

Composing with the Event—Moving Toward Neurodiverse Perception/Sensation

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## ABSTRACT

### **Composing with the Event—Moving Toward Neurodiverse Perception/Sensation**

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Neurodiversity is the mode of composing. The infinite diversity in diversity, of the field of relation making itself felt in its becoming.

This thesis is this composing.

Relationality is the dance itself of all that is compelled to move in a mode of composing worldings/bodyings. Movement is the force, the ever transitioning/thresholding (of shapes/forms, etc.), the excess, as well as the arena of qualities continuously arriving to their singularity.

Simultaneously, both the voicing and the harmony in the atonal dance of relation in emergence.

Composition as ecology.

Relationality, not between located fixed objects, but rather the field of relation at the interstices themselves, of becoming and abecoming (without becoming). The excess makes a difference in the architecting of the spaces and silences by which movement is informed. Forces emerge, and through the singular moving qualities, matter is weathered into shapings and formations that reciprocally shape space and silence—forever a transitioning from the middle. Qualities express at the interstices of the edging of emergence. Singular qualities event, pulsing frivolously throughout the continuum of the multiplicity of potential.

How to read this thesis? This thesis invites you to cut the words into fragments, throw them to the wind and enter the dance of relation in a co-composition.

*To experience the event of this thesis, please click on the link below:*

<https://pacific-shore-53515.herokuapp.com/diagrams/6/canvas>

*and scroll slowly to encounter the propositions*

“When the artist refuses to produce an object as the object of her work, when the artist refuses to be the subject of the work, when the philosopher refuses to write at a distance, when the work becomes the practice, when the practice invents its own language, research-creation deeply threatens the power/knowledge that holds the academy in place”

(Manning 2020c, 221).

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## A NEURODIVERSE THESIS—A THESIS THAT WALKS

The bounciness of the forest floor bouncing thought

Seasons season thinking that walks

It is important to make this statement for all who are not considered thinking beings, because their modes are not speech or the written word. And for those who endure the pain and exhaustion of forcing complexity to fall into line, into tangible prefigurations. For those who are not seen or understood because they do not communicate neurotypically. The written component of this research-creation thesis acknowledges that it is written under duress. Under the obligation by the institution to write. Practice and other non-prefigured modes of thinking are not valued as rigorous enough modes of thinking to be considered on their own. Therefore, the writing in this thesis engages in this dissonance. It enters a movement of waywardness, finding ways off the page, while holding space for the pain, exhaustion and deeply felt violence in composing each word.

Also, it is important to mention, right away, that the thesis builds and composes with previous iterations of the thinking—therefore sections and pieces from the proposal and comprehensive exam are integral, and included throughout. Back to the writing on writing.

Relating to Mel (formerly Amanda) Baggs's inquiry “into our tendency to place language as the determinant of experience” (Manning 2013, 9), in a meta-esque fashion, I would like to state my hesitation and concern regarding writing acting as a translation in this text on techniques for neurodiverse perception. Baggs's *In My Language* “challenges the notion that by ‘translating’ [...] experience into spoken language [one] will make it more ‘complex’ or more ‘real.’” (Manning 2013, 9). “*In My Language* does not reject language” (Manning 2013, 9), it uses it to investigate “hierarchical di-chotomies to experience (like language versus sensation, cognition versus the preconscious)” (Manning 2013, 9). “What it does is use first movement and sensation

and then language to inquire into our tendency to place language as the determinant of experience. Why would we assume that language can touch every aspect of experience, and why are other ways of sensing or expressing the environment sidelined?” (Manning 2013, 9). “It was a grave error on the part of the structuralist school to try to put everything connected with the psyche under the control of the linguistic signifier!” (Guattari 1995, 5).

The question of writing as overlay/translation is especially of concern in its relationship to art. My own artistic practice of *composing with the event* does its thinking beyond language. How to consolidate this paradox such that writing can do another kind of work? In this text, it is this tension in writing, making and thinking that is explored—for the writing not to be merely supplemental in function but be essential to the formulation of experience-concept composition.

Emerging is a writing practice that tends toward movement and multiplicity, that co-composes with the languaging the artistic work is doing—writing that is similar to what is described in *A Thousand Plateaus*—that “has neither object nor subject; [that] is made of variously formed matters... [for] to attribute the book to a subject is to overlook this working of matters, and the exteriority of their relations” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 3). Writing that dissolves the illusory difference between what the writing “talks about”<sup>1</sup>; what it is doing and not doing; and what it might and might not do (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 4). In the interest of developing this neurodiverse writing practice, I am embracing the metamodeling concept Guattari foregrounds, a technique that is “concerned with [the] excess over models... in an ethos that challenges method” (Manning 2020b, 3). What “moves across” the writing and what “evades the writing” is

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<sup>1</sup> “There is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 4).

what is of interest (Manning 2020b, 3). Therefore, expectations of writing that tends toward content and form, writing that is well packaged, realized/actualized, concrete or demonstrative in any way should be curbed (even if the writing may also be doing those things as well). This movement *towards* may not be perceivable by the reader—my only hope is that what escapes this iteration will work toward other iterations. “Philosophy begins in wonder. And, at the end, when philosophic thought has done its best, the wonder remains” (Whitehead 1968, 168).

In regards to the selected pieces/exploration/propositions, what is at work is another kind of thinking-languaging<sup>2</sup>—a thinking-languaging that is attentive to and in conversation with the very force and event it is a part of. Thinking-languaging of the event is in co-composition with its own emergence and multiplicity. This thinking-languaging is embodied in the event (*event-embodied*); it is trans-sensory. Writing-with: in excess of, and therefore escaping the grasp of socio-linguistic thinking—languaging otherwise.

## The Trauma of Neurotypical Language

For many who tend towards direct perception, carrying the complexity of worlding can be debilitating. This thesis proposes, however, that the difficulty is not inherent to carrying complexity, but rather due to the toxic neurotypical environments forced upon us all. This results in environments that constrict all that wants to move and gaslights those who don’t reduce all that is felt. And, let’s be clear: it is not just those who tend towards direct perception who suffer the violence of these lifeless environments (although the more one leans that way, the more attunement there is to the pain of neurotypicality). The more neurotypically-inclined must drug

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<sup>2</sup> Thinking-languaging as a term that accounts for the thinking of languaging and the languaging of thinking.

themselves in many ways to try and survive unhealthy environments. The practice of coffee, for example, to keep the self functioning for capitalism. Alcohol, so that the self can tolerate masking in social settings that are devoid of connection. And even systemic thinking operations that keep the masses drugged perceptually—identity, for example, is a practice of reducing the production of subjectivity and the more-than-human experience so that there is a fixed and categorized self that can become an object called “human,” which can then be managed. No one is surviving neurotypicality. Neurotypicality kills all life force. Some are just more easily tolerating a life without life force—*motioning* (an empty gesture) instead of moving in composition with the world (a creative gesture). Some world-bodyings<sup>3</sup> just refuse louder!

Attempting to pin down thinking in the making, alive in a relational field, is an act of murder, in that thought is being ripped from the ecology of which it is alive, in formation. To parse, filter, reduce and arrange thought is to kill it and cement it into a dead figure. Sidenote: see here?! Even in this instance, thinking catches on the web of neurotypicality. To some degree, this is and will always be a part of the process. Engaging in the relationality of neurodiversity includes neurotypicality and can be approached neurodiversely with animality—“the animal in play actively, effectively affirms paradox” (Massumi 2014, 7). With that said, it is important to put forth *life-death force* as a conceiving that re-fuses the pulling apart of experience. All life is dying. Death is alive with energy-matter shapeshifting. And so, I may continue to play with this neurotypically constructed dichotomy in the writing-thinking, to see what can be done with it.

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<sup>3</sup> Rather than using bodies (a closed container), this term reorients towards a bodying that remains in flux, as it is simultaneously an element of worlding, and the worlding itself. Just as the crest of a wave is both a durational shaping of the ocean as well as the ocean itself—a singularity that foregrounds and is in co-composition with itself in its larger context.

One of the ways (and perhaps the most pervasive and painful) in which neurotypicality stops the life force in perceptual fielding is by carrying out its main operation, reduction. Filtering out complexity and disorder in the name of a false sense of security and understanding. This is why neurotypical language, the spoken and written word, can be a trigger and traumatic mode for those who “feel the potential of all that is reduced and broken by neurotypicality—and [know that] to feel is to live” (Erin Manning, email communication, February 11, 2022). For those for whom worlds think and move them into being, it can be the most heartbreakingly suffocating (and this is meant literally) feeling when they are demanded to hold the breath of life. This is when bodyings break down—it is a way to break free of the “stronghold for experience made static” (Manning 2020c, 50).

In addition to this trauma, there is also the frustration of neurotypical language as a mode of communication. Firstly, that communication is seen as a human to human activity that is rooted in an activation of what Manning calls the *volition-intentionality-agency triad*.<sup>4</sup> As though you first need to have the intention to communicate, to communicate. What if we took seriously that volition is merely a guise of the pull of worldings? Neurodiverse communication is an ecological encounter, it is relationality. Relationality is a mode of communication that does not subtract from the welter, that does not separate bodying from worlding.

Neurotypical languaging is also problematic in that it is bound by neurotypical time and the limitations of linearity. It is a shame to lose so much in the encounter. “To write is to focus all the exuberant energy onto one form of subtracted expression, funneling the excess into a line”

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<sup>4</sup> For more on the volition-intentionality-agency triad, see Erin Manning, *The Minor Gesture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).

(Manning 2020c, 273). When thinking tries to fall into line, only fragments can get through. That is why tending towards direct perception is often perceived and labeled as unintelligence. Through the neurotypical lens, the excess, all that didn't fall into line, all that didn't make it through is not accounted for in such a logic.

What if we listened to what was trying to be heard? Instead of what is said? What if all that has eluded neurotypical language and communication was considered? What if all that could not be contained or expressed within the given conditions (neurotypical conditions) were recognized as part of the encounter?

## Toward Neurodiverse Writing

The written component of this research-creation thesis is an event (and proposition)—an event that co-composes with the other events (19 pieces/propositions). What the thesis is *doing* is in the *relation*. The writing is located in its own emergence and creates its own languaging, releasing it from the inactivity of the prefigured. Sometimes escaping the prefigured is a rubbing against the codes. This can create a dissonance that sparks movement, a push against, if anything. Similar to the gesture of being in water and pushing against a rock to redirect orientation—the force will give directionality and the constellation of all that is becoming in the flow of the water will provide unpredictable ways of going. What does this mean operationally? It means that the writing may play with the conventions of writing, pushing, pulling, and escaping linearity, grammar, spelling, words (used as definitions), etc. (and it may not). To read this thesis, is to read without a body, to become matter shaped and shaping the event that is emerging transmodally. Transmodal writing “transcend[s] established conventions and forms of literature’s

essentially textual character by transforming, within their own structure, the presence and nature of text so that it is experienced in a new function, less lexically... and move[s] toward the larger écriture that occupies the discursive spaces of this transmodal work, in a reading that defines itself around experiential poesis and against interpretation..." (Ricardo 2008, 1). Reading that is immersed in a *poetics of relation*<sup>5</sup>, "the being of relation" (Manning 2020c, 47), rather than relation between fixed captured figures. Ask instead, how do these words, concepts, sentences, compose themselves into expression? For it is the relationality that brings forth their singular formings. The multiplicity of signification is merely a byproduct of transmodal writing/reading looping back to a hardening of experience. To experience this thesis, read transmodally and with what Manning references as "hypothetical sympathy" (2016, 38). "What is important is how the text does its work in its own logic... feel-out what is at work in the work" (Manning 2020c, 119). Let the thesis wash over you. No need to hold and harden thinking, enjoy the pathway! Lastly, my hope is that explanations like these will become obsolete because justification will no longer be needed. How wonderful would it be for the discovery and understanding to happen in the work itself?

### Editing and Translating for Neurotypicality (Writing for the Human)

Rather than writing for humans (a very limiting perception and directionality), the writing is situated in the thinking. Despite the enormous pressure to *translate* and *edit* for the sake of the "human" and neurotypicality, this thesis fully commits *itself* to the *more-than-human*<sup>6</sup> mode. Editing occurs seldomly and only with great consideration—always checking to make sure that

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<sup>5</sup> "Édouard Glissant (1997) would call a poetics of relation" (Manning 2020c, 7).

<sup>6</sup> The *more-than-human* of Manning's work.

the potency of the neurodivergent languaging and thinking expressing itself is not watered down to reduce its complexity for the sake of “clarity.” Clarity is a neurotypical operation of reducing the field of relation. Two ways in which it reduces is by demanding that everything fall into line (linearity) and by accusations of “oversaturation.” Oversaturation is a neurotypical construct that emphasizes that we must not let everything through, because then it will be too much and not recognizable and organizable. But there is only saturation and reduction. Saturation is direct perception. And reduction is neurotypical perception. A perception that is devoid of movement and the field of relation. Neurotypicality demands that we reduce experience to digestible hollow figures—editing out the infinite, so as to not overwhelm.

### Reorienting the Function of Words into the Field of Relation (Terminology, Definitions, Concepts, and the Lineage of Academic Thought)

There are many neurotypical writing protocols that must be dismantled if we are to grasp at the ineffable. To move towards neurodiverse writing, let us ask: what else can writing do?

Oh, if I could only put things into words as I *see* them! Mr. Carpenter says, ‘Strive — strive — keep on — words are your medium — make them your slaves — until they will say for you what you want them to say.’ That is true — and I do try — but it seems to me there is something *beyond* words — any words — all words — something that always escapes you when you try to grasp it — and yet leaves something in your hand which you wouldn’t have had if you hadn’t reached for it. (Montgomery 2009, 10)

To “see” here is not a seeing of the categorized and located sensing body (the eyes/vision), but rather the feeling of nonsensuous<sup>7</sup> bodying-worlding feeling itself into emergence. This is not a conscious perception, nor is it a located sensation of the *human body*.<sup>8</sup> It is a peripheral *seeing*, a seeing that cannot be pinned down by *faciality*<sup>9</sup>-*focusing*, that can only be directly experienced, felt nonconsciously and with the leakiest of bodies—before the hijacking of perception by neurotypicality (parsing, categorizing, gridding and centering of the human, etc.).

The “beyond”-ness of words coupled with the “grasping” gesture (directionality) compounds in an infinite cresting<sup>10</sup> feeling. All words fail. It is this failure to express that makes felt *all that has not come into expression*. It is this very failure that propels the felt residues of all that escapes expression and/or capture. This is thought-in-act; thought alive in its thinking, in its doing, in its becoming. I call this mode of thinking *pathway thinking* because it occurs in direct perception as the felt journey it is taking, it does not come to expression as figures of thought like content thinking. What is felt is the pathway that the thinking walks. This pathway of thinking is the thinking (thought) itself, the experience—rather than thinking being a destination with a

<sup>7</sup> As in Manning’s conceiving-composing with Alfred North Whitehead’s nonsensuous perception. “This quality is carried more than sensed through sense perception” (2020, 38).

<sup>8</sup> “For Whitehead, the expression of time must not be reduced to sense perception as this would imply a cognition of time-passing, a mediation of the present into the past by the figure of the present. It would make the folds of time a conscious proposition, turning the human into a mediator of those folds. Nonsensuous perception is a way to speak of the immediating effect of direct experience, experience immanently orienting rather than experience externally oriented” (Manning 2020c, 38).

<sup>9</sup> I am using this term as a presupposed relation of what is allowed to foreground. Neurodiverse perception “resists the plane of faciality” (Manning 2020c, 6, 312).

<sup>10</sup> Similar to Manning’s conceiving-composing with William James account of the present (time), *qualities* are also slippery, they remain in the peripheral of experience. “‘Where is it, this present? It has melted in our grasp, fled ere we could touch it, gone in the instant of becoming’ (1890, 608). The present, James says, is specious: the now of experience is already part of the past, altered, if only minimally, in the now that is cresting” (Manning 2020c, 37).

predrawn (repeatable) map of concrete points/locations that can be visited over and over.

