance from experience but in contact with the possibilities of experience beyond representation, whereas the abstraction of abstraction I am discussing here is precisely a problem of representation overriding experience.

²⁵ This is why, in process philosophy, concepts are not abstractions but literal machines for ways of thinking and ways of living. Take it from Whitehead (1968): "[t]he notion of pure thought in abstraction from all expression is a figment of the learned world. A thought is a tremendous form of excitement." (...) "This is why, as it is expressed, a thought is like "a stone thrown into a pond." Shaking its environment with its ripples, "it disturbs the whole surface of our being." (p.36)

sense abstractly. When we're talking about that mango in a windowless classroom, we could be having the experience of discussing a metaphor, building broadly out of the idea that learning must be grounded in experience as if "experience" is a generalizable object we can plug into a formula. But it's always possible that at the very same time, we could be reading and having the experience of longing for a mango and salivating, and maybe we build worlds out of that specific and literal drooling for life. *Life* here is not abstract at all, and not generalizable: a mango is quite literally a unique expression of life, and each drooling for it a unique expression also.

Pure experience is a simple *that*:

The instant field of the present is always experience in its 'pure' state, plain unqualified actuality, a simple *that*, as yet undifferentiated into thing and thought, and only virtually classifiable as objective fact or as some one's opinion about fact.

James, 1912, p. 74

The simple *that* of experience, emerging perception that "constantly creates micro shifts of becoming something else" (Bee et. al, 2019, p. 257), is for James admittedly a quasi-chaos because it never stops changing: "the fundamental fact about our experience is that it is a process of change" (James, 1986, p.89). Acknowledging the simple *that* of experience, distinct from its subsequent combination with mediations, meanings, understandings, and applications that make of it a totally different experience—and a different experience again when new combinations arrive—is to acknowledge that conflating all of this loses the possibility of what else is going on, how else it could all combine, what else could happen. We can lock down the meanings of experiences within pregiven morals or assumptions, beginning with assumptions about what constitutes experience itself, but there will always be more going on. Going directly to experience, before assuming the secondary conceptions that make our experience seem rationally

possible—or rationally valuable in a given framework—leads us to ask different questions and open to different potentials. It leads us to become different things through the emergence of experience, through the simple juicy *that* of life unfolding. If we didn't already know what it meant, what else could it do? What else could we become?

The simple *that* of Freire's mango appearing in my mind as a pre-service teacher had its own productive force beyond every meaning I began to layer onto it. I said to others, at the time, that it made me want to teach, but before I'd reached for those words and started saying them, before I reached the idea that it made me want to teach, I think first it was a simpler activation: it made me want to *live*. I started saying, in conversation and in teaching statements, that it made me want to make learning real for my students, but I reached that idea because first it simply made me feel something *real*. The simple *that* of a juicy mango, a piece of life, gave me the appetite for more life, and I began to invent what *more life* could be. Of course, I hitched my inventions to the meanings that had been given, a specific angle of production: the idea of teaching like Freire had mixed with the juicy taste of life that first appeared. But why stop there? A mango could never. In between my ideas of why my encounter with Freire mattered, that juicy appetite itself was endlessly productive. I didn't actually teach like Freire; the aspiration was too abstract. But I taught out of the taste for life, the invention of what else *more life* could be. At the very same time as experiencing, in relation to Freire, a given world and a given notion of what teaching is, there was another layer of experience in between, in the force of life in the mango, where all possible worlds are yet to be invented, where we never know what else teaching could be or what else it could do. The appetite is endless. What happens when we take it just as we feel it?

Life in its Literacies

“I get a thrill guessing/ the way people will respond/ to me and my open/
Languaging.”

Adam Wolfond²⁶

“Talvez estejamos muito condicionados a uma ideia de ser humano e a um tipo de existência.”
“Maybe we are too conditioned to be human as a type of existence.”

Krenak, 2019, p. 29 (translation mine)

For at least a decade, literacy studies has grappled with the problem of how emergent experience has been excised from institutional accounts of literacy practices and literacy pedagogies. Boldt & Leander (2013), for example, describe how children’s own unforeseeable desires and movements constitute emergent literacy-related practices that make them “alive to the world in a way that few school literacy practices [do]” (p.43). One child’s playful and passionate literacy-related activity outside of school with a Japanese manga book stands in sharp contrast with the fact that the same child was labeled as underperforming along the guidelines of what counts as literate behavior within school. This elaborates a critique of the New London Group’s pedagogy of multiliteracies in which “student interests are brought into the curriculum. However, their interests are taken as a point of departure with no ontological reality, no body of their own” (p.43). In other words, the set path of curriculum would like to steer student interests towards its aims, while the pure experience that sparks those interests tends to invent other paths and ways of being. Beyond the rational design of literacy pedagogy which takes students’ interests and emergent literacy activities to be rationally designed as well, Boldt and Leander ask: “can the teacher make space for fluidity and indeterminacy as the nature of things? Can he

²⁶ In the poem *Eros if Bathing Stimming Dancing*, 2022. See:
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/158826/eros-of-bathing-stimming-dancing-pacing>
[Retrieved on November 28, 2022]

or she recognize difference, surprise, and unfolding that follow along paths that are not rational or linear or obviously critical or political?” (p.44).

Between manga and mangoes, the question of whether or not a teacher can make space for emergent experience is a question produced by the constraints of the given system of schooling, a system which, as Foucault might point out, does not even need to be as severe as the dictatorship Freire faced in order to govern the kinds of pedagogical questions we are asking within its parameters. Boldt and Leander hope that research and pedagogy might “emerge into improvisational flight” (p.44), but it is clear that a decade back from where they’ve helped us to arrive now, they are speaking to a disciplinary field that may not recognize what is being offered, and they hedge that their observations: “clearly [...] do not constitute a pedagogy” (p.43). What if we believed in the pedagogy that is at work in the interstices of the discipline that might fail to recognize it as such? This is not another fruitless critique, rather it is an acceptance of the invitation to truly flee on the flight that was offered.

The energetic problem here is that any encounter with mango or manga will produce a hundred thousand possibilities that lead us beyond the disciplinary regimes we’ve been given, and our institutions keep giving themselves to preventing the possibility of their own dissolution. To ask if teachers can make room for emergent experience is to ask if we can help experience to sneak itself past the standardization of literate activity that has become little more than a way of reigning experience in. The threat of pure experience is precisely that it does not obey any prescription for how experience ought to unfold or what it ought to produce, and certainly it doesn’t answer to the will of the white settler colonial educational framework for such. How is a discipline designed to prescribe literate experience going to cope with this? To get beyond the situation such as it’s been proposed to us by the discipline, the good news is that pure experience

has not needed our help to sneak off and invent other things. And the more the institution fails to cope with such inventions, the more the structure shakes in spite of itself.

Niccolini (2016) points out that affect is a pedagogical force, and that “affect as pedagogy puts pressure on legacies that position the human, usually the teacher, as the sole locus of pedagogy in the classroom” (p.230). Niccolini recounts a classroom encounter in which a pedagogy emerges and stirs amongst students regarding the subject of homophobia, and exceeds the pedagogy that was expected so much so that it results in the dismissal of a student teacher from the school. Here there is of course the question of how our institutions and practitioners might reconceptualize pedagogy to include the importance of such an encounter. But there is also the question of why such a pedagogy and its consequences have been excluded in the first place, how such exclusions rupture due to their inadequacy to account for life, and how such ruptures become the force for creating other ways of living. Life in its pedagogy is always teaching us the consequences of the world we’ve built. We may feel called to make room for considering these consequences within that same world, and at the same time we can follow these provocations on to the next possible world.

When my students and I read *The House on Mango Street* together during my first year of teaching, it erupted into yelling, protest, and disagreement over the subject of sexual violence. For years afterward I regretted not knowing what to do, not having a sturdy didactic response, not being able to arrange the conversation into something that satisfied the longing to resolve ethical tensions. But life in its pedagogy had shaken up the very real lack of resolution in the matter, and it propelled the longing for a better response to the issue of sexual violence far beyond the duration of the classroom encounter, perhaps for all of us. A few decades prior, when Sandra Cisneros began writing *The House on Mango Street* at the Iowa Writer’s Workshop, she

felt alienated from the other students "as a person of color, as a woman, as a person from a working-class background."²⁷ Feeling angry, intimidated, and wanting to quit, she worked up a way to write: "in reaction to being there I started to have some Mango Street almost as a way of claiming this is who I am." (Tokarczyk, 2008, p.212-219). The world of an elitist writing institution was so unlivable that the invention of a more livable world shook itself out, a Mango Street that went on to help many imagine worlds. Life in its pedagogy, shaking things out this way, tends to worry the human pedagogue, I think: our desire to take action makes this seem like a call for inaction. But it is rather a call for being in the work that is already at work. It is a call for asking what our fullest participation might be in the pedagogy that far exceeds us, and far exceeds any one encounter or outcome we've imagined. Beyond the set path of our curriculums and pedagogies as we've already envisioned them, a left turn onto Mango Street can always appear, can always lead us further than we thought we could go.

Pedagogies and literacies are, of course, modes of relation. What we make of them can amplify or diminish all that they make of us. Our beautiful literacies have also been used as an imperialist tool for centuries (see, i.e., Gee: 2015), and our literary subjectivities, whatever else they may produce, have been used to create the exclusions of prestige value. We have begun to break loose and run full-tilt toward the dust our literacies actually came from, recognizing that literacies are connections and relations and expressions shared between everything living—which is to say: everything²⁸. On one end of such relations, our most traditional human literacies go back three thousand years to a time when "writing" was the result of pressing a cut reed into wet clay to make markings, and "books" the result of collecting the dried clay tablets

²⁷ <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=102900929> [Retrieved on May 5, 2022]

²⁸ More on more-than-human literacies: "Signs are not exclusively human affairs. All living beings sign. We humans are therefore at home with the multitude of semiotic life" (Kohn, 2013, in Snaza, 2019, p.60). Haraway (2016) would go further to "material-semiotics"(p.4), and Krenak (2016) would disregard the separation: "we were alienating ourselves from this organism of which we are part, the Earth, and we began to think that it is one thing and we are another: the Earth and humanity" (p. 16).

on shelves (see: Kurlansky, 2016, in Snaza, 2019, p.60). On the other end, wet clay expresses meanings and orients relations in its own right—Hackett & Somerville (2017) describe children playing with mud this way:

Human makings with mud are continually redirected by the questions posed by mud and water at their interface. What is water and what is mud, how is water and how is mud, as the girls become water/river swishing water from the river to make dry mud wet and gathering up mud to form shapes, making wet mud dry. Human words and stories give way to sensory entanglement with mud and water. Movement and sound are the ways in which the mud and water pose these questions, and the children's answers, through gestures, full body movements, vocalisations, songs and words, are deeply entangled with these wider more-than-human movements, some of which result in sounds and words at the level of human perception.

p.386

Krenak would have us wonder: “Why do we insist so much and for so long on participating in this club [humanity], which most of the time only limits our capacity for invention, creation, existence and freedom?” (p.13, translation mine). By losing our equal footing with the mud, “we [are] alienating ourselves from this organism of which we are part, Terra, and we began to think that it is one thing and we are another: Terra and humanity” (p. 16, translation mine.) Krenak reminds us that we come from the mud: “I don’t understand where there’s anything that isn’t nature” (p.16-17, translation mine), but within this is the same plea made by the children swishing water in the river: “we are always able to tell one more story” (i.e., 2019, p. 27, translation mine).

To recognize life in its literacies is to understand that “everything in the universe is a singular expression of everything else in the universe” (da Silva 2016, p.65, citing Leibniz, 1646-1716), that we are part of life’s compositions through the relation of everything to everything else. The ways in which traditional human literacies participate in life’s compositions and what they produce will always extend beyond our perception, and yet we can engage with the broader consequences of how we relate to the world through our practices. If we gather our literacies into a definition of who we are, we must care for the consequences of how this has produced the lofty literate human figure mainly used to dehumanize others (see, i.e., Snaza, 2013), and how this has produced our disciplines within that image. Meanwhile, we can scatter our literacies into the wind to ask what else we could become in that relation, remembering Krenak again: “subjectivity is the only flowerbed for worlds²⁹” (translation mine). Life’s own literacies are always making other kinds of meanings. We are always the material in something else that’s being made, our bodies combined into a composition of a different kind. We are always the seeds for processes that grow way over our heads. A pedagogy for life in its literacies, for nestling into this kind of participation, might begin by asking without giving ourselves an answer: what is life seeding?

²⁹ Krenak in Forum: *Novas subjetividades, novas possibilidades de existir e resistir*, October 11, 2019. <https://forum.ufri.br/index.php/reetrospectiva/2019/1024-novas-subjetividades-novas-possibilidades-de-existir-e-resistir> [Retrieved on August 18, 2021]

Ontogenesis and the Seeds of Better Living

“We do not witness the ontogenesis because we always place ourselves before the taking-form that is the ontogenesis.”
—Simondon, 2009, p.5

For Simondon, ontogenesis is “the character of the becoming of being” (2009, p.5).

Becoming here is the “division of being into phases” (p.6). Becoming is not a framework for being, but rather a dimension of it. It is “a mode of resolution of an initial incompatibility that is rich in potentials” (p.6). Of course, as everything is always moving, becoming is necessary again and again and again. Becoming is the conservation of being “through the exchanges between structure and operation, proceeding by quantum leaps through successive equilibriums” (p.6). *Being* itself is not a substance, matter, or form—it is a *system*, “not consisting only of itself” (p.6). Body, machine, and nature, for example, are all the same thing: “transversal connections of connections of connections” (Gil, 2019, p.151). Being cannot be thought without everything else in the system. This is why the godlike concept of reason, from outside of experience, cannot actually explain being and becoming: Simondon (2009) tells us that “the world cannot be re-constructed *post factum* with monads³⁰, even by adding other principles such as that of sufficient reason, so as to order them into a universe” (p.6). An idea such as reason, explanation, definition, identity, could only apply to one of the phases of being and cannot apply to ontogenesis, or the becoming of being as a continuous process.

These quantum³¹ leaps of becoming go on at every level of being, whether we notice or not, and what’s curious is the strong tendency to continuously re-frame our being as the same thing over and over again. We can get caught up in neurotic normativity (see: Guattari, 1995, p.72), “which invests itself body and soul in the compulsion to repeat the same, to the extent

³⁰ *Monads* here being an indivisible entity, such as an atom.

³¹ It’s kind of rare to talk quantity in irreducibly qualitative work! But here, Simondon gets us to gesture towards becomings as many, many, many in number, an endless accumulation.

humanly possible” (Massumi, 2014, p.70). We may find ourselves perceiving minimal difference as a threat to “the way things are” (p.70), guarding structural borders against the implosion of categories and parameters of being presented by becomings. The problem is a lack of attention to the processuality of life as it calls for structures and categories to phase into new equilibriums as much as being does, and a lack of regard for the levels of this ontogenesis that are beyond our *post factum* human logics and ordering principles.

But we can be kind to the tendency to tightly grip the way things are: isn’t this simply an expression of the desire for the persistence of being? It’s the same motor as ontogenesis, moving backwards to hold onto life as it is a little longer, whereas ontogenesis holds onto life precisely by phasing it into the new conditions and ways of persisting that it now needs. Life is always capable of shaking the normative tendency in spite of itself, blurring the boundary between what is and what could be until the latter catches on by surprise.

To trust in life’s persistence, in its persistent creativity, in its endlessly creative appetite for what could be, is to take up the possibility of learning the way that life learns. Life phases willingly, along its own logics, formed by the force within the system itself, guiding its own conditions for persistence. It does not look from outside itself to ask if this is comprehensible from a conceptual distance, from the comparative angle of a different constellation of being or a hypothetical reconstitution of itself. It does not design from the distance of comprehensibility from elsewhere. What would it be like to learn the way that life learns, to make the way that life makes, to live the way that life lives with its own reasons for its own phases and its own robust appetite to live a little more in each phase?

Life’s own pedagogy does not take up the aims of the individual or the institutions that wrap around this image of being. Rather, it moves us at the level of our being where we are a

connection of a connection of a connection. Here our being and becoming is suitably messy: it is not separable from the whole system of relation that constitutes it, affecting and being affected by life in all its other connected expressions. We do not consist only of ourselves. We do not exist without everything else in the system of the universe. How does life call us thus to a deeper ethics? How does life give in full the ethics necessary for living better as co-constituted beings through its own modes of learning, its own phases of becoming?

We do not need to presume to have an answer to that—our answers only apply to one phase of being, and not to becoming. Rather than to try to have an answer, we only need to be changed by the asking, and to follow that change into shifts in our living. Did the living shift, just a little, just now when the human didn't need to have an answer? Did you witness the ontogenesis that just took place? When Simondon says that we do not witness ontogenesis, that we always place ourselves before its taking-form, he is calling us to remember that our perception does not keep up with life's becomings, that we exist in the middle of transformations that we do not control, and that we tend to think of ourselves from outside of experience so that we only notice what's happening in its final gesture. How can we catch on to what *could be* right in the middle of its momentum? How can we negotiate with the safeguard of rearing back at the last second? How can we leverage the desire for the persistence of being into the ontogenesis at hand, loosening the grip of the individual on its sense of what already is? How can we move as a transversal connection of connection of connection, a process of a process of a process, a seed of a seed of a seed? How is life already teaching us this?

*The Way Life Studies*³²

I can't study unless it's the way Harney & Moten (2013) describe study, which is this radically ordinary thing of living together as usual, and noticing its powers:

It's talking and walking around with other people, working, dancing, suffering, some irreducible convergence of all three . . . playing in a band . . . or old men sitting on a porch, or people working together in a factory ... To do these things is to be involved in a kind of common intellectual practice. What's important is to recognize that that has been the case – because that recognition allows you to access a whole, varied, alternative history of thought. (p. 110)

This is the difference between study that anticipates a classroom and study as it has always spread itself out into the world. It's like love—or, it *is* love. Not all study is love, and that's the problem. But love is always study – relational by definition, ontogenetic in force. The distinction between study as framed by the classroom and study as it runs into the world is the same distinction that exists between love in a movie and love in a movie theater, where 50 people sit next to each other and dream of other worlds, or love on the sidewalk afterwards, where five kids stand around talking about Wakanda. For Moten and Harney, study is a mode of thinking with others separate from the thinking institutions require of us. It is an embeddedness that allows us to 'spend less time antagonized and antagonizing' (p. 11) within the modes of critique and hierarchies of credit that neoliberal learning models wedge between us. Study is a mode of what Harney calls 'the with and the for' (p. 11). It implicates a togetherness that the individualist institution has never imagined nor supported.

Love is 'a mess-making force' (Berlant, 2011, p. 685), of course. This is for the best: living and learning are messy, and only our lesson plans and methodology sections try to pretend

³² A version of this section originally appeared in Rackley et. al, 2021.

otherwise. Love always implicates the concept of desire, and so does learning (see: Mozère, 2014). What if we understood these two – love and learning – as movements of what Ashon Crawley calls ‘otherwise possibility’ (A. Crawley, 2019)? The world becoming new in a feeling, a force, a drive. This is a belief in the world that Moten carries in the working and dancing and suffering of study. ‘Like Deleuze,’ he says, ‘I believe in the world and I want to be in it . . . because I believe in another world in the world and I want to be in that. And I plan to stay a believer, like Curtis Mayfield’ (in Harney & Moten, 2013, p. 10). Black study, as Moten would have it, is as ontogenetic as black life: its creativity for inventing life beyond the lack of imagination of dominant frameworks is a belief in all the worlds inside of this world, and in what else the world could be. To believe in the world through its failings and to work, dance, and suffer for the new worlds within it, is nothing less than love. To study is to actively love the world and its potential.

If love and learning always implicate desire, literacy and education researchers have been urging for pedagogical openings for the movement, feeling, and desire through which learning bursts (see: Boldt et al., 2015) as standardization attempts to suck all possible poetics from classrooms. This is a reaching out for connection. It is a belief in the world in the sense that it believes that learning ‘does not have to do with what happens when children master the official curriculum; rather, learning happens in moments that leak through curriculum when the children are able to snatch something that empowers their own “forces of life”’ (Boldt et al., 2015, p. 431, citing Mozère, 2014, p. 102). The institutional structure of classrooms has always been disconnected from the forces of life that overspill its boundaries. Life’s poetry is always being written by the chorus of laughter in the stairwell as students come back from lunch. The work a teacher didn’t assign is the work that changes her. The way study spreads itself out into the world

is through memory's replay of one moment between learners, composed in relation to life's urgencies in the excess of curricular focus, which offers new ways of living every time it is remembered again and remembered differently. So our question here is not how to let the world into classrooms, but how to follow study out into the world. Otherwise possibility: the lesson never ended, the teacher is the embeddedness of relation and the mess-making force of life itself, and it is constantly teaching us how to love and how to study.

For Moten and Harney, study is a mode of thinking with others separate from the thinking institutions require of us. It is the recognition that we could 'spend less time antagonized and antagonizing' (p. 11) by sidestepping the modes of critique and hierarchies of credit in which the activity of thought becomes a neoliberal defense mechanism that drives us apart rather than a sociality that brings us together. Study is a mode of what Harney calls 'the with and the for' (p. 11). It is a togetherness that does its work by skipping hand-in-hand past the individualist institution's vision for how our study matters and why, what it's put towards and how.

Our attention abundance is frankly bored with talking *about* this mode of study again and again and again. Our hyperactivity of thought is ready to walk it and dance it and play it, to live it and love it out. What would it do for us to elaborate this mode of study further as it emerges within the experience of the rest of our poetics here? What if our working-dancing-suffering rolled out our concept of study in real time? What if the mosaic of our reading and concept-building was gathered in shiny pieces through the living, growing with us as we live it, as is always the case? We will love out this mode of study further along the way, we will see its momentum gather from every poetic to come and especially the poetics between poetics. Call the bureaucratic theater of the world as given—it's against the laws of APA format to abandon a section midway and relay the thinking to a different part of the document. The

American Psychological Association is ready to diagnose us. Our attention abundance is playing too much, having too much fun, inventing too many ways. If we're not careful, we might learn something, and that would be really risky.

The Risk of Thought Realized

“But all things excellent are as difficult as they are rare.”

Spinoza (in Curley Translation, 1985, p.617)

The risk of thought does not land on each of our bodies in the same way. Our proximities to its risks are all incommensurately different. What is it to invent other worlds when the political stakes do not touch your body as closely as they could? Keep those words close to the body. Keep these words close, too: what if everything, *everything*, did change? What if we found ourselves far from the world as we knew it? Far from the way that capitalism kills some of us silently and others loudly, the way colonialism poisoned our roots and still poisons the drinking water in the First Nations³³? What if suddenly, we were all *in it* together as much as we actually are, as much as life demands, beyond the hierarchies we've dammed into the middle of the way we affect and are affected by each other? The dry side of the dam would have no idea how to swim, and that is the terror that's been avoided by inflicting worse terrors on the waters.

We are learning all too well how to perform our identity politics, how to conjugate our bodies into the given problematics. We do this because we care about it, and we want to care about it better, and sometimes we care about it so much that we conjugate the same problems back into existence, because we learn how to outwardly construct the politics of our bodies into a certain image more than we learn to awkwardly, intransitively swim in the micropolitics of relation. Only the latter develops ways of being together, in the soft squishy ongoingness of

³³ For more on the decades-long dispute over clean drinking water between the Canadian government and the First Nations: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/23/world/canada/indigenous-water-lawsuit.html>

never assuming in advance that we know how to care for relations that are still emerging. The performance of our identity politics, which maybe does facilitate the work sometimes, is not enough. Living out our weird complicities and believing in the yet weirder potentials of doing so honestly, turns our care toward life's immanence.

Chapter Two

In Excess of Methodology

"O modo de funcionamento da humanidade entrou em crise"
"Humanity's mode of functioning has entered a crisis"
Ailton Krenak³⁴

There is no method for where we're going and what we're trying to learn how to do together. There is no method for getting on, becoming-with, for love and study at the end of Education. We don't know how we'll do this, and the urgencies of the matter have finally pointed out that stopping to figure it all out in advance will not work—everything keeps changing, and we'll just have to keep moving and changing along with it. We need not one but a hundred thousand ways, cobbled-together together, passed along and patched up, scrapped and started up again from the middle, rearranged to make more room. We need ways that we've lovingly failed with something else made and something else noticed in the failing, we need ways that we've noticed that we were in the midst of something else altogether all along. We need ways of catching on to how life intervenes in what we thought we were doing, and we need all the ways that we love and study throughout these gifts of encounter and gifts of accident. The way we do things matters more than any of us can account for alone, and we are never finished helping each

³⁴ See:

https://www.em.com.br/app/noticia/pensar/2020/04/03/interna_pensar.1135082/funcionamento-da-humanidade-entrou-em-crise-opina-ailton-krenak.shtml [Retrieved on November 30, 2022]

other carry and carry on and carry out, helping each other notice how we're being carried. Showing up is not a method. It looks and feels completely different each time.

We could stop to talk about how university research fails to show up in a lot of ways. We have to keep in mind that for a great many of us, institutional learning and institutional research reproduce the violence of the rest of the inadequate world. We could stop to talk about the “major disasters of mankind” wrought by “the narrowness of men with a good methodology” (Whitehead, 1929), how scary things can happen when Homo sapiens believe that they know exactly what they're doing, how playing master and conqueror of the universe can play out through the colonial errand of the university and its onto/auto-encyclopedic circle of the state (see, i.e., Harney & Moten, 2013), or even just how the tender potential of thinking can get steered into an institutional maze that leads to the university's capital gains and the idea of the world that sustains its sovereignty. We could stop to worry that the university only recognizes its own image; that it bends toward reproducing the same pre-given figure of knowledge destined to produce the same inadequate world. We could worry about how this harms all other ways of knowing, either through exclusion or through extraction. We *should* stop and worry about this. And at the same time, we should continue our real work that goes on in the interstices, we should keep working for that other world that proposes itself to us through the everydayness of coming together, studying together. We should continue calling for a different kind of participation, inventing our own participations between this world and the next one.

Beyond the methods for the processes that humans lead on paper, the forms of participation needed from here are those that can care for the affective ripples we have within processes much bigger than ourselves. How to care for the ways of knowing that emerge when we do not assume the institutional frameworks for what counts as knowledge and what it means

to know? How to care for the seedlings of change that emerge beyond disembodied assumptions about what counts as change and how it happens? How do we care for our relation to everything in the universe through an attention to what else moves through the work, beyond a focus on the work as driven by the university's neoliberal individual subjectivity, tasked with making the world turn all on her own back (or at least to articulate as much for the grant application)? How to participate in the world as it bends toward the worlds-to-come?

Underneath, between, within and beyond our carefully articulated methods, *study* spreads out into a rewilded field that does not ask it to account for itself within the body of the work of the circle of the state. Poetics works its opacity. By walking around and talking, working, dancing, suffering, cooking Shabbat dinner every single week, “the wisdom of the milieu”—Guattari’s definition of *ecosophy* (see: Stengers & Pignarre, 2011, p.117)—gathers new powers to act, imagine, dream, and fabulate, in its refusal of what Foucault (1991) calls “total education.” These modes of participation, of love and study, refusal and dreaming, fabulation and the poetics of everyday living, concern everyone and exclude no one. As much as we all may find ourselves stuck, now and then, as Deleuze might say, “accepting situations such as they are proposed to us” (Stengers & Pignarre, 2011, p. 106), we all may find ourselves inventing the difference in radically ordinary ways, in singular and inseparable ways that belong to all of us and belong to the worlds to come.

What might be a way of foregrounding all this other work? We will get curious about the stakes of life’s own research, going beyond knowledge production and traditional methodologies. We will go through the speculative pragmatism of Research-Creation (i.e., Truman, 2021; Manning & Massumi, 2014) as an alliance between art, thought-in-the-making, and the work of research to live out questions in earnest. We will arrive at poetics, of course. With poetics we will

move through the work of the interstices without making them rationally account for themselves. We will go to the edges of experience and not try to settle upon what's happening there, but instead we will take seriously their suggestion of a world.

Beyond Method

Can accident, which is the joy of poetics, be tamed
through circuits? [...] Then what would be the consequences of such an intrusion?
Glissant, 1997, p. 139

“Thought does not need a method...Method in general is a means by which we avoid going to a
particular place, or by which we maintain the option of escaping from it.”
Deleuze, 1983, p.110

Education is of course a discipline. Lord, haven't we been disciplined enough? The total education is a mode of correction, as Foucault points out in the parallel correctional machinery at work in the prisons and the schools—the two sides of the institutional structure, or as Ta-Nehisi Coates (2016) might say, the two arms of the same monster. Harney & Moten (2021) see it this way:

Insofar as it is the case that in prison and in school one's job is to learn, to get it straight, to straighten out, then it is also the case that every citizen and non-citizen, every person and non-person, every worker who is in or out of work – even the enemy combatant, the prisoner, and the supposedly unemployable – is subject to a total education.

p.63

Learning here, as given by the total education, is performing the correction. Instruction stands to reform what Foucault calls the “perverted” individual. A call for reforming the prison or the school is a call for more instruction. Instruction provides the grounds for discipline, and discipline “only confirmed the underlying perversion of these bodies, and called forth more reform, which called forth more instruction to reform the perversion that discipline confirmed”

(Harney & Moten, 2021, p.61). Instruction, reform, discipline—the endless straightening-out of the total education—begins with the organization of bodies as perverted to begin with, the framing of bodies as in need of correction.