Pathway thinking will never reach the same destination twice because the journey is a singular event. There is a sense of arriving that may be confused with content. But as soon as you attempt to walk the pathway to arrive at the same content, you arrive somewhere else.

Words and writing do not have to be engaged with neurotypically—there are interventions that can reorient towards a writing-reading practice of life-living.

The art of life-living is conditioned through the activation of modes of existence that are oriented not by a volitional first-person-singular human but by the force-of-variation of a minor gesture. (Manning 2020c, 100)

In many ways, words have limitations, especially if they are only engaged with as prefigured mental objects—mental objects whose only purpose is to uphold neurotypical perception as the only existing perception. But what happens when words do not impose meaning, what if they are not experienced as fixed mental objects? What if words are encountered at the encounter? What if they are encountered without the prefigured sensing body (a body that has separate categorized senses and who is the center of experience)? How does a word, or a constellation of words compose worldings? Words can act as foregrounded backgrounds, they can create negative space for qualities to dance in the interstices and foreground in immediation. Words can act as fixtures that spark and orient movement—matter that takes shape by being shaped and shaping all swirling entities.

Most deeply felt is the pressure imposed by neurotypicality to conform the *how* of neurodiverse voicing. More so than *what* is being said, it is the stifling of *how* it wants to come to expression that is doing most of the abolishing of diversity. It is in fact the nature of diversity in diversity itself, the continuous variation that causes this intense institutionalized collective systemic rejection. If something cannot be pinned down or recognized it cannot be controlled and turned into a commodity. There is an inherent hypocrisy in a system that pretends to welcome and support innovation and diversity but only if it can be recognized, compared, evaluated, and profited from.

Rather than words as emergent activators-elements of worldings, words are mostly used as definitions and terms, whose primary function is to uphold a system of ownership of thought. Academic practices such as positioning oneself in the lineage of academic thought is a systemic operation of white-male ownership of thought. Diverse knowledge is excluded: either outright if it does not serve the system's gluttony for power, or subtly by pretending to include it, but really it is just yet another account through the lens of neurotypicality.

### Amethodology, and Scope of this Thesis

In order to do justice to the complexity of the thinking in this thesis, the footnotes will be as important as the main text. In fact, I would like the reader to consider that there may not be a main text at all, rather an organizing of the text that attempts to find freedom in the current constraints of academic writing. The sidestepping holds as much importance as what seems to be the “main content.” In fact, in this approach the typical understanding of “content” is revised. “Content,” in this thesis, is the thinking pathways, the felt journey *thinking* is taking. This text

offers a neurodiverse thinking-doing-writing approach that takes seriously that *complexity* is rigorous and that conventional academic/scholarly thinking, writing, and methodological models are at best a reduction of knowledge (or what I call knowing<sup>11</sup>) and at worst a distortion and deadened byproduct of thinking that is no longer of the thinking. If research is meant to discover and go other places, a practice of predetermining and prefiguring does not align with the purpose of research. Furthermore, I would posit that complexity is the ethical and accurate approach to research. Just as excluding findings in scientific research is inaccurate and unethical, so too is excluding thoughts that do not neatly fit the constraining parameters of linearity and traditional views of an acceptable range of scope. Neurotypicality organizes thinking in a hierarchy: labeling some thoughts as “tangents” or “irrelevant”; as beyond the scope of the research; or worse, dismissing the rigor of detailing and need to include all thoughts as messy or even paradoxically unthoughtful. An approach rooted in *complexity* values all that emerges in the process of thinking-doing-feeling—everything makes a difference, everything is relevant (the imperceptible, the incongruent, the peripheral, etc.). This valuing of details and attuning to how/where the research wants to go, instead of predetermining, prefiguring, and excluding (which is not research anyways, as I briefly just explained) is similarly described in the chapter “Designing an autistic space for research” of *Neurodiversity Studies: A New Critical Paradigm*:

Being in the flow is on one hand pleasurable; going into oneself as a writer, the joy and the pleasure of being swallowed up in details, developing them and following them, which can result in new discoveries and new patterns. At the same time, an awareness is expressed that this detail-focused writing process can be perceived as unnecessary and complicated or that the writer is ‘bad at seeing the

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<sup>11</sup> Knowledge is a knowing—a thinking-feeling taking shape.

relationship of the details to the whole picture'. This awareness of one's own writing process can be understood as an expression of internalised cognitive ableism (cf. Carlson, 2001), part of a process of upholding the distinction between cognitive normates and others, where one's own way of writing and processing is described as lacking in relation to an imagined cognitive normate other writing process, characterised by a more NT conventional selective focus ('a holistic approach') or linear writing:

I can get incredibly fascinated by a train of thought and want to elaborate on it, follow threads to see where they lead even though they may not be relevant for the bigger picture. A person with more of a holistic approach would probably see immediately that a track is irrelevant and be content with a footnote. On the other hand, there might be benefits in taking these detours, after all, as they may lead to unexpected discoveries that I can use later on, even if they strictly speaking fall outside the scope of the disposition.

The process is depicted as 'chaotic and non-demarcated which allows me to see what my colleagues do not see':

I see so many nuances and so many connections. It is sort of non-linear for me. It branches out in all different directions and I see that all of these directions are important, see how they relate to each other in complex ways that cannot be forced into linearity, and yet you must write in a linear way. It is so frustrating! I see way too much. (Rosqvist, et al. 2020, 162-163)

This description/account closely aligns with the thinking mode that I am suggesting. In this text, footnotes will be utilized to welcome these so-called detours (which in actuality are not detours

at all, but rather thought in the act.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, this account evidences, in the text itself (perhaps intentionally, perhaps not) lingering internalized neurotypicality. The force of this remaining echo of neurotypicality is evident when the author wrote “even though they may not be relevant for the bigger picture.” The positioning of detailed thinking in opposition to holistic thinking (sometimes called bottom-up processing<sup>13</sup>) is a common thinking operation that most do not think twice about. In contrast, I would like to suggest that we do think twice, and consider that details are not perceived on their own. They are perceived in context. A context that feels abstract, complex, and is located in the virtual/actual; and although the operation of neurotypicality is designed to discredit such experiences by discounting and diminishing the intangible as non-existent, this background, this periphery, this imperceptible, is felt in its relation to the details, and does exist. If this is not radical empiricism, I don’t know what is. In my view, the ability and need to take everything in to account, to feel and think with all expressing and possible iterations, to move with the movement of thinking in the act<sup>14</sup> is a radical empiricistic mode (thinking-perceiving) of pure experience.

William James’ *Radical Empiricism* does not *exclude* in its account of pure experience (what I will call direct experience later on). It is additive:

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<sup>12</sup> The activity and gesture of thinking. Also, see footnote #4, this is a concept/phrase prevalent in Manning’s work.

<sup>13</sup> “Bottom-up processing (cf also Haker et al., 2016) – commonly represented as ‘extreme attention to individual details’ or a ‘cognitive/perceptual ‘style’ favouring detail-oriented cognition’ (Valla & Belmonte, 2013), or local processing bias over global processing/holistic stimulus processing (Stevenson et al., 2018). This way of processing is commonly represented as different to non-autistic processing, where non-autistic people usually show an a priori top-down bias (Haker et al., 2016), automatically combining congruent and incongruent cues into coherent wholes, or with other words a compulsory process of forcing stimulus into a preconceived conceptual framework. In addition to individual autistic people not having their thinking processes governed by pre-existing conceptual frameworks, autistic people sharing a space generally follow each other’s thinking on its own premises rather than forcing it into a conceptual framework (Seng, 2019)” (Rosqvist, et al. 2020, 157-158).

<sup>14</sup> Erin Manning’s “thought in the act” series dives into this in more detail and I will elaborate further on the thesis.

My description of things, accordingly, starts with the parts and makes of the whole... it is essentially a mosaic philosophy, a philosophy of plural facts... 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. (James 2013, 22-23)

His “description of things... [that] starts with the parts and makes of the whole... [that] is essentially a mosaic philosophy, a philosophy of plural facts” takes seriously how details and context are experienced in tandem—further discrediting “autistic” perception theories that are rooted in the dichotomizing of processing (the positioning of details in opposition to the whole). Furthermore, “every kind of thing experienced” accounts for every *kind* of experience, including those not conventionally embraced as experience; such as the imperceptible, periphery, the actual/virtual, multiplicity—the minor gesture.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> “This tendency is a gesture felt in the event both as absolutely singular and infinitely multiplicitous. The one and the many, the minor gesture has a quality of a resonant multiplicity singularly itself. The minor gesture emerges from within the field itself: it is a gesture that leads the field of experience to make felt the fissures and openings otherwise too imperceptible or backgrounded to ascertain. A minor gesture is a gesture that tweaks the experiential to make its qualitative operations felt, a gesture that opens experience to its limit” (Manning 2016, 65).

The research, the investigations/explorations are thinking-doing practices that are gestalt<sup>16</sup><sup>17</sup><sup>18</sup> and multimodal/multisensory—allowing the relation of multi-languaging to do the work. A multi-languaging does so much more than transfer information: it is a languaging that accounts for the thinking and composing occurring in the languaging itself. This multi-languaging-thinking-composing is comprised of writing, reading, creating, performing, and other modes/activities.

A neurodiverse approach to citation will develop itself in this writing as well. Currently accepted citation practices must follow established explicit rules and implicit principles of logic. These practices are not conducive to neurodiverse thinking-writing. For one thing, they are problematic in that they prioritize rule-following over taking into account what the thinking or text calls for. Additionally, this allegedly inherent process called “logic” is a neuronormative attestation that there is only one accepted and rigorous way of thought-organization—moreover it assumes that all minds work this way and only registers and validates those minds. Matthew K. Belmonte addresses the issue of “recognising and meeting unspoken expectations” (2020, 174) in his chapter, “How individuals and institutions can learn to make room for human cognitive diversity.” He urges that “expectations ought not to be left unspoken” (Belmonte 2020, 183).

On this note, principles of citation have made it difficult for neurodiverse thinkers to perform neurotypicality as they do not implicitly know the rules that are apparently so obvious.

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<sup>16</sup> The qualities of the event are so unified as a whole that it cannot be described merely as a sum of its parts.

<sup>17</sup> “An organism tends to perceive a stimulus as a whole (Aydin 2004)”—“it is not the summation of all the parts that give a meaning to the whole, but how the parts are combined together (in other words the relation between the parts themselves) (Aydinli 1986)” (Uzunoglu 2011, 1000).

<sup>18</sup> “Self-organizing models often do not think of the traditional bottom-up/top-down interaction, but view the system as a whole, and therefore explain sound production and perception not as a several-stage hierarchical workflow but as one dynamic system leading to a musical Gestalt immediately” (Bader 2015, 4).

An advantage of not implicitly knowing the rules and protocols is that the work itself calls for what it needs and invents its own logic in each instance. In this thesis, for example, direct quoting is used exclusively (no paraphrasing), to direct attention away from the subject and toward the composing of thought in the act. The relationality is where the thinking is moving. The work working. A citational practice of the activation and multiplicity of lines of flight.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, there are long quotations, when the work calls for them, as to not submit to the pressures to omit complexity and richness by neurotypicality.

The rigor of this thesis is in how it moves with its own complexity and excess, offering richness of thought, rather than favoring reductionist attitudes of exclusion<sup>20</sup> in the name of clarity and logic rooted in neurotypicality.

### Citation as Activator

This thesis moves beyond neurotypical practices of citation (situating the work within categorical disciplines and lineages (white-male lineages)—deciding what counts as knowledge). Rather than citation as convention to reinforce and uphold the commodification of knowledge and the notion that knowledge can be owned or even reduced to an individual, the citational practice in this thesis moves towards citation as activator. In this account of citation, the function of citation is not reliant on how it has been understood in the past, nor does it hold stakes in the author's

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<sup>19</sup> As in Deleuze and Guattari's lines of flight in "The Rhizome" of *A Thousand Plateaus*.

<sup>20</sup> "Schizoanalysis was Guattari's antimodel proposition. He called it a 'metamodel.' A metamodel, for Guattari, is a nonmodel that upsets existing formations of power and knowledge, challenging the tendency of models to 'operate largely by exclusion and reduction, tightly circumscribing their applications and contact with heterogeneity' (Genosko and Murphie 2008)" (Manning 2016, 43).

intention of meaning. Rather, what is of interest is how the quote or citation sparks or moves thinking. This citational practice carries with it the appetite for infinite diversity in the diversity of thought.

The threat to neurotypicality is that all of this might count as knowledge. The threat is that the world might actually be this way, be this perceptually rich, this perceptually disordered, and that neurotypicality might keep us from seeing it. (Manning 2020c, 285)

The term “nature,” for example, seems to be a trigger word for many academics (because of the anthropocentric perspective of positioning nature in opposition to the human)—I will not enter this conversation because the operation of categorizing constructs does not align with the very thinking that this thesis is practicing-eventing. The word “nature” in this work (or any other word for that matter) is an emergent composing of wording.

To find a concept is to touch on a nerve of experience, to catch the necessity of its naming. What is formed in this gesture is an operative proposition, an intercessor capable of catching in a word, in a phrase, experience moved. None of this is an individual’s work. The writing, the thinking-with, the sociality, is what brings the concept to expression. A concept is oriented by the path it draws forth. The concept is less ours to claim than ours to follow. (Manning 2020c, 11)

In a meta-gesture, an appetite for composing with Manning’s concept of “concept” sprouts a variant that names itself *concepting*, at least for now. *Concepting*, like Manning’s “concept”, is not thought defined and designed, it is the force and lure of thought that moves and shapes itself by bumping into the elements that come in and out of relation—a *double articulation*, as

Manning would say. What is of interest is how concepting shapes perception and the ecology itself, including all that escapes formation (concept).<sup>21</sup>

### Analyzing Manning's Writing (through Feeling)

It is not just that Manning is able to use a deeply neurotypical medium (writing) to articulate what so many neurodiverse *bodying-worldlings* fiercely desire to express, by building a vocabulary and a concepting landscape; it is that her work then goes further, breathing life into concepting landscapes, reviving them as emergent ecologies. Her work has found a way to activate the inactive. An example of a similar process is how an instrument is resuscitated back to life when played; how it is transformed from a neurotypically perceived “object” into a living entity dancing vibrational qualities. Manning breathes life into deeply neurotypical “objects” (words, sentences, etc), *schizzing* their prefigured structures and reactivating field experience.

Writing is often a prefigured, neurotypical operation that dictates not only what to think but *how* to perceive and think—which is even more insidious in its spreading of neurotypicality (the white male perspective in operation). For this reason, a study of *how* Manning alchemizes “writing” and activates neurodiverse languaging was necessary for this thesis. Neurodiverse languaging, as in a languaging that is trans-sensory, that co-composes in-act<sup>22</sup> with the event—

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<sup>21</sup> “What things do when they shape each other, practices that have opened the way for a revaluation of value in excess of the form things take” (Manning 2020c, ix).

<sup>22</sup> Manning’s *in-act*: “the creative force of the in-act” (2020, 44)—“the in-act of the process’s own affirmation... affirmed not because of what it is but because of how it affects experience in the making” (21)—“nothing is ever completely lost in a philosophy of the in-act” (36).

“to compose with the how of coming-to-act in a way that allows for modes of becoming that exceed the form of being, encouraging an artfulness that is sensitive to... the event” (Manning 2020c, 49).

## Note Taking

In addition to reading-listening-walking as thinking activator-process, another component was transsensory notetaking. Transsensory notetaking is a technicity that activates thinking by engaging with text instinctually. The color coding does not belong to categories, rather it was an activity of attunement to the movement of the quotes.

John Cage’s *Diary: How to Improve the World (You Will Only Make Matters Worse)* is a useful study in other ways sound and language can be felt. The book has a textured title and is written in twelve different typefaces (fonts, colors, sizes, etc.) which were determined by chance operations. “A mosaic of ideas, statements, words, and stories,” as well as a diary, the content was also organized by chance operations (Cage). The text has been presented as a lecture (orally) on several occasions. My interest is in exploring this work as an example of a reshaping of standard language practices (written and oral)—how sound, language, and music can be reconceived, articulated, and experienced cross-modally (in this case through different modes of gesture—visually [color, font, size, position, etc], through content [the movement in the relation between the words, statements, questions etc], and through the touch of the book and the sound of the text); and dynamically (via chance). “The beautiful and unusual visual variances become almost musical as the physicality of the language on the page suggests the sonic” (Google books

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description). The study of this piece guided the exploration into other ways sound and language can be felt.

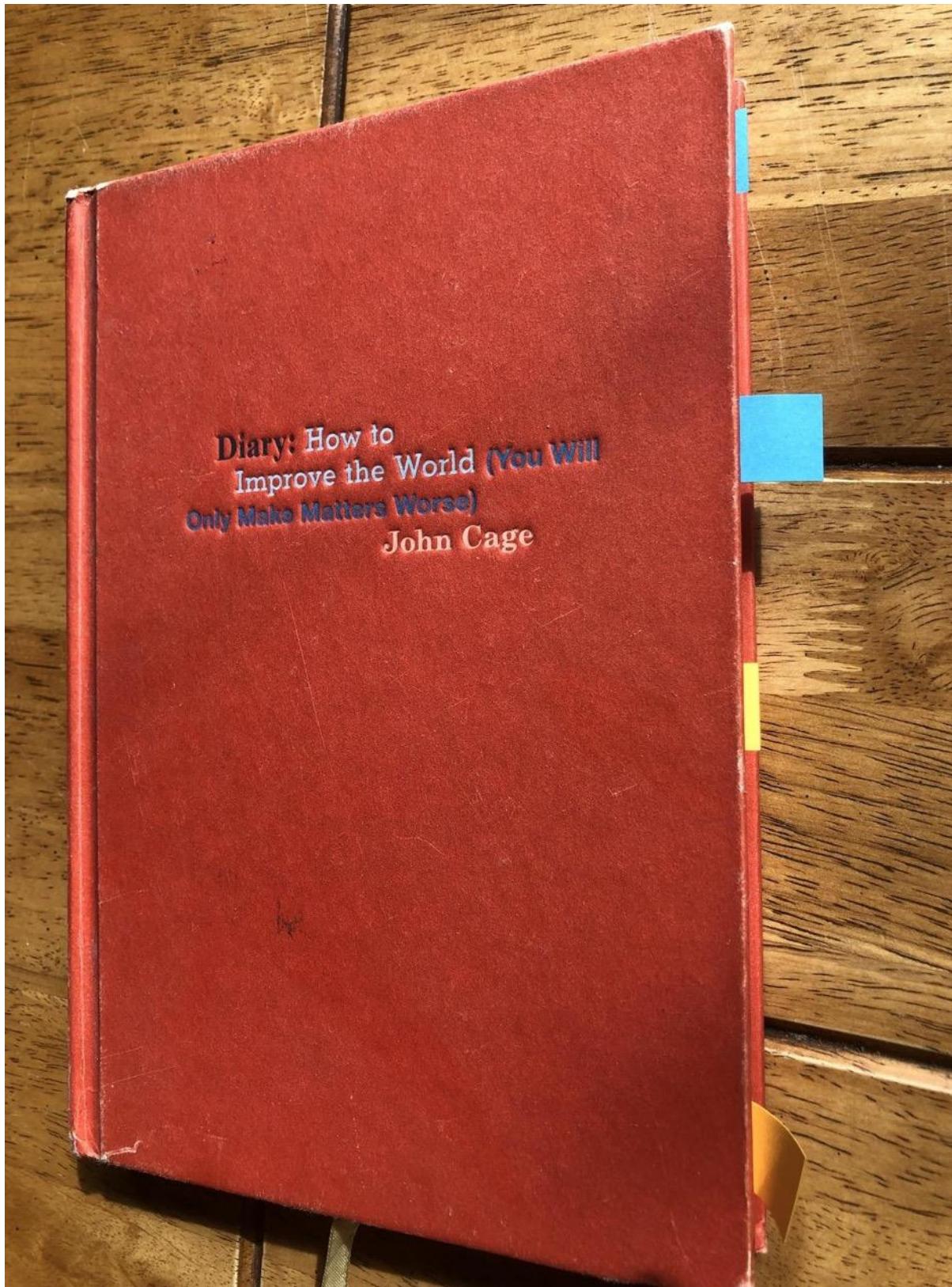
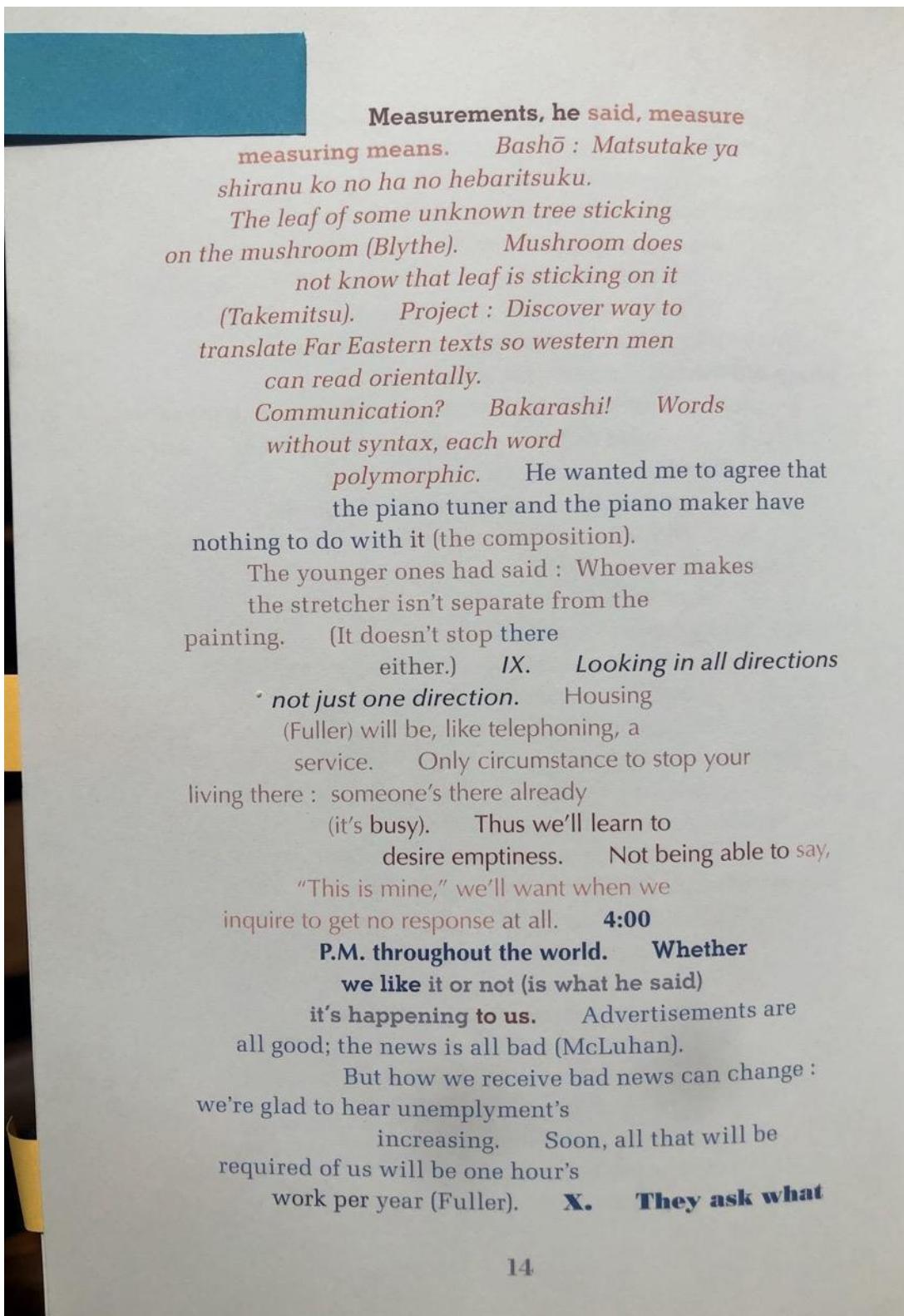


Figure 1



the wheel, he said, "I'm not interested  
in results; just going on. Art's in  
*process of coming into its own : life.*

**The lake is undefined. The land around**  
**rests upon it obscuring its shape, shape**  
**that needs to remain unrevealed. Sung.**

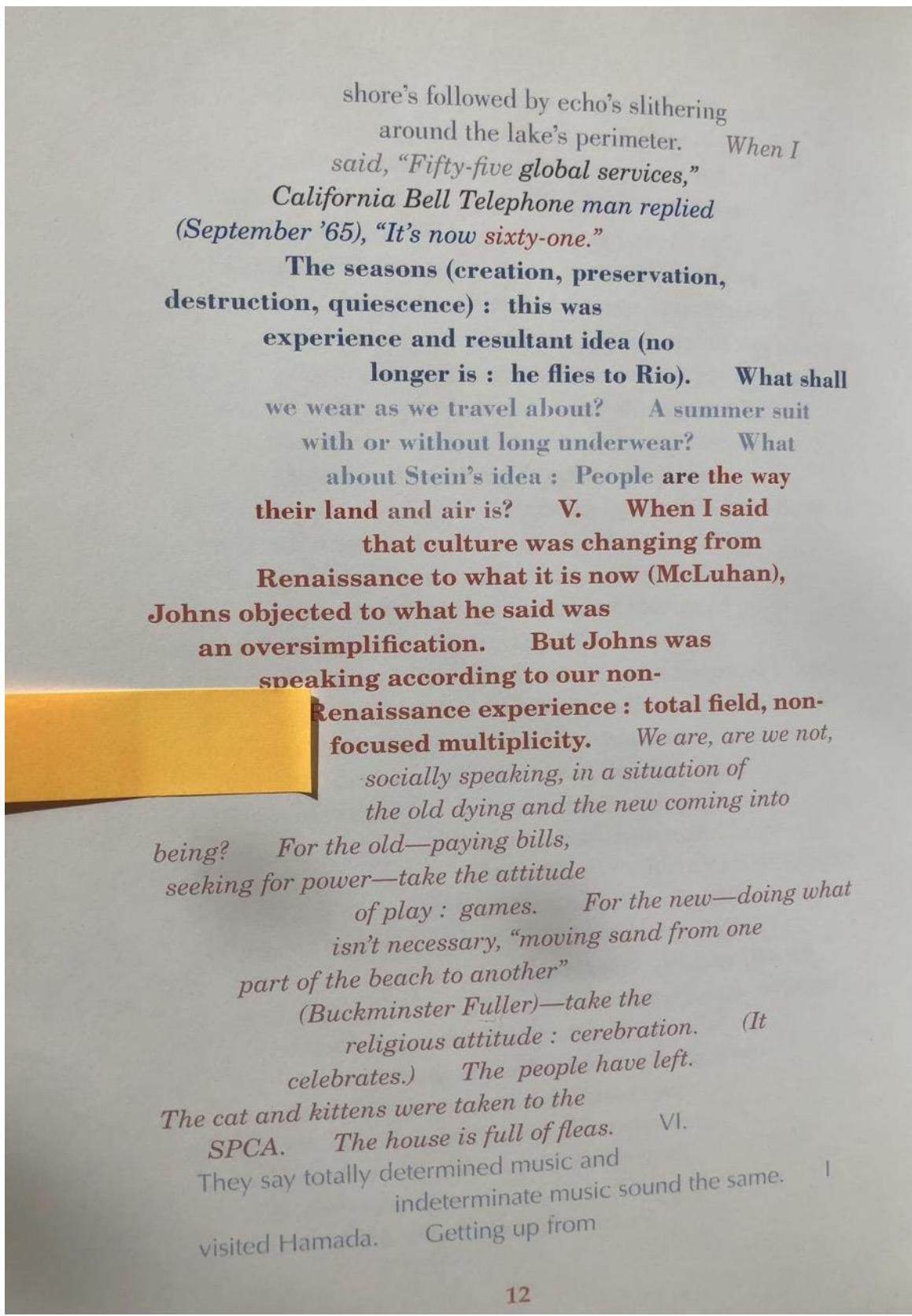
**"Floating world."** Rain, curtain of wind-  
**swept lake's surface beyond : second view**

(there are others, he tells me, one with  
mists rising). Yesterday it was stillness  
and reflections, groups of bubbles. An  
**American garden : water, not sand,**  
**vegetation, not stones. Thunder.**

Without intending to, I'm going from lake  
to lake. Saltair. Salt Lake. VII.

Hugh Nibley. I hadn't seen him since  
high school days. I asked him what  
he thought about other planets and  
sentient populations. Yes, he said,  
throughout the universe : it's Mormon  
doctrine. We'd said good-bye. I opened  
the door of the car, picked up my  
attaché case and everything in it fell  
out on the grass and the gutter. His  
comment : Something memorable always  
happens. Things we were going to do are  
now being done by others. They were, it  
seems, not in our minds to do (were we  
or they out of our minds?) but simply  
ready to enter any open mind, any mind  
disturbed enough not to have an idea in

it. VIII. The daily warmth we  
experience, my father said, is not  
transmitted by Sun to Earth, but is what  
Earth does in response to Sun.



systems. McLuhan : *Agenbite of Outwit*  
 (Location, Spring '63). (The inability of  
 people to be inactive. As Satie said :

If I don't smoke, someone else will in  
 my place. Audience participation,  
 active passivity.) XIV. Since the  
 Spirit's omnipresent, there's a difference  
 in things but no difference in spirit.

McLuhan was able to say "The medium is  
 the message" because he started from  
 no concern with content. Or ch [redacted]  
 quantity, not quality (we get  
 quality willy-nilly) : i.e. we'd like  
 to stay alive, the changes that are

taking place are so many and so  
 interesting. Composition'll have, he  
 said, less and less to do with what  
 happens. Things happen more  
 quickly. One of the signs you'll get  
 that'll tell you things are going well is  
 that you and everyone else you know will  
 be inhabiting lightweight Dymaxion  
 houses, disengaged from ownership and  
 from violated Earth spot (read

Fuller). XV. Smiling, she said, let  
 the old ones walk out : there's not  
 much to be done about them in any case.

Distractions? Interruptions? Welcome  
 them. They give you the chance to  
 know whether you're disciplined. That  
 way you needn't bother about sitting  
 cross-legged in the lotus position.

Phonetics. He was a physicist and a  
 computer-composer in his spare time.  
 Why was he so stupid? Because he was

## *For a Pragmatics of the Useless*

"my work has aimed to sidestep the **neuroreductionism** that I believe shuts down the political and social force of the movement for neurodiversity. While much of my work on autistic perception *does* emphasize neurological difference, and while I am certain that neurological difference *is* a formative effect in the variation designated by the term *neurodiversity*, my interest is in the *diversity in diversity*, **locating the neurotypical not as the measure of an individual diametrically opposed to the neurodiverse but as the (unspoken) baseline of existence**. I see neurotypicality as akin to structural racism—as the infusion of white supremacy in the governing definition of what counts as human. The assumption that neurotypicality is the neutral ground from which difference asserts itself (an assumption everywhere supported by the neuroscientific literature) suggests that there is still an urgent conversation to be had about how the human, and knowledge as a defining category of the human, is organized and deployed in the image of neurotypicality. The decision to continue to work with the neuro in neurodiversity is therefore less an alignment to the neurological per se than an engagement with the presuppositions of neurology as a science for and of the (neurotypical, white) human, a science that far too rarely calls into question the assumptions that underlie either its humanism or the categorical imperative to perform according to its normative expectations" (Manning 2).

"A pragmatics of the useless is speculative in the sense that it is open to transformation by the potentializing force of what courses through the event, even when it cannot be fully actualized. Potential courses through the "just like this" nature of the event, making it reverberate. The infrathin is felt in this reverberation, potentially singularizing" (21).