The total education, with instruction as the figure of endless *improvement* as it is taken up by the neoliberal economy, proceeds from the total institution and the total method, which works within the purview of finance to ascribe onto our bodies its “(e)valuative assault” (Harney & Moten, 2021, p.63). The standardization of learning across North American school systems and the knowledge-production of the neoliberal university do not even do well to disguise their assaults on the surplus-value of our bodies. We need innovation, we need to measure our knowledge production, we need to bring as much grant funding to the university as possible, we need to police each other’s thinking with the criticality that sells as thought and we need to police each other’s policing in the circle of the state. We need correcting. We need to improve. We’re not good enough tools yet. The institution could extract more capital from us if we were better.

Learning performs the correction when it assumes what constitutes knowledge within the framework of the institution. “[T]he voice of knowledges not yet parsed for the academic establishment” (Manning, 2016, p.31) always exceed capture because the university’s errand overlooks precisely the risk and the gift of such thought. Harney & Moten (2013) would say that the university “needs what she bears but cannot bear what she brings” (p.26). Following the knowledges that wash the institution into life’s sea is not a matter of naming these knowledges and categorizing them and putting them to work as the university does again and again, in its attempts to capture, for example, black studies, queer studies, neurodiverse studies, and indigenous studies, and thereby losing completely the actual *study* in between all of life’s modes of creativity. Rather, to honor the thinking of our bodies beyond the (e)valuative assault is to stop

straightening them out in the disciplinary field and to allow them instead to bewilder the total education. The surplus-value of bodies of thought, our bodies of thought, in need of no correction, is that they remain thinkers and never shape us into knowers. Thinking splashes in the tides of relational unknowing, never straightening out or straightening up or drying off or assuming the proper comportment. The instruction may go on and on, but the thinking's playing hooky elsewhere.

Standardized methodological approaches function as the instruction and correction of knowledge production. The value of knowledge, the accountability for how it is "attained", and the role of knowledge in experience, is delivered to the concept of reason (see: Manning, 2016, p.31). Again, Kant's godlike faculty which "surveys, judges, and understands," (Whitehead, 1929, p.4), organizes the activity of proving that knowledge was formally secured through airtight methodologies tailored to a pre-existing notion of what the knowledge is. A method's actual function here is organizing pre-formed categories, negotiating an arrangement that can register in the establishment's pre-existing design for knowledge production: the effort to make experience again seem rationally possible, as James might say. If an airtight methodology has done its work, of course, it has sealed out all the air: the invisible microbes of experience that move through thinking from within the act of living. What is under-attended to or altogether erased is the tender and tentative act of thinking, the force of change that moves a process unpredictably, the excess of knowledge's consignment to the realm of the conscious. What St. Pierre (2018) calls the "too strange", the too much, the "shock of thought" (p.8) that gets pruned from our studies in the pre-conscious realm of needing our work to communicate its value to the total education.

Life's own research is always throwing the curve, though, whether we take notice or not. A process develops its own reasons, its own relational stakes, its own movements of thought, and its own creations, no matter how hard it has needed to discipline itself for the disciplinary field. Whitehead defines the function of reason as "the art of life" (Whitehead, 1929, p.4), following life's appetite for difference. Reason as such is still absolutely a decisional force—it chooses *life*—and for Whitehead this decisional force is called *appetition*. Appetition is "a flash of novelty" (p.197). It is a conceptual feeling, a conceptual prehension: "the feeling of determinate relevance to a world about to be" (p.176.) Whitehead describes the primary meaning of life as "the origination of conceptual novelty of appetition" (p.115). The necessity of ontogenesis as the persistence of existence, the becoming of being as life's very mode of continuance, is urged on by that first flash of a world about to be, the conceptual prehension of the next becoming. A process goes toward the novelty it needs. Even if we have consciously noticed only those things which we were able to subdivide and hierarchize and write up as a common sense case study, the excessive inventions of the process we don't know that we're in keeps dazzling beyond parameter or perceived duration. A flash of novelty cannot be guessed-at by the world as it already is. Methods are set up to find what they already know how to look for. But they never stop the appetite that stirs in between.

The flash of novelty, the thinking and making of a world about to be, is speculatively pragmatic. Pragmatic in the sense that the decisional force engages with the stakes of "some particular consequence in our future practical experience" (Perry in James, 1996, p.xvi-xvii), and speculative in the sense that it does not narrow such consequences to the way that they are proposed to us by the world as-given. Speculative pragmatism, by way of James and Whitehead, is, as Truman (2021) points out, radically political: "it's up to those of us who mobilize these

theories in research-creation practices to consider the forces, feelings, lures, and contexts that affect what actualizes, how it might be felt, and how what takes place in actuality might then affect what could be” (p.10). Truman points to Debaise and Stengers’ (2017) pragmatic question: “does the possible whose insistence I sense add or detract from the situation?” and then, how we answer “*is part of the situation,*” which calls us to be “response-able, answerable for its consequences” (Debaise & Stengers, 2017, p. 13, in Truman, 2021, p.10). Speculative pragmatism takes the stakes of a process completely seriously, precisely by believing in what else could emerge in a creative engagement with them. Creativity, then, is radically political itself, in its ability to propose new possibilities.

This is how thought might produce new modes of living. It’s important to remember that speculative pragmatism, the flash of novelty, and Whitehead’s account of reason as the art of life, does not dodge definiteness or organization, and it does not suggest that experience may not give some kind of form to existence or that a category may not appear as a way of gesturing this. The problem is *how* this tends to happen, the organization or category cutting into a process before its own force has arrived at its own form. Experience cannot be delimited from outside its own process, the conditions must be invented within the experience. A standard methodology would begin to ramble beyond the given frame if it asked not what knowledge is or how it can be organized, but what it is *doing*. What experience is being produced, and what relational stakes does this suggest? What’s changing, how is that momentum gathering itself and where does it seem to be going? A method is a plan and knowledge is an end. Life’s own research is a creativity, and its decisional force is a flash of novelty that invents the world anew.

Research-Creation

When Ailton Krenak speaks with ecological preservationists, he wants to know why we would want to preserve a few square meters of the forest—is it so that we can take our grandchildren there and show them how beautiful the earth used to be, before we destroyed the rest of it? (see: Krenak, 2019). That is what it can feel like to organize knowledge production through the economy of the university. Here are a few square meters of lush grassy thinking—imagine what it could do if we got out of the way of its growth.

“Research-Creation” was first introduced as a funding category in Canada in 2003³⁵. Conceptually, we could say that research and creation have always been mutually inclusive, whether or not we think of research as creative even if it creates things, and whether or not we think of creativity as a research in its own right even if it certainly explores questions. As a funding category, Research-Creation made its hyphen for artists working in the academic institution, extending the value of the commodity of both disciplines, art and academic research, at a moment when interdisciplinary innovation had become economically viable. Lazzarato (2017) would describe this mode of innovation this way:

capitalists cannot produce surplus value without deliberately coordinating the activities of large and ever-growing numbers of bodies, bringing together vast collectivities in the process: be they factories, cities, universities, or the huge distributed networks of the internet. The need for capital to regulate behavior, modes of organization, interactions, and outputs of these collectivities is clearly what motivates much of the political, administrative, and institutional innovation of the modern epoch. (p.xxi).

³⁵ See, i.e., Manning & Massumi, 2014, p.84-85

So it was with a mix of affects that university-based artists and researchers found themselves entangled with this new economy, and began developing a new vocabulary for articulating the functions of their work. Harney and Moten (2013) would say that fugitive planning is necessary here, to ensure that our work is still working for us when its value has been determined from outside of itself. How to grow the lush grassy thinking of the actual reciprocity between research and creation, and to bring that open field with us to the strategic work of figuring out how it operates as a category in the disciplinary field?

From this angle, research-creation is ontogenetic. It asks what else research can be, and its mode of study is to affirm each variation that leads us to ask the question more and again and differently. The hyphen moves both ways: creation is always a thinking in its own right, already a way of studying from within processes of making. Research-creation asks *what else* in earnest, not as the colonial explorer discovering “new” worlds, but as the wilderness herself who quietly reinvents her terrain as a mode of living. It follows the techniques that a process invents:

Technique is therefore processual. It reinvents itself in the evolution of a practice. Its movement-toward definite expression must be allowed to play out. Technique is therefore immanent: it can only work itself out, following the momentum of its own unrolling process. This means that what is key is less what ends are pre-envisioned—or any kind of subjective intentional structure—than how the initial conditions for unfolding are set.

[...]

Manning & Massumi, 2014, p.89

Research benefits here from the immanence that countless artistic practices have always enjoyed. In the social sciences, this has led to emergent experimentations that are not organized through “pre-existing ‘data’ harvested through traditional qualitative research methods”

(Truman, 2021, p.xx). When St. Pierre (2018) urges us to “break the habit of rushing to pre-existing research methodologies and, instead, to follow the provocations that come from everywhere in the inquiry that is living and writing” (p.1), this mode of thinking with theory as empirical research in its own right (i.e., St. Pierre, Jackson, & Mazzei, 2016) is, as Truman (2021) points out, not new to any humanities scholar anywhere (see: p.xix), who may just call it literary analysis. The speculative pragmatism and immanent creations of reading-writing-living, working-dancing-suffering, the modes of thought within the making of art, do not offer something “new” to empirical research so much as they cut through the image of how university-based empirical research ought to proceed. It is not that this work produces the new category called post qualitative research, but that it quietly practices the fact that our work has always been irreducibly qualitative beyond the frame. Research-creation goes first to the force of radically empirical living, rather than to the given form of university-based research, allowing for inquiries that shape themselves around the curiosities of living that may have drawn us into the research to begin with.

In literacy and education research, we’ve begun to take inquiry for a walk (see: Springgay & Truman, 2017), literally³⁶. We’ve begun to explore the reciprocity between creative writing and research-creation (Truman, 2016). We’ve taken up Guattari’s question: how to make a classroom operate like a work of art? (Springgay & Rotas, 2015). We are neuro-queering noise through research-creation in the early childhood classroom (Shannon, 2020). We are spinning (literal) yarns as posthuman pedagogy³⁷ (Niccolini, Zarabadi, & Ringrose, 2018). We are

³⁶ WalkingLab, co-directed by Springgay & Truman, “studies and advances the theory and practice of critical walking methodologies through interdisciplinary arts practices and public walking events. The various projects and events activated at WalkingLab draw on feminist-queer, anti-racist, anti-ableist, and anti-colonial thought and practice to question who gets to walk where, how we walk, under whose terms, and what kind of publics we can make” <https://walkinglab.org/> [Retrieved on March 1, 2022].

³⁷ I am drawing a connection here between posthuman pedagogies, affective literacies, and artistic practices that is not necessarily articulated as research-creation by the authors.

exploring refusals in the classroom as propositions that open new ethico-political potential in literacy learning (i.e., Truman, Hackett, et. al, 2021). The emergent ethics of allowing life to guide our inquiries beyond us, and the felt terrain of creative practices that orient research toward a world about to be, is slowly and steadily reaching through literacy, art, pedagogy, affect, and the more-than-human.

Because the ethics is never given in advance of any singular occasion of life's research and creation, we cannot teach each other how to do this by pulling and plugging one process's codes into a totally different occasion of experience. We can never claim to know in advance how a process should unfold or precisely what it should do. In fact, we can lose our sensitivity to the emergent stakes of pure experience if we start to make a dogmatic image, as Deleuze would say, of what research-creation is and what kind of material fits its branding. We cannot teach each other how to *do* research-creation, precisely because the question is always what life's own research-creation is doing with us. But we can do something deeper than teaching each other to know. We can keep each other company in the boundless unknowing, and we can learn from each other's continuous learning. We can practice radical presence as a beacon for radical presence elsewhere. We can offer our belief through each occasion of practicing what else might be possible, and that belief itself can seed new processes.

Poetic Thought

Gallo (2015) reminds us that before classical Greek antiquity begat the "empire of logos" (p. 350, translation mine) as the dominant way of ordering thought, *poetics* was one of the first modalities for organizing thought in ways that moved very differently from the linear narratives of logic. Poetics, in oral cultures, carried techniques for the accumulation of thought that allowed for it to be shared. All the various particulars of thought itself guided the rituals of how thinking

was rhythmized and paced, given in recitation and given again in the riffs and deviations of fresh accumulations of experience. For Gallo, the possibility of differentiation opens through a poetics of/in thought. Through poetics, “creation took place: as an exercise in memory, but also as a digression, as an opening to becoming” (p.354, translation mine.)

The slide from poetic to logical thought echoes in the ancient divide between oral and literate cultures. Imperialist culture wars presided over an arbitrary distinction between oral culture and literate culture in order to advance colonial societies through exclusionary literacies (see, i.e., Gee, 2015), only to discover in contemporary educational settings that literacy practices are intimately connected to “speaking and listening”, leading to campaigns to add these skills to national curriculums (see, i.e., Alexander 2012). In the end, literacy as an imperialist tool severed itself from oral culture only to want back the connections it lost, as with almost every other earthly practice that colonialists discarded to great consequence. And then, misunderstanding what was lost, the move has been to supplement these ancient practices of orality with a rationalist take on them: “speaking and listening” as compartmental utilities in the order of logos. The poetics of thought is gone with the wind.

And yet nothing stops the wind from blowing. For Glissant (1997), poetic thought is “fragile and inescapable, obscure and revealing” (p.83). It “accepts accident” (ibid.), even if we ourselves may struggle to do so. Poetic thought goes toward poetry and science and accident “without being required to say where they will come together—nor even that they have any need to do so” (ibid.). Science and poetry connect easily in the indeterminacy of axioms, departing from a premise and creating “an infinite sort of conjunction” (ibid.). The poetic axiom is “a grounding fantasy” (ibid.)—fantasy right here on the ground!—which I take to mean that it imagines from within the actual stakes of life, that it takes seriously the impossible part of the

possible, the unreal feeling within the real, the world about to be within the world that already is. The radical in the ordinary. Poetic thought is privileged in “not having to be either elucidated or resorbed” because “the psychoanalysis of knowledge is fixed on something else entirely” (ibid.). This is all an opaque way of saying that poetic thought is speculatively pragmatic. And while its accumulation is not measurable or teleologic, perhaps Gallo would remind us again that it accumulates precisely so that it may be shared. Both in its speculatively pragmatic character and in its desiring force of being shared and being transformed, poetic thought gives-with.

Giving-with: The Poetic Proposition

Whitehead’s concept of the proposition is a way of seeding speculative potential, and it is often practiced in process philosophical and research-creation work as a means of creating the conditions for new encounters and opening new territory for thought. For Whitehead, “a proposition enters into experience as the entity forming the datum of a complex feeling derived from the integration of a physical feeling with a conceptual feeling (Whitehead, 1978, p. 256)”. A proposition’s work is to indicate a conceptual feeling that can produce the possibility of novel physical feelings yet to come. As such, a propositions is a lure for feeling: a seed for a world about to be. It stirs the flash of novelty, entices acts of possibility.³⁸ Life is always full of emergent propositions. Take, for example, a sluggish morning in the hallways of a high school, where students are milling about their lockers and teachers are standing at their hall duty posts. One student comes gliding down the hall singing: *if you wanna be somebody, if you wanna go somewhere, you better wake up and pay attention* (you’ll find this poetic proposition in the Hallway below, p. 130). That this actually gets you to pay attention, that it stirs up an intense desire for a life of deeper receptiveness and presence, that it reveals a beauty in the hallway that

³⁸ For more on the Whiteheadian proposition, see: Gil, 2019; Shannon, 2021.

had always been there and calls up the force of continuing to notice that beauty as a modality of living, is the seed of potential that a proposition can produce.

In process philosophy and research-creation, we could say that we make propositions, but I would orient us toward the notion that it is always a question of how a process *gives* us propositions, how life constantly presents them and opens them within us. This itself is a question of paying attention: the student's hallway proposition echoes again here and now, to produce yet more speculative potential, and Harney & Moten (2013) would take this opportunity to point out the incessant intellectuality of singing in the hallway as study's true work between the parameters. What is at stake here for research, art, pedagogy, relation, is a receptiveness to life's propositions and an openness to the lures for feeling, for the worlds about to be, within them.

How does poetic thought cultivate a receptiveness to life's propositions? How do life's propositions cultivate yet more poetic thought and poetic living? This is the reciprocity between life's very own research and creation that I want to explore. How can we give-with life's propositions through a poetics of thought and poetics of living? How can we practice a sensitivity to the relations between the particular and all possible particulars, both within our capacity for noticing life's propositions as well as for laying the ground for their emergence? These are questions to be practiced through radically ordinary living, research and creation gathering from pure experience. As life's poetics offer the gifts of accident that become propositions for worlds to come, how can we take up this suggestion of a world? What can we become through our poetic relations?

For Deleuze and Guattari, writing has the expressive capacity to unleash a 'particle of becoming': [...] the movement toward the supernormal" (in Massumi, 2014, p. 58). By writing

scraps of experience—from kitchens and hallways—with a bend toward their excess and their potential, I am unleashing their particles of becoming. They offer themselves into our fresh encounters with these scraps of experience now. They wish to mix their poetics with our next experiences, their speculative pragmatism is an angle toward what might be produced next—what world is about to be—between their poetic inflections and our continued living. Each poetic proposition is written as a belief in the radical within the ordinary. This means that sometimes the poetics feel like a delicious glittering edge of possibility, and sometimes the transformations get shaken out the hard way—from the cracks of neurotic repetitions and the tiredness and boredom of critique. Everything is an opening, even and especially the closings, and the hardest work of poetics is to believe in the world at the deadest end and to notice the creativity of the scorched earth. This modality of belief seeds itself towards future belief—finding the creativity of one dead end gives its speculative potential to the next dead-ended feeling, prehending its transformation ahead of our desperation. The poetic propositions here give-with our future experience, lending a pedagogy about-to-be in the relation between a poetic scrap of ordinary life and all poetic scraps of ordinary life. What we make through such a relation, what life makes of all such poetic scraps, is never finished seeding fresh experience and inventing possible worlds.

Chapter Three Poetics of the Kitchen



São Lourenço da Serra, Brazil, 2021. Photo by Lea Rackley.

“If there is no church in the wild, if there is study rather than knowledge production, if there is a way of being together in brokenness, if there is an undercommons, then we must all find our way to it. And it will not be there where the wild things are, it will be a place where refuge is not necessary and you will find that you were already in it all along.”

Halberstam in Harney & Moten, 2013, p.12

My wild body cannot help but take it completely seriously when St. Pierre (2018) says that anything “too strange to fit into a category of methodology is most likely ignored, avoided” (p. 8). We begin our poetics by accounting for the weird ground they gather from. Or is it the ordinary ground our weirdness gathers from, a very common matter of attention abundance gathering its perceptual poetics from the interstices of the everyday? In the following chapter, I foreground the background that has gathered decades of study, and I allow my conceptual inquiry into process philosophy to deviate off the domain-specific content that my disciplinary body might have put it to. I go through a body of thought that was constituted in between the

things I thought I should be doing, a body of thought made in those moments when your head full of philosophy is standing in front of the open refrigerator and working out some kind of conceptual knot until this converges into the activity of experimenting with the possible afterlives of wilting spinach. I would venture to say that this kind of conceptual work is radically ordinary, that you probably do it all the time. Maybe you make a joke out of it, if you ever start to riff on the ephemera around you with a comical level of philosophical force. Maybe you start to do a bit at the dinner table with your academic friends, where you all start reading the menu as if it was a multiple choice test. But maybe it was real. Maybe it moved you. Maybe the lures for what we do and what we want to do are gathered like that from the edges. Maybe the best life a multiple choice test ever had was when it got to be a menu for a second. Maybe our dramaturgies and our play, our shiny little weirdness that we can only pass off as a joke, is where the other of thought grows, where we make other worlds without realizing it. Maybe it would take a recklessly impulsive thinker to deviate all the way into the too-strange. Hi.

What if I told you that I did all the stuff we are supposed to do in Education research fieldwork, and that you already know what that stuff looks like? What if I told you that in between all that, I spent a lot of ordinary time standing around in my kitchen and got impulsively philosophically attached to why it is that thinking felt more possible there? I got curious about that interstitial space, how it worked as a site for collaboration in all the schools, galleries, community centers, and homes I'd been in. I spent two pandemic years writing, thinking, and digesting all this kitchening that had rubbed into my appetite for thinking. I didn't know what I was doing, I was cagey and raging and sad and bored. I thought I was being *bad* – this is what the discipline of my early education had taught me about my trackless deviant thinking. I was still the small ADHD child who had three essays hidden in her backpack, but turned in none

because none of them obeyed the assignment. I spent my whole education hiding my thinking in a side zipper pocket because it was off the given topic, acting petulant and calling the assignment stupid so that I didn't have to be the stupid one, cuz the truth was that I just couldn't focus on the thing I was told to focus on. I felt like my wild body had no choice but to fling its thinking in the unforeseen directions that beckoned. I needed to chase the shiny distracting marginalia that excited my senses, and I always had the strong feeling that this was leading somewhere important even though I couldn't articulate *where exactly* in advance. Education is not set up for attention abundance, it is not set up for impulsivity of thought. It's not set up for the too strange of speculation.

After those years of *being bad*, writing kitchens instead of writing whatever I thought the assignment of social sciences research was supposed to be, the writing began to work itself out and show me what was at stake in its own inquiry. It showed me the child philosopher in my belly, who was desperately hungry to know that her deviant inquiries could lead somewhere if she was allowed to pursue them. Over countless dinners with my friend Emma, commiserating over our neurological quirks while chopping vegetables, chopping vegetables while repeatedly saying "hang on, I can't chop and talk to you at the same time...", I started referring to this work as *The Kindergarten Thesis*. I finally understood that as a thinker, I needed to be in my play kitchen mixing up imaginary concoctions, that for all these years in the unspecial education I was struggling with the tiny violence of my own interpellation that this couldn't count as thinking. Deleuze talks a lot about the dogmatic image of thought (i.e. 1994), and I had learned how to embody the rationalist image of what I thought constituted research, from weaving a tight thread of rhetoric to faking the ability to operate a powerpoint, take questions, and actually think at the same time. It damaged my body, and this is not unusual³⁹. Then, I learned the second impulse,

³⁹ My old mentor, Smago, gives us an intimate portrait of mental health in academia here: Smagorinsky, 2011.

the reaction. I learned to do the dogmatic image of what I thought constituted the feminist critique, what I thought Cixous would tell me to do about the *phallogocentrism* (see: Cixous & Derrida, 1994) I'd interpellated as the image of research. I learned to rage through the artificial separation of the cooking and the thinking, through whether I asked for help with the powerpoint or not, blah blah, and the violence of that is in large part how boring it is. This not only damaged my body, it almost killed me. Learning to queer it all, learning to neuroqueer it all (see: Shannon, 2022) is in every way lifesaving.

When I was in kindergarten, I could feel that thought came hot out of my Easy Bake Oven. Three decades of unspecial education later, that is the only thing I needed to know. We could lay me down on Freud's couch about it. That would probably go some places we've been before⁴⁰. Deleuze and Guattari (1983) tend to think that "a schizophrenic out for a walk is a better model than a neurotic lying on the analyst's couch. . . ." (p.xvii). I'm asking you to walk with me. Please, can we play? Get down on your knees in my play kitchen. Pick up a plastic tea cup. Pretend all the possible worlds with me until we find the one we want, the one that *works*, until we find that we were in that other world all along, but we thought we had to stand up and dust our knees off and get back to "work".

What follows is a theoretical obsession over the concept of the kitchen, overcodings that want uncodings that wrestle to break the codes. It ends with descriptions of the kitchens that kept

⁴⁰ We could force me to go to the normopathic limit, Freud could gloat that everything is all about my mother or that maybe I've buried how it's all about my father, or how my appetite for study is like a floppy puppy bounding after all the interests of all the people I love, or whatever, we could get really neurotic really fast if we needed to rationalize how desire and thought circulate and propel, as if anything is ever separable from anything else, as if there is a correct way to chop it up. Or we could take it just as we feel it, and realize it's absolutely perfect, that love and life and study and play mix us into formations that we can only try to explain later, and getting honest about that might take us a bit further than trying to tidy it up or to command it to fall within one codified way of understanding how experience matters. Deleuze was so right that method is the means by which we avoid going to a particular place, or how we maintain the option of escaping from it. Who would want to follow the absolute strangeness and intimacy of the desire for learning laid bare? Unless their little impulsive heart just couldn't resist? P.S. - Massumi (2014) describes Jean Oury's concept of normopathy as: "the compulsion to repeat the same, to the extent humanly possible" (p.70). Like how the Freudian impulse repeats those Oedipal codes over and over and over again.

me alive and sowed the ground for much collective thought, from home kitchens to school, gallery, and community center kitchens to the kitchens that put me up as a nomad for a time. All this kitchening exposes the layers of how we collectively craft the conditions for thought in the background of the aims we eventually gather into the foreground. It goes to the bare act of getting through and getting by, and gathers powers for thought by playing with the most ordinary conditions. With no exaggeration, the writing here is a fight for life. We all do that in our own ways. It is desperate for the philosophical highground in the back kitchen of the lowcountry. It aches. You'll feel it. But as much as it aches, it plays. The poetics get cooked up somewhere in between, and they spill out right after the kitchens they came from.

Micropolitics of the Kitchen

"The place I like best in this world is the kitchen [...] Now only the kitchen and I are left. It's just a little nicer than being all alone."

—Banana Yoshimoto, 1988, p.3-4

"We are instruments at work and play, in touch and taste, of tongue and roof, for mouth and bridge."

Moten, 2017, p.183

As a place, as a concept, the kitchen is sticky as hell. We know all too well what kitchens are and what they do, we know all too well what they mean to us and what they make of us. We know too well what goes on in a kitchen. We flip an egg in the pan and the day goes on. Half the time, a poetics of the kitchen seems a dead-ended platitude. Crochet it on a doily, hang it above the pantry: *everything happens in the kitchen*, and how could there be anything more to say? That's where the rigor is, the fun of thinking, the change stirring within the unchangeable. Go back, look in the pantry again. Same doily in a frame, same canned goods, same wood-paneled

walls, same cereal boxes and same red gingham apron hanging from a hook. But this time you can see the politics within the politics, the world within the world, the thinking within the thought, the other within the same—if only because I’ve just described a slice of folk Americana that is not your kitchen.

A kitchen is a body⁴¹ of thought. If everything in the universe is a singular expression of everything else in the universe (see, i.e., da Silva 2016, p.65, citing Leibniz, 1646-1716), a kitchen is always a cosmopolitical⁴² situation. A kitchen is life’s own research and creation: the art of living, the art of being in the world and creating other ways of being in the world. A kitchen is an architecture of relation. A kitchen is a sign of life, a way of signing life, which changes as life changes, as all sign systems do. A kitchen is one of life’s literacies, and what it makes of us and what we make of it is always up for grabs.

It’s easy to grab it and hold it hostage, and we often do. We know all of the kitchen’s existential regimes. We know all the scripts of meaning it’s been given, whether related to drudgery and labor or pleasure and hobby, family and gathering or capitalism and commerce. We carry its prescribed sets of politics and values around cooking and eating, body and life, home and economics, sustainability and nutrition, order and disorder, biology and spirituality, religion and tradition, land and ancestrality, human and animal, earth and fire. The politics of gender alone can hold court over how we relate to centuries of kitchening and how we react to its potentials. Yet for such a high-traffic site of territorialization and existential stirring, somehow a kitchen is also capable of fading into the background. Somehow we are capable of the

⁴¹ For Spinoza (i.e., in Curley Translation, 1985), a body is a relation of affecting and being affected, a capacity of affecting and being affected. Affect, of course, being the power of one thing to act upon another thing. A kitchen is a body in that it is a set of relations.

⁴² Cosmopolitics: the politics of the cosmos. This is a proposition toward sharing worlds, the politics of the coexistence of multiple worlds, multiple practices for and perspectives on living. Stengers (2010) uses the concept to propose an “ecology of practices” rather than a unifying field theory, in the sciences.

extraordinary intimacy of waiting for the kettle to boil, accompanying its escalating cry, without thinking too much about it.

This is how Guattari (1995) describes the kitchen at La Borde Clinic:

This territory can close in on itself, become the site of stereotyped attitudes and behaviour, where everyone mechanically carries out their little refrain. But it can also come to life, trigger an existential agglomeration, a drive machine [...] The kitchen then becomes a little opera scene: in it people talk, dance and play with all kinds of instruments, with water and fire, dough and dustbins, relations of prestige and submission. As a place for the preparation of food, it is the centre of exchange of material and indicative fluxes and prestations of every kind.

p.69

Going through such a site for exchange, relation, and flux, my question is: how do we come to life? How does life come to us and grab hold of us and bring us into itself again, right in the middle of the repetition of our thinking we already know what life is doing and what we are doing in it? Right in the middle of our well-worn refrains, right in the middle of flipping the egg in a hurry before work, or flipping the egg resentfully amidst the demands of hungry mouths, or flipping the egg listlessly with an inexplicable lack of taste for much of anything just now, how is it that one day the egg flips us? Flipping out mid-flip, how is it that one day, in the middle of the same, everything feels different?