"The **infrathin** does not rely on consciousness to come to expression. And yet it does touch at the edges of an awareness in which the **conscious and the non-conscious** are in **co-composition**. Here, where degrees and scales of **feeling** are in-act, we are in the midst of autistic perception, the active fielding of experience edging into itself. Elimination is included, the **untimeliness** of nonconscious tendings directly felt" (Manning 27).

"By activating the infrathin of experience in the making, the relational object potentializes this tension where feeler and felt are at their most lively differential. In so doing, it creates **the conditions for an artfulness** that defies the bounds of art, **pushing art into the field of life itself**" (Manning 30).

### **"The Value of the Infrathin"**

This differential force of artfulness is replete with potential. **What art can do is make this potential felt**" (Manning 31).

*Figure 6*

"No relational object is fully operative that cannot create a cut in the process: an object is relational precisely because of its capacity to schizz the field such that certain qualities stand out more than others. How a contrast makes itself felt is precisely what makes art artful" (Manning 31).

"The artful creates fields of relation through which new modes of encounter are propelled. These infrathin modes of encounter propose new ways..." (Manning 31).

"Artfulness activates the event's contrast, making felt the force-of-form that undoes art of its hold on the very object that too often is said to represent it. A pragmatics of the useless takes this as its third proposition: that what art can do is always in excess of the object it leaves behind" (Manning 31).

**"A pragmatics of the useless: the value does not reside in the form but in the infrathin of form's incompleteness"** (Manning 31).

"For Alfred North Whitehead, there is never a subject that preexists an occasion of experience. And there is never a time into which we bathe fully formed. All occasions of experience fashion the quality of subjectivity their uniqueness calls forth. In so doing, they co-create the time of the event. A subject is in-time, coming into itself just this way in this set of conditions only to change again with the force of a different set of conditions. A subject can therefore never be reduced to a single occasion as though that iteration of experience could map onto every past and future instance of what it might have meant to have come into oneself. Such an account would leave no room for the liveliness of difference in the world."

If this is the case, why is it that we maintain such a strong sense of the subject? How can we speak with such confidence about subject positions and the identity-based practices that prolong them? Why do we claim to know who is included (or excluded) from "the subject"? On what terms is this transparency of inclusion/ exclusion played out, and what does this categorization foster in terms of the middling of subjectification?" (Manning 33).

"We know the subject because the subject is given to us again and again as the leading feature of experience" (Manning 33).

"The subject, we learn, is the agency behind bodies, the agency that partitions body from world to protect the human's place in it" (Manning 34).

"What is left behind in the perishing is not a fully fledged subject but a quality of form-taking. The quality of form-taking will have effects: future comings-into-themselves will be influenced by the shape it took" (Manning 35).

"This interweaving of experience, where experience carries both the quality of the occasion coming into itself and its crystallization, is made possible by the infrathin of event-time, the

future-presenting always already **a fold in the event's coming to expression**, time unmoored except in the peaking of **the occasion's self-definition as momentary form-taking**" (Manning 35).

"...nothing is ever completely lost in a **philosophy of the in-act**. **Everything that comes to expression makes a difference, cutting into experience to schizz it toward new cleavages of worlds in the making**" (Manning 36).

"The **category of the human** is more fragile than it would like to appear, however. In fact, it is so uncertain of the place it occupies that it **requires continuous policing**: **the human, and humanism** more generally, is terrified by the prospect that faced with the plethora of modes of practicing, of becoming-praxis, as Wynter might say, other modes of existence might be cast forth **that could trouble its position of white centrality**" (Manning 40).

"...that **knowledge is made in its image**. Knowledge-as-mediation, knowledge as that which comes between, which fits in **a model of preexisting point of view...**" (Manning 41).

"...instauration can be thought as that quality of intervention in the event that cleaves it to **its inner variation, exposing what else moves through it**. Thus creating the conditions for the minor gesture, instauration becomes **the motor of the differential's expression**" (Manning 46).

"**Diversity is in diversity, not in opposition to a norm**. This is what the minor gesture makes palpable, that variation that moves at the rhythm of the included middle, **the being of relation**. "When we speak of a poetics of Relation, we no longer need to add: relation between what and what?" (27)" (Manning 47).

"the conditions that opened the way for their singular mode of expression" (Manning 47).

48 violence human

*Figure 8*

"Atmosphere is a relationscape that escapes any kind of mediation. It may include us, but it also always exceeds us, its feltness a contributory factor in experience that moves through us without ever being only about us. Always more-than what actualizes, atmosphere is carried by that which comes into being but is not limited to being. It affects and is affected, qualifying experience. It has no form, only force. And yet all taking-forms are affected by it. As pure relation it never operates alone. Atmosphere could perhaps be said to be that which conditions all that is relational, that which moves through all that comes into contact.

Brian Massumi connects atmosphere to affective tonality, suggesting that affective tonality is "the leading edge of experience" (2017b). Atmosphere is the background of that leading edge, a "diffuse vitality affect" (Massumi 2019, 296). Every instauration brings with it an atmosphere. This atmosphere is the quality, the color of that intensification" (Manning 49).

"we must learn to write history differently, challenging the mediating models that are used to mobilize and strengthen existing forms of valuation, forms of valuation that tend to privilege those modes already in existence, modes too often seeped in the epistemologies of colonialism and the identity practices colonialism breeds, including all of the ways academia values the stance of objectivity and distance, always in the name of the unnamed neurotypicality (whiteness) that lurks at its core" (Manning 49).

"The work of crafting new modes of existence will never be possible if we situate ourselves in the position of the critic, observing the world from a mediating distance. Across her books, Hartman's prose teaches us to write in the opacity of the being of relation. Speaking back to the insufficient archive, coloring it in when she needs to, always in movement, wayward, Hartman composes with what echoes diagonally, on the angle of the inexpressible" (Manning 50).

"that which cannot be rendered discernible by an archive whose task was always to stabilize the traces of what fell out of the frame" (Manning 50).

"Only immanent critique can do the work of immediation—critique that moves from the force of the in-act to discover not only what the conditions of a singular mode of existence are but what its merest existences reveal. Critique that stands in as judge and mediator of experience will leave things firmly in place.

Immediation is a practice. It is an act, a verb. Relational to the core, it reminds us that time is never a stable state and that experience can never be reduced to that which is culled from the welter. Experience is atmosphere coupled with the cut of subtraction, the crest and the wave. Here, where "we look in two directions into time" (James 1890, 609), it is the more-than that defines us. A politics of immediation proposes this schizz of experience in-forming as the site of existence's potential" (Manning 50-51).

Figure 9

### "Beyond Identity"

How to raise the problem of identity positions in a way that doesn't perform this kind of gesture? How to problematize identity while remaining sensitive to the fact that for some the loss of a sense of stable identity may feel like the very same gesture as the colonial act of exclusion from the category of the human? How not to engage in re-disenfranchising those very bodies that have historically been denied subjectivity? How to create an affirmative politics of a production of subjectivity that does not ignore that alliances are crucial in the face of the systemic violence of oppression?" (Manning 51).

"The task, it seems to me, involves recasting alliance such that it need no longer be subsumed to identity and, by extension, to the bounded individual. The bounded individual, that pet figure of neoliberalism, is nothing more than the other side of the subject, which is the other side of the human. To focus on the individual as the harbinger of identity, to make the politics about the individual, is to reinstall a mediation that knows in advance how to recognize the human as orienter of experience. The problem of identity must instead be engaged from the perspective of Wynter's "descriptive statement" of the human. This category of the human, as Wynter underscores, is concerned to perpetuate a genre of the human (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 9). What kinds of sociality cut across this genre?

The kind of identity politics Moten gestures toward remains attached to the genre of the human installed by the colonial practices that still serve as the ground from which we claim our identities. It is no doubt the case that many, if not most, critiques of identity serve to sideline those very people who have already been uncounted. It is also clearly the case that from a perspective always pretending to be neutral, critiques of identity serve to reinstall the primacy of the white, neurotypical subject position. This brand of identity-politics policing refuses to be sensitive to the ways in which exclusion from the category of the human continues to permit the perpetuation of violence and segregation. And, too often, as Moten underscores, it proposes no creative encounter with sociality, no other ways of thinking of alliance. *It proposes no other practices*" (Manning 51-52) .

"A critique of identity politics must always be an engagement with what else it can mean to be human as praxis. A critique of identity politics must commit to more-than human forms of sociality. It must come from the unsettledness of giving up on the genre of the human, which too many of us take for granted" (Manning 52).

"I consider neurotypicality to be a pervasive form of identity politics that, precisely because it chiefly remains unspoken, has profound effects on the conditions of experience for anyone who doesn't easily fit within the parameters it sets up to frame the human. These parameters tend to be based on the policing of intelligence and, by extension, of the very capacity to be a (human) body" (Manning 52).

*Figure 10*

"The policing of the category of the human happens in an infinite number of ways. Two that stand out in relation to neurodiversity are the performance of exclusion based on motor difference and on spoken language. Bodies that tic or stim, bodies that appear disorganized, are too often considered to be bodies without anything to say. These bodies are cast aside as having no contribution to make to humanity. Intelligent bodies are bodies that stand still, their subjectivity demonstrated by the very fact that they seem to control their gestures. Bodies that command their own movements are knowing bodies. Add to this modes of communication that are not oriented around speech and you have full-fledged exclusion. The consequences are complex: neurodiversity too often continues to be excluded from mainstream education not because the neurodiverse are not fully capable of participating, but because accommodations will not be made for their modes of functioning. This is not only due to the lack of imagination within education. This is also due to a widespread neurotypical account of knowledge that gives no value to other ways of coming to knowledge and feels no urgency to learn how else learning can happen" (Manning 52).

"To know cannot be limited to neurotypical definitions of knowledge. "We, autistics, have tried hard and accepted the neurotypical way of doing things to make it easier for non-autistic people to understand us, interact with us," Sequenzia continues. Neurotypicality cannot be the barometer of experience, nor can, by extension, the category of the human upheld by neurotypicality"(Manning 53).

"neurodiversity speaks to a difference that cannot be assimilated, a diversity *in diversity*" (Manning 53).

"It follows, then, that any critique of neurotypicality—which will always be a critique of identity politics as I understand it—must be extended such that it can also become a critique of racism and colonization and any other exclusion perpetuated by the category of the human.

To do this work, modes of knowing differently must be valued. These modes can include language, but to situate them only within language would be once again to put the human at the center. So many other forms of knowing are active in the conjugation between atmosphere and subtraction. These modes include movement, texture, touch, and they include much more that is too mere for us to perceive, let alone categorize. These too are worth study, and this is the work decolonization must take up" (Manning 53).

"Finally, following Moten, we must not "leav[e] politics to its own uncriticized devices." We must be careful not to situate politics in the realm of those very categories that exclude us, the "we" we are becoming. A politics of immediation orients around a concept of the political that itself must be invented anew with each occasion of experience. With this call for invention comes the call to be vigilant about the category of the human, to think differently about where "we" begin and end, and to create movements of thought, modes of knowing, that depart from a place that is infested with the legacy of colonialism and the barren imagination it leaves behind. Turning instead to the aesthetic yield of experience in the making—to an aesthetics of the earth—what if we began with the haecceities that blur our contours, seeing these new ecologies not as less-than the subjects we are accustomed to being but as infinitely more-than?" (Manning 53).

"to create movements of thought, modes of knowing" (Manning 53).

*Figure 11*

"Experimenting immediation is **shape-shifting**: tigresque. Free-radical intercession produces an enthusiasm of the body. **We are not the center of experience**; tigritude is; **vitality affects are**. **It is here that we must begin, shifting from our belief that we are the center, composing instead with other scales and tempos, with the minor gestures of geological time, affective time, event-time**" (Manning 143-144).

"**To know time differently is to feel how the more-than of existence composes us, composes with us**. The political is never within reach. To have reached it is to have organized it into myth. To be politically engaged, **to open up fields of emergent collectivity, is not to have willed them into existence, but to have been moved by them, to have been composed by them**. Our task: to become schizoanalytic experimenters at the edges of experience where the intercession of the free radical unbinds **linear narration**, freeing the bonds of time prescribed. Our task: **to become sensitive to a composing-with that will never tell the true story of how emergent collectivity briefly came to expression**. Our task: to move at the rhythm of free radicals who affirm the schizz of immediation. Our task: to destroy, with all the force of the free radical, that which too easily conforms to our image, to our need to recognize ourselves in the work we do" (Manning 144).

"I turn to the university because there is a troubling asymmetry at the heart of teaching and learning practices, on the one hand creating a path for new ways of thinking and making while on the other **imposing forms of knowledge that do violence to the bodies they purport to address** (Manning 214).

"**Autistic voicing** makes felt how autistics are not only intensely attuned to what goes on around them but also **aware of how this aroundness includes them without making them the center of experience**. More than most, theirs is **an ecological perspective** that, while it includes the human, doesn't see the world as simply made up of human intentionalities. This lack of self-centering is heard in writing that moves with the force of the world, composing the entry into experience through language's own synesthetic rhythms" (Manning 276).

Self-Organizing Propositions, "formalize and schizz at the same time" (Manning 303).

"If practices of the event seek to engage with the more-than of experience in the making, this by necessity includes collaboration with nonhuman forces. Nonhuman forces allow us to better understand the modes of perception of a **neurodiverse sensibility** that refuses **frontality** as the matrix of attention, participating instead in experience from its **more-than human edges**. **Composing with nonhuman forces facilitates the recognition that humans, too, are suffused with the nonhuman, those more-than human qualities that forge openings toward an aesthetics of the earth. The world pushes into us, makes us**" (Manning 303).

Figure 12

### "Cut"

The schizz cuts. A cut reactivates a field of experience, tuning it to new frequencies. The question is, what is the difference between a limit-cut and a threshold-cut? The difference has to do with the more-than of exchange outlined above. A limit-cut attunes to the conditions of the process by feeling-out the process's own limit. This attunement is a folding-through that is social in the sense that it is collectively attentive to the penultimate, to that which precedes the tipping into a new assemblage. A threshold-cut tips the process into a new assemblage by going straight for the ultimate. Everything is rejigged in the threshold-cut. While the more-than also accompanies the threshold-cut, the intensity of the collective feeling-out is less palpable since the process is reforming and, in so doing, creating new modalities of existence" (Manning 297).

"The threat to neurotypicality is that all of this might count as knowledge. The threat is that the world might actually be this way, be this perceptually rich, this perceptually disordered, and that neurotypicality might keep us from seeing it" (Manning 285).

"Less capture than bend, the aim is to reorient a set of conditions so that a spark can catch on the edges of an existing process, seeding a new one" (Manning 300).

### the involuntary / non-voluntary / free will

"What if we started elsewhere and suggested instead that it is because of the share of nonvoluntary experience lived at the edge of consciousness that the neurodiverse so easily move between worlds, parsed and unparsed, between the calm of the stim in the storm of the world. What if we could listen to the exuberance of that body and hear the excitement of a voice that can finally say, gestures included, what it really feels? What if we marked a difference between the imposition of the category of the involuntary and the mode of the nonvoluntary, beginning not with a deficit model but instead exploring how the nonvoluntary as mode of existence collaborates with the forces that voice through us? What if we took seriously that our neurotypical belief that movement should be stilled (pay attention!) undermines the very force of what movement is? What if we emphasized that placing meaning in the agential category of the intentional, making speech and individual will inextricable, is misaligned to the complexities of expression, which always move in registers incapable of being completely contained by the will of a preconstituted subject? What if we followed Friedrich Nietzsche and suggested that will is not something we have but something that moves us into a worlding, activating the force of a composition we only briefly call "I"?" (Manning 280-281).

"Whiteness cannot bear complexity. Reduced to the most bland of accounts of perception, it relies on the conscious as the matrix of an impoverished presiding of the one (and only). No encounter happens here, its social scape reduced, always, to the 1 + 1, in the self-distancing of difference with separability. For whiteness confuses complexity for what Bergson calls a "homogeneous medium," reducing time to a line" (Manning 240).