As a site of possibility, the kitchen is a laboratory for the production of worlds that begins right where we are, here in the everyday. It is not an abstract place, it is a literal site that facilitates our living daily. It has in it all the inheritances and consequences of how we make the world each day and how we've done that for centuries. It has in it all the consequences of

making and thinking, capable of hardening us into dinnertime schedules and battles over vegetables but equally capable of softening us suddenly through the gentle touch of washing lettuce leaves or the playfulness of kneading dough. A kitchen has in it all the inheritances of the worlds we've made, all the conceptions of life we've arranged and rearranged, all the care and shared practices of hundreds of thousands of years. Krenak (2019) says that the future is ancestral. The way we move in a kitchen is nothing less than that—we are moved by every ancestral trace of how the world moves through this kitchen, every inflection in the movement of what else the world could be as it moves through us there. Each kitchen is a singular expression of its place amongst worlds, carrying the changes of decades through it in the contents of its cabinets and the restoration or decay of its tiles, and we are made right there in this place where we go to make life possible for ourselves and each other. A kitchen is right in the middle of the world we have now and the worlds we want and the worlds we make, and it is a place where we go about the messy work of love and study every day, singularly and inseparably going on with the tangle of our needs together, making the world in ways that we realize and ways that we don't, gesturing subtly towards what we could become.

This is a most ordinary magic that sweeps us up when we're busy doing other things. Like when we think we're making sourdough bread, but the sourdough bread is making us: slowing us down to its rhythm, getting us to notice how our time has been "literally emptied of its natural rhythms" (Guattari, 2013, p.10) in the capitalistic passion; tuning our perception of a damp/cold/sterile environment to a sensitive microbial frequency; greeting us when we have a hard time believing that anything is possible or that anything matters with its own perspective on value in a flourishing of bubbles and quiet brimming of life. And if these encounters make us, what if we allowed them make us *more*? These are the stakes of becoming-with: we are always

becoming-with something, with so many somethings, shaping and being shaped in relation, whether it's with capitalism or wild microbial yeasts. How to notice the creativity in such relations, how to follow the potentials for difference?

Or what if we never foregrounded this force of potential? What if all the knee-jerk attachments to the world as-given keep on unconsciously stirring anything that feeds them? Kintz (1997) exposes the innocent dangers of *Kitchen Table Politics*, in which women's activism in conservative folk America leverages a "kitchen-table way" (p. 86) of engaging policy from the perspective of "traditional family" ideals (p.97) which ultimately produces "a variety of ways that exclude people who are not like them" (p.78). Reducing the far-reaching effects of policy to the homogenous attachments of the upper-middle-class kitchen table, a narrowing logic is produced that banishes ambiguity "in order to achieve the simple, absolute clarity upon which people can act with great passion" (p.97). The subject of welfare, addressed in this kitchen table way, begins with a violently naïve premise that ignores the actual stakes of welfare: "if her children showed up in the kitchen asking for a check [...]" (p.86). The more innocent and everyday this approach seems, the more we should worry. Kintz makes the observation that the KKK's women's auxiliary provided a "humanizing facade that rendered the Klan more insidious." (p.109).

Guattari (2013) would call us to a "micropolitical approach to subjective formations" (p.34-35), asking how the political terrain emerges first from the affective attachments of a subjectivity reproducing its selfsame ontological bearings; the subjectivity of the white middle class suburban American conservative mother/part-time community activist not at first intentionally using "traditional family ideals" as a political angle, even if this does take shape along the way, but more immediately pouring the tea at the kitchen table and therein beginning to

make the unconscious movements of reconstituting all the thought necessary to maintain the world in which she can remain there pouring the tea at the table within the given order of things.

Massumi (2015) would have us look to ontopower, and its gestures of preemption: the felt reality of a threatening emergent potential operating as a mode of power in the present. The affective logic of the body, moved first by its felt reality before it tries to organize these effects into rational intention as the consequences emerge, thus can't be negotiated with *post-factum* at the level of any logic outside of the felt experience. Call it schizoanalysis (Guattari, 2013) or call it the poetics of relation: the processual approach is to be radically present in the pouring of the tea, to see what gestures toward potential difference might become possible there.

When Moten says that he believes in the world and wants to be in it (in Harney & Moten, 2013, p.10), because he believes in another world in the world and he wants to be in *that*, he is pointing out that the force of belief is the production of worlds: which world we believe in, which *us* we believe in, receives the activation of the belief. A radical presence in the pouring of the tea is a gesture of belief in the world, and in the other world inside the world. If we were able to relate through a belief in what else could happen, if the felt reality sensed this belief cutting into its preemptions, how might this activate potential differently? If we take the cup with a belief in what else it could carry, what might get carried out in the relation then?

In 2011, Derek Black, a young but prominent white nationalist⁴³, was exposed for his active leadership in white supremacist organizations in a viral message thread shared across the liberal arts college campus where he was an undergraduate. His subsequent exclusion from campus social life might have been morally encouraged in its natural didactic consequence that such oppressive beliefs were not sustainable in the campus community, but it was likely also a

⁴³ See:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/the-white-flight-of-derek-black/2016/10/15/ed5f906a-8f3b-11e6-a6a3-d50061aa9fae_story.html [Retrieved on January 30, 2022]

simple affective response in which other students avoided the threat of his presence. But an Orthodox Jewish student named Matthew Stevenson took a different tack, inviting Derek to his weekly Shabbat dinners. The only Orthodox Jew on campus, Matthew's shabbat dinner guests were mainly atheist, Christian, black, Latinx... and now a thoroughbred Klansman descendent who regularly riled the passions of neo-Nazis on a white nationalist radio program. "Matthew decided his best chance to affect Derek's thinking was not to ignore him or confront him, but simply to include him" (Saslow, 2016, np). He asked the other dinner guests to try to treat Derek like anyone else. It was the only social invitation Derek had received since the controversy. He was quiet and polite, and came back each week, until "nobody felt all that threatened" (i.d.). At first no one asked about Derek's ideology, instead talking about their own lives which naturally proceeded from a variety of backgrounds. Eventually the friends asked about his views, and Derek would have then heard himself trying to explain these beliefs at a multicultural Shabbat dinner in the presence of Michael's soft Hebrew prayers. By the time he graduated, Derek had publicly renounced white nationalism ("I can't support a movement that tells me I can't be a friend to whomever I wish"), defected from the white supremacist organizations, and changed his political views. He remains close with Michael and the rest of his Shabbat dinner friends.

Deleuze and Guattari (1983) might call Michael's dinner invitation a *schizz*: a movement to "escape coding, scramble the codes, and flee in all directions" (p.xxi). In the binary world as given, Michael had two rational choices: *ignore* or *confront*. He could not be *for* white nationalism, so he must be *against* Derek Black. Relating not to the tension but instead to the potential, Michael invented the third impulse. Ernesto Filho⁴⁴ says that when we are asked to choose between *this* or *that*, we can choose *life*. Michael scrambled the codes of relation that had been so well established to reconstitute the subjectivities of the progressive student body *and* to

⁴⁴ See: *Inflexions* 2019: <https://www.inflexions.org/> [Retrieved on January 30, 2022]

reconstitute the subjectivity of the white supremacist they opposed. He did this by choosing instead to *live* with Derek, and to believe in what else such ordinary living could do.

Remember: *study* is walking around and talking with other people. Working, dancing, suffering. Cooking Shabbat dinner every single week. Study asks us to go beyond the structures that “limit our ability to find each other” (Harney & Moten, 2016, p.6), to scramble the codes of relation that presuppose who we are so that instead we might live out what we can become. It is the interstitial work that happens as we are walking out of the classroom together—it is the dinner invitation that extends the study of living out into the world. Because it is so deeply relational, it is never exactly reproducible. Everything happened in Michael’s kitchen, and yet we cannot reconstruct his actions as a new relational code to be applied to different processes and different sets of relations. We could do exactly what Michael did and find ourselves in a totally unique disaster. The living is different each time. Study is radically present, as a belief in what life could do this time.

When I look to the kitchen as a conceptual vector for all the undercommoning work of ontogenesis that lends itself to the kind of study that can produce new worlds, half the time I fail to find what I wanted to explain. I fail to reconstruct the world there, pointing too hard and suggesting too much so that suddenly I’m just pointing at a kitchen and you are nodding at me very slowly and politely. I’ve trapped myself into asking life to explain itself, expecting rationality once again. Reduced to either the literal functions it carries or to the symbolic meanings I could ascribe, I’m looking in the kitchen but the relational terrain exceeds capture, the interstices will not make themselves visible, the transformative material does not exist outside of the particulars of actual experience. I do not know anymore how the difference is made, I do not know what I’m looking in the pantry for, I don’t remember why I walked into this

room. That is how it feels when we withdraw into the dimensionless place where the idea of thought alone exists. I can't make the kitchen perform its tricks for us. I cannot make a new code out of those moments that escaped the coding. We cannot order ontogenesis on demand. But the feeling of wanting such is important. When we look to the ordinary and only see the ordinary, life's freshness has to be invented again. It's the moment when the next becoming is needed, just before that need pulls from the environment the transformative potential that was always right there. It's the moment when Moten's belief in the world is the most necessary, when studying unknowing is the hardest. This is the moment when poetics takes over.

***For Poetics*⁴⁵**

“Poetic thought safeguards the particular...”

—Glissant, 1997, p.32

Relation is a process of transformation between beings. To be *with* something or someone—and we always are, inextricably—is to be reciprocally modulated by that withness. Being and becoming, passages of experience, are produced through relation's inventions. This means that we are produced by relation; we are inseparable from everything in the relational field⁴⁶. For Glissant (1997), the ethics of proceeding through this relationality with a care for what it produces requires poetics. Poetics, as a mode of existence that is “directly in contact with everything possible” (p.32), gathers its creativity from uncertainty. Poetics is an expressivity that “opens onto the fluctuating complexity of the world” (p.32). It aims beyond a certain “literary dedication to clarity” and “pleasing rationality,” which guarantee a “manipulation of a unity composed of consecutive, noncontradictory, concise statements,” which can lead us to discard any “infelicitous accidents” of real experience which stray from its accounts (p.113). To

⁴⁵ Parts of this discussion on the poetics of relation appeared in Rackley, Bradford, & Peairs, 2022.

⁴⁶ This comes from the Jamesian sense of relation. See, i.e., James 1912.

foreground the fluctuating complexity of relation over manipulated concepts of unity is to attend to the duty of unknowing in relation to others. To reduce the singularity of others with whom we relate through claims of understanding, through flattening unifying universals, we reduce what is possible through relation, and we reduce what we can become through relation. The complexity of poetics, as a mode of thought and a mode of living, safeguards the particular, because the particular “guarantees the energy of Diversity” (p.33). This produces intransitive relations between the particular and all possible particulars. Simondon might call this the very stuff of ontogenesis, where the world in us relates to all possible worlds.

The poetics of particulars is necessarily opaque. When Glissant (1997) demands the right to opacity, it is because white colonial ontologies would prefer “the false transparency of a world they used to run” (p.114). Whiteness as an ontology believes that it can clarify anything by reducing it to its own image. The right to opacity is the persistence of difference. Opacity is “subsistence within an irreducible singularity” (p.190), beyond the generalizing universal that is “always ethnocentric” (p.117). Being in the affirmation of difference and the irreducibility of singular experience calls for the opaque expression of poetics. Without poetics, we risk “turning in circles within a code,” while opaque expression would have already “slipped away toward other, fruitful and unpredictable controversies” (p.120).

A poetics of relation “does not proceed without rambling” (Glissant, 1997, p. 25), and it is this rambling that improvises and invents its way toward what Ashon Crawley (2016) calls “otherwise possibility”, or what Glissant calls “the other of thought” (p.154). Rambling off the paths of thought designed to lead to an inadequate world carries “an aesthetics of turbulence whose corresponding ethics is not provided in advance” (p.155). This aesthetics of turbulence “produces every exception” (p. 195), so that we must ask at every rambling step, *what now?* The

bounded biological individual can know unto itself what it must do to reconstitute its own identity in the given world, it can know how to organize everything it relates to in order to re-feed its selfsame standing. But when all possible worlds in us meet all possible worlds in others through the poetics of relation, we can learn how to ramble through the turbulence of co-inventing the ethics of what could be.

Poetics gives-with. Glissant's concept of *donner-avec* is a contrast to the Latin basis for the French word *comprendre*. *Comprehendere*, to understand (con- with, prendre, to take): to seize or to take-with—the colonial errand of knowledge-snatching down to the letter—a gesture which Wing (in Glissant, 1997) calls “appropriative, almost rapacious” (p.xiv). *Donner-avec*, to give-with, is “a generosity of perception” (p.xiv). *Donner*, to give, can also mean “to look outward.” It has the sense of yielding, “as a tree might ‘give’ in a storm...” (xiv). Relation proceeds not through understanding, but through generosity. To give all possible worlds into the perception of the other is to experience the relation giving back all possible worlds and more.

For Glissant, *roots* are an important problematic in the way that identity carries itself into relation. How can the roots of language, culture, place, history, community, family, accumulated experience, “the evanescent taste of what you ate” (p.7) in your homeland, be safeguarded as particular without closing to the modulations of relation? How can roots give-with? Rather than a root as “a stock taking all upon itself and killing all around it” (p.11), Glissant looks to the botanical rhizome as “an enmeshed root system, a network spreading either in the ground or in the air, with no predatory rootstock taking over permanently” (p.11). An enmeshed rootedness can carry into relation while still challenging the notion of a totalitarian root. The ways in which “each and every identity is extended through a relationship with the Other” (p.11) through the poetics of relation is, for Glissant, rhizomatic in the Deleuzo-Guattarian (1987) sense. Deleuze

and Guattari challenged a rooted, tree-like conception of knowledge that operates hierarchically and mounts from binary categories and choices, by conceptualizing the botanical rhizome as an image of thought that instead spreads out into multiplicities, opening multiple non-hierarchical entries. For Glissant, this enabled an epistemological shift from the reinscriptions of tradition, identity, filiation, and belonging, towards a breaking-free where all particulars combine with new particulars.

Given that we are produced by relation, the concept of identity—that desire to safeguard the particular—is not fixed but emerges again and again. Simondon calls this *individuation* (2009, p. 4), the process by which an individual emerges through the whole system of relation. True ontogenesis is allowing for this emergence without imposing the idea of the individual before this taking-form can express. Going before the individuation to impose the pre-formed identity cuts off the ontogenesis. The totalitarian root of identity can take the whole system of relation all upon itself and kill the potential becomings all around it. Or else an individuation can spread into the multiplicities of relation between the particular and all possible particulars. We individuate together. It is through relation that becomings are given. How to give-with? What is given to relation comes back as a multiplicity. Whatever knowledge could rapaciously take is much less than the learning that relation goes on to keep inventing. Whatever particulars our identities might try to guard unto themselves are significantly less than the relation of the particular to all possible particulars.

What would it mean to look not to knowledge-production, but to relation-production? Just the way that in poetry, “language concentrates solely upon its fervor to exceed its own limits” (Glissant, 1997, p.25), poetics as a mode of thought and a mode of living concentrates upon its fervor to exceed *ourselves*. Through the poetics of relation, “[S]ingularity and

collectivity are no longer at odds with each other” (Seem, in Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. xxi). Becoming-with, giving-with, scrambles the mutually exclusive codes. Poetics invents not a unity but a rambling, excessive multiplicity; not a clarity but an endlessly creative opacity; not a knowing but a limitless doing; not a world to settle on but ways to keep worlding into the next one and the next one. Poetics flees in all directions, surpassing the given *what* through the lived expression of *what else*.

Life in its Poetics

In case we have circled back onto ourselves, as we tend to do, to ask how we can think and live through the mode of poetics—how we can frame, direct, and guide our poetic approach—we’d do better to let it escape our grasp so that we can follow it beyond our own limits. We could never know in advance the poetics needed at any given rambling relational step. Only life could invent that. Take, for example, the following opaque exercise in glimpsing life’s poetics. Over a hundred years ago, James (1912) observed “a curious unrest in the philosophic atmosphere”:

a loosening of old landmarks, a softening of oppositions, a mutual borrowing from one another on the part of systems anciently closed, and an interest in new suggestions, however vague, as if the one thing sure were the inadequacy of the extant school-solutions. The dissatisfaction with these seems due for the most part to a feeling that they are too abstract and academic. Life is confused and superabundant, and what the younger generation appears to crave is more of the temperament of life in its philosophy [...]

Life in its poetics gathers all the particulars here into a rambling relation with all possible particulars. Was this written six years before the Great Influenza pandemic of 1918 or two and a half years into the Covid-19 pandemic of the 2020's? James was not writing about the curious unrest of our current philosophic atmosphere, which may have begun with the first lockdown of the pandemic in 2020, or five years before that, when Trump announced his run for the presidency of the United States, or with something else entirely in another part of the world. But maybe James *is* writing about our own current unrest, maybe the ground was already breaking 100 years ago for the 100 confederate monuments taken down in 2020⁴⁷, maybe it began back then with that loosening of old landmarks in philosophical thought that James describes. When the one sure thing is the inadequacy of the extant school solutions, for how long has the dissatisfaction been fleeing in all directions, equally capable of softening oppositions and borrowing new suggestions for *what else* as it is capable of neurotically short-circuiting in its binary oppositions to create the concept of fake news?

Massumi (2015) pulls the following words from the 2005 headline of a Québec newspaper: “the next pandemic does not exist yet. The threat, however, could not be more real” (Soucy, 2005, in Massumi, 2015, p.189). With the threat of what does not exist qualifying as front-page news, Massumi gestures to the logic of preemptive strike that loaded the affective terrain of Bush-era politics. Did we avoid disaster through the abstract preemptive panic over an avian flu strain in 2005? Or did we become the makers of worse disasters in the meantime through the preemptive logic of threat as a mode of living? Life is confused and superabundant. Putting ourselves before the poetics of its nonlinear relational stakes in order to seem to have

⁴⁷ See:

<https://www.npr.org/2021/02/23/970610428/nearly-100-confederate-monuments-removed-in-2020-report-says-more-than-700-remain#:~:text=Music%20Of%202021-,Nearly%20100%20Confederate%20Monuments%20Removed%20In%202020%2C%20Report%20Says%3B%20More,aftermath%20of%20George%20Floyd's%20killing.>

[Retrieved on January 31, 2022]

some control over the outcomes is outright disastrous, violent at the scale of trampled becomings and violent at the scale of wars launched for the threat of possible threat and the terror of possible terror.

A narrative could wrangle of all of this into a moral. The poetics of relation keeps emerging, instead, with the ethics of opacity. Glissant (1997) asks: “what, then, will both violence and opacity be for us in Relation?” Tracing the violent clashes of “Western thoughts,” he believes these thoughts to be “aimed at, but not inventing, the world” (p.59). A lot of reduction is necessary to assume that we know the full extent of the relational stakes that are spreading out around us, what processes are in the middle of unfolding, what ethics might emerge, or what fresh combinations may throw it all into a different light one hundred years down the line. What we are living through now is absolutely singular—it feels groundbreaking and unprecedented and we don’t know what to make of it or what to do. Just like every other moment of being alive, at any time, anywhere. It is all both singular and inseparable. The temperament of life in its philosophy is not an organizing force, not the violent clash with that which it cannot organize. A “mosaic philosophy” (James, 1912, p.41), it gives-with the notion that everything in life, singularly together, may dapple the light in yet new ways. Whitehead (1967) might call it a “receptiveness to beauty” (p.1). Life in its poetics is the beauty itself, too bright and brilliant to look at directly, its opaque refractions inventing the world. Pedagogy emerges there, from the opacity of relation itself. Didactics dissipate. Nothing in the mosaic could know exactly how its light will refract elsewhere, but can be sure that its shining has widespread effects.

Body of Thought: One Hundred Kitchens

We're making a point of contact between the particular and all possible particulars, the possible and all other possibles. You from your kitchen and me from mine. Here we will walk into the kitchens that took up the interstitial work between several university fieldworks and several organized pedagogical propositions. These kitchens are bodies of thought and architectures of relation, as much as any other, as much as the one I'm sitting in now. These are the sites from which various poetics became possible (some of which we will encounter later). All the thought offered here was produced by these kitchens. These kitchens have my body—my various bodies— in common, but of course their poetics of relation extend in rambling and weedy paths far beyond me. If you look for through-lines and narratives between these kitchens, you'll be able to fabulate them. If you look for political and micropolitical terrains, you will find as many curiosities and contradictions as life always produces. If you take to noticing ontogenetic potential, you'll create many possibilities. If you take an interest in *difference and repetition*⁴⁸ (i.e., Deleuze, 1994), you'll certainly have fun with that. If you trace the production of subjectivity through refrigerator contents and cooking rituals and recycling habits, you could diagram a hundred thousand outlines of reality at once. By entering these kitchens, you are making them. You are re-making their potential with your radical presence, with the poetics of relation between these kitchens and you thinking with them from your kitchens. What is to be created here in your encounter? Whatever exists between these kitchens and your kitchens, these worlds and your worlds and the worlds inside of all of these worlds, is being written now as you enter. There are ten kitchens here, multiplied by ten of your encounters with them. Welcome.

⁴⁸ Deleuze (1994) conceptualizes difference and repetition as reciprocal and inseparable relations in processes of change, with repetition allowing for the fixity, boundaries, distinctions, and limits from which difference may assert a shift. Repetitions run through the production of difference, and difference runs through repetitions.

And a final word of (dis)orientation: it is impossible to have starved in these places. Impossible. Look at the abundance. Look at the writer's need to catalog abundance, to believe in it.

São Lourenço da Serra

I am writing from my kitchen in a small one-room cottage on a farm in the Atlantic forest, just outside the city of São Paulo in Brazil. The kitchen was little more than a tiny room with a sink when I moved in. It has a cool brown tile floor, sloped wooden ceiling, and two little windows that I keep open to the rambling green forest just beyond. The frequent sound of a helicopter is actually hummingbirds (*beija flor*), which zoom right inside the window and dart around the cabinets. The sink runs with cold well water. We heat water in the kettle to wash dishes. We have a gas range fixed atop a wooden cabinet, a small refrigerator that clogs itself impressively with frost, and a miniature electric oven. The electrical grid can support one thing at a time: the oven, the blender, or the electric heat for the shower. The conversation in the kitchen is often: "Last call for a shower before the chicken goes in the oven!" Twice now I've blown the fuse by flicking on the blender while roasting vegetables at high heat. The first time, I was surprised to open the fuse panel and discover that it contains *actual fuses*—like little sticks of dynamite—rather than the panel of switches I'd expected. There is a frog that lives on the edge of the sink, sometimes found nestled into a teacup. Lizards with long tails flick across the wall. We clear away spider webs only to have them reappear overnight. The pots and pans are aluminum, dinged and worn and sedimented with generations of loving use. The utensils hang in a row above the countertop: ladles and plastic measuring cups, a metal sieve and silicone spatulas, a Swiss Army knife with its tiny scissors extended for opening stubborn packages. In a green vase on the counter, hand-chiseled wooden spoons and two dull knives with wooden handles that we sharpen on a stone. The shelves are lined with jars that we refill during trips to

the city: Brazil nuts (*castanha do Pará*); burnished, fire roasted cashews and peanuts and almonds; hazelnut-sized crunchy coconuts called *licuri*; Amazonian cacao nibs; a fruity-tasting nut called *pequi* as well as a bottle of the bright orange *pequi* oil; coconut oil and the oil of a specific type of coconut called *babaçu*; pumpkin, sunflower, sesame, flax, and chia seeds; oats, black rice, dried chickpeas and lentils; white coconut flour, powdery red *babaçu* flour, manioc flour and a coarse-ground manioc flour called *farinha de agua*; a dark citrusy coffee grown at high-altitude in São Sebastião da Grama; a 100% chocolate from the south of Bahia; the deep red palm oil, *dendê*, central to Bahian cooking; Medjool dates, dried figs, and dried apricots.

We pick kale from the garden, collect brown eggs from the hens, and buy fresh honey from the groundskeeper's beehives down the hill. We make homemade coconut milk, though it spoils quickly so we keep cartons of shelf-stable cow's milk nearby. We tend to a large kombucha scoby in a 2-kilo jar underneath the counter, a sourdough starter that bubbles with microbes in half the time described in North American instructions, and a yogurt colony. Sometimes we make banana moqueca with nut farofa, or fish bolinhos pan-fried in *dendê*. Sometimes I make North American chicken pot pie with a manioc biscuit topping, or oatmeal cookies with *licuri* and *castanha do Pará* and cinnamon. Sometimes we mix together whatever we have left into the unexpected: braised beets and lentils with the last scrap of smoked gouda, or omelettes flecked with the surprisingly bright flavor of carrot greens. We make nut butters of all possible combinations—peanut, almond, cacao nib, *licuri*—and eat it off the spoon. Sometimes we get down to our last can of sardines, mash it with olives and roll it in kale leaves, and try to borrow a car to go shopping before the next meal. Sometimes we ache for tastes from elsewhere—bagels or curry or pizza—and try to invent a farm pantry version. When we come back from the city with a good garam masala or a ball of fresh mozzarella, a Maldon sea salt

splurge or a coveted *real* vanilla extract, we treasure every ounce. I write at the counter with my laptop propped up on a cookbook: Dona Brazi's *Traditional Amazonian Cuisine*⁴⁹.

Resende

I often visit a kitchen in Resende, Rio de Janeiro. It is a half-Greek half-Brazilian household. Every surface is white. There are lots of windows and lots of mirrors to reflect the sunlight. The kitchen countertops are a cream marble that produce a good echo through the tall ceilings. There is a large blue plastic deposit bottle of spring water next to the refrigerator and a spare underneath the sink. The drinking water is decanted into three glass pitchers: one kept at room temperature and the other two chilled. There is a green carton with two dozen brown and white eggs beneath the sink, a half-dozen more in a bin in the refrigerator, and at least a dozen hard boiled eggs kept in the refrigerator door ready for breakfast. Also beneath the sink is a basket containing two purple sweet potatoes, three manioc roots, ginger, garlic, a half dozen white onions, and a big stalk of green bananas cut from the tree in the garden. On the middle shelf of the refrigerator, next to the chilled water pitchers, there are a few clear glass Pyrex dishes with leftovers, a few tubs of Greek yogurt, a glass bowl of green and purple grapes covered with clingwrap, and a large Pyrex of sliced fresh mango. On the shelf below, there are two silver trays: one holding pears, peaches, apples, plums, and guava; the other holding cucumbers, tomatoes, and avocados. The bottom bin carries carrots, a head of cauliflower, a head of purple cabbage, arugula, spinach, okra, a Styrofoam tray of pre-shredded kale, eggplant, and pumpkin. At the top left there is one cubby for the silver butter dish, behind which there are three more bricks of butter waiting. There is another cubby at the top right for cheeses: one wedge of blue cheese, one soft round of *queijo Minas*, a smoked gouda and a tub of shredded

⁴⁹ See: <https://www.amazon.com/Brazi-Cozinha-Tradicional-Amaz%C3%B4nica-Portuguese/dp/8578500830> [Retrieved November 28, 2022] and hold that our only link to the book in the anglophone world of this Amazonian book, comes from the nonworld of amazon dot com.

Parmesan. Behind these there are two ready-made cheese quiches. On the door by the hardboiled eggs, there is a small bag of sugar twist cookies from a local bakery, left open to sneak a bite, and an opened bar of chocolate with the wrapper folded like an envelope. There is an almost-empty jar of whole grain mustard, capers in oil, and a large plastic bag of black olives in their juices. There is a jar of homemade cooked apples with cinnamon.

One of the cabinets contains boxes of tea, small jars of walnuts and salted peanuts, a plastic container of golden raisins and a box of dates. The shelf below is for vitamins and medications: Omega-3, magnesium, iron, B6 and B12, Q-10 Co-enzyme, dissolvable packets of probiotics. Next to the vitamins is a bread basket with a heel of a wheat boule, half of a small raisin bread, and two loaves of the fresh cornbread that I bake. Underneath the breads is the stack of green and white floral placemats and the white tablecloths. The cabinet opposite carries the dishes, white plates and bowls stacked on wire shelf dividers. The cutlery tray is covered with hand-embroidered linen tea towels to keep out dust. There is a large fruit bowl between the cabinets with ripe bananas, a pineapple, oranges, and limes. The silver tray on top of the microwave, which has a neat row of honeys and jams each sitting atop a folded square of paper towel, is frequented by a colony of teeny tiny ants. It's not unusual to find an ant floating in your glass of water.

In the mornings, we drink coffee that has been prepared in a purple plastic pour-over and decanted into an electric coffee pot used for its warming plate. We eat cold hardboiled eggs or scrambled eggs with parsley, bread with butter and honey, sliced fruit, and spoons of natural peanut butter. Lunch is a production: a casserole dish of velvety gigante beans braised with tomato, carrot, celery, onion, oregano, and an ample coating of Greek olive oil. A salad arranged on a tray, each leaf of arugula facing the same direction, with rows of tomatoes, cucumbers, and

olives. Wedges of avocado served in small glass bowls with a spoonful of mustard vinaigrette. For dinner I make pumpkin curry, braised purple cabbage with toasted walnuts, radicchio salad with apple cider vinegar, cauliflower croquettes. We bring out the cheeses and the breads on cutting boards, and sometimes a bottle of red wine. For dessert I make oatmeal cookies with apple, walnut, and cinnamon, or cheesecake made with *queijo Minas* served with bright pink *goiabada*. Or else we have the grapes or mango, a date or a fig, another spoon of peanut butter or a little dish of yogurt. We set the table by passing the cutlery across the counter of the kitchen's serving hatch, adjacent to the dining room. We pass all the dishes back through after the meal, and we stack them with Tetris-like precision next to the sink, to be washed at 5am by the Greek octogenarian among us, who enjoys doing this while making the coffee and enjoying the sunrise.

Petite Italie

Over a year ago, I was reading Glissant in my kitchen in Little Italy, Montreal, Québec, Canada. It was on the ground floor of a triplex with big windows facing the garden. The refrigerator was enormous and constantly burdened with an assortment of foods from several roommates: at least three pints of yogurt, six types of cheese, thick-cut bacon, two dozen eggs, tupperwares of leftover pasta and rice, a door full of half-empty condiments. Value-size tubs of protein powders populated the dense dry goods shelf. The blue-and-white tiled island in the center was handmade by friends of the roommates, with one removable tile to drop compost through to the bin underneath. A basket of oranges drew a thick crowd of fruit flies, and a collection of herb vases were regularly pruned and emptied of their greenish water. We each moved in with our own cookware in tow, and couldn't figure out where to fit everything. The cabinet was stacked precariously with mismatched coffee mugs. My purple KitchenAid mixer and Instant Pot—prized possessions acquired during Black Friday sales past—took up precious

countertop real estate, but earned their keep by churning out peanut butter chocolate chip oatmeal cookies and braised pork for tacos. One roommate installed an espresso machine, and we all hovered by it in the mornings, chatting over its roar and passing each other double shots. We would sit around the garden reading with our cups of coffee, each embedded in a different literature. I took notes in blue ink at the faded blue patio table. The neighbors' cats roamed in the grass and rolled lazily on the concrete by our ankles. A small tree and large hydrangea bush shaded our work. We cooked huge meals and ate very late at night—one roommate specializing in mapu tofu, another in feijoada, another in carbonara. We washed the dishes together in a cheerfully efficient rhythm, rinsing and stacking them into a cavernous dishwasher.

Outremont

Months before that, I was cooking my meals in a friend's kitchen in the Hasidic Jewish sector of Outremont. A visit there became a March 2020 lockdown and a global transformation. This kitchen was small with dark wood paneling, soft, translucent orange curtains and a round table with two stools by the window. There was a door to the second-floor balcony, heavy curtains in the corner obscuring a washer and dryer in the closet, and a microwave sitting atop an old wooden mail stand. There was an espresso machine, a Moka pot, and beautiful dusty-crimson teacups with saucers. Squirrels walked on the power line outside the window and a raccoon occasionally rifled through the recycling on the balcony. The kitchen window faced the neighbors' kitchen window with startling proximity: a Hasidic family with seven or eight young children. We could not help but watch the mother's constant movements between her two separate sinks and two separate refrigerators, keeping everything Kosher with help from plastic tablecloths changed between meal courses, paper plates and plastic forks discarded between meat and dairy servings. The oldest daughter carried the babies on her hip. At night, as late as 1 or 2 in

the morning, the mother would be wiping out the refrigerator with Clorox while talking on a cordless phone tucked into the side of her pink hair wrap. Sometimes she noticed us looking at her or we noticed her looking at us. We wondered what she saw us doing.

In our kitchen, we cooked insatiably. We sat on the kitchen floor and cried about pandemics, deaths, breakups, depressions, and illnesses. We stocked the refrigerator with organic 2% yogurt and milk, blackberries and raspberries, soft mounds of Burrata that we could not afford. The countertop was stacked with thick-cut dried coconut, Medjool dates, sacks of roasted almonds, hulled hemp hearts, dark unsweetened chocolate, and a half-kilo of thick creamy honey from Mirabel, Quebec. Pistachio shells littered the table, and one of us took to playing with them, lining them up in ever-expanding concentric circles. The two smokers among us rolled their cigarettes at the table and darted out frequently to smoke them on the balcony, loose tobacco fluttering behind them. We cooked elaborate meals and ate them at 3 in the morning. We made almond flour cake with jammy orange slices and pistachios, and ate it in one sitting. We visited the butcher on the corner almost every day, wide-eyed behind hand-sewn face masks. We cooked gigantic sausages and roasted whole chickens. We spent six hours frying carnitas in a vat of melted butter—as seen in a YouTube video from Mexico—and spooned the fatty, salty, crispy meat onto warm corn tortillas with cilantro and lime. We each chipped in to buy a rack of short ribs, which we braised slowly with tomato and red wine. We learned to make soft buttery arepas and ate them in the late afternoon for breakfast with avocado and bacon. We scrambled eggs with coconut milk, garam masala, tomato, and cilantro. We made fancy Ottolenghi cookies with grated chocolate bar and orange zest. Between our erratic feasts we made teacups full of yogurt, decorated with nuts and hemp seeds and berries, coconut and honey, arranged in careful landscapes. We could not keep up with the dishes, our stupor of grief and greedy persistent joy

stacking up in a high volume of pots and pans that we stopped every now and then to wash slowly over the course of an afternoon, playing music from other times and places.

Plateau

I started my doctoral studies in a different Montreal kitchen, in the Plateau. The kitchen of a marriage. It had white and gray cabinets, very tall ceilings and a second-floor window overlooking the landlord's courtyard. The cabinets were narrow, so that the cereal boxes would prop their doors open slightly. An Ikea island under the window held an electric coffee grinder and a pour-over vase that sat atop a cream-colored potholder knitted by my mother. The dish towels had green and white stripes. The coffee mugs were each a different color, decorated with the Chinese characters for Peace, Love, Happiness, and Good Fortune. In true Plateau-Mont Royal fashion, the whole apartment was tilted on its crumbly foundation. The oven wobbled on an unlevel floor each time we opened its heavy door. A small brown mouse frequented the dark gap below the dishwasher, and we started to call him Mortimer. I placed a half-hearted trap there once, delicately draped with a thick slice of Morbier cheese which Mortimer swiped away easily. The refrigerator usually held skim milk, natural fruit juice, pickles, two pieces of protein picked out for dinner that night (salmon, or chicken breast), fresh asparagus, a bag of spring salad mix, a half-pint of wilting blueberries, a twelve-pack of sparkling water, and two cans of Boreale beer or a bottle of white wine. Anything else came from the fruiterie on the corner at a moment's notice. On Saturdays we walked to Jean-Talon and came back with little baskets of cerise de terre, rainbow carrots, honey crisp apples, red and yellow cherry tomatoes, and arranged these in the wooden bowls made by my grandfather. We bought a kilo-sized bucket of Maldon sea salt on Amazon and sprinkled it on air popped popcorn, courtesy of a red countertop popcorn popper also purchased on Amazon. I made homemade pizza, pumpkin chili, vegetable

lasagna, instant pot pulled chicken with maple barbecue sauce, chicken soup, banana bread, peanut butter cookies, and one-bowl chocolate cake. He made linguini with white wine and clams, baked fish with chimichurri, steak and garlic smashed potatoes, the special occasion soft-shell crab. Sometimes we got four oysters from the poissonerie and ate them over the sink. On the way home from campus after late night classes, we got chicken shawarma from the place on our corner, or arepas stuffed with black beans, roasted plantain, and feta from Arepera du Plateau. At the beginning of my studies, I made steel-cut oatmeal in the slow cooker set to finish at 5am for my date with Spinoza. The last meal I cooked in that kitchen was campanelle pasta baked with whole milk ricotta, lemon zest, purple kale, garlic, red pepper flakes, and mozzarella. The last picture I took was of fresh baked peanut butter cookies, rolled in sugar and pressed with the classic criss-cross mark of fork tines, sitting on the coffee table next to two glasses of milk.

Centre de Jeunes

During those years, I frequented the kitchen at the youth centre where I was completing fieldwork. An afterschool drop-in centre for youth ages 11-18, the downstairs area housed a busy ping-pong table and foosball table, and the upstairs a conference room where staff meetings and workshops were held. Between these spaces, an upstairs hallway had been made into a makeshift kitchen. A refrigerator and one table with a microwave and electric kettle. Taped to the refrigerator was a list of offerings: Chips or popcorn, fifty cents. Ice pop, 75 cents. Juice box, 50 cents. Granola bar, 50 cents. Soda, 1 dollar. Instant Ramen, 1 dollar. Staff members brought steaming hot ramen to the kids in little Styrofoam bowls. At some point they decided to forego the disposable dishes, a little rack of thrifted mugs and bowls appearing next to the microwave with a sign printed on computer paper: *PLEASE wash your own dishes WITH SOAP*. The bathroom sink downstairs became the permanent home for stray bits of ramen noodle, the smell

of the flavor packet mixing with the smell of the pink industrial soap in the dispenser. The bowls and spoons were always slightly filmy.

Besides the ever-present smell of ramen broth, hot popcorn was always popular. We passed around the paper bags and plunged our hands into their greasy interiors, washing our hands—or forgetting to—before touching video game controllers. At the open house in the summer, one of the counsellors made a jug of mojito limeade. During workshops, counsellors passed out granola bars to youth and adults alike. Occasionally baked goods turned up in the conference room—pound cake or sugar cookies with sprinkles—and the counsellors carried them downstairs on a tray offering pieces while reminding youth to *take a napkin, say thank you, and Wash. Your. HANDS!*

Bendigo

For a few weeks during fieldwork in Australia, I lived in the artist residency studio apartment at the La Trobe University Art Institute in Bendigo, Victoria. The small galley kitchen was grey and white, and mostly empty. The refrigerator contained a few packets of soy sauce and a half-empty bottle of kewpie mayonnaise. There were a few white plates and bowls in the cabinet, a set of IKEA coffee mugs, a French press, one big stock pot and one small soup pot and one frying pan. The pantry held a big box of sugar packets, a bottle of powdered coffee creamer, and a bag of white rice. There was a value-sized bottle of bright blue dish detergent, and a green box of powdered soap for the dishwasher. There was a small table with two chairs in the living room, next to a small couch that still had the furniture store smell. The supermarket was a ten-minute walk away. I bought cheap coffee, whole milk, and yogurt with fresh passion fruit mixed in. I toasted crumpets in the toaster and ate mangoes over the sink. Several nights in a row, I made fried rice with fried eggs and vegetables and used the soy sauce packets. By the

second week, I made the easy jump from sadness and nostalgia to sugar, subsisting mainly on child-marketed cereal, pink animal crackers, and peanut butter cup ice cream.

I ate lunch every day inside the gallery with my colleagues. We walked to an organic shop together several times a week, and made a vegan spread each afternoon: salads, hummus with carrots and radishes, guacamole, gluten-free buckwheat toast with cashew cheese, blue corn tortilla chips, hibiscus kombucha. The gallery kitchen was a small counter with a staff refrigerator, kettle and French press, one electric hot plate, an oven, and a dishwasher. We ate outside at the big picnic table, which had a translucent orange sunshade stretched above it. One day, my friend Andrew⁵⁰ bought me a few grams of rye flour and I baked banana bread to share with the gallery staff at tea time. For our final event, we roasted a tray of cherries with feta, licking the purple juices off of our fingers in the sun.

Preston

Before going to the gallery, I spent a few weeks at my friend's sibling's house in Preston, the Melbourne suburb referenced in the Courtney Barnett song "Depreston"⁵¹. My friend's sibling, Mils, works in homelessness prevention and crisis intervention. In addition to having three roommates, they helped build a community ethos in the house that allows friends and visitors to come and go when they need a meal, a shower, or a place to stay. This now includes me, sleeping on the porch. *Anything you find in the kitchen is yours*, they say. The kitchen has wood paneling and a window over the sink overlooking the porch. It has a nice array of thrifted mugs and dishes, a broken coffee percolator that I never figured out how to use, and a deep pantry cabinet with four shelves. The middle shelf is labeled with masking tape and sharpie: "Food Louis doesn't understand." This shelf holds things like quinoa and organic apple cider

⁵⁰ Andrew "gathers ecologies" here: Goodman, 2018.

⁵¹ See: <https://open.spotify.com/track/6tCQCy7SCL2xg2QNe2inmd?si=3a92a5c76d504e78> [Retrieved on November 29, 2022]

vinegar, which Louis says he doesn't understand as the *trends* they've become. Above and below the foods Louis doesn't understand, there are economy-size bags of white rice and pasta, jars of red and brown lentils, cans of chickpeas and tomato sauce, boxes of cereal, bottles of honey and boxes of tea, tubes of vegemite. The refrigerator is bursting with plastic containers of leftovers and takeout, cartons of generic-brand soy milk, yogurt, eggs, sriracha, butter, soy sauce, tofu, specialty beer and kombucha. My first contribution to the kitchen is a bag of bamba and 3 passion fruits that have been in my bag since a few destinations ago. The first morning I go out and buy a loaf of bread and a bunch of bananas to make a more substantial contribution. By the end of the day, we find that one roommate also bought and came home with bread and bananas, and another one has dumpster-dived bread and bananas and added them to the pile. We are delighted by the coincidence and the excess. We eat obligatory banana toast each morning, and remark on it each time we do. In the evening we make communal dinners. Louis makes pasta with vegetables and tomato sauce, with red lentils on the side because Mils detests the idea of this as a meat substitute in the sauce. *I have a lot of experience with hippie cooks and communal meals*, they say. *If someone says they're "just going to bulk it up," get them away from your food*. But Mils says the pasta is great, and Louis says they don't have to sound so surprised. On another occasion, one of the other roommates makes Pad See Ew for us, and explains that they learned this from a friend, and the white pepper is the important ingredient. It is October, and so my friend Flo and I decide to do Canadian thanksgiving one night. We conjugate all the dietary needs— a few vegans and vegetarians, a few gluten-frees and lactose intolerances, and one life-threatening nut allergy. We end up making vegetable soup and vegan southern cornbread. No one seemed to have any expectations for what thanksgiving is, and graciously accepted our feast.

The South

Only once did I enter the kitchen in the building where I taught high school for three years. I needed milk for my coffee. I could have taught that day without first having coffee with milk, but it felt like a risk to find out what kind of teaching it would be. I popped into the cafeteria at 6:15am, as the staff washed the big metal trays they would use for the breakfast service. The manager invited me back to his office. I walked past the row of metal countertops, the metal door of the walk-in refrigerator, and the stove burdened with pots the size of baby bathtubs. The floor tile was yellowish with brown grout, and black rubber honeycomb mats guarded the potentially slippery areas of the stove and the industrial dishwashing station. The door to the cleaning closet was open, and a large rectangular yellow bucket on wheels occupied the floorspace, a wooden mop handle protruding from its ammonia-scented foam.

The manager's office was a small room next to the cleaning closet, with a wooden desk covered in papers, a filing cabinet, and a window. He sat down to make a note in his ledger about the one carton of 2% milk that he was about to give to a teacher. That is when I felt that I was doing something wrong, taking government milk from a child. I did not have fifty cents and I didn't know how to leave the situation by that point. But the manager was friendly, with an easy smile. He asked what I taught, and when I said English, he said that maybe I could proofread some stuff for him; he wanted to go to business school and he was starting to get the application process going. I gave him my faculty e-mail address. Back in my classroom, I stirred the milk into my coffee at my desk. Once the coffee was gone, I drank the rest of the milk not because I wanted it but because I had already taken it. My stomach was uneasy, with the excess milk and the small moral battle over the fifty cents I needed to take down to the manager; over my caffeine addiction and possible sense of entitlement. But there was so much more going on.

There was also the spark of connection—the way the kitchen manager had been alive with his plans and smiling at the world that day.

Deeper South

I learned to read and write in my parent's kitchen. No one enters through the front door of my parents' single-story brick house in Georgia, in the Southern United States, but through the kitchen door at the side. My mother made the curtains for the door and for the window behind the sink, which looks out at the back yard's shed, clothes line, and the edge of the woods. The cabinets are wooden with recipes taped inside their doors: *Aunt Pat's Good Cookies*, *Dad's Barbecue Sauce*. My mom makes quadruple batches of the cookies—oatmeal chocolate chip cornflake—in a gigantic brown ceramic bowl from the fifties, lining the countertop with brown paper bags so that we would arrive home from school to a factory line of warm cookies cooling there. My dad tweaks his barbecue sauce recipe each time he makes it, penciling in the adjustments on the recipe card: little less sugar, little more vinegar, dab of mustard. There is an Keurig machine in the corner, to which my dad has affixed toy car wheels to roll it easily out from underneath the cabinet when he refills the water from the top. There are food and water dishes on the floor for Chica, the most recent in a long history of family dogs (not to mention cats, birds, hamsters, and rabbits), but the food dish is irrelevant: my dad cooks and cubes chicken breast and feeds it to Chica by hand. The refrigerator is always stuffed with leftover spaghetti and hamburger patties, gallons of whole milk and value-size bottles of ketchup, mustard, and Duke's mayonnaise. There is a second refrigerator in the garage for Budweiser beer, liter bottles of Coke, cans of sparkling water, and surplus leftovers such as a stock pot of homemade chicken broth. The pantry is stuffed with cereal boxes and canned goods, and then there is the pantry *room*: the laundry room taken over by excess kitchen tools hanging from a peg

board, bulk dry goods, and a shelving unit for the microwave, a fondue pot and a pasta maker still in their boxes, and half of the plates and dishes. This room also has a full-size freezer stocked with bulk frozen vegetables and bags of frozen shrimp and chicken breasts from Sam's Club. My mom's electric grain mill sits on the shelf below the microwave, along with a row of five-pound buckets of soft white, hard white, and hard red winter wheat grains. My mom started grinding her own flour for homemade bread when I was ten. I had to share my sandwiches with the whole lunch table, cutting the soft, cakey, honey-scented bread into eight pieces. Her cinnamon rolls were even better. My dad occupied the garage years ago as his grilling station, slowly adding more and more components: beside the gas grill, a long prep station table and a deep-fryer. He smokes whole chickens and fries chicken tenders with the secret ingredients of the southern chain restaurants (pickle juice brine.) Sometimes he fries a pound of bacon and sausage for fun, and stores it in the fridge to reheat during the week. The dinner I remember eating most often in my childhood, when there were seven of us in the house and no time to fuss, was a hamburger patty with a squeeze of ketchup on the side and a heap of microwaved frozen broccoli. On my birthdays I would ask for my mom's chicken pot pie and her cheesecake. On nearly every holiday we ate my dad's smoked chicken with barbecue sauce, and on Saturday mornings, he made us bacon and fried egg sandwiches. After school, while I sat at the counter eating my mom's (Aunt Pat's) cookies, my mom and I would chat through my spelling homework. If I had to make up sentences for each word, we made up silly sentences together. The sillier, the better.

Poetics

Thinking thought usually amounts to withdrawing into a dimensionless place in which the idea of thought alone persists. But thought in reality spaces itself out into the world. It informs the imaginary of peoples, their varied poetics, which it then transforms, meaning, in them its risk becomes realized.
 –Glissant, 1997, p.1

Poetics 1:

The Preacher's Son (A Pathology)

You are fourteen when the preacher's son wants to tell you a joke. *Why don't women wear watches?*

You play along.

Because there's a clock on the stove.

Ohmygod, what if we didn't call Freud, DON'T CALL HIM, leave me alone, loose and undone, too late—the social field is always calling that dude and putting him on the other line and it's too late now—

It's a joke told by an idiot full of sound and fury signifying nothing but you're the idiot now, it becomes a virus in your body.

Poetics 2:

Starter

Canada, September 2017

You are in the first months of doctoral studies, and you are performing this for yourself very dedicatedly. The week before your first day of classes, you meal-prepped the whole week in advance to prevent yourself from diverting your energy each day into dreaming about what you wanted to make for dinner. You came home from the first night of class to beef stew from the

crockpot, which would have tasted better if you had stood over it all afternoon, adding a bit of this or that along the way as the flavors changed and developed, and this is what you thought about while you ate it and tried to read an article about positivism. It took you two hours to read the same page several times over, because you were re-making the stew in your thoughts at the same time. Each day, the meal-prepped food tasted worse. All of it was made with the appetite you had on Sunday, which couldn't possibly account for how you felt now. All of it was already ready, and this robbed you each day of the process of making it. Every day you took out the Tupperware and ate what was in it while trying to read and re-making the dish in your thoughts. You were furious with yourself the next week when you went back to cooking, dreaming of dinner across every saved pdf.

The more there is to read, the more you cook. Rousseau? Kale and apple salad with white cheddar and pecans. Ranciere? Farro with roasted pumpkin, caramelized red onions, feta and pepitas. Foucault? Homemade pizza, 00 Italian flour dough rested in the fridge for five days, with crispy prosciutto, pepper flake, and a drizzle of honey. Deleuze? Lasagna with perfectly roasted vegetables, whole milk ricotta, and spinach. With Spinoza you can't stop baking bread, and this is becoming a real problem.

You try so hard to read, you try so hard, but every three sentences you black out and find yourself bent over the counter kneading dough. You knead your frustration into it, pushing again and again into the smooth elastic ball: you. are. supposed. to. be. reading. When you do not understand anything Spinoza is saying, you bake bread. When you feel a rush of energy in what Spinoza is saying, or within the effort to understand him, you bake bread. When you feel the movement in a phrase, some something shifting in you beyond the incomprehensibility of the

words, you close the pdf and get up and start measuring flour into a bowl before you realize that you are yet again baking bread.

You assume that this must be an activity of avoidance, rather than an activity of thought. That is why you are furious with yourself. Your performance of the image of graduate studies is being ruined by your body's inheritances of other kinds of thinking. At an Education conference, you attend a panel that is meant to be about digital literacies. Megan Bang (e.g., Bang et. al, 2012) begins her talk by saying something like: *I'm not going to talk about technology, because that's not what emerged as the desire for learning with the youth I work with. They wanted to make a garden, so that's what I'm going to talk about.* You go to her afterwards. You say that you're supposed to be studying video games and literacy learning, but all you're doing is baking bread like your mother taught you. It's the first time you've confessed this to anyone. *That's great,* she says. *You should write about that.*

Poetics 3:

Body and Bread

Canada, March 2019

For a course called *The Production of Subjectivity*,⁵² we experiment schizosomatics, which Gil (2019) describes as “transversal modes of embodiment” (iii). Considering somatics as the plane of collective experience, including and in excess of the body, *schizosomatics* are ways of re-composing experience, allowing it to become⁵³. In other words: what else could our bodies become within emergent, collective encounters that schizz the usual parameters? For example, imagine we are in a university classroom, but the room is filled with long strips of pink foam and we are invited to play with them in any way we like. There is no sense beforehand of how this

⁵² Concordia University, Sense Lab, 2019, Professor Erin Manning.

⁵³ For more on schizosomatics, see: <https://vimeo.com/323278301> [Retrieved on February 22, 2022]

might alter the occasion of our being together in this room, but certainly new ways of being emerge. The playfulness dissolves the decorum we usually assume in this space. Perhaps collectivity is noticed in a new way. The way we end up connected by the strands, tied around one person's foot and another person's hand, brings a different attention to how we affect and are affected in relation. There's no way of knowing everything produced by such an encounter, but we play seriously with the awareness that our shared living can be altered by such a small gesture. That is the kind of experimentation at stake in schizosomatics.



Schizosomatic proposition by Diego Gil on the occasion of his thesis defense, Concordia University, 2019. Photo by Lea Rackley.

You are not an artist, a dancer, a somatic practitioner, a schizoanalyst, or at least you have not told yourself that you are any of these things. When it comes time to propose an encounter for the class, you are not able to think of anything that draws from your CV's list of skills and expertise. You end up doing the thing you hardly noticed you've always been practicing. You bake bread. You invite an afternoon in which the room is perfumed with little jars of fermenting

yeast, and the tables are strewn with flour and rolling pins. You offer a mound of risen dough that everyone is invited to sink their fingers into, to take a piece of, to smell and feel and play with. And of course there is bread to be eaten: wobbly-looking homemade baguettes still warm from the oven. Bread-making as a process of with-ness—a process that gets us up early, sets our rhythms according to its first rise, second rise, and baking; a process that tells us everything by the touch, teaches us how to feel the difference between the passages of crumbly dry, shaggy loose, firm, wet, elastic, supple, soft; a process that promptly lets us know if we are too rough or too inattentive, if we are noncommittal or impatient; a process that orients us to its subtle shifts in sensation—enters into a philosophical proposition for experimenting with-ness in new ways.



Body and Bread schizosomatic proposition by Lea Rackley at Sense Lab, Concordia University, 2019. All photos by Sense Lab.

The familiar (or remote) sensations of baking at home are transduced into a new encounter. What does it produce to smell freshly baked bread in the corridors of a university building? How are we different when we are rolling lumps of dough into ropes and braids and cute little snails? How does the emergent ethics of this kind of play (a concern for not wasting edible material) produce yet new encounters (each taking a bit of the dough to bake at home)?

How does the with-ness linger then? What happens when we feel the shift in the dough, a soft lump that was soothing to touch now recoiling into a tough gum from too much prodding? Do we want to keep touching it? What happens when we lose our sensitivity to the smell of yeast in the air, a moment ago so powerful? Can we find the sensitivity again? What else is produced when suddenly our bodies are asking that question: *can we find the sensitivity again?*



Body and Bread schizosomatic proposition by Lea Rackley at Sense Lab, Concordia University, 2019. All photos by Sense Lab.



Body and Bread schizosomatic proposition by Lea Rackley at Sense Lab, Concordia University, 2019. All photos by Sense Lab.



Body and Bread schizosomatic proposition by Lea Rackley at Sense Lab, Concordia University, 2019. All photos by Sense Lab.

Poetics 4:

The Taste of Ethnography

Canada, 2017

What did ethnography taste like, before you had ever attempted to practice it? What is it about the word that drooled with life for a time, when you were just entering an organization of experience known as fieldwork? Did it taste qualitative? Did it promise to put you in front of the many different tastes of experience? Did it taste like the damp soil you might sit on while nestling into the experiences of those participants whom you hope will forget you are there so that you might observe something that has not been augmented too much by your presence? Or did it taste like participation of a different kind? Did it taste like *going out into the world*, even if the world you'd go out into was the same type of cold-tiled fluorescent classroom which you return to afterwards?

Did it taste like paper and pencil? Like sand stuck in the crevices of the recording device? Did it taste like its anthropological forbearing, “long-term and open-ended commitment, generous attentiveness, relational depth, and sensitivity to context” (Ingold, 2014, p. 384)? Or did it have that metallic taste of formula, “conduct[ing] ‘ethnographic interviews’ with a sample of randomly selected informants, the data from which will then be processed by means of a recommended software package in order to yield ‘results’”? (p. 384). Did it taste like trying to get it right? Did it taste like the water you drank from the fountain in the hallway right before the funding workshop—cold water from underground that chilled your bones as you learned which words would make your dreams into a proposal, your body into a scholar? Did you learn to say *ethnography* within the context of these workshops? Not first a life’s work and then a funding application, but a funding application that determines what work the life will be allowed to take on? How long before it spoiled on your tongue?

Or did it keep the taste of a serious word, a working word, a responsible word, a careful word? Did it have an outfit that matched it? Did it give you files and folders, hard drives and spreadsheets? Did it give you something to do with your hands? Did it give you places to go and people to see? Did it give you a world to explore, another world besides the world where you sit behind a desk as the apprentice? Did it promise to make you an expert in something, to give you something to deliver? You’ve heard Indigenous communities refer to white people as “the project people.” Did you like being a project person?

Poetics 5:***Refusal***

Canada, 2019

The body is so tense that it develops injuries. Every muscle is trying to hold itself at the ready, the university's [e]valuative assault seems to come from everywhere, but by now it comes mainly from the way the body has learned to expect it and anticipate it and organize against it, until it can't think through and feel through what it is actually with and for. The doctor says that either, like, you can try to work on this with yoga and stuff, or she can give you the anxiety drugs. She herself, who has too many patients and can't keep up, drinks vodka, which she does not recommend. She refers you to a young kinesiologist, who wants to know what else is going on when you are sitting in class and the muscles are guarding your body to combustion. We meander through the details. Do you drink water in class? She wants to know. Is it cold water? She says you should try drinking tea. Keep the body warm. And see.