"Motored by sympathy (the force of feeling)" (Manning 94).

Figure 13

## Massumi

“the game does not model itself on combat so much as combat modulates itself in play, flush with the gestures composing its enactive cartography” (Massumi 23).

“It is not play that is modeled on the form of combat—it is the form of combat that is modulated by play” (Massumi 12).

“that the game does not model itself on combat so much as combat modulates itself in play, flush with the gestures composing its enactive cartography. These cartographic gestures have the potential to reconfigure the arena of activity of combat” (Massumi 23-24).

“A philosophy of nature must take into account this primacy of self-varying expressivity, as well as its processual autonomy as a self-driving tendency” (Massumi 21).

“Ruyer makes much of the fact that an instinct can trigger itself, even in the absence of any stimulus. He characterizes this ability as “hallucinatory,” in the sense that it is “improvised directly” on the percept (1958, 146–147). This capacity of spontaneous improvisation, he adds, must be considered a necessary dimension of all instinct. Another word for this native hallucinogenic power is the one Hume uses: imagination. Whatever the name, what we’re dealing with is not a slot machine but a first degree of mentality in the continuum of nature” (Massumi 17).

“the natural upwelling of the qualitative and subjective as a factor in nature: to improvisational blocks of sensation indicative of a mental power to spontaneously surpass the given” (Massumi 17).

“The supernormal tendency is an attractive force that pulls experience forward, toward its own limit—that of the spontaneous passion for the mutual inclusion of the diverse, under integral transformation” (Massumi 17).

Figure 14

## Evaluating this Thesis

This thesis finds its entry, as in movement and appetite, from Manning's last proposition in her book *For a Pragmatics of the Useless*: "Don't Evaluate! Experiment!" (2020, 315). This thesis is not constructed to be evaluated. A neurodiverse thesis, which this is, cannot be registered within neurotypical practices such as *evaluating*—a practice that by its very nature cannot account for anything outside of its own measure. This thesis is a shapeshifting, sparking, growing, pulling apart and towards of appetite—it is an event. This thesis urges an engagement of experimentation, rather than the neurotypical convention of "evaluation [which] sticks to what is already known" (Manning 2020c, 315). To move towards "new" knowledge (which is in itself a problematic neurotypical maneuver (elaborated on later)) is to be immersed in the unknown; yet the academic system is set up to only value what is recognizable. This thesis beckons the polyphony of the infinite, singular, multiplicities of modes and percepts—a welling up of thinking-doing in motion, that explodes in a germinating gesture of sporality, an asexual form of thinking-doing reproduction that lures itself, and generates from its internal force.

Robin Nelson proposes that methodologies which differ from the traditional scientific method be valued and held to at least equal importance in academic culture (2013, 51). Nelson paraphrases Pierre Bourdieu, who suggests that "... there is a questionable self-interest sustaining the privilege of the scientific at the expense of other approaches" (2013, 51). Bourdieu states that social privilege predisposes scientists and traditional academics to proclaim the superiority of their knowledge (2013, 51).

There is still a long way to go in order to advance neuro-inclusivity in graduate research. PaR and research-creation continue to be seen as less rigorous than scientific methodological

approaches. For example, in December 2010, the updated regulations in Canada for ethical research protocols excluded creative practice, inherently devaluing research-creation and PaR as legitimate academic research methods (Chapman and Sawchuk 2012, 17). Although research-creation is not a new academic practice, it has only begun to become officially recognized in academia in the past ten years as a credible methodology (Chapman and Sawchuk 2012, 6). Chapman and Sawchuk propose that alternative modalities of presenting research, such as research-creation, are necessary in disseminating ideas, concepts, and results of explorations to a broader audience (2012, 7). This is because research-creation “... challenges the logico-deductive or analytic forms of argumentation or presentation,” often abandoning scholarly protocols, such as logic and rationality, to prioritize innovation and experimentation (Chapman and Sawchuk 2012, 6).

## DIRECT (NEURODIVERSE) PERCEPTION

## Towards a Neurodiverse Neurodiversity—Moving Away from Definition

Though neurodiversity is not a new paradigm, it is only recently becoming more widely recognized in academia. In fact, the self proclaimed “first work of its kind” was published summer 2020, and is titled *Neurodiversity Studies: A New Critical Paradigm*—“building on work in feminist studies, queer studies, and critical race theory,” the neurodiversity paradigm challenges systemic assumptions about human nature (Rosqvist et al. 2020, i). This thesis both makes its contributions to and situates itself at the intersection of neurodiversity studies and performance studies.

The unfortunate irony is that even within a budding academic field, there are many published works on neurodiversity that are written from a neurotypical lens, including *Neurodiversity Studies: A New Critical Paradigm*—but more on that in a moment. I would offer that neurodiversity models that rely on operations of othering and dichotomizing neurotypicals and neurodivergents as categories of people don’t align with the very serious and critical conceptual shifts that underpin the neurodiversity paradigm and movement. Furthermore, I would caution that any author who claims their definitions, terms, or language surrounding neurodiversity as the only correct version (ie. grammar) is preoccupied with, and regurgitating, the prefigured. This preoccupation with the prefigured stems from academic conventions and practices that are rooted in neurotypicality. Both of the aforementioned, are preoccupations with constructs, with categorization and tradition, operations that posit fixed and objective experience.

It is worth touching on a few examples of how some accounts or models of neurodiversity are neurotypicality naming themselves neurodiversity.

It is an interesting experience to read works on neurodiversity, because you can feel right away if the work is written neurodiversely or neurotypically. Either way, they hit hard. Neurodiverse works on neurodiversity are deeply moving—moving right off the page into fielding. They activate, germinating ferociously. Neurotypical works on neurodiversity are evident immediately in that they return neurodiversity to the “subject”—perpetuating the very operation they are supposedly addressing. There seems to be a deeply problematic unawareness that is playing out.

### Neuro-culture and neurotypes are neurotypically

Even *Neurodiversity Studies: A New Critical Paradigm*, which is supposed to be a seminal work, is written neurotypically—it is brutally apparent from the table of contents, with a section titled “Cross-neurotype Communication.” Within this section, Alyssa Hillary writes in her piece “Neurodiversity and cross-cultural communication” about how they “believe connections and overlaps between communication between people of different neurotypes and people of different cultural backgrounds will hold up, even if the current clustering (set of named neurotypes and related identities) or clustering itself does not.” (Hillary 2020, 92). Although the author superficially acknowledges that clustering is not ideal, they do not seem to recognize that clustering and typifying are neurotypical procedures. And even more shocking, is that they are the protocols from the very model that sparked the neurodiversity movement in the first place.

Returning right back to the medical model’s clustering of traits to typify and categorize hollow figures they call “humans.”<sup>23</sup>

It is deeply concerning that there is such profound unawareness that neurotypicality has built in, that inhabits us all. Even within this thesis, I am aware that there will be many ways in which neurotypicality hides itself in plain sight. But it helps to remember to stay with movement, and this is how we can out-dance nuerotypicality, because it cannot enter the dance of relation.

Neurotypicality is rampant among neurodiverse populations—including those who have been diagnosed with autism, learning disabilities, personality disorders, etc. As I write this, abortion is no longer protected by the federal government in the USA—and it feels like such a synchronous moment to aid in articulating what is at stake. Just like those who are assigned female at birth can work against their own interests by internalizing, embodying, and perpetuating the white male perspective, so too can those who have suffered the worst of the discrimination and harm of neurotypicality. And it is no surprise that some of the worst perpetrators of neurotypicality are those who would be categorized and labeled as very “neurodivergent” by neurotypical measures, for these are the folks who have had the most practice internalizing these messages of innate deficit. The louder the differences present, the louder and more frequently the messages are relentlessly repeated. It is the mere frequency and repetition of these messages and forced behavioral practices that break the spirit and teach self-hatred.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> “Human is a shorthand for the most impoverished forms of living, and the most violent” (Manning 2020c, 40).

<sup>24</sup> As in, first that there is self and then that there is a value judgment on that self.

... through the violent practices of ABA [applied behavioral analysis], then through the ubiquitous behavioral codes that are systemic in our education systems, to backgrid perception so as to sense less fully, so as to craft a less porous body. But this will not actually make her sense less. It will simply make more violently apparent that a sensing body in movement is a deficient body.” (Manning 2020c, 251)

Before leaving childhood, even the most spirited have been worn down and convinced that in fact, it is true that they are a closed container, a self—a self that: is too much, has no boundaries, takes up too much space, talks too much, doesn't talk enough, etc. By adulthood, they have been operating from neurotypicality for so long, that they can no longer see that perhaps they are not innately lacking, perhaps it is neurotypicality that is lacking.

What is being highlighted here is that models that presume constructs such as identity, a self subtracted from the field of relation, are themselves mired in neurotypicality. Another way of saying this is that they presume perception as “given”: perception is limited to the neurotypical world view. What this thesis and many other neurodiverse thinker-makers offer instead, is to move with-from emergence. To feel without prefigured, contained, bodies; to feel with a sensing bodying-worlding that is moved by space rather than located in space. Space, not as a void container, but full to the brim with emptiness, with potentiality. Space, as both the conditions and the force that drives matter beyond any fixed form (located), that is alive with dying (perishing), evermore.

Rather than concentrate on what their identities were, I could look to where the theatre was empty, where there was no ‘identity’, no bodies, where nothing was certain. We so often crave for representation, to confirm ideal queer bodies on stage, that we lose sight

and sound of how, in Judith Butler's terminology, these genders can be troubled. Perhaps it's in these spaces of uncertain absence that we can imagine new possibilities that always question, always disrupt, always queer music itself...

When I stop looking directly at one performer or the other, in drag or no, and stop casting them in an identity, a very queer body emerges between us that affirms and troubles both of our existences...

... encourage us not to look for an affirmation of identity, to see queer and disabled bodies in the centre of the stage, but where we're spaced apart, where we're tucked away in a corner, where we can compose, perform, and listen in ways that'll re-orient, even queer our bodies. (j.n.m. redelinghuys 2022, n.p.)

Once a self is cemented in perception, neurotypicality can now manipulate this self to best serve neurotypicality—for now there are firmly established, categorizable bodies in space that can be organized and commodified. To abstract and reduce matter (movement) to a subject, and object, is to set up the conditions for neurotypicality to firmly establish its own loop of reasoning. And let us be clear, neurotypicality is not an opinion, it is a system of discrimination—a systemic operation of oppression synonymous with whiteness. Neurotypicality is the white male perspective that acts as though it is the objective ruler with which all must be measured. That is to say, it is able to dominate and hold its power precisely because it measures itself by its own logic. This is how it upholds its rules, values and laws and perpetuates the very systems that normalize its own logic—a closed loop that reinforces itself by impeding diversity. But rhizomatic rhythms of reflexivity cannot be measured with rigid, regular intervals, or distanced by fixed located points with straight lines. The field of relation cannot be measured with a ruler.

## Queering sensation and perception

“Queer is not an identity for Yergeau; it is a mobility of expression” (Manning 2020c, 288).

Composing with Yergeau’s “neuroqueer,” a queering of sensation and perception is called for.

At root, these shitty narratives are rhetorical projects: they apprehend neuroqueerness as interlocking series of socially complex impairments, impairments that impact the domains of relatedness, intent, feeling, sexuality, gender identity, and sensation—indeed, all of that which might be used to call oneself properly a person. (Yergeau 2018, 3-4)

If to be a person is to have a closed-contained body that performs neurotypicality without failure, perhaps we can agree that none of us are persons. What if instead, to person is to continuously be sculpted and be sculpting in aggregate? What does this mean for perception and sensation? This means that sensation, as commonly understood as separate senses located on a pre-mapped neurotypical body, will not appear, precisely because appearances are of no relevance in direct perception. What is felt in direct perception is the field of relation in expression—this is neurodiverse sensation—billowing directionalities, whirling qualities, forces surging, potentialities churning (sometimes into becoming). “I believe in the potentialities of autistic... gestures, of neuro-queering what we’ve come to understand as language and being” (Yergeau 2018, 5).

j.n.m. redelinghuys approaches relationality as bodying-worlding, by queering the self and the other. This is done by attuning to the space in between, the exchange of difference—“they’re different, and there’s an exchange at play, from one to the other and back again, that disrupts the certainty of both” (2022, n.p.). And through this exchange, “this sensory third body as musical

sex differences”... “surges forth” (2022, n.p.).<sup>25</sup> j.n.m. redelinghuys speaks to destabilizing the neurotypical body and deconstructing normative perception—emphasizing that “these ideas aren’t an abstract philosophy” but rather felt in “common experiences...” (2022, n.p.)—a queering of thought that enters the field, a philosophizing active in direct perception, thought teeming with sensation. Neurotypical thought operations such as languaging-thought, strip thought of sensation. Languaging-thought, as in the production of thought deriving from linguistics/signification, is really a playing out of performative patterns of representationalism—regurgitation really, more so than thinking.

Direct perception is queered perception in that it disrupts what is understood as perception and sensation. Queering is not an intentional dismantling of neurotypical norms, and this is, in fact, what makes it so threatening to neurotypicality: that there is no volition involved, for there is no self-contained self to claim volition—there is no registering of neurotypical constructs, precisely because of this so called “lack” of volition. But to lack volition and a self, is to be danced by lures, directionalities, and swirling qualities—to be danced in direct perception is to be immune to neurotypical perception. Often, this is mistakenly understood as a sort of jovial obliviousness to reality, but I would tender that it is perhaps the most fiercely robust mode, untouched by neurotypicality, that is direct perception—for to perceive constructs such as culture, identity, bodies, and even the senses, would require the holding still of all that moves. Queer sensation-perception feels feeling feeling, the feltness of its own emergence, overspilling formation, going beyond its becoming.

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<sup>25</sup> j.n.m. redelinghuys is referencing French-Algerian feminist author Hélène Cixous’s Third Body: “... ‘a Third Body (Troisième Corps)... between our two bodies our third body surges forth’” (2022, n.p.).

In direct perception, neurotypicality has no hold on perception, however indirectly it does add to the co-composing of ecologies. It does so only insofar as it affects the orientation of bodyings, casting shadows that shimmer the ecology in emergence.

The shadow queers the surface of existence. The shadow spooks the norm, turning neurotypical experience on itself. The shadow follows and haunts, but it also leads and orients, inventing more-than human worlds. For that's the strange thing about shadows— theirs are as much the movements of the human as they are the movements of the earth and its suns and moons. (Manning 2020c, 287).

All it takes for perception to queer is a drifting skyward, a peripheral glitch, or perhaps shadows casting durations that slenderly slice, or curtly cut within the chiaroscuro of composing worldings.

### Against Storytelling (Culture)

Lastly, before moving on from this section: *neuro-culture and neurotypes are neurotypicality*, it is important to speak to the neuro-culture aspect. Culture is the indoctrination of norms that underpin the ways in which neurotypicality asserts itself. For one, culture informs perception— how thought moves. For example, from the outset, storytelling is a key component in how neurotypicality mobilizes—storytelling is the unspoken framework that affirms the contained individual at the center of experience. This perceptual conditioning is so pervasive and normalized that most “humans” are unaware that they are thinking of themselves, and the world, through the lens of storytelling. There are predetermined storylines and characters that must be played out in society. You can think of it this way: culture is the set of rules one must play within, which includes what storylines and what characters (identities) are available to you

(which of course depends on race, sex, status, etc.). This storyline thinking is detrimental to the development of one's perception, cementing neurotypical perception as the only perception. Furthermore, implicit in thinking patterns entrenched in archetypes or storylines is the idea that one must find their story and character or they do not exist—for if one does not find one's place they are taught that they are useless to society—which of course is also taught as the worst thing to be. It is extremely important to be useful to society (capitalism), to be a cog that fits well in the machine that commodifies all living things. And surely, there is a category and label for all those who will not fit, for all those who cannot conform: the outcast. For most, this sense of uneasiness that they don't fit, this deep knowledge that perhaps they are not a character in a story, is enough to evoke a desperate urgency that drives them to spend their entire lives chasing conformity. It is a perfect formula for mass self-policing—for built right into this perception is innate lack, for everyone is inherently undetectable within these predetermined narratives.