Months later, at an international conference for the unspecial Education as given, you tell your supervisor, Bronwen, that you don't want to give your paper. You already tried to refuse to write it in the first place. You are applying all your hyperactivity of thought to the refusal⁵⁴, using the force of philosophy to elaborate your refusal of the encyclopedia of knowledge of the world as given. You are saying that the implications of *not* giving the paper might be more interesting than the implications of giving it. You wonder if you give Bronwen headaches, but she always holds you calmly. She seems to hold the you who is refusing, and also the you who doesn't know why she is suffering. She asks if she can get you a cup of tea⁵⁵.

⁵⁴ Truman et. al (2021) hold a place for affective refusals as a literacy practice.

⁵⁵ Bronwen comes around to hold us, again, here, in a pedagogy around *listening*: Low & Sonntag, 2013.

Poetics 6: Misunderstanding the Assignment

You are eleven when your class begins a project about ancient civilizations. You learn about the artifacts that civilizations leave behind, the way that we attempt to know them through the fragments of their living; their art and their tools, their pottery and garments. Now you are supposed to create an artifact to represent a civilization. The class takes turns going around the table and presenting their project idea to the teacher. You are busy enjoying all the thought and feeling that studying ancient civilizations has brought to you—the way it connects your body to the smell of earth and sand on the playground, the way it gives you a longing for ritual and community that is infusing all your play lately. But there's no time for these feelings: you need to have a product in mind. You are still very unsure what school wants from you in terms of product. You try to do what the others do.

It's almost your turn to share an idea, but your friend Debra goes first. Debra says that she plans to make a mask out of clay, and that it will be just like the masks made out of clay that we saw in the History Channel videos of ancient civilizations, and she will paint the same symbols on it and it will have the same meanings as the ones in the videos. The teacher has a big red-lipped smile. She makes a note to get clay from the art teacher for Debra; she can begin sculpting on Monday. Now it's your turn and everyone is looking at you expectantly. All you can think about is that clay, and the smell of earth. You say this thing that has arrived as an excitement in you: you would like to make a BRAIN OUT OF CLAY! The teacher has already descended into the squint of the skeptic. She wants to know... *why*. You try to explain as your excitement deflates, wondering what magic words Debra had said to earn her clay rights. But you're not really able to explain the momentum of this clay brain. You just feel deeply that you should be putting your hands into wet clay, and that somehow the thought of doing this calls you

to the slippery and mysterious pathways inside our bodies, the way that our neurology has channels like the rivers that clay comes from to begin with. Making the pathways of the body out of the material of the pathways of the earth would feel good, would honor something these ancient civilizations have moved in you. But it's just a feeling you can't explain, so the teacher says: hm, I think you heard Debra say that she will use clay, and now you want to use clay too, but you don't really have an idea about an artifact.

On Monday, you watch Debra put on a smock and carve a face into a ball of soft, silty wet earth. You don't turn in anything for the civilization project. You make lots of things, but it doesn't occur to you to mention them in class. You mix leaves and dirt and spit at the far corner of the playground at recess, slowly developing the cuisine of a playground people. Friends come to receive a dirt cake or to sit down and shape the dough with you. Debra comes, she with her A and you with your F, and you shape the dirt together. Sometimes you explain to the air all the ways that you could have rationalized the clay brain to the teacher: maybe it was for an ancient Egyptian civilization, with its careful practices of tending to a body. Maybe you were travelling in time to a people who would discover contemporary Western civilization, it's neuroscientific mappings of the body. You keep trying to explain it, to make it fit, to perform the expectation, but it doesn't feel right. The clay brain was something else. You wanted to connect your body to the earth, and that was not the assignment. Maybe Debra wanted that too, she just hid it better. Maybe the teacher, her mouth spread with lipstick made of smooth wax and oil and lanolin, wanted to give you the clay, she just had to justify it in words that can go in the filing cabinet that collects your learning in certain terms. Over time, you learn to hide the feeling of learning connecting your body to a force. It's easy, really. You just have to hide it in the clarity of certain words.

Poetics 7:***Eating our Words***

Canada, May 2019

For the past six months you have been observing and trying to participate in a narrative video game writing workshop designed to help more female-identifying writers enter the gaming industry. The *Pixelles*⁵⁶ game writing workshop is sponsored by Ubisoft Montreal, a branch of one of the largest video game development companies in the world, and facilitated by female-identifying writers employed by Ubisoft. It is a highly competitive program, with just seven applicants selected, and carries the promise that gaming industries notice the name *Pixelles* on a CV. Each session, the womxn demonstrate through their writing why their presence in the gaming industry is transformative. From a feminist Jane Austen-style video game with thorough historical accuracy to a choose-your-own-adventure game about a lesbian time travel collective, the writing that only these womxn could write produces play-worlds that the video game industry as-given has never seen before.

On the first day there is a snack table lined with maple cookies, chex mix, doritos, and m&m's. We comment on how good the snack selection is, and one of the leader's shares her formula: a snack table needs to have cookies, crunchy and salty things, and candy. We all grow quiet as we wait for the last few members to enter. One womxn is eating thai peanut noodles and says she's thrilled that we all get to sit around listening to her chewing. One of the leaders springs up and takes some chips from the table and crunches loudly: "Here! We can chew together."

⁵⁶ Real group name, per our ethics agreement and the group's preference.

At first you try to write along with the group, completing each writing assignment that they complete, which feels like the dumbest idea ethnography ever gave to you. You write a script about a 29-year-old girl playing Super Smash with some youth at a local youth centre. It sounds like field notes, only a video game narrative. In the feedback roundtable, one of the leaders kindly suggests that maybe it should say “29-year-old *woman*,” but it’s not for her to say, it’s totally up to you. That is the last time in your life that you need another woman to give yourself to you in full; others had tried but this time you hear it.

You stop trying to write along with the group after that. You are overwhelmed by the gifts of their writing and their presence, and you spend a few weeks just being in awe of sitting there with them. After a while you get anxious that you are supposed to be *doing* something. You are really itchy by now with the idea of what your research was supposed to be: you learning how to write video games in a perhaps Cixous-ish style feminist writing intervention in order to develop feminist video game writing pedagogies. It’s not so much that there is anything wrong with this idea. But you are overcome with the work that these womxn are uniquely able to do, and rather than try to take it and replicate it, you want to give something back to them.

You ask if you can prepare a meal for them to celebrate the final day of the workshop. You will cook a dish for each person’s writing, a dish that gives back some of the qualities that the writing has given to the world. Each person sends you their favorite piece of writing. You taste each person’s writing and try to describe that taste to yourself. And then you cook. For the writing that is *fresh and raw*, melon and prosciutto. For the writing that is effervescent, sparkling lemonade. For the writing that is intricate and layered, forager’s salad with mushrooms and hazelnuts. For the *smooth* writer, a vegan cashew queso. Three people have written cakes, and this is absurd, but you bake three cakes. For the tart and juicy writer, a blackberry lime cake. For

the salty and bittersweet writer, chocolate peanut butter pretzel cake. And for the wistful writing that always brings nostalgia for possible worlds of lesbian time travel collectives and trans becomings, choose-your-own-adventures in which we could come out over and over again if we needed to, a nostalgic birthday cake with candles to blow out.

“That’s my writing,” the fresh and raw writer says, pointing to the melon. “How do you know?” we ask. “I don’t know, but I know that’s my writing.” The salty and bittersweet writer looks upon her cake and says, “those are all of my favorite things!” But it is the smooth writer, who as a native francophone is naturally quieter in this anglophone setting, whose dish presents a new form of participation: the queso receives the loudest praise and demands for more, we rave about it, we call her writing liquid gold. As we eat together, we do the same things that we did throughout the workshop with its very good snack table and very generous feedback rounds. But we’re doing it differently. Some things that could not be expressed have been expressed. Some things that could not be forgotten have been tasted again in a new way. The fact that sometimes our most important work is chewing loudly together, and that we are each capable of giving other womxn back to themselves in full whenever they may need it, is pulled to the forefront and honored.

Poetics 8:

Requiem for Instant Ramen

Canada, June 2018

You had planned, as a research team, to hold a video game tournament at the youth centre this afternoon, but someone runs down the stairs and announces that a spicy ramen eating contest is underway. Who wants to join? The counselors need to know how many ramen packets to microwave. Upstairs, the conference table is filling with Styrofoam bowls as the contestants gather. Everyone is talking smack: *you’re going to cry after the first bite*. It’s a limited edition

triple spicy instant ramen blend that comes with an extra packet of chili oil. The counselors are crowning each bowl of noodles with an extra hot Taki. You and the other researchers agree to enter the competition, and you prepare your salivary glands, but in the end you give your ramen bowls to a few latecomers who want to join.

After *one, two, three, go*, all the kids rush to dip their faces into their noodle bowls, even though it is not a contest for speed but for endurance. Some of them whoop and holler in a hammy kind of way, trying to contain the grin that says the heat of this is fun and carrying on about it is even more fun. For some of them, the fun is in continuing the smack talk between slurps: *this isn't spicy AT ALL! Make me ten bowls if this is supposed to be a challenge!* For some of them, it really isn't that spicy, and they've shifted into enjoying a bowl of soup with their friends: *oh dang, that's kind of good with the Taki*. And there is a bit of genuine endurance: mouths on fire saying the only thing one can say in such a case: *my mouth is on fire!!!* You are smiling at the whole group of them in this way that feels just like the inside of a look you remember seeing on the faces of the adults around you when you were younger: this watery and soft smile that desires to hold the enthusiasm and sweetness of young people, and to file it close to the heart. The youth director seems to be smiling that kind of smile, too.

You can smell instant ramen in the air for the rest of the afternoon. Licked fingers return to the video game controllers downstairs beyond the ignored pleas of the counsellors: *Please wash your hands. PLEASE*. Dramatic accusations of bad breath become a fun way of reactivating the time we spent around the table, the moment just a moment ago when everyone was slurping together.

On any given day at the youth centre, there are more counsellors and university researchers offering change-making projects than there are youth to participate in them. Each

research team has its project proposal ready and its ethics review cleared. We have all set our sights on this youth centre because working with “at risk” youth provides the suggestion of a world that we want, in which unfair risk is cleared from the paths of youth. The part of us that simply wants to be with kids, the part that feels a thousand times more alive when a kid from the centre offers us a fist bump, conjugates daily with the part of us that needs to buy that feeling and put it in a dossier because late capitalism is brutal and our time is for sale, and if we don’t sell our time to the university to do research at the youth centre to fist-bump daily with these kids, we’re going to have to sell it to something else and then we’d have to call that something else who we are.

We listen when the director of the youth center describes what is actually needed, because we know how important listening is, we know how important it is to be the kind of researchers who listen. When he asks why we don’t use our grant funding to help pay the youth centre staff a more livable wage, it seems that we have no choice but to say that the grant structure doesn’t allow us to do that, it only allows us to pay graduate students from the university. Our grants buy gaming systems and iMacs and Maker Spaces for the centre, and this is very exciting. This allows us to do the projects with youth that we were able to fund based on the trends that Education has taken up, things that end up in the literature through a variety of valuations, including a push for computational thinking that came straight outta Silicon Valley and a game-making-for-learning wave nudged along in part by the gaming industry itself (see: (Kafai & Burke, 2016, p.10). And these things *do* provide interesting occasions of experience and shared learning, and they do provide moments with youth that matter. And at the same time it rings true when the youth director says the kids don’t come here for the stuff, *they come here for a feeling*. And besides, if you want to talk about stuff, he says, the youth center needs a new ping

pong table. We come here for a feeling, too. We come for the feeling of piling onto the red pleather couch downstairs with six kids to play a few rounds of Super Smash. We come for the feeling of saying that this is a *youth-led* project, even when the youth get bored with the projecty-ness, even when the feeling they come for gets corrupted by us all trying too hard with so many projects. We are trying too hard, and that's ok. It doesn't corrupt the part of experience that cannot be corrupted. No matter how hard we try at a project, we are lucky because we still get to fist-bump every day, and we still get to sit on the couch together. The day that we participated in a spicy ramen eating contest was not written into our project design, but it had always been a part of the feeling that we came for, the feeling the kids come for. It had always been the kind of heat that draws us to each other.



Gaming tournament at “Centre des Jeunes”, Montreal, 2018. Photo by McGill University research team.

Interference 2: Play

*Parts of this section were originally published in *Maker Literacies and Maker Identities in the Digital Age* (McLean & Rowsell, 2020). See: Ehret L, 2020.*

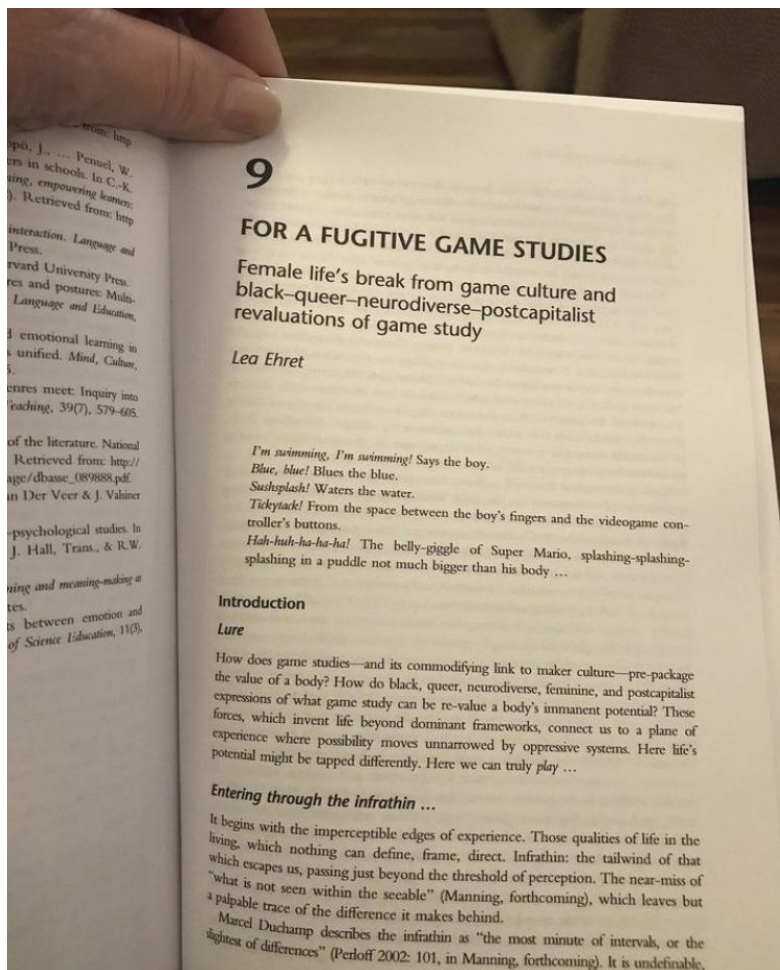


Photo by Kathy Rackley, 2020.

I'm swimming! I'm swimming! The boy sings, moving his shoulders, enjoying his cleverness, as he gets Super Mario to swim repeatedly in a circle, splashing fervently in a tiny puddle at the edge of the path he is supposed to go down to rescue Princess Peach. This is useless and it makes us all laugh a lot, which is brilliant. The actual point of the game—our being together—gathers a fresh momentum beyond our focus on rescuing the princess. Play is a radical togetherness. Play comes with “the intuitive understanding of what does not affect one without affecting the other” (Massumi, 2014, p.78). Play invites the individual to

“fully assume its transindividual implication in the situation” (p.81). Thinking with Bateson’s *A Theory of Play and Fantasy* (1955), Massumi conceptualizes play as “the surplus-value of life that comes with enthusiasm of the body” (Massumi, 2014, p.77). The generic outcome of play is to “inventively express enthusiasm of the body” (p.78), and while the parameters of a given theme of play are intuitively understood, it is also understood that the ending is not a foregone conclusion. “The open-endedness goes beyond the uncertainty as to which generic alternate ending [i.e., win or lose] will eventuate. There is always also the creative possibility that a spontaneous improvisation [...] will inflect the tendential unfolding, giving the genericness of the theme a singular twist, a something extra surpassing the known ‘what’ of the goings-on with an unforeseen ‘how’ it will have happened” (p.78).

Enter game studies. Like all academic disciplines, there are sides here. Pick a position: (a) video games are harmful, feeding aggressive behavior and obesity and gambling addiction, and intoxicating youth with that dangerous substance known as *screen time* (see, i.e., Squire & Steinkuehler, 2017); (b) video games are learning machines (Gee, 2003) and constellations of literacy practices (Steinkuehler, 2007). If you choose position B, you must now back up and select a pre-position: (1b: *instructionist gaming* or *serious games*) video games are prime vehicles for instructional content, and students can learn a variety of skills by playing educational games (see: Kafai, 2006). (2b: *constructionist gaming*) playing a well-designed video game or making your own video game is inherently embedded with valuable learning opportunities (see: Earp, 2015). Once you have made a choice here, you might get tired of arguing and decide to ask these sides to get along: (b2.0: *connected gaming*) both playing and making games (either explicitly instructional or for entertainment) are valuable for learning (Kafai & Burke, 2016). Now, wherever you have landed on the B continuum, your pursuits in

gaming-for-learning must contend with all of game culture's problems, notably its mistreatment of women through its proliferation of misogynistic game narratives, its male-dominated gaming communities, and its oppressive and even violent treatment of women working in the gaming industry (see, i.e., Jenson & de Castell, 2013; Wingfield, 2014). Perhaps the A group is gloating—they *told* us video games were rotten!

Going sideways now. If we begin to feel out the space in between these positions, the terrain changes. What existing parameters for gauging the value of video games are at work in framing these debates? What counts as a valuable body, a valuable life, across the argument against gaming, and how does the argument *for* gaming double down on the same parameters? What counts as knowledge and skill across these debates, and what bodies are devalued through this register? What framings are lending shape to the fraught position of women-in-games, and how can we do justice to each singular experience therein as irreducible to the sum of its parts? How does this commitment to irreducibility carry other bodies with it, moving beyond the stakes outlined by a focus on women-in-games? Is there any elbow-room in the universe, as Whitehead would say, for valuing differently? How do we learn to value that which cannot be evaluated in advance — the relation in between playing, making, and living, inseparable from each other and inseparable from the edges of experience that make all the difference? Put another way: how is *the work's work eluding us* (see, i.e., Manning, 2020) in game studies? How, in the middle of such profound damage, is game study still joyful? This is a question for play. And to ask: *how do we play?* or *how do we study?* is to ask: *how do we live?*

The boy playing Super Mario teaches us that. He rescues us from the game's constrained gendering by rescuing Mario from the rescuing. He rescues us from looking where all the problems with game study have taught us to look. A representational contention with game

culture's misogyny might concern itself with the content of the game, prescribing instead a Princess Peach version that restacks the hierarchy in her favor. We could never be against such a thing, and neither could capitalism, but when we play together we improvise beyond the problem as-given, the world as-given. Play involves us in "the immanence of a life" (Massumi, 2014, p.84), which brings us into fresh combinations of what our shared living can be and what it can do.

Poetics 9:

Baba

Canada, August 2019



SenseLab event at the Darling Foundry, inspired by the work of artist Lygia Clark. Montreal, July 2019. Photo by Darling Foundry.

In the work of Brazilian artist Lygia Clark, "the body is the proposition"⁵⁷. Clark's somatic propositions for collective and individual experimentation offer experiences and participations that "call up a body's perception, dissolving its unity" (ibid). These propositions

⁵⁷ See: <https://fonderiedarling.org/en/Make-Space-for-Surprise-to-Arise> [Retrieved on February 23, 2022]

create the conditions for new sensations to arise, playing with how our bodies anticipate their participation in the world and disorganizing sensory experience in ways that might allow new bodyings to emerge. For Clark, the somatic is political and ethical, and by calling up the entanglements of chaotic vitality and creativity of the body, collective experimentations in the body's own ethico-political engagements escape institutional codings⁵⁸.

Taking up one of Clark's propositions, we are gathered at the Darling Foundry on a hot summer evening in Montreal. Two volunteers are lying on tables in their underwear. The rest of us gather around them. We are each given a spool of thread. The proposition is to put the spool in your mouth and pull, unraveling a continuous drooly thread from your mouth and unfurling it onto the skin of the person on the table. It's hard to describe what this produces. Seeing others pulling an endless thread from the mouth startles the stomach at first, triggers a gag—the mind choking on spaghetti—until you feel the plastic spool in your own mouth, clattering against the back of your teeth as you pull, and the sensation separates from the expectation that the thread is coming from down your throat. You begin to play. If you pull too fast, spittle flies into the air, and this makes us all laugh as we learn to pull more slowly. The smell of saliva is quickly overwhelming. You have never smelled collective halitosis before. All of our breath combines into a sourness that hangs in the hot heavy air. The gagging returns now and again.

The body on the table quivers as we uncoil the damp strands onto her skin. She gags once, and we ask if she's ok. She says she's ok. She relaxes into another way of entering the sensations. She cannot see the beauty of the multicolored strands accumulating in delicate landscapes on her body, so someone says to her, *you look beautiful*. Later, one of the two says that the smell of our breath on her skin called up the sensations of breastfeeding. The other said that if she thought more atmospherically about the cool feeling on her skin in the heat of the

⁵⁸ For more on the work of Lygia Clark, see: Rolnik, 2015.

evening, the light tickling of the threads and our laughter and voices near, it was pleasant, but if she thought more pointedly about the saliva spooling from our mouths, it was disgusting.

The rest of the evening at the Darling Foundry is oriented by shared breath. We stand around talking with drinks in our hands like any evening in any art gallery, but our shared breath still hangs in the air and it catches hold of our senses from time to time. You are trying to carry on a conversation at the same time as noticing the particular intimacy of talking itself, the way our mouths open. Later that night, you have a very surreal experience trying to floss your teeth. As you sleep you are supernaturally attuned to your partner's respiration, aware of the warm and damp saliva molecules spreading into the air like a halo.

Poetics 10:

Pandemia

March 2020-present

We think more now about the air that is breathed between us.

*

Poetics 11:*Hallway*

Southeastern United States, August 2012



High school classroom in the Southeastern United States, 2012. Photo by Lea Rackley.

It's hard to create a good feeling here. Has anyone ever felt truly good in a place that has a security gate in front of the bathrooms, padlocked during classes? Where there is a police officer with a gun, but no school nurse on duty? We have all been roused from sleep before dawn to traffic through the acrid exhaust of the school buses, to swarm into a building that smells like hot dishwater, boiled corn, and industrial cleaning products. Our nervous systems quiver with the recognition of these sensations. You have the same feeling in the pit of your stomach that you had when you were five, entering a building like this for the first time, waiting in line for a carton of milk and missing your mother. Being a teacher now has done little to alter the depth of

that feeling. During hall duty one morning, between all the sleepy bodies shuffling to class, a freshman boy comes down the corridor singing. *If you wanna be somebody, if you wanna go somewhere, you better wake up and pay attention.* This is beautiful in a way that does make you pay attention. The longing to “go somewhere” is the exact vector of this place. It’s not really set up as a place where anyone wants to stay.

Why do the delights feel cruel? The fact that a teacher could decide to distribute cupcakes one day, or that a principal might deliver baggies of candy to the teachers after a hard week, strikes a sad contrast to the routine absence of delight. The joy is so sparse that it can feel like an insult when someone decides to pass out a token of it; evidence that the rest of the world contains delight, but here it is rationed and, worse than that, leveraged. *This school is so DRY*, a freshman girl once observed during homeroom. *No clubs, no activities, no field days, no nothing.* The schoolboard recently overturned the entire administration responsible for drying up this school into a barren police state penitentiary. It will take the new administration years to make up for what’s been lost. In three years’ time, there will be a few couches added to the library and the hallways, but still a gate in front of the bathrooms. There will be free-choice clubs every Wednesday on a variety of fun topics, but still three tiers of standardized testing drills dominating the curriculum. There will be a field day with bouncy castles and ice pops, but still active shooter drills every few months. One moment you are asking if they want a grape or cherry popsicle, and the next you are saying: *get down on the ground and try not to make any noise.*

We recite the school’s mission at every faculty meeting. We all know that we are here to *equip our students to realize and achieve their potential, to involve families, and to strengthen communities.* We talk a lot about strengthening communities. Most of us are new hires who don’t

know each other and don't know the neighborhood. Our students and their families are used to meeting brand new teachers every year, and they seem prepared to never see us again. They are not wrong: by October, a third of the teachers in your hallway have already quit. In a faculty meeting at the beginning of the year, the principal advises us to avoid the negativity and cynicism that can spread amongst teachers, and initially this makes you wary of going out for beers with the other teachers after work. You are meant to be afraid of cynicism oozing onto your naivete as a new teacher, and that fear doubles the pressure of your work in the need to maintain its sincerity. By the time you do go out for the beers with the other teachers, it's because all that pressure has made you really need a beer. We are all wrung out in a way that makes us keep wringing, as if we need to get to the last drop of our sanity before we could ask for a refill. Asking for a refill of beer, however, is easy. It's a new feeling to add to the pit of the stomach: the sense that we are stock photos of teachers, relating to stock photos of students and parents and administrators, exchanging stock phrases about strengthening communities and stock complaints about every part of this work. You feel like you've been laminated and three-hole punched into the definitive image of the only way all of this could go. But every day you show up and talk about poetry.

Poetics 12:***Potluck***

Southeastern United States, 2012-2015

Faculty potlucks, usually on the last day of school before a holiday or break, are the only days you eat a full meal at the school. They are also the only days that you all eat together. People bring barbecue meatballs in the crockpot and hot wings with blue cheese dressing. There is *always* "Rotel dip"—which is Velveeta cheese melted with a can of Rotel tomatoes and

sausage—with tortilla chips. There is probably gonna be French onion dip with Ruffles potato chips. Some people dip their chips into the dip and lay each chip on their plate, and some people put a heap of chips on their plate and spoon the dip all over it, and the math teacher shakes her head and says: *messy*. Someone always brings deli potato salad and pasta salad, both a touch sweet and heavy on mayonnaise. We usually have those sweet Hawaiian rolls and pulled pork with bottled barbecue sauce. If we're lucky there's southern-style macaroni and cheese. Maybe someone brings a salad. Maybe someone brings a basil and tomato and mozzarella caprese salad with pesto, and everyone calls them fancy, and they say oh no, it's really easy to make.

There is definitely Jell-O salad, Heavenly Salad, Ambrosia, or whatever you call it: green Jell-O, cool whip, canned pineapple, walnuts, and marshmallows mashed together. Maybe someone rolled up ham and cheese in tortillas and cut them into pinwheel rounds, and we all say oh, that's a great idea, I should remember that, it would be easy to bring that for lunch. Maybe the math specialist makes her banana pudding, which is exactly like your mother's—with the layers of bananas and vanilla wafers and cool whip—and you try to tell her this but it's so good that you can't finish the sentence. There's Coke and Diet Coke and Sprite and for sure Orange Crush, and plastic cups of ice. There are Dixie paper plates—which is the name of a paper company from Tuscaloosa Alabama that may or may not see fit to change its confederate name as other brands have—and red paper napkins and clear plastic silverware. Everyone seems sated, tired, almost happy or at least joking through it. You imagine that the administrators are sharing the glance that teachers share with each other whenever we get our students settled with a Funfetti cupcake or a movie Friday: look, everyone's calm. Why couldn't it just be like this?

Interference 3: Love

This section was originally published as Love & Poetics: Black Life Beyond Literacy Research As We Know it (Rackley, Bradford, & Peairs, 2022). It was written for the context of literacy practitioners in today's schools and education researchers in today's universities.

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES IN SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09620214.2021.1882871>



ARTICLE



Love and poetics: black life beyond literacy research as we know it

Lea Rackley^a, Tishawn Bradford^b and Demetrius Peairs^c

^aDepartment of Integrated Studies in Education, McGill University, Montreal, Canada; ^bUniversity of Memphis; ^cNashville, TN

ABSTRACT

This paper emerges from a seven-year, ongoing relational poetics between two poets and their former secondary English teacher. Organized by the world's urgencies, the three authors have studied the force of poetry throughout incidences of violence against Black lives close to home and across the United States. This practice began in the classroom and continues beyond graduation through remote correspondence across three cities. Through it we develop the concept of study as *love*, engaging with Moten & Harney's concept of study as irreducibly social and in excess of institutional parameters. We also develop the concept of *poetics* as more than methodology, engaging with Glissant's poetics of relation. Through love and poetics, we call for literacy studies engaged with the ontogenesis of Black life, moving beyond institutionally white disciplinary methods and standard research outputs. We ask how the poetics of relation and the love of study produce new worlds.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 15 November 2020
 Accepted 21 January 2021

KEYWORDS

Black study; poetry; poetics;
 relation; methodology;
 literacies

“No one will ever understand.”
 – Demetrius Peairs

“We demand the right to opacity.”
 – Édouard Glissant (1997, p. 189)

“If no one has told you they loved you in recent times, know that I do.”