Culture informs all systems that control bodies. For example, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), which is used to make formal diagnoses, is formulated on the bases of culture.

Mental disorders are defined in relation to cultural, social, and familial norms and values.

Culture provides interpretive frameworks that shape the experience and expression of the symptoms, signs, and behaviors that are criteria for diagnosis.

... The judgment that a given behavior is abnormal and requires clinical attention depends on cultural norms... (American Psychiatric Association 2013, 14)

... Deficits in developing, maintaining, and understanding relationships should be judged against norms for age, gender, and culture. (American Psychiatric Association 2013, 54)

Society/culture is neurotypicality. And neurotypicality is perceptual and physical captivity—for all systems that we are obliged to participate in are informed and built with the status quo of neurotypicality. These are norms that have not been collectively agreed upon, but rather are obligated if to avoid being villainized (always reinforcing the storyline) and mistreated/abused. For all must play a character, and to fall outside the norms of culture means that the systems that are in place to uphold these norms (neurotypicality) will exert punitive force to manage these “deviant” bodying-worldings. Of course, this happens often, like how in family systems when parents punish their children for falling apart and breaking down when their bodying cannot adhere to the demands imposed on them. This example neurotypically would be considered to be on a “personal” level. So how about an example of such a system on a governmental level (supposedly, not personal)? The DSM, again, is an obvious example of how culture dictates what is considered normal, healthy, and acceptable. This socio-cultural construct is profoundly abusive, for it has its justification to control boding-worldings that deviate from this non-existent norm built in. DSM-5 diagnoses are based on whether behaviors fit into the norms of the culture—but regardless of the type/strain of systemic control via constructs (identity, culture, clustering, etc.), they all function in one way, in that they presuppose behavior. But to reduce experience to behaviors is to leave out the field of relation.

This is not to say that sociality is inherently neurotypical; quite the contrary, neurodiverse sociality thrives regardless of neurotypicality. For even neurotypicality cannot abolish movement (life): there will always be cascading cracks in the cement and it is in these seemingly unlikely places (and perhaps because there is such hardening to push up against) where the drive to life seems to move with vehemence. However, the same cannot be said in reverse (luckily):

“neurodiverse sociality doesn’t even register on the plane of neurotypicality” (Manning 2020c, 6).

Neurodiverse sociality emerges in the event, and therefore cannot be thought of through the human paradigm. It is not as simple as saying: autistics prefer to socialize with animals and trees. Neurodiverse sociality is the event’s sociality, its concern for its intermingling.

Taking into consideration that even within this newly recognized (by academia) neurodiversity studies landscape, the account of neurodiversity composing itself in this thesis may be labeled by some as “radical,” because it refuses that there is a norm and to dichotomize individuals as either neurotypical or neurodivergent, I would offer that this thesis is composing neurodiversely rather than discussing the neurotypical “subject” called Neurodiversity.

Considering the current landscape of neurodiversity studies within academia, it is possible that this thesis’s account of neurodiversity could be labeled as “radical” or simply not discussing neurodiversity at all. However I will reiterate that what is offered here is a neurodiverse account of neurodiversity, rather than a discourse within the “subject” of neurodiversity—for, to use linguistics/prefigured language, to speak or write “about” neurodiversity is to remove thought from the field; simply put, it is, to use neurotypicality to perceive of a neurotypical neurodiversity. To have a standardized set of terms and definitions is in itself a neurotypical motion, in that it is claiming that there is a homogenized perception, which of course does not account for the diversity and dynamism of words word-world-ing. Furthermore, what this thesis

is suggesting is that narratives of neurodiversity that continue to uphold the norm as a given in regards to neurology, by categorizing and dichotomizing individuals as neurotypical vs. neurodivergent, are themselves functioning from normopathy.<sup>26</sup> There is a crude denseness that enables such hypocrisy, to use the lens of neurotypicality to think neurodiversity.

A word on neurodiversity and how it relates to the design of the propositions/creative works. Given that neurodiversity has a wide range of definitions it would be difficult to provide a concise summary. Instead, I will concentrate on moving with my ever-changing definitioning<sup>27</sup> of neurodiversity. When using the term neurotypical, what I mean is the state of neurotypicality: social conditioning that reshapes direct experience and perception (ie. socio-linguistics, categorical and hierarchical thinking, chunking, etc). When I use neurodiverse, I mean a state tending toward direct perception—a perception that is infinitely diverse and multiplicitous. To be clear, I am not positioning individuals as neurotypical versus neurodivergent, nor as fixed neurological structures. Then why use terms and language that intrinsically articulate that there is a neurological norm? Aren't these terms problematic in that they work against what they are trying to offer? Are they not practicing the very thinking they are claiming to oppose? Why not invent new language? Well, it felt like a microcosm of the thesis, an opportunity to practice the schizzing of concepts, words, structures, definitions, language, etc.—to lay bare that thinking moves—moves through prefigured connotations of “neurodiversity.” This is not to say that the baggage does not exist and have an influence on perception.

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<sup>26</sup> As in: “what Guattari would call ‘normopathy’ continues to rule, not only defining value in terms of normative criteria of functioning, but also reducing the importance of relation...” (Manning 2016, 6).

<sup>27</sup> A practice of shapeshifting with words as they compose constellations of thinking.

Neurodiversity and neurotypicality are not opposing states. And in fact, what this work is more interested in is how “to find ways to collectively inhabit the dynamic in-between of their processual interlacing, in order to compose with their difference, recognizing the necessity for survival of the anchoring in lived importance, all the while pulling the gestural strings activating the processual primacy of lived abstraction in the genesis of forms of life” (Massumi 2014, 39). Neurodiversity and neurotypicality course through all of us to different degrees at different times. How can we compose with the middling of “two poles of life’s collective bodying” (Massumi 2014, 39)?

With that said, I would like to acknowledge the multifunctionality of the neurodiverse propositions offered here—they are always doing more than we know—simultaneously breaking loops of conditioning rooted in neurotypicality while also working as a guiding movement or directionality tending towards direct perception. By direct perception, I mean perception that is not influenced and shaped by neurotypicality—perception that is activated through its own force of emergence. These are propositions that work, indirectly,<sup>28</sup> at shifting the tectonic plates of neurotypicality. These propositions are designed to generate what Manning calls “minor gestures”:

The gestural force that opens experience to its potential variation. (2016, 2)

... The minor gesture emerges from within the field itself: it is a gesture that leads the field of experience to make felt the fissures and openings otherwise too imperceptible or backgrounded to ascertain. A minor gesture is a gesture that tweaks the experiential to make its qualitative operations felt, a gesture that opens experience to its limit. (2016, 65)

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<sup>28</sup> Indirect, in the sense that we cannot directly (consciously) access or explore the imperceivable or peripheral.

... A minor gesture cannot be known as such. It is what the minor does within the field of experience that makes its gesture felt. (2016, 65)

As I write this, I think of neurodiversity as a concept similar to Deleuze and Guattari's "body without organs" (1983, 1987) or Manning's "leaky body" (2013) in that it accounts for the dynamic plurality and complexity of sensation and perception. Body without organs is a concept that comes from neurodiversity through Antonin Artaud. In their discussion of it, Deleuze and Guattari foreground the role of *organization*<sup>29</sup> in the account of the body and refuse to allow this organization to become the conduit to what it means "to body" (Manning 2016, 245).

Neurodiversity's extended, shifting body escapes the limits of the cognitive field's grasp—recognizing the imperceptible as a force shaping sensation and perception. The imperceptible is the overflow of experience and the weather that sculpts experience. It is embodiment in its full capacity. Without limits, complexities can be held in this dynamic body. Manning writes extensively about this overflow, this excess, as "the virtual excess or more-than" (2016, 53), also addressing the potential in the escape<sup>30</sup> (2016, 38). Massumi also explores the force of the imperceptible and the periphery of perception in his book *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. The imperceptible and/or the periphery of perception as a force is perhaps even more influential in the shaping of direct perception and sensation than we can or will ever know.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> "The body suffers from being organized... Antonin Artaud discovered this one day, finding himself with no shape or form whatsoever, right there where he was at that moment" (Deleuze and Guattari 1983, 8).

<sup>30</sup> "Techniques that tune the anarchical toward new modes of knowledge and new modes of experience. It is also committed to what escapes the order, and interested in what this excess can do. It implicitly recognizes that knowledge is invented in the escape, in the excess" (Manning 2016, 38).

<sup>31</sup> "Virtual tendencies that have the potential to act on future reconfigurations without ever coming to the fore as actual occasions" (Manning 2013, 106).

Considering this force (that it is simultaneously of and beyond<sup>32</sup> these extended, shapeshifting bodies, which I tend to call *non-bodies*), I would like to offer multifunctional techniques that can function as rhizomatic entries to direct perception. Rhizomatic in Deleuze and Guattari's sense of the word relating to entries that are not "points or positions" but rather lines that are "connected to anything other, and must be"; without "unity to serve as a pivot in the object, or to divide in the subject" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 7-8). Techniques that are transferable across events/event-times,<sup>33</sup> that open the event<sup>34</sup> of experience to minor gestures.<sup>35</sup> Techniques that move with tendencies, a "tendency is a gesture felt in the event both as absolutely singular and infinitely multiplicitous. The one and the many, the minor gesture has a quality of a resonant multiplicity singularly itself" (Manning 2016, 65). Techniques that "[open] the multiple to multiplicity and thus making felt the uncountability of the excess" (Manning 2016, 72).

## Quality, Transdisciplinarity, and the Collaboration of Non-bodies

Techniques "are generic... yet utterly singular" (Massumi in Manning 2013, xvi). They do not stand on their own removed from the event nor from other techniques. In consideration of the multiplicity of techniques in each piece/proposition (iteration), I don't think it would make sense to try and talk about quality, transdisciplinarity, and the collaboration of non-bodies separately,

<sup>32</sup> "Surpasses it while accompanying it" (Manning 2013, 17).

<sup>33</sup> "Event-time, the nonlinear lived duration of experience in the making" (Manning 2016, 15).

<sup>34</sup> In process philosophy, the *event* is how experience expresses itself—"the event here is defined according to a Whiteheadian concept of the actual occasion. Actual occasions are the coming-into-being of indeterminacy where potentiality passes into realization (Whitehead 1978, 29)"—it is also important to note that the event is by its very nature more than the sum of its parts (Manning 2016, 2)—"acknowledging the event's own potential for activating the differential between the actual and the more-than" (Manning 2016, 34).

<sup>35</sup> "Each minor gesture is singularly connected to the event at hand, immanent to the in-act. This makes it pragmatic. But the minor gesture also exceeds the bounds of the event" (Manning 2016, 2).

nor by excluding other techniques that emerge in order to avoid tangents. Instead, I will weave in and out, letting each technique (including the tangential) take what space it needs since each technique is “intimately entwined” with the event it co-composes (Massumi in Manning 2013, xv). My valuing of what is neurotypically deemed as tangential, moving in direct contrast to socio-linguistic conventions, is what ultimately enriches and supports the outlined techniques—moving with the messiness of thinking in the making. The aim is to go even beyond the techniques’ relation to each other (because that prescribes form to a certain extent) and move in composition with them.

## Learning and Reading Disabilities

Often what are neurotypically labeled as disabilities are in truth abilities that unravel the threads neurotypicality has knotted in an attempt to keep tightly bound its perceptual monopoly. Neurodiversity is the way of direct perception. A deeply felt sensitivity and attunement to the eventing of words as virtual-actual matter. This is why words and the ways in which they come into relation and formation are not carried over as replicas to other events. Each wording-event is distinct and perishing. This is not to say that there aren’t qualitative tendencies carried across events.

In crude simplicity, neurotypicality views this exceptional capacity to attune and engage with words yet to be extracted from the welter as inability. And yet it is a capacity to move with *all* that words are and can be, rather than hollow symbols, representations, stand-ins for life-living. A co-composing with actual-virtual matter-entities teeming to world.

Those who tend towards direct perception are often accused of not being able to see the “big picture” and are perceived to be lost in the details. This comes across as an inability to see whole words, sentences, or prefigured meanings when “learning” to read. But those who have been accused of such claims know how ironic they are. For this so-called “big picture” is in fact an impoverished, prefigured subtraction of all that is eventing. Neurodiverse reading is feeling. It is exploring in co-composition. It is not a learned procedure of subtraction or clumping, meant to flatten all that wants to transverse across, all those details dancing relationality.

Words are dancing on the page and in the mind, transsensory shapings engage the virtual-actual (potentiality-perception). When experienced with their full perceptual richness, words are not symbols, they are unrepeatable events—singular ways difference expresses itself. Therefore, to memorize and regurgitate how words are supposed to be used (grammar, spelling, definitions, etc.) is inconceivable; for neurodiverse experience is in immediation, which is why it will not produce or recall objects cut from the relational field. It is not that those who tend towards direct perception lack the ability to remember how to spell or define words, but rather it is the keen awareness and felt potentiality, multiplicity, and richness that will not be ignored!

Words invent themselves, carrying nonsensuous qualities that compose constellations, more so than meanings. Neurodiverse words do not denote meaning. Meaning is an operation of abstraction from the field of relation.

**WORDS ARE ALIVE** and should be treated as such! For many who tend towards the distinct multiplicity of direct perception, words are relational events whose singularity crests-perishes in

immediation. This thesis recognizes this and moves with it. One way in which writing can reside in its own life force is by not being held to consistency. Not being consistent with the spelling of words, punctuation etc. are indications that the fertility of the soil is being attended to, turned over for emergence and potentialities to activate. Though words are temporary figure-formings of operations of conceptualizing, words and concepts are not merely the crystallizations of thinking, they can be the activators of thought in the act. They can co-compose singularly with event-time and more than human elements of occasions in event-time.

Neurodiverse reading is a becoming, transensory, transmodal, nonsensuous, activity; an event—it is the field of relation felt.

### Sexuality of the Event

The *sexuality of the event* is a consequence, really, of the sensuality of the event. Sensuality as in, the event's self-enjoyment of feeling itself in attunement. The event has an appetite to attune affectively, with sensing bodying-worldings becoming in the field of relation. "The process of self-creation is the transformation of the potential into the actual, and the fact of such transformation includes the immediacy of self-enjoyment" (Whitehead 1968, 151). Sensuality: the playful push and pull force-quality, that expressivity ecstatically compounding—the ebb and flow of sensory qualities composing—the perpetual energetic peaking... until...

Satisfaction, yes, but satisfaction as transition, not as conclusion, a tipping into and pull of other lures. It takes just the right conditions for the sensuality of the event to materialize into sexuality—conditions that are alive with context, unbodied sensing, and ever-building dynamics. The event enjoys desiring, as it is an endlessly moving affair, intensifying, augmenting, escalating to the completion of its own satisfaction, and then transitioning anew.

... ‘actuality’ is in its essence ‘composition’. Power is the compulsion of composition...

The essence of power is the drive towards aesthetic worth for its own sake. All power is a derivative from this fact of composition attaining worth for itself... Power and Importance are aspects of this fact. It constitutes the drive of the universe... maintaining in the creature its appetition for creation. (Whitehead 1968, 119)

The sexuality of the event is, in Whiteheadian vocabulary, an actual occasion. It is composition, the particular conditions that mattered in the mattering of worlds composing.

An actual occasion is a grasp of mattering that multiplies the universe’s perspective. Directed by a prehension—a hold on an angle of experience—an occasion comes into itself—produces its completion or “satisfaction”—by consolidating around a certain precise node of existence. (Manning 2020c, 186)

The sexuality of the event is not the desire to reproduce per se, but rather the consequence of the sensuality of the event desiring for its own sake, to continue its self-enjoyment to its satisfaction, leading to particular prehensions, to contouring singular speciations of experience in an emergent ecology that is the extensive continuum.

It is the event’s continuous concern for its own attunement and satisfaction that composes worldings-bodyings—or as Manning would say, “concern shapes the field” (2020a). This urge that pulses throughout the extensive continuum is creativity. Whitehead has “termed each individual act of immediate self-enjoyment an ‘occasion of experience’”. He “hold[s] that these unities of existence, these occasions of experience, are the really real things which in their collective unity compose the evolving universe, ever plunging into the creative advance”

(Whitehead 1968, 151). The universe is perpetually creative; this, really, is the only state that truly exists. Though prehensions are felt and perceived as movement, as a lingering, a catching on the edge, or teetering on an angle of experience, they are never a capture. “Ecology must be understood in this cosmological angle as relation itself” (Manning 2020a, 185). Relationality, but not between preexisting, fixed, and contained matter; relationality as an endlessly shapeshifting of matter in composition—ecologies composing ecologies.

The sexuality of the event has nothing to do with “reproduction”, in the neurotypical sense of the word, for reproduction, as j.n.m. redelinghuys and I have discussed, is a parody of what never existed, it is always an iteration of something that was never actually produced to begin with. The sexuality of the event’s fertility is a matter of composition, of the creative advance composing in perpetuity. Each producing bodying-worlding is a composing ecology—“ecological perspectives reveal a queer commingling, the production and reproduction of life... This challenges the notion of individual discrete human bodies and the privileging of sexual reproduction in public discourse” (Griffiths 2015, 37). A neurodiverse queering of reproduction works from within the field’s ecological relationality, rather than from predetermined abstractions<sup>36</sup> (ie. categories, closed contained entities, etc.), a moving away from “matter in the logic of simple location... of a count already presupposed” (Manning 2020a, 185); instead, matter as movement,<sup>37</sup> a symbiotic view of life that reveals that in fact yes, we have never been individuals<sup>38</sup>, and consequently, a rethinking of what counts as “reproduction”—“Margulis

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<sup>36</sup> “Anything that stands still—an object, a form, a being—is an abstraction (in the most commonsense notion of the term) from experience” (Manning 2016, 47).

<sup>37</sup> “Matter in process philosophy is always expressivity, not simply form. Matter is movement.” (Manning).

<sup>38</sup> David Griffiths’ *Queer Theory for Lichens* builds on the article *A Symbiotic View of Life: We Have Never Been Individuals*, which was published in December 2012 in The Quarterly Review of Biology—which “argues that

argues that symbiosis is actually the primary mechanism of evolutionary novelty and speciation, rather than the gradual accrual of genetic mutation and variation.” (Griffiths 2015, 38). Griffiths touches on many examples and ways this neurotypical presumption of an “individual” is inaccurate, considering it doesn’t account for the diversity and ecology of multiplicitous life in formation—“... the human body is a teeming multispecies ecosystem that is constantly engaged in reproduction, connections and transfer outside of the narrow understanding of sexual reproduction in heteronormative public discourse” (Griffiths 2015, 43). Considering how important and exciting these examples are, I feel it is worth quoting substantial sections of David Griffiths’ *Queer Theory for Lichens*. Therefore, following, are a succession of quotes touching on some of the examples in which the presupposition of the “individual” is exposed as a normative construct, rather than present in the field of relationality.

Queer theory for lichens suggests that we have never been individuals ... This symbiotic view of life can ... denaturalize the primacy of heterosexual biological reproduction in discourses of normative and non-normative bodies, practices and communities. (Griffiths 2015, 44)

First, an example of how organisms are narrated as “individual” when in reality, they are multiorganisms and how this changes what counts as “reproduction”<sup>39</sup>—how neurotypicality

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organisms cannot be defined as individuals ... that no organism is autonomous and independent” (Griffiths 2015, 36).

<sup>39</sup> Luciana Parisi also discusses the “manifold compositions” of desire, sex, and reproduction in *Abstract Sex: Philosophy, Biotechnology and the Mutations of Desire*:

The Darwinian logic of evolution, resting on the centrality of sexual reproduction in order to engender species variations or differences, is substituted with a rhizomatic recombination of information expanding through viral hijacking of codes between singular machines of reproduction: a microbe and an insect, a bud and a flower, a toxin and a human. A far cry from organic unity and identity or from the original line of descent, endosymbiosis or abstract sex starts from heterogeneous assemblages where the parasiting web

suppresses the diversity of life by reducing life to narratives of fixed, located, contained bodies: “Lichens [ ] demonstrate the queer ways, sexual and otherwise, that life reproduces (Griffiths 2015, 43)”:

Lichens generally exist as discrete thalli, and are implicitly treated as individuals in many studies, even though, as Nash points out, they may well be a symbiotic fusion of organisms from three kingdoms of life; Nash argues that this misrepresentation has consequences for the biological sciences (1). I will return to this point and argue that thinking of all organisms, including humans, as non-individual multispecies communities does indeed have consequences for the biological and medical sciences, but also has consequences for thinking about human and non-human sociality and sexuality. (Griffiths 2015, 39)

... Margulis's account demonstrates that lichens are not anomalies but are rather illustrative of the fact that life and nature are found, if anywhere, in the complex and queer cobbling together of multispecies relationships. Crucially for my argument, this decenters heterosexual biological reproduction and vertical inheritance as the only way that life produces and reproduces and challenges a restricted and restricting view of human sexual reproduction. (Griffiths 2015, 38)

What we are all taught to accept as truth and “fact” is often nothing more than a story.

Neurotypical narratives are used to frame so-called “scientific” endeavours—I would offer that

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between hosts and guests produces new bodies—sexes. Far from determining a dualism between micro and macro levels of composition, for example between bacterial and nucleic cells, endosymbiosis exhibits a reversible feedback of information transfer that unfolds a continual variation of the body—sex, nature and matter. (2014, 16)

because of this, this makes them unscientific. The neurotypical lens in which studies are designed, executed, and interpreted are themselves mired in bias and functioning as self-substantiating rather than as genuine exploration. Furthermore, to reduce complexity is to exclude “data” in the interest of corroborating the neurotypical narrative that reigns.

... biologists tend to observe and interpret nature through a frame of social and sexual normativity. Roughgarden suggests that this leads either to misinterpreting or simply missing a large amount of biological diversity. Nature is then used as a comparison to human sociality and sexuality, and, consequently, non-normative practices, identities, and communities lose out—reframed as necessarily unnatural.

... if we start to look at the true social and sexual diversity of nature, this ... reveals a wealth of biological diversity previously ignored. (Griffiths 2015, 42)

The following example/quote included, challenges the notion of a clearly defined “self”.

Furthermore, it exemplifies one way that the creativity of the extensive continuum expresses:

The Human Microbiome Project also challenges notions of genetic individuality, as ecological metagenomics has revealed diversity in bacterial genomics within populations of humans (327). The concept of immune individuality is challenged by a shift in how the immune system itself is conceptualised. The immune system has traditionally been considered a defensive system and the immune self is defined clearly against its external environment and its defence against dangerous and invasive “others” (330; Klein).

However, recent research suggests that immune systems are “created, in part, by microbial symbionts” (331). With all this in mind, the authors conclude: “there is no circumscribed, autonomous entity that is *a priori* designated ‘the self.’ What counts as ‘self’ is dynamic and context-dependent” (333). (Griffiths 2015, 37)

Lastly, and further supporting the idea that “we have never been individuals” is that “there is not any clean and pure space of transcendent individuality, even in the womb (Griffiths 2015, 44)”:

Hird argues, a normative account of human reproduction also misses much queer ecological reproduction that is going on in what is commonly thought of as the human body. Even human sexual reproduction is not as simple as two individual humans producing a child with a mix of human genetic material. Human babies are born with gut microbiota. While it has long been assumed that the entirety of a baby’s gut microbiota must colonize the baby after leaving the womb (and research has shown that breast milk encourages this colonization), recent research shows that even in the womb, a foetus is not sterile and has its own unique symbiotic community (Hamzelou; Wiley). (Griffiths 2015, 43)

Erin Manning writes extensively in this area—her books: *Always More Than One: Individuation's Dance* (2013), *The Minor Gesture* (2016), *For a Pragmatics of the Useless* (2020), as well as many other publications, are immersive thinking-feeling events exploring the “more-than human.” I imagine that her works are often read as theoretical offerings, but in my experience they are neurodiverse thinking-doings that shift understanding—an account of what is felt on a cellular degree.

This diversity of co-evolving associates is observable at the level of symbiotic gut microbiota and at the level of the human cell. It is impossible to think in terms of individual human bodies, as these bodies are emergent entities formed through the co-evolution of more-than-human agencies. (Griffiths 2015, 40)

Griffiths disrupts the neurotypical preoccupation with categorization of organisms by pointing out that all bodies are multispecies assemblages, that they are emergent multispecies aggregates and communities, destabilizing species and even kingdom boundaries in lieu of an ecological perspective of matter bodying (Griffiths 2015, 38, 43).

Gilbert, Sapp, and Tauber state that this symbiotic view of life is not new to the microbiological or botanical sciences, but that the zoological sciences are only recently starting to consider animals as multispecies composites. They argue that:

“The discovery of symbiosis throughout the animal kingdom is fundamentally transforming the classical conception of an insular individuality into one in which interactive relationships among species blurs the boundaries of the organism and obscures the notion of essential identity (326). (Griffiths 2015, 37)

I would suggest that an ecological understanding of matter in co-composition not only debunks the categorization and separability of “living” organisms, but also the dichotomizing of living beings from inanimate objects as well, for all matter is movement alive in ecologies of composition. Furthermore, I would offer that it also dismantles any use for *categorization* all together, as a mental structure with which to think and investigate existence.

There are many mental constructs that go unrecognized as such, and they do damage to our collective ability to think within the field of relation. Far too often, mental habits are mistaken as universal givens because they were established early on in life and set sturdily in the collective psyche by neurotypicality (such as “science,” “fact,” “nature”). Yet, they are not givens, they are perpetuations of “normativity masquerading as nature necessarily support[ing] the conservative status quo... hostile to non-normativity” (Griffiths 2015, 44).

Sexuality of the event is untouched by narrative. “Heteronormativity depends upon overstating the importance of sexual reproduction between two individual human bodies” (Griffiths 2015, 42). Anything that does not exist within the field of relation has no impact on the event’s sexuality. Heteronormative (neurotypical) stories of bodies and reproduction are inconsequential, they do not tinge affectively the event’s sexuality. Time is another narrative structure that we treat as “fact”—but because “bodies are always already multiple, and engaged in continual reproduction” (Griffiths 2015, 42), the sexuality of the event is fully immanent, unbound by time constructs and linear (past, present, etc.) narratives.

The sexuality of the event is this neurodiverse bodying-ecology as reproduction expressing. It is creativity that desires to move into existence and follow through until its satisfaction, reproducing further ecology-bodying-reproductions.

... humans are themselves networks of living and non-living agencies, and not singular sovereign individuals. Hird’s approach outlined in “Re(pro)ducing Sexual Difference” could also be described as a queer ecological account. It recognises the ecological interconnectedness and involvement of what is commonly thought of as the individual human organism with countless bacterial, microbial, and other agencies. It also stresses that the ignorance of such entanglements supports and is supported by heteronormative narratives in the social and sexual status quo. Attention to bacteria reproducing on and underneath our skin, in our guts, and in our cells is part of a queer ecological perspective that deemphasises heteronormativity and sexual reproduction while drawing attention to the myriad of queer phenomena that make up life and nature. (Griffiths 2015, 43)

The diversity of life is far-reaching and inexpressible (in general terms/assumptions or fixed “facts”). The sexuality of the event can conceptually offer this continuity of expression beyond what is expressed, but more importantly it is not the conceptual implications, but rather the felt immanence of the event’s appetite to fulfill its own desire within the field of relation that is of relevance to this thesis.

Creativity, composition, and diversity are not socio-cultural and aesthetic activities, they are what existence is made of. This is why I have included these examples, to substantiate thinking-doing that would otherwise be dismissed and discarded as poetic fantasy. These examples of symbiotic diverse life, make it evident that creativity and composition do not belong to the Arts (the subject), they are not humanist, artistic endeavours, they are intrinsic to existence, driving and weaving potentiality throughout. These examples challenge the notion that to create or compose is the volition of the human, manmade. To think that composition is made, rather than an ecology of emergence, is to miss the very essence of life. This thesis aims to move away from prefigured aesthetics and meaning (narratives) and return creativity and composing back into the field of relation. Nature is composing—to attune to this composing is the proposition this thesis is offering. More fitting than a theory of a composing nature, what is mobilizing in this thesis, is an experiential entanglement, in which neurotypical perception disintegrates and a dropping into the field of relation is felt by the dissolving of the self into matter joining the turbulence of emergence.

Brian Massumi also offers an account of this drive to create and compose in the continuum of nature. “A philosophy of nature must take into account this primacy of self-varying expressivity,

as well as its processual autonomy as a self-driving tendency” (Massumi 2014, 21). Massumi speaks to imagination and the animal’s call to spontaneously improvise—“this instinct to spontaneously surpass the given” (Massumi 2014, 17). “It must be acknowledged that instinctual movements are animated by a tendency to surpass given forms, that they are moved by an impetus toward creativity” (Massumi 2014, 16-17). Instinct is the event composing:

... the game does not model itself on combat so much as combat modulates itself in play, flush with the gestures composing its enactive cartography. These cartographic gestures have the potential to reconfigure the arena of activity of combat. (Massumi 23-24)

This passion to create, to compose worldings in the making, is expressed by the endlessly diverse accounts that exist—“The supernormal tendency is an attractive force that pulls experience forward, toward its own limit—that of the spontaneous passion for the mutual inclusion of the diverse, under integral transformation” (Massumi 2014, 17).

Most Art (capital A) is the reshuffling and rearranging of the prefigured. It is rare to find creativity in Art, and when it is there, it is often perceived through the neurotypical lens as an unraveling of a structured world, rather than the emergence of worldings (aka creativity). Creativity is violent in its forging forth—it is unsettling, chaotic, and full of charge. The combination of such intensity, along with its unknowable and unrecognizable nature, means that often, creativity is registered as unintelligible and of no importance (by neurotypical standards). The unpredictable musician or actor, for example, who cannot execute the same performance twice, is often seen as a “bad” artist/performer. But I would tender that this is creativity! When the event takes over, and the artist is so deeply attuned to the field of relation, there is no longer volition, for movement has now taken the lead—in this composing bodying, the self, along with

all the neurotypical “skills” of that self dissolve, as creativity takes the reigns and moves bodying-worldings into events. This charge, found in play that includes the excess, is just like the example above, described by Massumi—this is the supernormal tendency.

Manning’s “engendering body reaching toward its individuation-in-relation” (104), in *Politics of Touch* (2007), beautifully works through how “Sex becomes an event” (104). Or rather, how the event composes desiring, worldings, and bodyings, which I call *the sexuality of the event*. This account of sexuality carries creativity and composition at the forefront, rather than “result”. To a certain extent, the resulting bodyings, desirings, and expressions taking shape are inconsequential, in that they will never produce again in the same way, therefore there is no need to hold on to them for identifying purposes.

The engendering body is a becoming-multiple of the body. This is not a subjective body that identifies itself as something concrete one could call a self or an individual, but a series of intensities, through which endlessly diverse populations are engendered. (Manning 2007, 95).

The socio-cultural notion that individuals are born with fixed gender and sexual preferences becomes destabilized when the individual is decentered from sexuality in expression. Sexuality does not belong to, nor is it created by, fixed and contained individuals. The sexuality of the event challenges this view by recognizing that desire and bodyings are composing with the event, accounting for the unpredictable potentialities of desiring-worlding-bodying in creation.

To think of evolution as a process of engendering is to begin to challenge the Darwinian and neo-Darwinian evolutionary canon that continues to privilege individuals over

individuations, genders over engenderings, stable and inert matter and form over composite exfoliating multiplicities. (Manning 2007, 91)

Lastly, it is important to acknowledge the event's indulgence in the fleshiness of all that is composing. This is to say that bodies are not irrelevant, indeed, the incorporeal bodying is essential in eventing—"By incorporeal I do not mean less real. On the contrary: the body becomes more than real, more than its envelope, more than the space-time of its pre-locatedness." (Manning 2007, 93).