–Tishawn Bradford

“It ends with love ... ”

–Jack Halberstam (in Harney & Moten, 2013, p. 5)

Bradford and Peairs’ wrote poetry in the hallways and corners of the school, and it kept touching the world 7 years later, recombining with new realities and reconnecting to shared singularities, producing, again and again, a reaching out for connection. Over the years, Rackley kept saying *we should . . .* write about this? Write more poetry about this? Develop some way of curricularizing our conversations about this? Her teacher training and doctoral studies knew how to organize the feeling of reaching into various modes of knowledge production. But one of the ways that study spreads itself out into the world is by co-opting our disciplinary impulses. Each procedural suggestion was just a way of reaching, and as the relational force of our opaque feelings and expressions kept exceeding the tasks we applied them to, the joy of relation endured as the point. Literacy studies has always done this kind of love and not understanding on the way to its products. I was thinking about you. We should write together. Whatever ends up being written is yet another way of reaching, and it continues to reach in ways we will never know about. But the process of reaching out to write together also contains meanders of relation where our love and study spread out into the world’s creativity.

What if we do not want to write anything else about violence, but when the world fails us we write to each other and to the world, and the opacity of the violence is in there as a singular expression of everything else in this universe, and we end up reaching for everything else together? What if *reaching for everything else together* exceeds the writing into other modes of love and study, foregrounding the joy of relation in the ordinary movements of remembering

each other, calling each other, and doing the front-porch work of discussing otherwise possibility? How could we share these modalities of reaching with others, in all their poetic rambling and turbulence? The poetics of relation has its own ways of answering its own questions. We were always already doing the thing we needed to do, it was just beyond what we could have expected.

Poetics 13:

Changing Planes

Australia, September 2019

The range of the airplane—a few thousand miles, the other side of the world, coconut palms, glaciers, the poles, the Poles, a lama, a llama, etc.—is pitifully limited compared to the vast extent and variety of experience provided, to those who know how to use it, by the airport.

Ursula Le Guin, 2014, p.1

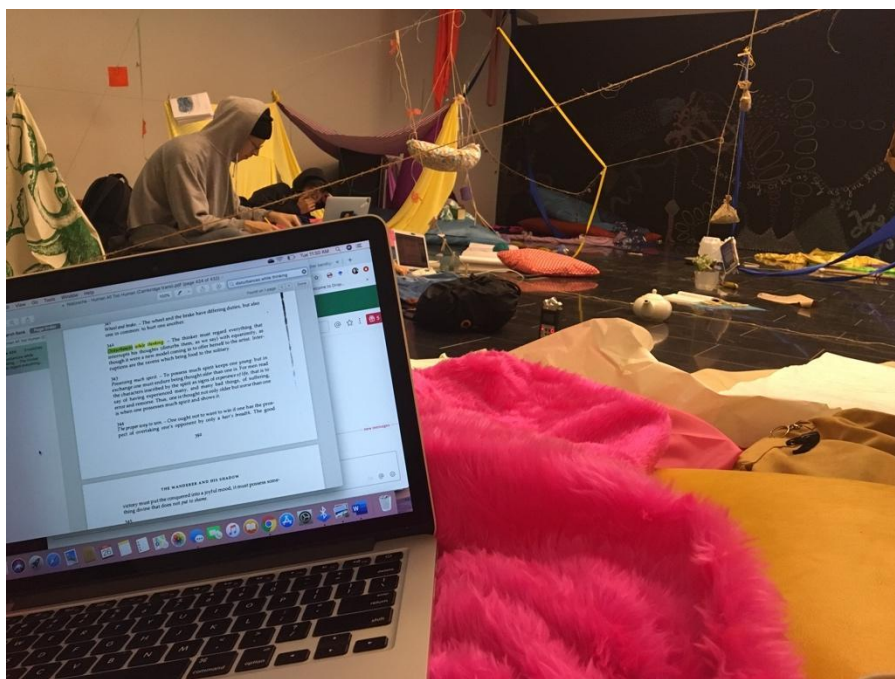
You are pale, Vitamin-D deficient, and depressive. Your mother hasn't seen you for too many years while you've been "studying." You don't know how it is that you've ended up in Australia. Well anyway, you're still on the way there. You are going to Australia to help facilitate an event called *Minor Movements and Social Dreaming*, at the intersection of art, process philosophy, neurodiversity, and radical pedagogy. As part of the research collective SenseLab, you will help set up a pedagogical exhibit in an art gallery at the LaTrobe Art Institute in Bendigo and see what propositions this leads to. But first, you and the rest of the researchers from North and South America and Europe are flying to Australia on different flights at different times. For your part, this is a 5.5 hour flight from Montreal to Vancouver, followed directly by an 18 hour flight from Vancouver to Brisbane. You have planned to pass the first twenty minutes of this time reading a chapter from Ursula Le Guin selected by the research group on social dreaming. Instead you are caught by the beginning of the book: *Changing Planes*. The

protagonist of Le Guin's story discovers, in the purgatory of the airport, waiting endlessly in chairs bolted to the floor, "that she could go anywhere—be anywhere—because she was already between planes" (p.3). She begins to discover fabulatory lands and visit fabulatory peoples.

You visit many places from your airplane seat. There is a part of you, curled tightly inside of the you who is watching *Finding Dory* and drinking ginger ale from a plastic cup, who visits the deep blue ocean 38,000 feet below. There is a you who is immersed in the endless night sky, heavy and weightless at the same time. There is a you who gets off the plane and emerges into a brilliant Brisbane morning, teal and cloudless, 26 degrees Celsius at 7am. There is another you who has never landed. On all the other planes of experience, you are still in the endless deep blue, you have taken it very seriously to *just keep swimming*. Jetlag is like doing a flip underwater. You wade through the enormous Australian skies without ever seeming to touch the ground. Le Guin did stipulate that changing planes provides varieties of experience *to those who know how to use it*. You know how to float between planes of existence, but landing in a new one is something else.

From this swimmy, burbly deep blue, it is impossible to comprehend the wildfires. The dry blazing heat you can feel, the daily fire danger rating you can see, but the blue of the sky and the blue of the surrounding ocean does not register the threat of the burning earth. Blue does not seem like the color of burning, but of course, to the very center of a flame, it *is*. A Melbournian friend once mentioned her fear of being caught in a bush fire, explained that Australians keep wool blankets in the car for fanning out flames. She told you about this in your apartment in Montreal, over the steam of hot cups of coffee, where you kept wool blankets draped over the back of the couch for warming frostbitten bodies.

When the art gallery residency begins in Bendigo some months later, you and your collaborators make an ontogenetic space for collective experimentation and radical pedagogy. It is architected in much the same spirit as the research-creation laboratory you share at Concordia University in Montreal⁵⁹. The space is different every day, and in fact it may change multiple times a day, but it could be described as a very messy playroom. SenseLab gives the feeling that the adults will arrive any second and tell us to clean it all up. The suggestion of a world that comes from this vibrant mess of fabric tents, doohickeys hanging from the ceiling, chalkboard drawings, beanbag piles, stray teapots and orange peels, plants full of toys and rubber frogs taped to the wall, is this: what else could happen if the parameters for normativity were nowhere to be found?



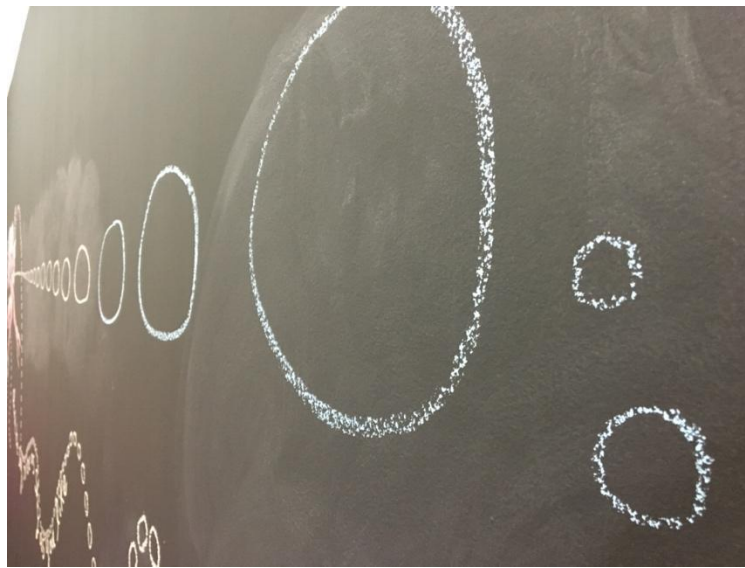
SenseLab: Minor Movements exhibition⁶⁰ at La Trobe Art Institute, 2019. Photo by Lea Rackley.

Visitors to the gallery are invited to participate in the space however they want. Naturally, some of them enter the plane of the art gallery and the experience it usually provides. They ask if

⁵⁹ See: <http://erinmovement.com/about-senselab> [Retrieved on March 4, 2022].

⁶⁰ see: <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/art-institute/exhibitions/past/2019> [Retrieved on March 4, 2022].

you are an artist and if you'd care to explain the mess to them. Some visitors change planes immediately, delighted to faint onto a bean bag or draw with chalk on the wall. This is mainly what you spend your days in the gallery doing: drawing bubbles with blue chalk on the wall. When you are discussing with your collaborators how things are going at the gallery, you chew pathologically on your critiques of the given world's pathologies and criticality. You insert your normative critiques on society's ability to insert the normative parameters anywhere. But when you are drawing bubbles on the wall, your thoughts drift into the blue. Around this time, your collaborator Sebastian was studying *Azul Profundo*, "deep blue" (see: Weidemann, 2021) and it held your thoughts.



SenseLab: Minor Movements exhibition⁶¹ at La Trobe Art Institute, 2019. Photo by Lea Rackley.

That is what you are doing on the day that the sky turns red. You are drawing bubbles on the wall when a gust of hot wind blows the gallery doors open behind you, knocking down a paper marquee by the entrance and scattering the tile with broken twigs and loose gravel. There is an orange alert on the wildfire app for greater Victoria. The staff decides to close early. You hurry out the back doors of the gallery to the residency apartment. Outside the sky is a dull

⁶¹ see: <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/art-institute/exhibitions/past/2019> [Retrieved on March 4, 2022].

mauve, thick with a smoke you can taste. You wish that you could ask one of the locals who had visited you at the gallery: please, can you explain this mess to me?



Bendigo, Victoria, Australia, December 2019. Photo by Lea Rackley.

Poetics 14:***Missed Trains***

Australia, December, 2019



Train station, Bendigo, Victoria, Australia, December 2019. Photo by Lea Rackley.

It's a thirty-minute train ride between Bendigo station and Castlemaine station, and if you miss the train you wanted to catch, you'll wait at least an hour for the next one. Traveling each day between the art gallery in Bendigo and the cluster of Airbnb's in Castlemaine where most of us are staying, we spend a lot of time either running or waiting. We also spend a lot of time walking to and from the train stations, up and down a tremendous hill in Castlemaine and along the flat, straight main drag of Bendigo. One morning we leave the house with four minutes until the train we want to catch. The moment between getting ourselves out the door and realizing that we need to *run* happens quickly. You toss a yogurt into your backpack before beginning to sprint, and will it to stay upright. It is seven in the morning. Your body was not prepared to sprint. Your shoes, shins, knees, the fabric of your clothes, the loose straps of your bag, the lining of your lungs, the whipping threads of your hair, all complain loudly at this sudden pounding on the pavement. You do not think that you will make it. You are a hundred yards behind the others, but

they slow down so that if you miss the train, you will miss the train together. Once you all slip through the doors of an air-conditioned train compartment, you try to slow your breathing. Your body was not prepared to stop sprinting. Once you can breathe you open the yogurt. Your friend asks: “did it become a smoothie?”

One day you do miss the train. You and three others wait at the station for an hour, sitting on the ground and laying down on the benches, wandering up and down the steps and blinking in the contrast between the blazing blue sunlight and the darkness under the shade of the platform. One of your friends takes a purple crystal from his pocket and sets it down next to a can of grape Fanta. This lifts you inexplicably. He was not prepared to be stuck at a train station for an hour, but he had a purple crystal in his pocket, which means he was prepared for anything. He was prepared for the kinds of situations that nothing can prepare you for. Only non-preparation will do; only a purple crystal that says, anything can happen.


Interference 4: Noise

This section was originally published as Joyful Noise and Abatement: Idle Chatter and the Undercommons of Oracy Education (see: Rackley & Bradford, 2022). It was written for the context of debates over “oracy education” in the United Kingdom, and situated for literacy practitioners in the UK and beyond, as well as education researchers in today’s universities.

Literacy UKLA

Literacy Volume Number xxxx 2022 1

Joyful noise and abatement: idle chatter and the undercommons of oracy education

Lea Rackley  and Tishawn Bradford

Abstract

This paper imagines oracy education as a reaching-out for connection with the irreducible socialities of black study. In the wake of imperialist functions of literacy, classroom talk has been left to defend its value against traditionalist views which rebuke, as one UK education minister put it, “idle chatter in class.” We argue that oracy education risks doubling down on the value system outlined by this rebuke – and the white settler-colonial onto/auto-epistemology mobilised therein – if it measures the value of talk within this purview. We follow the undercommons of black study and the poetics of relation toward revaluations of idle chatter and noise as modes of thought. We explore the abundant participations of noise beyond the colonial errand of abatement, and we elaborate the relational stakes that idle chatter may invent. We reorient the stakes of the learning conversation with its single guiding lesson into the vibrant jazz riff of a learning cacophony that leaves the continuous echo of possible lessons behind it, proposing new ways of valuing oracy education and new possibilities for participation. Our chatty inquiry practices this ethics, overlapping our shared classroom experiences with discussions of theory and our discussions of theory with yet new possible experiences.

Key words: oracy education, black studies, poetics, relation, literacy

“This joyful noise is fundamentally a critique of the given world.” (Crawley, 2016, p. 144)
 “I’m hearing every joy.” Bradford, Author 2

and literacy is a desire for reconnecting with the black and indigenous oral practices that were violently severed from an imperialist function of literacy during colonisation; or else it can extend the colonial account of what counts as voicing and which kinds of knowledge are to be voiced. Here we imagine reconnecting. We imagine oracy education as a reaching out for connection – the very definition Harney and Moten (2013) use to describe black study – and we explore the capacities of the oracy education movement to revalue oralities that express multiple ways of being and knowing.

The emergence of oracy education has pressed the importance of listening to students. Oracy, the focus on oral expression, is not separable from literacy (see, i.e. Gee, 2015), except that it was not viewed as part of literacy from the perspective of ancient imperialist culture wars and the national curriculums leftover from them. Over the past two decades, dialogic perspectives on learning (see, i.e. Bakhtin, 1982; Vygotsky, 2012) oversaw the addition of speaking and listening to the transversal skills taught in North American school curriculums, as well as the contestation of such additions in the United Kingdom for fear of promoting, as one education minister put it, “idle chatter in class” (see Alexander, 2012). In both cases, literacy researchers and educators began defending student voice as a processual part of their learning amidst centuries of training toward passive, teacher-transmitted conceptions of learning (see, i.e. Alexander, 2020). This has meant negotiating shifts in expectations for how classroom learning functions (no longer rows of silently obedient pupils, but clusters

“Listening to cacophony and noise tells us that there is a wild beyond to the structures we inhabit and that inhabit us.”

Halberstam in Harney and Moten, 2013, p. 7

Noise has always been a problem for white settler- colonial onto/auto-epistemology. Crawley (2016) goes back to Enlightenment discourse through theology-philosophy to track colonial reactions to noise as, essentially, excessive existence: “always in need of abatement” (p.) For Crawley, the abatement of noise is the colonial errand: the reduction of existence. Colonial elites had agreed upon what constitutes sound as a category of rationally curated expression, and they also agreed upon who produced noise:

Native Americans, African Americans (slave and free), and the laboring classes generally were among the greatest noise-makers in colonial America [...] and made sounds that threatened to fracture the acoustic world of English settlers.

Crawley, 2016, p. 140, citing Smith, 2001

Noise became racialised as other, the other of rationality and propriety as colonial society defined it. And yet what constitutes noise is already a proposition for other modes of sociality:

Noise is that ephemeral movement that cannot be pinpointed, separated, individuated.

Noise is, only insofar as it is irreducibly social, irreducibly formed by vibration off other surfaces, through and against air such that vibration, movement, begs its being heard, its being listened to.

Crawley, 2016, p.139

Crawley’s definition of noise is a relation: the movement of many entangled movements, the expression of many different expressions, which combine and alter each other so that they are not easily separated one from the other. This is an account of irreducible social life which echoes through the great noise making of black and indigenous sociality in the face of colonial abatement: if the colonial perspective wished to reduce social life to one voice and its image of

the world at a time, the irreducible sociality of noise insisted on the ethics of accounting for everything that exists inseparably at the same time.

Through the abundant calls, cries, claps and hollers of Blackpentacostalism, Crawley details the emergence of alternative modes of social organization, a vibrant sociality of collective living. Regarding an instance in 1819 in which Benjamin LaTrobe experienced “an overwhelming sense of cultural alienation” when he came upon a large gathering of slave instrumentalists playing while African Louisianans danced in Congo square, Crawley asks: “What if he had let the rhythms move him, if he had consented to the noise of the encounter?” (p. 142).

What would it mean to consent to the noise of a learning encounter? The institutional logic of abatement applies both subtle and direct pressures to our attempts to change learning conversations to embody the relations that are actually necessary for shared living. These pressures often push the literature on classroom talk to paradox. Michaels et al. (2016), for example, acknowledge that “students’ ideas, diverse cultural knowledge, interests, and life experiences have a great deal of influence,” which creates a “background of unpredictability and diversity” (p. 14) to the task at hand. Their suggestion is that the teacher should maintain two goals: “1) all students must have access to the learning conversation, and 2) the content of the talk must consistently further academic learning” (ibid). The conflict, of course, between the first and second goal, is that a learning conversation as truly moved by all students would change the constitution of “academic learning” as given, and would gather its own pursuits from that “background” of unpredictability and diversity, of unique ideas, cultural knowledge, interests, and life experiences, rather than abating these possibilities within the institutional task at hand.

We know the force of these possibilities precisely because our institutions assume we must reign them in.

To let the rhythm of a learning encounter move us, to consent to its noise, would be to refuse the inheritance of curriculum as control and academic learning as its surveillance. This would move us beyond the single dominant learning conversation into the background din of possible conversations, unpredictable and diverse, and the possible knowledge that circulate there. It may even attune us to the fact that a vibrant background of study has always been going on, in the poetic overlap of irreducible sociality. What radically inclusive modes of shared participation and shared possibility are being invented there? What if we consented to these inventions?

Poetics 15:***Mango 1, or Laranja***

Brazil, 1982-present



Beco do Batman (Batman Alley)⁶², São Paulo, Brazil, Spring 2019. Photo by Lea Rackley

Over half of Brazil lives with food-insecurity,⁶³ although Bolsonaro's minister of agriculture says Brazil *does not* deal with much hunger because there are lots of mangoes growing in the streets.⁶⁴ Let them eat cake, let us eat mangoes – what has changed in human politics over the centuries? What have we learned? Here in the 2020's, Brazil is studying, living, elaborating its next revolution, casting its turbulent vote. *Lula is back*. We don't know this yet.

When Felix Guattari visited Brazil in 1982, during the political campaign for the first direct elections after nearly two decades of military dictatorship, he described the atmosphere to Suely Rolnik (in Guattari & Rolnik, 2007) this way:

⁶² For a Freirian read on graffiti literacies in Beco do Batman, Ana Christina Iddings holds us here: Iddings et. al, 2011.

⁶³ See: <https://rioonwatch.org/?p=71267> [Retrieved on November 27, 2022]

⁶⁴ See: <https://www.metro1.com.br/noticias/politica/71594.brasileiro-nao-passa-muita-fome-porque-tem-muita-manga-diz-ministra-da-agricultura> [Retrieved on November 27, 2022]

“Yes I believe that there is a multiple people [...] a people of potentialities that appears and disappears, that is embodied in social events, literary events, and musical events. I’m often accused of being exaggeratedly, stupidly, stubbornly optimistic, and of not seeing people’s wretchedness. I can see it, but... I don’t know, perhaps I’m raving, but I think that we’re in a period of productivity, proliferation, creation, utterly fabulous revolutions from the viewpoint of this emergence of a people. That’s molecular revolution: it isn’t a slogan or a program, it’s something that I feel, that I live, in meetings, in institutions, in affects, and also through some reflections.”

P.9

This reactivation of public life in Brazil, as Rolnik notes, was “not only the macropolitical dimension, predictable in this type of situation, but above all its micropolitical vitality, the force of what was happening in the politics of desire, of subjectivity, of relationship with the other.” (p.9). A similar reactivation is awakening now, again, fresh—already on the way although it is still Bolsonaro’s pandemic, and the streets are bursting with protest to the genocide of allowing Covid-19 to rip through the country⁶⁵ unabated. Your friend Alexis is writing about the powers of hunger and appetite, and this holds your thoughts (see: Milonopoulos, 2019; Milonopoulos, forthcoming). Your friend Erneste⁶⁶ is dancing in the metro stations beneath the city, and this suggests and provides a more radical vitality. You don’t walk down a street in São Paulo without witnessing hunger. You also don’t walk down a street in São Paulo without witnessing this talent for throwing things into fresh combinations, an appetite for life purely unabated. A people in all their poetics is constantly emerging. The mango is a *laranja* (literally orange; figuratively the equivalent of “strawman” in English). Real hunger is cruelly a tool of diminishing a people, a

⁶⁵ See: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/19/world/americas/bolsonaro-covid-19-brazil.html> [Retrieved on November 27, 2022]

⁶⁶ See: https://www.instagram.com/erneste___/ [Retrieved on November 27, 2022]

world, about to be. Yet life has its own radical pedagogies working, its own molecular revolutions. A people who know that they make each other possible are planning, studying, writing, dancing, working, suffering, and dancing some more. The actual mangoes in the street—tiny and hard and green— are not a rhetorical device. They are life in its pedagogy, hard and green and in need of real cultivation of new ways.

This mango I am writing now, though, is some kind of shitty performance of presence, I think. An academic gesture of trying to say: I am with you so much and always, and I don't know how to say that I am with you because the stakes don't touch my body in the same way. This kind of mango is the fuckery of metaphor. It's a *laranja* of a different kind. Why do we need to perform our presence for each other? I am with you. So much. And always. The world doesn't touch my body in the same way that it touches yours, but we don't need to touch *that* so much as we need to refuse it as a barrier to touching each other. We need to refuse the rhetorical hunger as a distraction from the fatal one, refuse the *laranja* of the metaphorical mango in order to find the real worlding it was meant to summon. The poetics of relation insists that we feed each other, and the hard green mangoes in the street literally indicate that we forgot how. All of this is no less stupid and useless than when I began writing it. Unless you read it and it feeds something and you feed something. Unless we remember the poetics of using our laranjas in real ways.

Poetics 16:

Mesa 1

São Lourenço da Serra, São Paulo, Brazil April 2019

For *Minor Movements and Social Dreaming*, we are gathered on a farm in the Atlantic forest in Brazil, one hour outside of the city of São Paulo. It is a farm owned by a German-Brazilian family, acquainted with one of our collaborators. Our group will spend two

days together here, cooking and eating, reading and discussing, and we will take a walk through the forest to receive a lecture-in-motion on agroforestry. We arrive with crates of local vegetables and fruits from an organic market in São Paulo.

Outside the table is draped with banana leaves. We cook together, all of us, and line the table with bowls of black beans beans and rice, tofu, purple sweet potatoes and inhame, kale salad with the tiniest crunchy coconuts you've ever seen (licuri), bitter arugula and sour peixinho leaves with cilantro and ribbons of carrot, a jammy mixture of zucchini and tomatoes and onions, raw cabbage salad with passion fruit vinaigrette and peanuts, and wedges of fresh pineapple. We use the spindly pineapple rinds to make a tea. After dinner you try a whole cacao pod for the first time, its deep bitterness lingering in your mouth.

Everyone seems to be taking a long exhale, stretching into the velvety night air and savoring the taste and sight of so many vibrant foods, wishing for a healthfulness and fullness like this night to continue and continue. But when we decide to do some reading together we begin to disagree—we are visited by tensions well known to some of us and bewildering to others. We are picking into or drawing back from our usual academic criticalities. You are bewildered that the healthful meal made you feel a little ill. Nietzsche (1996) says that there is practical wisdom in prescribing for oneself even health in small doses (p.9). You ask an Australian friend for an acid reflux remedy. He gives you a glass of slippery elm mixed with water.

When you leave the farm, you are trying to carry with you the things that made you feel more alive. The banana leaves on the table. The colorful, raw, deep, earthy foods. The trees draped with vines and succulents. The pineapple tea, made from the part of the pineapple that you used to throw away. The agroforestry: the way you learned about the layers of the forest.

You have the terrible feeling that you will not be able to pick up any of these things and pull them out and put them on your table and still feel what you felt when you first encountered them. That colonial impulse we've built—the need to be able to make the universe again rationally possible so that on our own we can pull it out at will and ask it to perform its tricks for us—fails. You have the feeling that whatever it is that you are learning is still being learned, that you do not yet know what this difference is that you felt, that you do not know what shift in the living is being asked for, but you know that it is a seismic shift of the earth itself that concerns not those banana leaves on the table but every banana leaf in the forest and everything else in the forest, too. Every forest fire and every flood, every mud slide and every rising tide. You know that you are not ready yet. You don't even know yet that it is a taioba leaf, not a banana leaf. But you attend faithfully to this feeling when it comes to you: the whole world in a taioba leaf, the whole world about to be.



Minor Movements and Social Dreaming dinner, Brazil April 2019. Photo by Lea Rackley

Poetics 17:***Chuva***

São Lourenço da Serra, São Paulo, Brazil, December 2020

It rains almost every day in the summer in Brazil. A quick downpour that darkens to night and breaks limbs with sharp strokes of lightning, then lifts into daylight again a few moments later. On the farm, we lose power often. You can sit in front of your computer in your cottage all afternoon, moving things around on your google calendar, responding to emails, making lists, tensing over each drag-and-drop task, disappearing into the blur of activity that pays you and organizes your days, but the storm can cut your power whenever it wants. It can plunge you into darkness, power down all devices. It can surround you with a roar, with thunder so loud that it seems to land its blows right outside your door. It can render everything else still while it wails. It can erase all the directions you'd given yourself, so that instead you sit in the darkness, aware only of the rain.

Poetics 18:***Massa***

Valdosta, Georgia, June 2022

Massa means dough in Portuguese. It is also an exclamatory expression, meaning that something is cool. Massa!

You could not write a thesis because you were waiting to feel like you knew what you were doing first. With a proposal approved, you still did not feel like you knew. In fact, you felt that you knew even less than when you'd begun. You threw that proposal in the air. You went back to knowing nothing, questioning and questioning and questioning, doubting the places you'd tried to reach, squirming out from the microfascisms you'd made out of the theories you

loved. You stopped. You unlearned. You tread water without the rafts you'd made before. You felt desperate. You let go of every way you'd had, to see what ways would come now.

You baked bread. You baked bread in Canada, Australia, Brazil, and the U.S. You baked white bread and wheat bread and rye sourdough. You learned to bake pão de queijo and cornmeal broa. You baked southern cornbread and old-fashioned banana bread. You baked challah for your Brazilian Jewish uncle. You kneaded through your frustration. You learned the patience of a proper fermentation. You burned it sometimes, and sometimes you rushed the rise, and sometimes it just wasn't as good as the last loaf you made, because no matter how long you've been doing this it is always different and you always have to feel your way through it.

You wrote without feeling like you were writing. You still didn't feel like you knew what you were doing. You wrote with the frustration that you did not recognize what you were writing (of course, it had never been written before.) You wrote with the frustration that you did not feel like the writer in you who has a tight grip on what's happening. And you baked bread. Somehow, you had never asked the bread maker in you to know everything. It wasn't a perfect loaf of bread that you needed. You needed the kneading. You needed to follow the elements at your hands, to listen to the atmosphere. You needed the *massa*, always unfinished, always a suggestion of potential.

And when you needed to finish this writing that did not feel finishable, because writing it had never felt writeable to begin with, you went *home*. You taught your sister and your niece to bake bread. Together, you baked the most beautiful loaf that ever emerged from your oven. As soon as it was baked, the writing wrote itself. *Massa*.

You still do not know, exactly, how to call upon these conditions when they feel very far from the halls of the worlds where your writing gets filed and examined, where it's supposed to

get itself done from day to day in the fishtank of the library. You still do the performance of putting post-its on pages while you sit in the hallway and cannot actually think. You still try to be someone who can think there. You still panic in your kitchen when your thinking starts to warm and soften with the butter. You're afraid you'll never walk into one of those halls again if you start to think here. It's the most difficult choreography of your life to try to believe that all these things are not separate from each other. The separations we've made within our institutions have cut things up almost beyond repair.

It is a real bread but a fake thesis, or at least the squishy ongoingness of the thesis is not a loaf yet but you are desperate to go ahead and bake it so you can deliver it to the encyclopedia of knowledge of the world as-given already, and end the suffering of the institution living in your body as a pressure. You poor sweet scholar, always trying to make bread before the dough is done rising oh so slowly. You still don't know what the yeasts are up to yet, things are still rising, swelling up from everywhere beyond your control. You are still capable of baking bread and trying to use it as a good narrative framework. You're so good still at performing the knowledge. Even though you're trying to learn precisely that life rises in its own time, microbial germinations are not yours to direct. Your body is the *massa*, soft and ongoing.



Photo by: Lea Rackley, June 2022

Poetics 19:

Commencement Address



Preston, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, September 2019. Photo by Lea Rackley.

The body is sick because the unspecial Education is a sickness, and it is metastasizing our softness into hard tools that we must use to be and become things we don't actually want to be and become. The body is sick because the world as given is sick with this striving⁶⁷. The body is sick because the forest is sick with this striving to tear it down. Our bodies are sick because we made a world that doesn't know the forest is not separable from our bodies. The forest in your body is dying, all this striving is tearing it down.

When you arrive at Mils' house in the suburbs of Melbourne, they introduce you to their friends as a Canadian Philosopher: *she's here with this artistic group SenseLab that my sister is part of*. You say that you are not a philosopher, you're just broken and consenting to letting academia break you some more, and we sort of laugh at this and sort of don't want to make it funny. Mils gives a reading of their poetry at a local community center, and you attend. The poem speaks of living outside, and cooking a piece of meat as a way of feeling safe and at home.

There is a proximity to homelessness and nomadism that comes and goes from this house. Mils' suggestion of a world holds and gathers ways of being in the world together where we always have places we can go precisely because we always make places for each other to come to. For Harney & Moten (2013), the undercommons of study is "being together in homelessness" (p.10), which Halberstam points out does not idealize homelessness nor merely metaphorize it" (ibid.) The aim is, as always, elsewhere:

"Homelessness is the state of dispossession that we seek and that we embrace: Can this being together in homelessness, this interplay of the refusal of what has been refused, this undercommon appositionality, be a place from which emerges neither self-consciousness nor knowledge of the other but an improvisation that proceeds from somewhere on the other side of an unasked question?

⁶⁷ My friend Emily was writing about sickness around this time. She holds us here: Douglas, 2022.

And further still:

we must make common cause with those desires and (non) positions that seem crazy and unimaginable: we must [...] refuse that which was first refused to us and in this refusal reshape desire, reorient hope, reimagine possibility and do so separate from the fantasies nestled into rights and respectability. Instead, our fantasies must come from [...] the hold: [...]we remain in the hold, in the break, as if entering again and again the broken world, to trace the visionary company and join it.

Here at the house Mils has made, which is home to no one and welcome to everyone, we set up tents in the yard. For this one night only there are more siblings in our radical family than before, and we sit in the yard around a thrifted wooden table in the grass. The only light comes from the embers of cigarettes like fireflies, and beyond that, more softly, the stars. A cat named Opossum stalks bugs in the grass. *Maybe there is some other universe*, one person says, *in which I could stand to take a university course, but not in this one*. A blonde woman responds that she took a class on existentialism once, and she should have aced the whole thing because she listened to the concept as it was being talked about in the classroom and said, *nah*, and left, and went to Tasmania to work on a farm and grow vegetables. *And it was SICK!* She says, but she herself seems healthful and well. She looks up at the dark and smiles. You look at the gleam of the looking in her eyes, her eyes the stars themselves, and you smile. If we knew how to think with the stars in her— with her ways of knowing, ongoing and uncite-able—we wouldn't have any of the problems we've created.

You do not know yet that your home as you know it is already ending. You will end a world, right in the middle of the given world's sicknesses as they gather into the panic of a

pandemic. The zeitgeist of a Montreal “renoviction”⁶⁸ will leave you to collect a little pile of your belongings, draped in dust, from the demolition site of what used to be your home. The stakes don’t touch your body as closely as they could—you have resources. You will have the resources you need to try out a few inadequate worlds. Resources make violences if they don’t know how to make worlds. What if all we’ve learned in the unspecial Education is how to make that thing we didn’t want to make and how to do that thing we didn’t want to do, all over again? Learning the undercommon refusal of the options as given reveals an apocalypse inside of an apocalypse inside of an apocalypse, on its way to elaborating worlds, which is why we don’t do it alone. Study as “a way of being together in brokenness” (Harney & Moten, 2013, p. 12) holds between us all the starry parts of being more than just whole.

You do not know what address the university will mail your diploma to, once you’ve filed your hard tools in the encyclopedia of knowledge of the world as-given. You do not know what will be left of the softness of your body by then. Tonight, you eat a meal prepared by Mils’ roommate, and you sleep outside on the porch. Mils hangs golden velvet curtains around your bed. Mils drapes your body in velvet. Mils has already draped your body in poems, in nomadic thought, softer than velvet and ongoing in their address: the commencement of a world about to be.

⁶⁸ See: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/montreal-housing-apartments-renovictions-1.6489237> [Retrieved on November 29, 2022]

Poetics, 20:***My Mother is a Fish***

Quando foi encontrá-la, ela estava parada perto de uma rocha.
O pesquisador ficou esperando, falou: "ela não vai falar comigo, né?"
Ao que seu facilitador respondeu: "ela está conversando com a irmã".
"Mas é uma pedra."
E o cara disse: "Qual é o problema?"

When he went to find her, she was standing by a rock.
The researcher was waiting, he said: "she isn't going to talk to me, no?"
To which his facilitator responded: "she's talking to her sister."
"But it's a rock."
And the guy said: "What's the problem?"

Krenak, 2019, p. 10 (translation mine)

Is my mother a fish?

Interference 5: Canibalismo, or Mango 2



SenseLab event at the Darling Foundry, inspired by the work of artist Lygia Clark. Montreal, August 2019. Photo by Darling Foundry.

“The body is the proposition”
–Lygia Clark⁶⁹

“Your body is the perfect mango”
–Erin Manning (2019)

In 1964, just as Brazil was taken over by military dictatorship, Lygia Clark’s propositions were emerging to dissolve the distinctions “between art and experience, viewer and artist, the body and its environment”⁷⁰. Drawing us to what is possible through experience and participation, Lygia Clark’s propositions consider that “every day the body is captured by institutions, limiting experience to what already exists. When institutions capture us, they take us from our vitality and creativity.”⁷¹ The propositions themselves, which range in complexity from

⁶⁹ See, i.e., Rolnik, 2002

⁷⁰ See: <https://www.moma.org/artists/27445> [Retrieved November 27, 2022]

⁷¹ See: <https://fonderiedarling.org/en/Make-Space-for-Surprise-to-Arise> [November 27, 2022]

*Baba to Caminhando*⁷², which invites participants to cut paper, so that the experience of transforming the paper is the art, Clark tells us that the proposition is only potential. The act of participation will elaborate what is possible, beyond the encounter itself.

We gather in August 2019 for a public event at the Darling Foundry in Montreal, facilitated by SenseLab, to play with Clark's *Canibalismo*⁷³. This involves one participant laying on a table wearing a jumpsuit full of fruit. Everyone is blindfolded, and we feel our way around to taking fruit from the entrails of the body, and then we feel around to hand the fruit to someone else to eat, and to eat the fruit that is handed to us. Maybe the body anticipates being disturbed by this experience. Reaching into the belly of a body and pulling out the fleshiness of fruit. The act of devoration within this disorganization of the civil orders of the human. Potentially crossing the human politics of the body in ways we are afraid that we don't know how to care for. As with any proposition, there's too much else in the field of experience to be reduced to the codes of expectation. Fruit is sweet. Play is fun. Tentativity makes us light. Lightness makes us suddenly more available to the encounter. Care attunes us to each other's reachings. Reaching without seeing provides the immanence of feeling. Feeling for a hand, feeling a hand take your hand at the level of pure experience, without the codes of normative sociality that often background the feeling itself, the feeling of a hand reaching a hand out of the ether, the feeling of reaching itself, the reaching of the feeling itself.

⁷² See: <https://www.moma.org/audio/playlist/181/2419> [Retrieved November 27, 2022]

⁷³ Viveiros de Castro's *Cannibal Metaphysics* (2015) would be the place to deep-dive on this pathway of thought by way of Amerindian Perspectivism.



SenseLab event at the Darling Foundry, inspired by the work of artist Lygia Clark. Montreal, August 2019. Photo by Darling Foundry

The weight of a mango as it drops into the hand. The flesh of it. The other of sensation appears. The part of you that knows how to touch meets other ways. The flesh of the mango and the flesh of your mouth feel the same. The mango devours you into pure presence. The juicy *that* of being. The immanence of a life. A pulp so fictionless.



SenseLab event at the Darling Foundry, inspired by the work of artist Lygia Clark. Montreal, August 2019. Photo by Darling Foundry

Poetics 21:***School, escola, escolha, or Mesa 2***

Mesa 2, or "school", Valdosta, Georgia, June 2022. Photo by Lea Rackley

“Nosso tempo é especialista em criar ausências: do sentido de viver em sociedade, do próprio sentido da experiência da vida. Isso gera uma intolerância muito grande com relação a quem ainda é capaz de experimentar o prazer de estar vivo, de dançar, de cantar. E está cheio de pequenas constelações de gente espalhada pelo mundo que dança, canta, faz chover. O tipo de humanidade zumbi que estamos sendo convocados a integrar não tolera tanto prazer, tanta fruição de vida. Então, pregam o fim do mundo como uma possibilidade de fazer a gente desistir dos nossos próprios sonhos. E a minha provocação sobre adiar o fim do mundo é exatamente sempre poder contar mais uma história. Se pudermos fazer isso, estaremos adiando o fim.”

“Our time specializes in creating absences, from the meaning of living in society, from the very meaning of the experience of life. This generates a great intolerance toward those who are still capable of experiencing the pleasure of being alive, of singing and dancing. And it's full of small constellations of people around the world who dance, sing, make rain. The kind of zombie humanity we are being invited to join does not tolerate so much pleasure, so much enjoyment of life. So preach the end of this world as the possibility that makes us give up our dreams. My provocation about postponing the end of the world is exactly always being able to tell one more story. If we can do that, we will be postponing the end.”

Ailton Krenak, 2019, p. 13 (translation mine).

Ending the Education that is ending learning is connected to the plea to end the world that is ending worlds. Humanity's crisis of impending general systems collapse—the apocalypse of a people who do not realize our bodies are the forest and we are killing it—is of course not the first apocalypse, and not the first that we've caused. Krenak wonders how the original peoples of Brazil dealt with colonization, which wanted to end their world. What techniques did they use to make it to the 21st century, dreaming through that nightmare to continue living with their happiness intact? "I fed on them", Krenak says, "on the creativity and poetry that inspired the resistance of these peoples," (p.13, translation mine). He notes that these people are not individuals, but "people collective", cells that manage to transmit through time their visions about the world" (ibid). There are 130 of the Krenak people alive today.

I do not know where all of my people are, or who they are, or who they were, or how they dreamed. Self-evidently I'm lost, we're lost, we lost ourselves when we thought we were discovering things. That is why the white people only dream of themselves, because we got lost in all of our "findings", because in order to find things we'd have to believe we were separate from everything to begin with. My friend Curran would say that we're just trying to find our way back to the earth⁷⁴. This continues to be a symptom of the sickness that metastasizes through an Education that teaches us false discoveries and does not care if we learn how to hold each other. But I am dreaming of what we can learn together now. For Krenak, spirituality is an interdependence of all things living.⁷⁵ What we transmit, now, through the cells of our collective people, our visions of the world, is the flowerbed for the complex interdependence of all things

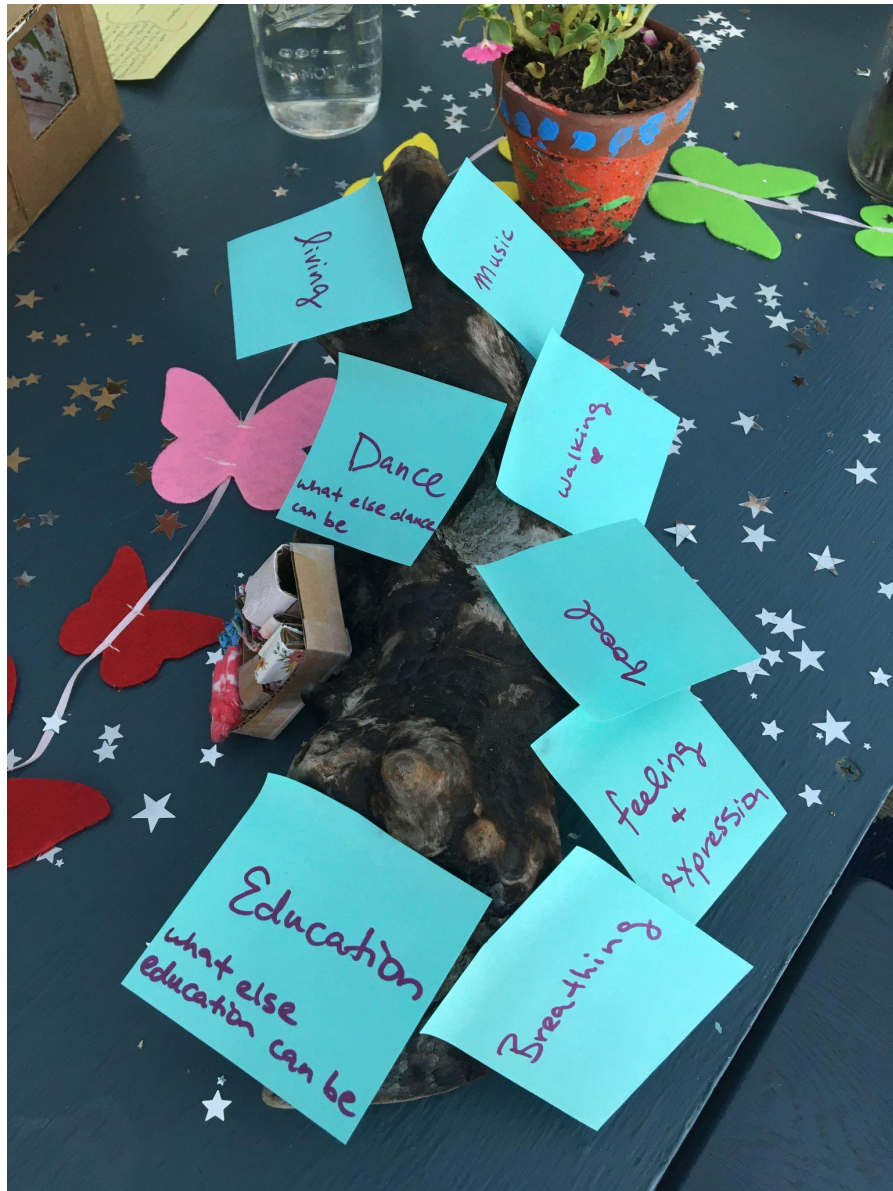
⁷⁴ Curran has been a friend to our thoughts all along, she holds us here: Jacobs, 2019.

⁷⁵ See:

<https://www.uol.com.br/ecoa/reportagens-especiais/o-mundo-pos-covid-19-15---espiritualidade-e-natureza-por-ailton-krenak/#cover> [Retrieved on: November 30, 2022]

living. New dreams. We must be able to tell one more story. We must insist on a different dream, a radical aliveness that is *with and for* the aliveness of all things.

Our young people teach us to dream every day. They dance, sing, make rain, make languages, and eat imaginary fruits. They live their poetry outside of the chalk lines of the world we built. They feed us all that is truly special in life, through all manner of suggestions. We make other suggestions of worlds alongside them all the time, when we get down on the floor and play or when we consent to taking the crusts off a sandwich because we are aware that the textures of experience and the aesthetic singularities of care and of need are truly important. We specialize in doing these suggestions of worlds with each other for the split seconds between all our grand Specializations. It's ancient to cry this cry in education and literacy studies, isn't it? It's one of the most ordinary questions that the immanence of our literacies and pedagogies put forth. We've known for far too long that our young people are being held to the track, despite their absolute talent for wandering into better suggestions of worlds. Do we ask how to wander with them? Have we asked it enough times yet?



"our school" on driftwood, Valdosta, Georgia, June 2022. Photo by Lea Rackley.

Poetics 22: Love and Study

United States, July 2022



Georgia, July 2022. Photo by Lea Rackley.

We never know what it is we've been studying for. Yet as soon as life has called on us in unforeseeable ways, we find that we were in it all along. Life is always calling on us in unforeseeable ways. The stakes are high and ordinary all the time. How childlike it feels to say that it's always been love that we need. It's always been the noise we raise, the play we make, that sees us through. After all our recommendations, it is the radical presence of unpreparedness that bears it out. After years and years spent in our unspecial Educations, all we will want is idle chatter. Just a little more of it, please. All we will need is ways of feeding each other. Just see if you can take one bite, see how it goes, maybe one more little bite? Please god. Please. All that will matter is how we hold each other. It's ordinary, but it is not obvious, because it does not stay the same. The poetics of relation is always yet to be invented. We do not know what else life is already asking of us, again, differently, this time, and we won't know because it is coming from everywhere at once. We have to take it just as we feel it. We have to hold it between us. We have to hold each other between the folds of the unfolding.

Ongoing
After the Unspecial Education: Poétigogies from the Interstices

I think I was going to ask you a silly question. A shy one. Humble. I would lean over and offer you my hand, and you would take it if you wanted to. In North America we'd almost have to be drunk for this kind of simple intimacy to occur. Or maybe not now, post-pandemia, in the suggestion of a world where we've felt the depth of our co-regulation through its absence. Don't tell the Academy I said that part about being drunk. They're going to kick me out, this is nonsense. Anyway, I would offer you my hand. And then I would ask this.

Did we walk together? While you were reading, while you were carrying the reading with you, did you take all of it with you down the street while you were walking? What did you encounter? Did you cook with me? In your kitchen, when you cooked with and for your people, or when they cooked for you, did you take us all with you? Did you startle at the intimacy of my mother holding us in the reading? Did it feel like an unearned intimacy, or did it hold your holding of your people? Or both? And what happened next?

Or anyway, nevermind— *what is it that is with you?* Do you carry poems in your body? Have you ever noticed how many poems you carry in your body, or what they do? Do you sing while unloading the dishwasher? Do you forget why you opened the fridge? Do you make the world possible by making someone a cup of tea? Do you plead with the world sometimes, and what do you say? I'll never know all the ways you love and study, or what you hold, or how you're held. But I know that life in its pedagogy, in its literacies, in its risks of thought, is already making something else between us, even if we'll never know what it is.

You may wonder what happened to our neurotic researcher, after the poetics dropped off these pages into their place in the world. You know that at least I'm still here writing to you. I came to the other of a conclusion here, at least. It would be insane if we knew that our neurotic

researcher was working for the high holy institution of the Ministry of Education at the same time as almost cutting her finger off as a line cook in a pub while she was finishing this thing. The poetics of relation gives us the desire to follow each other through the nonlinearity and non-narratives of our living—a reaching that doesn't have an end to it—and maybe gets us to break off a shiny piece to say, I am here, I'm okay, where are you? I haven't heard from Demetrius for a while, and that feeling lives in me like a drive. If you want to know what happened to me, I want to know what happened to us. That is my pedagogical question. *What is happening to us?* What if you have a child who is sitting in school right now being asked to get back on the tasks of a world so unspecial it doesn't realize it is slowly ending itself? What will we do?

In academia we sum up our “implications”. *Implication* can mean to be involved in some kind of crime⁷⁶. Maybe we are implicated in the crimes perpetrated under the institutional premise that life was not meant to be special. Maybe we have implicated ourselves in the analysis of the unspecial, the violence of the unspecial. Maybe we've Educated ourselves well in the ways of building an inadequate suggestion of a world, as it was offered by our institutions, and maybe we're not so individually important as to make this alone a worthwhile pathway for thought, but maybe it cracks into an interesting refusal, and anyway, there was always, and everywhere, more going on.

We came here with questions. We wanted to know how we might develop new sensitivities to life in its pedagogy. We wanted to know how this might tune our practices of research, learning, and literacies toward their immanent potential. We were curious about how the poetics of relation seeds new ways of thinking about collective study, and what the pragmatics might be for elaborating these ways of thinking through our share in life's pedagogies. We asked what it would mean to truly engage with the risk of thought in education,

⁷⁶ See: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/implicate> [Retrieved on November 29, 2022]

research, and literacies, towards the production of other worlds. We wondered how the poetics between these questions exceed the presuppositions of an unspecial Education, and how more special ways of living and learning—*poétigogies*— might be invented there. Go back. Look in the *Poetics* again. Their ontogenesis is always capable of producing one more world. And go on: take the following seed, which emerges neither from self-consciousness nor from knowledge. Take it and plant something else with it...

To listen to Krenak when he says that “subjectivity is the only flower bed for worlds⁷⁷” (translation mine) is to create new realities first through the way that we collectively carry and collectively hold our thoughts of a more special world. If life was never unspecial to begin with, the more special world *is already here* in all of its glittering and shining material, capable of being noticed. Just as we make each other possible, and we have the power to make each other *more* possible, we have the power to take life once more on the specialness of its own terms. We have the capacity to notice that it’s been teaching us this all along.

Imagine this next sentence in the voice of my Greek second papa in Brazil, Athanase, who, over a cafezhino, is thrilled to explain something to us. The word *pedagogy* comes from the Greek *ágō* (*I lead*) and *paidos* (*boy, child*): to lead a child. The whole setup is pedantic by definition but only if you give a shit, which I do not. I can’t believe I’m alive, and I want to sit by Athanase. We’re very special children playing an old game, and I plan to have fun. He wants clarity, I want opacity, he wants to explain, I want to play in my philosophical sandbox, and we want to sit by each other. We both seem to want to chat idly at the end of the world because that is what we are doing. We love each other and we want to be family, and when we are climate refugees or when we are ill, I will call that improvisational love a *poètigogy* that makes some

⁷⁷ Krenak in Forum: *Novas subjetividades, novas possibilidades de existir e resistir*, October 11, 2019. <https://forum.ufri.br/index.php/reetrospectiva/2019/1024-novas-subjetividades-novas-possibilidades-de-existir-e-resistir> [Retrieved on August 18, 2021]

other kind of world available between us, and he will call it a different kind of mythology, and it is the appositionality of the relation therein that will keep calling for itself: a directionless direction of wanting each other to be alive, of wanting imperfectly to life each other.

Poétigogies are: to be led by poetics. It's an immanent relation. It's a dance of ephemeral ways of knowing that relink, (relay), and relate. It gives us new ways of giving-with. This has been working on me lately in new ways, as I learn new ways of being with you each day. I started to draw these little poetics when I am walking around and talking with other people, sitting at the pub with the folks I've worked in the kitchen with or sitting on the floor with my reading group or having dinner with a friend. Sketching these poetics is a way of giving our shared thoughts more ways of re-combining across scraps of paper as we re-fold those scraps and ideas into closer ways of knowing and relating. It's become a way of allowing our shared attention abundance to expand and giving it more places to go. We sketch a generative problem together, and then we ramble about other things and one of those random things lands in our sketch and we see it next to the problem and we're able to think something wild about it, something playful that seems to work. We make a little practice out of a random thing we happened to say out loud. Afterwards, the sketches go into our pockets and get hung on our refrigerators or get tucked into our books. We find them when we're rifling through our bag looking for hand sanitizer. We find each other in random parts of the day, in the middle of other situations. We come into contact with the world, again, together, differently, and we're able to think one more thought, tell one more story, live one more suggestion of a world. This is a philosophical proposition on the ground: discardable until the moment it keeps us alive.

I have also been giving-into this expanded attention of noticing life's poetics around me, how it is always being offered and how there are always new ways of gifting it onward. How the

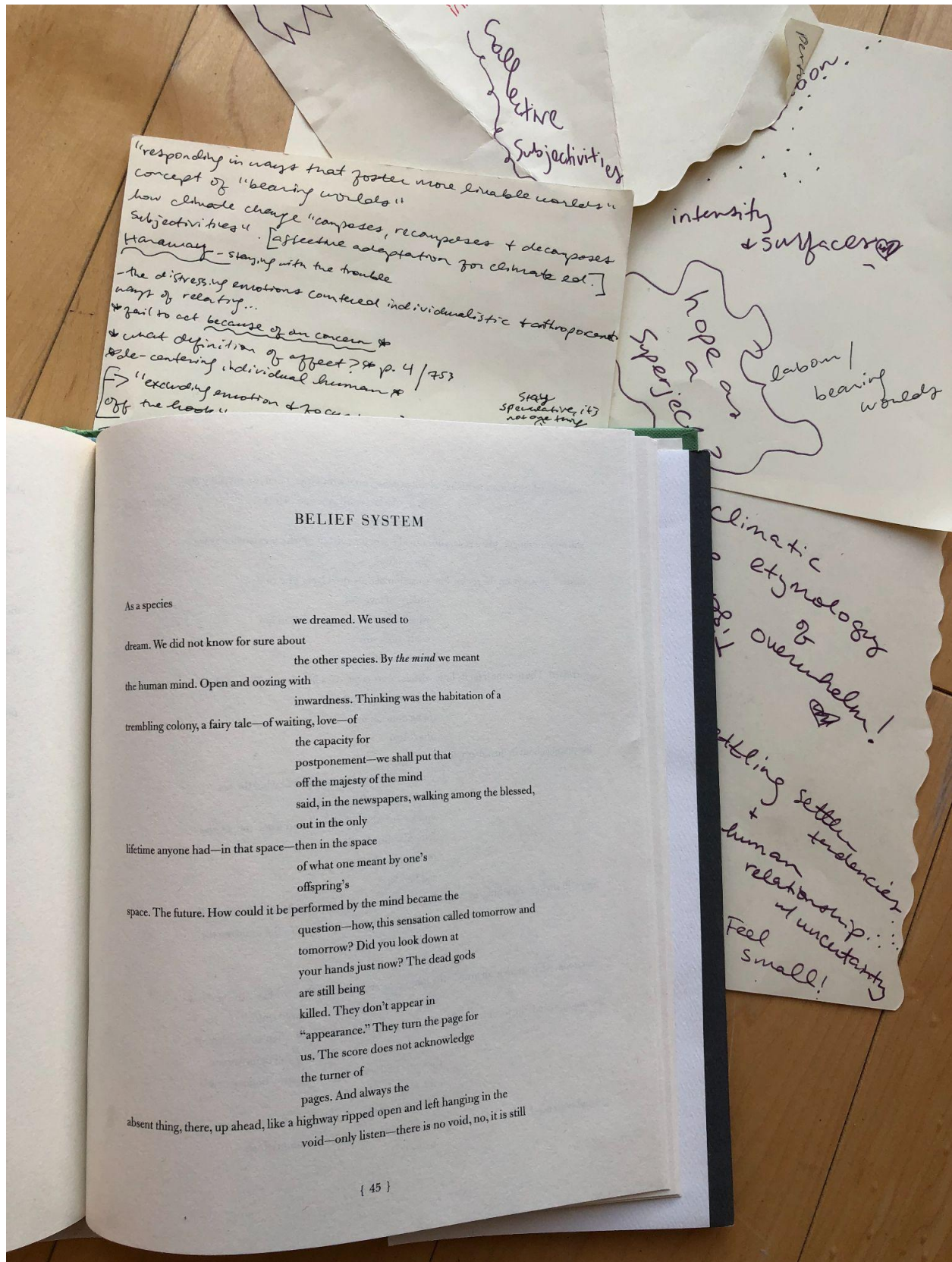
Brazilian artist Marianna Marcassa,⁷⁸ offers *Concerts for Otherness*, composing a forest of sounds here in a second-floor walkup in Montreal, calling the body to rewild its perceptions, and how her husband makes a beautiful goulash. How the Iranian photographer Sara Faridamin,⁷⁹ has hung in my apartment photographs from *Si-o-se-pol*, the bridge of thirty-three spans, on the Zayanderud river in the Iranian Plateau, and how the cracked earth of the riverbed there makes its suggestions from here, and how the photograph itself is cracked because it survived a demolition site, and how Sara always arrives at a dinner with a beautiful box of chocolates. How the Kurdish-Syrian artist Khadija Baker⁸⁰, teaches us the textures of home and displacement every day, and how she gently rolls out the dough for sfeeahas in a warm kitchen. How Demetrius is a father now, and the same philosopher of dreams. How Tishawn is a caregiver now, and talks about possibly being a teacher. How Emma is doing her philosophy on the street as a radical form of facilitation for everyone and everything around her, and how she's going to write it down someday for me to hold in my hands. How Ailton Krenak feeds on the dreams of his ancestors (see again: Krenak 2019, p.13, translation mine), reminding us that feeding on dreams is pragmatic to the bone. How Fred Moten talks about Curtis Mayfield being a believer (see again: Harney & Moten, 2013, p. 10), and the world feels a little possible again. How the dusk in Outremont swells into it all and makes its own suggestions, every night, again, differently, making the world pink again, or some quality of *laranja* that both settles and stirs. This is a radically ordinary mode of attention. It's an ancient suggestion of with-ness. It is life's poetics of gathering all the ways we hold each other, and the ways we come back around to hold each other again. It's like cooking. Or, it's not *like* cooking, it *is* cooking: how there is always one more way for our love and poetics to re-combine into a world.

⁷⁸ <https://marianamarcassa.com/sound-therapy/about-mariana/> [Retrieved on December 14, 2022]

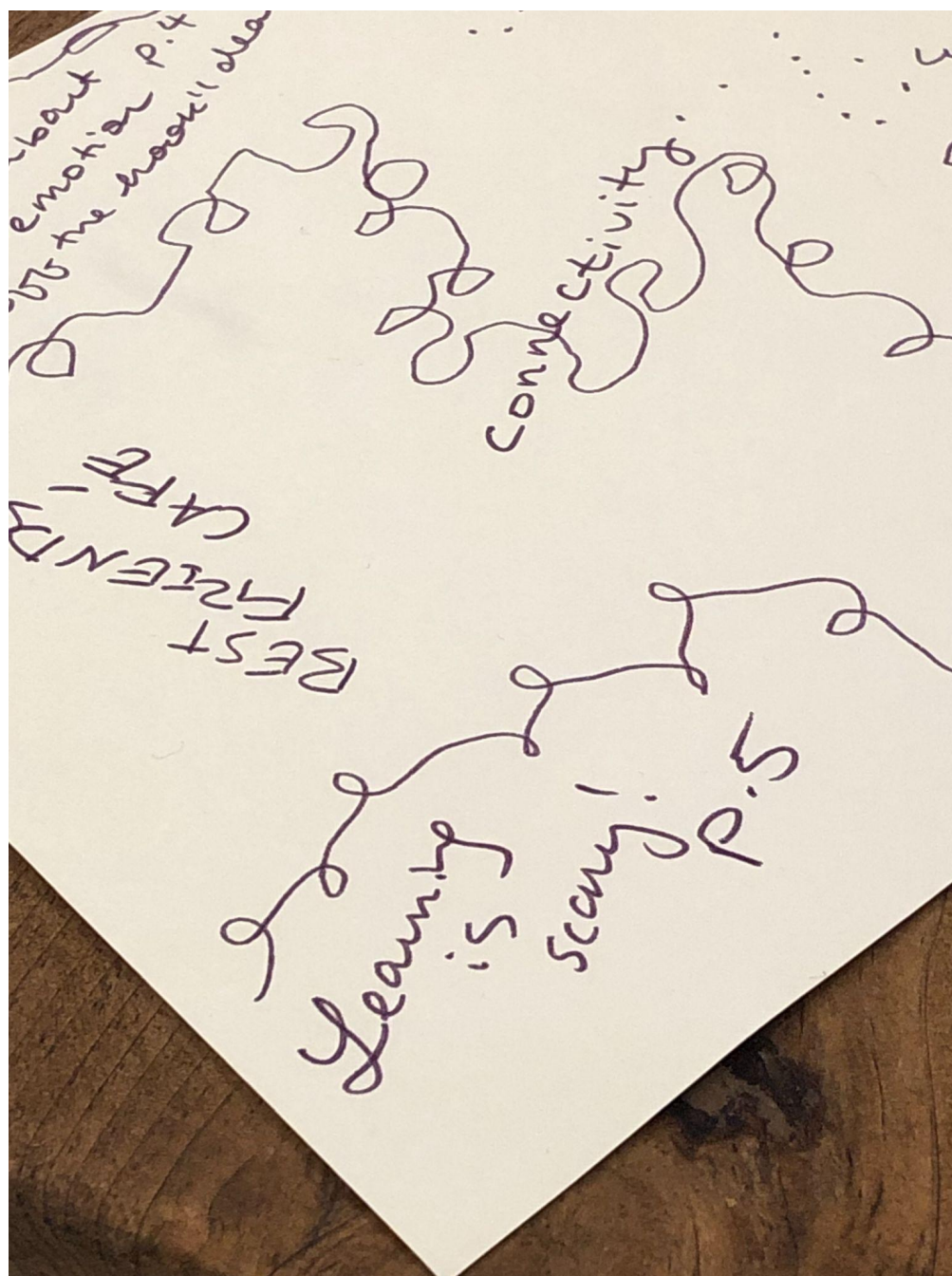
⁷⁹ <https://www.sarafaridamin.com/> [Retrieved on December 14, 2022]

⁸⁰ <https://khadijabaker.com/home.html> [Retrieved on December 14, 2022]

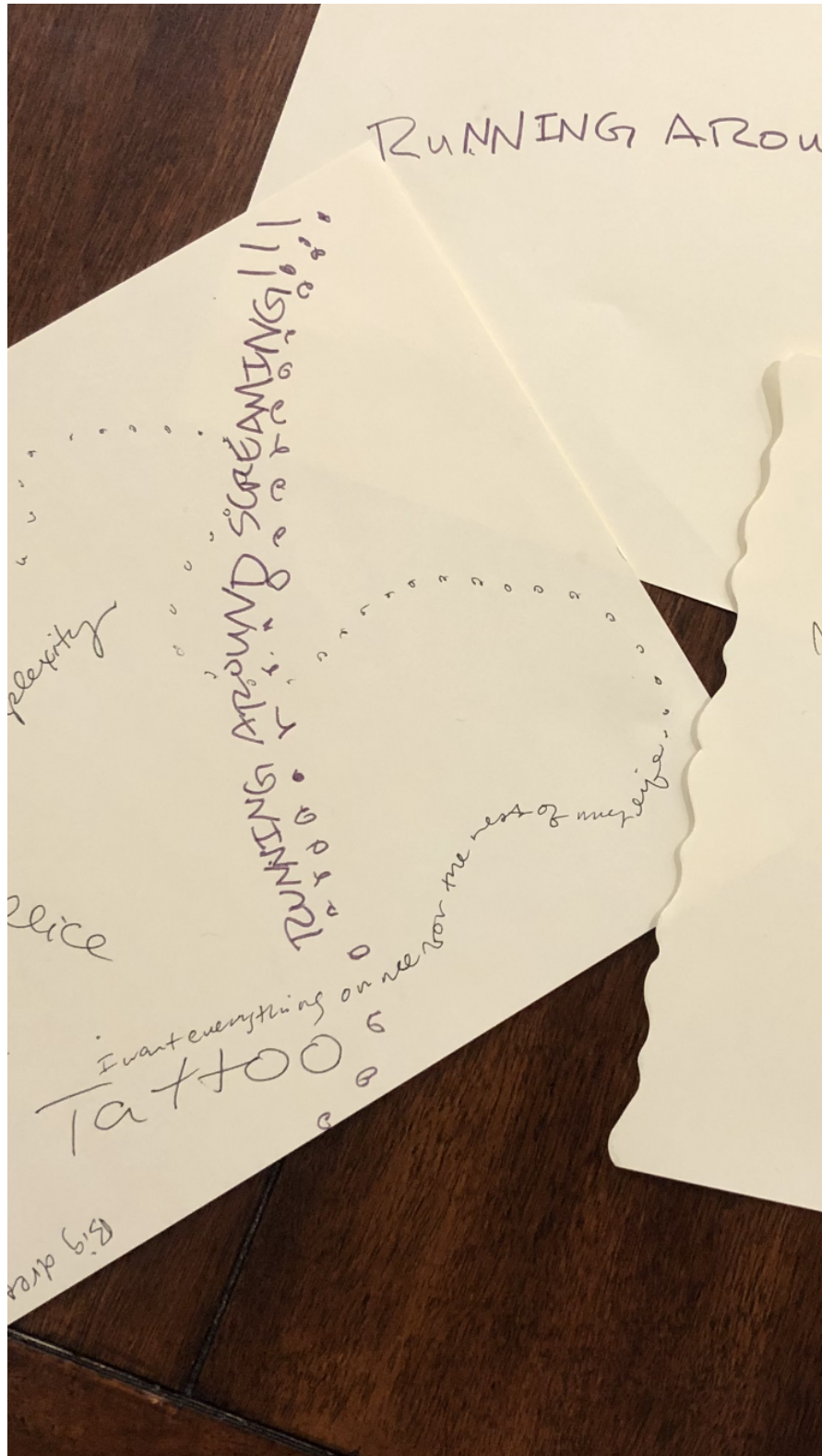
This is nomadic thought. Domainless. It traces a visionary company and joins it. It outlines desires for living that seem crazy and unimaginable, or nothing fancy and nothing new, the other of the usual, the life already possible in the living. It dreams one more dream as a real pragmatics that will keep us alive. Our departments will not survive the next several apocalypses, but the bare activity of our art literacies philosophies pedagogies will. Our dreams will. Imagine if we did not know how to feed on them. We talk about pedagogy as a big thing. It is, but only because it is so small. As small as finding the scrap of poetry in your pocket when you were reaching for something else. It's only big because it is the life in us, reaching out. And it's little enough, shiny enough, to come with us to the next world.



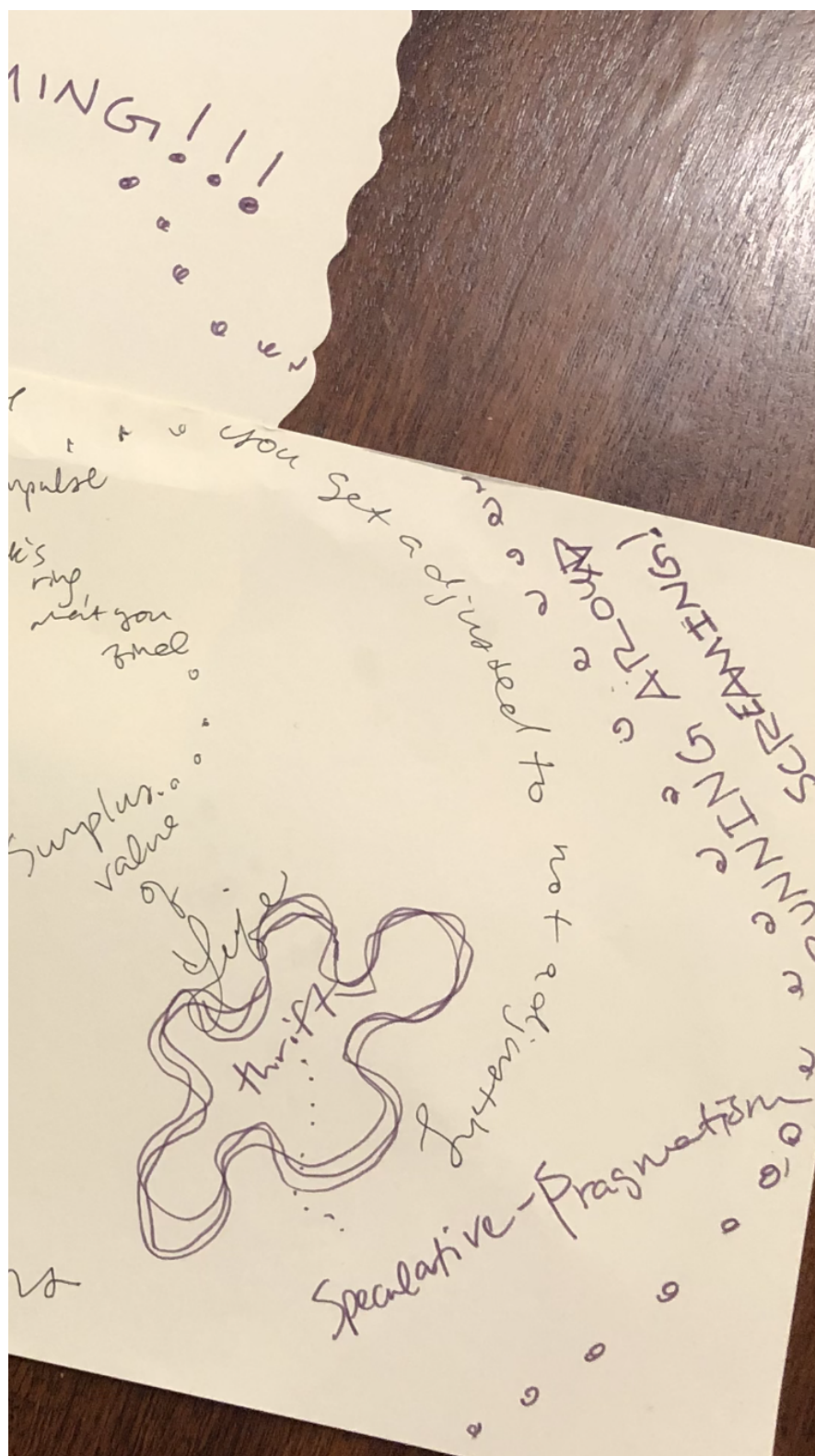
"Belief System" with the Jorie Graham poem of the same title. November 2022, Montreal. Photo by Lea Rackley.



Poetics of Reading Group, November 2022, Montreal. Photo by Lea Rackley.



Poetics of Pub Conversation 1, November 2022, Montreal. Photo by Lea Rackley.



Poetics of Pub Conversation 2, November 2022, Montreal. Photo by Lea Rackley.



“Concert for Otherness” by Marianna Marcassa⁸¹, December 2022, Montreal. Photo by Marianna Marcassa.

⁸¹ <https://marianamarcassa.com/sound-therapy/about-mariana/> [Retrieved on December 14, 2022]



Untitled, by the artist and photographer Sara Faridamin⁸². 2019.

⁸² <https://www.sarafaridamin.com/> [Retrieved on December 14, 2022]



Outremont Dusk, December 2022, Montreal. Photo by Lea Rackley

References

- Alexander, R. J. (2012). Neither national nor a curriculum?. In *Forum* (pp. 369-384). York.
- Bang, M., Warren, B., Rosebery, A. S., & Medin, D. (2012). Desettling Expectations in Science Education. *Human Development*, 55(5-6), 302-318.
- Bateson, G. (1955). A theory of play and fantasy. *Psychiatric research reports*.
- Berlant, L. (2011). A properly political concept of love: Three approaches in ten pages. *Cultural Anthropology*, 26(4), 683-691.
- Boldt, G., Lewis, C., & Leander, K. M. (2015). Moving, feeling, desiring, teaching. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 49(4), 430.
- Bossaert, G., Colpin, H., Pijl, S. J., & Petry, K. (2013). Truly Included? A Literature Study Focusing on the Social Dimension of Inclusion in Education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 17(1), 60-79.
- Cixous, H., & Derrida, J. (1994). *The Hélène Cixous Reader*. Psychology Press.
- Crawley, A. (2015). Otherwise, Instituting. *Performance Research*, 20(4), 85-89.
- Crawley, A. T. (2016). Blackpentecostal breath: The aesthetics of possibility. Fordham Univ Press.
- Da Silva, D. F. (2016). On difference without separability. Catalogue of the 32a São Paulo Art Biennial, 'Incerteza viva' (Living Uncertainty), 57-65.
- Da Silva, V. G. (2005). *Candomblé e umbanda: caminhos da devoção brasileira*. Selo Negro.
- Davies, J. 2017. How Voting and Consensus Created the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III). *Anthropology & Medicine*, 24(1), 32-46.
- Debaise, D., & Stengers, I. (2016). L'insistance des possibles: pour un pragmatisme spéculatif. *Multitudes*, (4), 82-89.
- Deleuze, G. (1983). *L'image-mouvement*. Les Éditions de Minuit.
- Deleuze, G. (1994). *Difference and Repetition*. Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1983). *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. 1987. A thousand plateaus, Edited by: Massumi, B. London: Continuum. (Orig. pub. 1980.)

- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1996). *What is philosophy?* Columbia University Press.
- Dernikos, B. P., Lesko, N., McCall, S. D., & Niccolini, A. D. (2020). Affect's First Lesson: An Interview with Gregory J. Seigworth. *Mapping the Affective Turn in Education* (pp. 87-93). Routledge.
- Douglas, E. (2022). Sick of it: Psychosomatic and Sociogenic Illness in Feminist Philosophy of Disability. [Doctoral dissertation, McGill University]. Escholarship@McGill.
- Ehret, C., Ehret, L., Low, B., & Čiklovan, L. (2019). Immédiations and Rhythms of Speculative Design: Implications for Value in Design-Based Research. *British journal of educational technology*, 50(4), 1603-1614.
- Ehret, L. (2020). For a Fugitive Game Studies: Female Life's Break from Game Culture and Black-Queer-Neurodiverse-Postcapitalist Revaluations of Game Study. *Maker Literacies and Maker Identities in the Digital Age* (pp. 167-186). Routledge.
- Ferreira da Silva, D. 2016. On Difference without Separability. In *Incerteza Viva (Living Uncertainty), the catalogue for the 32a Sao Paolo Biennale* (pp. 57-66). São Paulo Fundacao, Biennial de São Paolo.
- Flavian, E. (Always). *Philosophies of Radical Collectivity, As Yet Penned and Unpenned Undercommonly*. Sidewalk Press.
- Foucault, M. (1991). *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality*. University of Chicago Press.
- Frances, A. J., and T. Widiger. 2012. Psychiatric Diagnosis: Lessons from the DSM-IV Past and Cautions for the DSM-5 Future. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology* 8, 109-130.
- Freire, P. (1972). Education: domestication or liberation?. *Prospects*, 2(2), 173-181.
- Freire, P. (1976). Literacy and the possible dream. *Prospects*, 6(1), 68-71.
- Freire, P. (1983). The Importance of the Act of Reading. *Journal of Education*, 165(1), 5-11.
- Gallo, S. (2014). EM TORNO DE UMA POÉTICA DO/NO PENSAMENTO. *Revista Sul-Americana de Filosofia e Educação (RESAFE)*, (23), 350-363.
- Garcia Marquez, G. (2021) In Nepomuceno (trans.) *Cem anos de solidão*. 126 Ed. Record: Rio de Janeiro.
- Gee, J. P. (2003). What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy. *Computers in entertainment (CIE)*, 1(1), 20-20.

- Gee, J. (2015). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses*. Routledge.
- Geerts, E., & Carstens, D. (2021). *Pedagogies in the Wild—Entanglements between Deleuzoguattarian Philosophy and the New Materialisms*.
- Gil, D. N. (2019). *A Study on the 'Intervals of Perception' and the 'Architectures of Experience': towards Schizosomatics* (Doctoral dissertation, Concordia University).
- Glissant, É. (1997). *Poetics of relation*. University of Michigan Press.
- Goodman, A. (2018). *Gathering ecologies: Thinking beyond interactivity* (p. 347). Open Humanities Press.
- Götzsche, P. C. 2015. *Deadly Psychiatry and Organised Denial*. People's Press.
- Guattari, F. (1995). *Chaosmosis: An ethico-aesthetic paradigm*. Indiana University Press.
- Guattari, F. (2013). *Qu'est-ce que l'écophilosophie?*. Lectures, Les livres.
- Guattari, F., & Rolnik, S. (2007). *Molecular revolution in Brazil*.
- Hackett, A., & Somerville, M. (2017). Posthuman literacies: Young children moving in time, place and more-than-human worlds. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 17(3), 374-391.
- Haraway, D. J. (2016). *Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke University Press.
- Harney, S., & Moten, F. (2013). *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*. Minor Compositions.
- Harney, S., Moten, F. (2021). *All Incomplete*. Minor Compositions.
- Hekman, S. (2000). Beyond Identity: Feminism, Identity and Identity Politics. *Feminist Theory*, 1(3), 289-308.
- Iddings, A. C. D., McCafferty, S. G., & Da Silva, M. L. T. (2011). Conscientização Through Graffiti Literacies in the Streets of a São Paulo Neighborhood: An Ecosocial Semiotic Perspective. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 46(1), 5-21.
- Jacobs, C. K. S. (2019). Two-Row Wampum Reimagined: Understanding the Hybrid Digital Lives of Contemporary Kanien'kehá: ka Youth. *Studies in Social Justice*, 13(1), 59-72.
- James, W. (1996). *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (Lincoln. NB: University of Nebraska.

- James, W. (1912). *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. Longman Green and Co.
- James, W. (1890). *The Principles Of Psychology Volume II* By William James (1890).
- James, W. (1904). A world of pure experience. *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, 1(20), 533-543.
- Kafai, Y. B. (2006). Playing and making games for learning: Instructionist and constructionist perspectives for game studies. *Games and culture*, 1(1), 36-40.
- Kafai, Y. B., & Burke, Q. (2016). *Connected gaming: What making video games can teach us about learning and literacy*. Mit Press.
- Kintz, L. (1997). *Between Jesus and the market: The emotions that matter in right-wing America*. Duke University Press.
- Krenak, A. (2019). *Ideias para adiar o fim do mundo (Nova edição)*. Editora Companhia das Letras.
- Lange, K. W., S. Reichl, K. M. Lange, L. Tucha, and O. Tucha. 2010. The History of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. *ADHD Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder* 2(4), 241–255.
- Leander, K., & Boldt, G. (2013). Rereading “A pedagogy of multiliteracies” bodies, texts, and emergence. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 45(1), 22-46.
- Le Guin, U. K. (2014). *Changing planes*. HMH.
- Low, B. E., & Sonntag, E. (2013). Towards a Pedagogy of Listening: Teaching and Learning from Life stories of Human Rights Violations. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 45(6), 768-789.
- Manning, E. (2016). *The Minor Gesture*. Duke University Press.
- Manning, E. (2019). *The Perfect Mango*. Punctum Books.
- Manning, E. (2020). *For a Pragmatics of the Useless*. Duke University Press.
- Manning, E., Munster, A., Thomsen, S., & Marie, B. (2019). *Immediation I*. Open Humanities Press.
- Massumi, B. (2014). *What Animals Teach Us About Politics*. Duke University Press.
- Massumi, B. (2018). *99 Theses on the Revaluation of Value: A Postcapitalist Manifesto*. University of Minnesota Press.

- Massumi, B. (1987). Introduction. In G. Deleuze & F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (pp. ix–xv). University of Minnesota Press.
- MICHAELS, S., O’CONNOR, M. C., HALL, M. W. and RESNICK, L. B. (2016) *Accountable Talk Sourcebook: For Classroom Conversation that Works*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Institute for Learning.
- Mills, C. 2014. *Decolonizing Global Mental Health: The Psychiatrization of the Majority World*. Routledge.
- Milonopoulos, A. (2019). In-Between Hunger and Appetite – Food for Thought in the Act. *Inflexions 11*, n.p.
- Moten, F. (2017). *Black and Blur*. Duke University Press.
- Mozère, L. (2014). What about learning. Reconceptualizing early childhood care and education: Critical questions, new imaginaries and social activism, 99-105.
- Mukhopadhyay, T. R. (2015). *Plankton Dreams: What I Learned in Special-Ed*. Open Humanities Press.
- Niccolini, A. (2016). Animate affects: Censorship, reckless pedagogies, and beautiful feelings. *Gender and Education*, 28(2), 230-249.
- Niccolini, A. D., Zarabadi, S., & Ringrose, J. (2018). Spinning yarns: Affective kinshipping as posthuman pedagogy. *Parallax*, 24(3), 324-343.
- Nietzsche, F. (1996). *Nietzsche: Human, all too human: A book for free spirits*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rackley, L., & Bradford, T. (2022). Joyful Noise and Abatement: Idle Chatter and the Undercommons of Oracy Education. *Literacy*, 56(3), 191-198.
- Rackley, L., Bradford, T., & Peairs, D. (2022). Love and Poetics: Black Life Beyond Literacy Research As We Know It. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 31(1-2), 67-79.
- Rafalovich, A. 2001. The Conceptual History of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: Idiocy, Imbecility, Encephalitis and the Child Deviant, 1877-1929. *Deviant Behavior*, 22 (2): 93–115.

- Rolnik, S. (2002). Subjetividade em obra: Lygia Clark, artista contemporânea. *Projeto História: Revista do Programa de Estudos Pós-Graduados de História*, 25, 43-54.
- Shannon, D. B. (2020). Neuroqueer(ing) Noise: Beyond ‘Mere Inclusion’ in a Neurodiverse Early Childhood Classroom. *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 9(5), 489-514.
- Shannon, D. B. (2021). A/autisms:: a “queer labor of the incommensurate”: holding onto the friction between different orientations towards autism in an early childhood research-creation project. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 1-19.
- Shannon, D. B. (2022). Perversity, precarity, and anxiety: tracing a ‘more precise typology’ of the affect of neuroqueer failure in an in-school research-creation project. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 1-15.
- Simondon, G. (2009). The position of the problem of ontogenesis. *Parrhesia*, 7(1), 4-16.
- Simpson, L. B. (2013). *Islands of Decolonial Love: Stories & Songs*. ARP Books.
- Sjöberg, M. N., & Dahlbeck, J. (2018). The Inadequacy of ADHD: a Philosophical Contribution. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 23(1), 97-108.
- Smagorinsky, P. (2011). Confessions of a mad professor: An autoethnographic consideration of neuroatypicality, extranormativity, and education. *Teachers College Record*, 113(8), 1701-1732.
- Snaza, N. (2013). Bewildering education. *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy*, 10(1), 38-54.
- Snaza, N. (2019). *Animate literacies: Literature, affect, and the politics of humanism*. Duke University Press.
- Snaza, N., & Weaver, J. A. (Eds.). (2015). *Posthumanism and Educational Research*. Routledge.
- Spinoza, B. 1985. Ethics. In E. Curley (ed.), *The Collected Works of Spinoza* (pp. 408–617). Princeton University Press.
- Springgay, S., & Rotas, N. (2015). How do you make a classroom operate like a work of art? Deleuzeguattarian methodologies of research-creation. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 28(5), 552-572.
- Springgay, S., & Truman, S. E. (2017). *Walking methodologies in a more-than-human world: WalkingLab*. Routledge.

- Springgay, S., & Truman, S. E. (2018). On the Need for Methods Beyond Proceduralism: Speculative Middles, (in)tensions, and Response-ability in Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 24(3), 203-214.
- Squire, K. D., & Steinkuehler, C. (2017). The problem with screen time. *Teachers College Record*, 119(12), 1-24.
- Steinkuehler, C. (2007). Massively multiplayer online gaming as a constellation of literacy practices. In *The design and use of simulation computer games in education* (pp. 187-215). Brill.
- Stengers, I. (2010). *Cosmopolitics* (Vol. 1). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Pignarre, P., & Stengers, I. (2011). *Capitalist sorcery. Breaking the Spell*. Houndmills.
- St. Pierre, E. A. (2017). Deleuze and Guattari's Language for New Empirical Inquiry. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 49(11), 1080-1089.
- St. Pierre, E. A. (2018). Writing post qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative inquiry*, 24(9), 603-608.
- St. Pierre, E. A., Jackson, A. Y., & Mazzei, L. A. (2016). New empiricisms and new materialisms: Conditions for new inquiry. *Cultural Studies? Critical Methodologies*, 16(2), 99-110.
- Tait, G. 2005. The ADHD Debate and the Philosophy of Truth. *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 9(1), 17–38.
- Taylor, E. 2011. Antecedents of ADHD: A Historical Account of Diagnostic Concepts. *ADHD Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder* 3, 69–75.
- Thiel, J. J., & Wohlwend, K. (2021). #playrevolution: Engaging Equity through the Power of Play. *Teachers College Record*, 123(3), 1-7.
- Thomas, P., P. Bracken, P. Cutler, R. Hayward, R. M. Rufus, & S. Yasmeen. 2005. Challenging the Globalisation of Biomedical Psychiatry. *Journal of Public Mental Health*, 4(3): 23–32.
- Timimi, S. 2009. The Commercialization of Children's Mental Health in the Era of Globalization. *International Journal of Mental Health*, 38 (3), 5–27.

- Tokarczyk, M. M. (2008). *Class Definitions: On the Lives and Writings of Maxine Hong Kingston, Sandra Cisneros, and Dorothy Allison*. Associated University Presse.
- Truman, S. E. (2016). Becoming more than it never (actually) was: Expressive writing as research-creation. *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy*, 13(2), 136-143.
- Truman, S. E. (2021). *Feminist speculations and the practice of research-creation: Writing pedagogies and intertextual affects*. Routledge.
- Truman, S. E., Hackett, A., Pahl, K., McLean Davies, L., & Escott, H. (2021). The Capaciousness of No: Affective Refusals as Literacy Practices. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 56(2), 223-236.
- Valverde, M. (1999). Identity Politics and the Law in the United States. *Feminist Studies*, 25(2), 345–361.
- De Castro, E. V. (2015). *Cannibal Metaphysics*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Weaver, J. A., & Snaza, N. (2017). Against Methodocentrism in Educational Research. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 49(11), 1055-1065.
- Wedge, M. 2015. *A Disease Called Childhood: Why ADHD Became an American Epidemic*. Avery.
- Wiedemann, S. (2020). Azul profundo como escritura y re-escritura metamórfica de poliritmicidades: Una performance filosófica como contra-pedagogía radical ante la forma-academia. Saberes y prácticas. *Revista de Filosofía y Educación*, 5(1), 1-11.
- Whitehead, A. N. (1967). *The Aims of Education*. (1929). Free Press.
- Whitehead, A. N. (1929). *The Function of Reason*. Beacon Hill.
- Yergeau, M. (2015). *Authoring Autism: On Rhetoric and Neurological Queerness*. Duke University Press.
- Yoshimoto, B. (1988). *Kitchen*. Grove Press.