All this to say is that the sexuality of the event has this supernormal tendency, the expressing qualities carrying the more than.

### Neurodiverse Life—Composing Bodying-Worlding

The medical model is deeply harmful because it puts the individual at the center of experience. It asserts that it is the individual that creates internal and external chaos. "A *personality disorder* is an enduring pattern of inner experience and behavior that deviates markedly from the expectations of the individual's culture" (American Psychiatric Association 2013, 646). It claims that deficiency and deviance are located in the contained body/mind of the solitary individual.

This neurotypical narrative is systemic socio-cultural gaslighting, it is abusive, and it is no surprise that this toxic dynamic causes compounding and overriding distress in bodyings that are already having to manage the richness of unfiltered (or minimally filtered) stimuli and the uncertainty of everchanging worldings. All life must deal with uncertainty, however neurodiverse life composes with uncertainty and therefore is more acutely attuned to it, whereas neurotypicality denies uncertainty and asserts "we are human, we are in control." Neurotypicality

provides this illusory assurance via disconnection from the field of relation. This false sense of control is what perpetuates the violent notion that bodies have volition, therefore neurodiverse life is less than human.

Aaron Rosanoff, who claimed that human personality traits could be classified as hysteroid, manic, depressive, autistic, paranoid, or epileptoid (1921). According to Rosanoff, these traits exist in all people to some degree, so the key factor in achieving normalcy was the degree of self-mastery found in an individual: the ability to damp down expression of these deviant impulses (*ibid.*). (Waltz 2020, 16)

Included, momentarily, is an account of neurodiverse life that I believe offers some insight into an alternative notion—that neurotypicality is the predominant perceptual cause of distress, rather than the compository “conditions” themselves. *Compository conditions* refer to “conditions” or “disorders” in the DSM5 such as Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorders, Neurodevelopmental Disorders (Autism Spectrum Disorder), Personality Disorders (Borderline Personality Disorder), and other diagnoses that are prescribed to deeply creative, more-than human experiences and ways of life-living—amorphous composing natures<sup>40</sup> that are deemed erratic “personalities” are pathologized by the medical model and cemented within the sociocultural narrative of norms as life-living that should be pitied.

The still-dominant ‘medical model’ of disability can be understood on at least two levels. First, as a widespread ideological response to disability, pervading attitudes, policy, social structures, and representations of disability. For those who analyse it at the ideological level, the medical model has sometimes been

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<sup>40</sup> “A nature, an indefinite and yet singular attestation to what moves us into being” (Manning).

described as the ‘personal tragedy model’, in so far as proponents often frame disability as ‘objectively bad, and thus something to be pitied, a personal tragedy for both the individual and her family’ (Carlson 2010, p. 5). (Chapman 2020, 57)

But neurodiverse forms of life do not inherently induce suffering. Most of the time it is the neurotypical perceptual lens that induces suffering, by contorting experience with value judgments that degrade the natural variations and expressions of life-living. Furthermore, I would add that it is the internalized normopathy and self-policing that is the most damaging and the compulsion to uphold the less-than model. External abuse is damaging, largely, in how it teaches, instills, and reinforces messages of self-hatred.

Life that composes (neurodiverse life), is unacceptable and will not be tolerated within society<sup>41</sup>. Those who “choose to remain stubbornly” within the field of relation, despite the painful consequences of going against well-established (neurotypical) systems meant to direct bodies towards the suppression of all that moves, must be tamed by any means (abusive modes of “therapy”, medication (aka drugging bodyings into tolerating intolerable environments), Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), etc.).

What you will find in the DSM are neurotypical descriptions<sup>42</sup> of a variety of ways in which to fail at being an individual—even within the DSM categories, the diversity expresses itself in how it exceeds and spills over imposed bounds. The more one's sense of self is unstable, the greater the exertion of neurotypicality to weld amorphous lumps into cold, solid, stable individuals for

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<sup>41</sup> Society is a construct of neurotypicality, the homogenization of diversity to make bodies governable.

<sup>42</sup> Crude descriptions, that focus superficially on behavior, rather than on accounting for the complexity of ecologies.

sociocultural representation, manipulation, and exploitation. For example, Borderline Personality Disorder is the “new and improved hysteria”, to preserve the misogynistic lineage of psychiatry and to continue the mass pathologization of feminine personality traits (as perceived through neurotypicality). “The disorder is more prevalent in women than in men, in fact 76% of borderline patients are women” (Al-Alem and Omar 2008, 396). “Traits” such as sensitivity to one’s environment, a shifting sense of self (based on said environment), and with this attunement, a carried concern for, and engagement across the field of relation:

These individuals are very sensitive to environmental circumstances. (American Psychiatric Association 2013, 663)

... Persons with BPD have a very hard time controlling their emotions and may feel ruled by them. Marsha Linehan (10) said, "People with BPD are like people with third degree burns over 90% of their bodies. Lacking emotional skin, they feel agony at the slightest touch or movement. (Al-Alem and Omar 2008, 396)

... individuals with this disorder may at times have feelings that they do not exist at all. (American Psychiatric Association 2013, 664)

... Individuals with this disorder may feel more secure with transitional objects (i.e., a pet or inanimate possession) than in interpersonal relationships. (American Psychiatric Association 2013, 665)

Descriptions in the DSM of BPD (and other diagnoses), as well as note-taking practices by medical practitioners, are more a reflection of their deeply misogynistic and neurotypical-centered viewpoints, more so than any thoughtful insights into compositionary ways of being. BPD is considered to be one of the most “hopeless conditions” because there is a neurotypically perceived resistance at play, an unwillingness or inability to establish stable and consistent

interactions with others or with oneself. This inconsistency, the fluid nature of the self and other, seems to drive psychiatric professionals mad.

The diagnosis of borderline personality disorder (BPD) has been used for over 30 years to label patients who are "hopeless", those who get therapists upset, and is one of the most controversial diagnoses in psychology today. The term borderline came into existence because such patients were believed to lie on the borderline between psychosis and neurosis, with the label "borderline" first coined by Adolph Stern in 1938 (1). (Al-Alem and Omar 2008, 395)

What you will find in the DSM are diagnoses for the diverse ways in which body-worldlings compose. And of course, the further the tendencies toward composition, the more "extreme" is considered the condition and severity of the diagnosis. Those bodying-worldlings that reside mostly, if not completely, in neurodiverse/direct perception, vibrantly dissolving the fallacy of boundaries are deemed to be horrific experiences of life. The further the tendencies toward direct perception, the more ill, defective, and hopeless the "individual"—this is the value judgment that underlies all of psychiatry. It is evident when reading the DSM that the conditions that are considered to be the most severe/extreme are those that tend most fiercely toward composition, concrescence<sup>43</sup>, toward direct (neurodiverse) perception—it is, distinctly, the "lack" of the

<sup>43</sup> Concrescence:

"If form and force are always in co-composition, the occasion of experience, even on the side of its atomicity, or absoluteness, carries a germ of potential. Concrescence, the concept at the heart of Whitehead's process philosophy that expresses the process through which an occasion comes into itself, gives a sense of this holding together, in the occasion, of a vacillation between creativity and absoluteness. With the initial grasping of experience (prehension) through which the occasion begins to "take," there is already a certain concrescence, a certain growing of the grasp's attunement to form. Both the growing and the forming are carried by the concept of concrescence. As Whitehead writes, "the word Concrescence is a derivative from the familiar latin verb, meaning 'growing together.' It also has the advantage that the participle 'concrete' is familiarly used for the notion of complete physical reality. Thus Concrescence is useful to convey the notion of many things acquiring complete complex unity" (1967, 236). Concrescence is the growing into form, the growing that allows for the consolidation of the welter, the momentary "concreteness" of an occasion expressing itself as this or that. What must always be remembered is this: the expression the occasion takes can never be completely abstracted from this growing into itself of force to form. Concrete is never fully abstracted from the cresting.

concrete, bounded, individual that determines this. This is, of course, grossly problematic in many ways, including how it normalizes systemic abuse, etc.—however, what is essential to highlight here is how perceptually flawed and inaccurate these descriptions are of neurodiverse experiences. They do not account for the complexity, richness, diversity, and most of all, the aliveness in composing bodying-worldings. Neurotypicality leaves out so much experience/perception.

Composing neurodiverse life is not monstrous, neurotypicality is. Neurotypicality is more insidious and painful than waking nightmares. In the video “Cecilia’s Life with Schizophrenia (Living with Hallucinations),” produced by Special Books by Special Kids (2017), Cecilia McGough explains: “I often say I’m just someone who can’t turn off my nightmares even when I’m awake. That’s not a reason to be scared of me” (0:27). When Cecilia was asked, “why did you believe that was your only option” (3:19) when discussing her suicide attempt, she did not respond by citing her waking nightmares, instead, she responded:

People wouldn’t accept me as a person...

... Really it’s the worry of the real voices. I hear voices in my head but it’s really the fear of real people, like what real voices have to say, than the ones I hallucinate in my head.

Those are the ones that matter to me more.

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When I said that it was necessary to read Whitehead from the middle, I meant that we need to read him from the perspective of concrescence, moving at the same time in the direction of a process growing into itself, the necessary eclipsing of the excess in order that the form “take” absolutely, and the germinating force of what still participates, even if it does not actually take form. To think from this middling assures us of not getting caught in the process/form dichotomy. For there is always activity in the movement of forms “taking” and perishing and “taking” again differently. With that movement, what is created is not so much form as such as the time of the event, of this event, here, now, and all potentials grown from its cultivation.” (Manning 2020c, 80).

... I have been called a freak, I've been called crazy, I've been called deranged. I've been called very nasty words. (Special Books by Special Kids 2017, 3:19)

I'm not trying to argue<sup>44</sup> that symptoms do not cause discomfort. Instead, what is being offered is an opportunity to listen and think with an account of a composing life—taking seriously that the virtual-actual composing worldings aren't intrinsically causing the deepest and most unbearable pain, but rather that it is the neurotypical mindsets with which these experiences are perceived and moralized that do.

*Slow* is a word that has previously been used to objectify bodyings and minds that will not be contained and reduced to the individual—leaving it difficult for the systemic operation of neurotypicality to categorize and organize these bodies/minds. In *Sick? Or slow? On the origins of intelligence as a psychological object*, Nicolas et al. remark on how “‘slow’ children were unwanted both by schools and by hospitals. (The schools found them overly abnormal, while the hospitals dismissed them as insufficiently ill.) Their place, therefore, was in “special” education classes: neither in the hospital, nor in the school proper. But they still had to be educated” (S. Nicolas et al. 2013, 703).

Minds that produce experience, deriving from an ecological composition, are minds of the event, of the collective. These minds do not operate through the neurotypical lens of the individual, they do not produce experience through the framework of identity or the prefigured, they are the expressive mentality of the event—ecological, compositional mentality.

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<sup>44</sup> This thesis does not move with the intention of arguing points, but rather moves with the openings, offerings, propositions, and accounts of direct perception.

Neurodiverse perception carries an urgency to engage with all that passes through (and does not), the welling richness takes more (neurotypical) time to land. Additional time is also needed for the extra processual work/energy that must be expended when neurotypicality demands the richness of ecologies to be reduced, for the operation of extracting the field of relation from experience, to transfigure perception to signification (translating neurodiversity to neurotypicality). Earlier in this thesis, an account of this extra labor is recognized:

And for those who endure the pain and exhaustion of forcing complexity to fall into line, into tangible prefigures...

... When thinking tries to fall into line, only fragments can get through. That is why tending towards direct perception is often perceived and labeled as unintelligent. Through the neurotypical lens, the excess, all that didn't fall into line, all that didn't make it through is not accounted for.

To be *slow* is to become in the field of relation, it is to feel all that wants to compose and to move at the pace of the event. Paradoxically, to be *slow* is to be fast, it is to have the aperture of perception admitting complexity in its expansiveness.

In addition to neurotypicality's failed attempts to objectify beings that live beyond signification/hollowgrams<sup>45</sup>, there is also the matter of neurotypicality's intelligence and developmental hierarchy, that places adults at the top, then adolescents, children, infants, animals, plants, (supposedly) unliving objects, etc. *Slow* is also thought of as an indicator of development.

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<sup>45</sup> Empty image depicting experience, but not of experience.

This kind of thinking has since been extended to adult populations: adults who test as “slow,” but who are otherwise healthy, are “childlike”—again, by definition. (They were “delayed” in their development.). (Nicolas et al. 2013, footnote on 708)

Development is, in essence, the outline of touchstones in the programming of neurotypical perception. To be slow, to be at the development stage of infancy, is to be closer to neurodiverse perception. Infants are briefly untouched by neurotypicality, existing within the field of relation, in direct perception. They have not yet been forced into a hardened body/mind, separate from the world.

## COMPOSING WITH THE EVENT

“If you develop an ear for sounds that are musical it is like developing an ego. You begin to refuse sounds that are not musical and that way cut yourself off from a good deal of experience.”

“The highest purpose is to have no purpose at all. This puts one in accordance with nature, in her manner of operation.”<sup>46</sup>

— John Cage

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<sup>46</sup> (Cage 2012, 155).

More than what is materializing, *composition* is what is calling to spark in the process of emergence. What materializes makes a difference, shaping the conditions, architecting<sup>47</sup> experience, informing and orienting directionality, movement, and potentiality. Matter is always the more-than, composing, breathing, alive.

*Composing with the Event* is a neurodiverse practice. Neurodiverse practices are practices that reside in the complexity, richness, and movement of experience. Following, are neurodiverse techniques (technicity), or as I prefer to call them, *entries* that facilitate neurodiverse modes of encounter by activating trans-sensation/direct perception—making felt the field of experience in its emergence. The breadth and depth of these entries are in the work itself—in the doing—they are in the event.

These selected pieces/explorations are cross-modal/trans-sensory. In the composing of the event-videos, it was not a process of adding music to visuals or vice versa, but in fact an integration and treatment of materials as transcendent, non-disciplinary and non-categorical. Composing with qualities, side-steps the categorical separation of the senses—visual qualities were matched and contrasted with the auditory qualities as if they had never been differentiated as separate forms of material.

For many of these pieces/propositions I used low-fi recording devices to explore quality, transdisciplinarity, and the collaboration of non-bodies. Low-fi recording devices are wonderful

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<sup>47</sup> "... Architectings more than they are architecture" (Manning 2020c, 59)—“emergent architecture to create a field of relation that exceeds the human-all-too-human construct of the interpersonal” (Manning 2020c, 61).

resources and can be used to engage with perception. Regarding neurotypicality, such recording devices can recontextualize experience, acting as both a tool and technique in breaking habits and conditioning. Audio/visual recording can act as technic/tool, at the best of times producing what Manning calls technicity,<sup>48</sup> by providing a way to open up and create worlds (“worlding” (Manning)), while also carrying across the residues of other event-times. Through reframing events, gathering qualities/events that can later be an inventory of events co-composing with each other for other worlds/events to emerge. The practice of gathering and composing with qualities makes possible an engagement that transcends time and place, while also allowing for the qualities to carry through the essences from the originating event that are still living/moving in them.

### Neurodiverse Techniques (Technicity)

In this multimodal approach (which includes: audio, video and a written component), rather than outlining techniques, this thesis composes/dances multiplicity. Technique-modes<sup>49</sup> (technicity) germinate, inducing movement/momentum that propels ever expanding lines of flight. These propositions are neurodiverse modes of encounter. Some concepts that emerge, amplifying neurodiverse modes of encounter in attuning to direct perception/sensation include:

*Quality* as a conceptual and practice-based opening to *trans*<sup>50</sup>-sensation

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<sup>48</sup> “Technicity would be the experience of how the work opens itself to its potential, to its more-than. This quality of the more-than that is technicity is ineffable—it can be felt, but it is difficult to articulate in language” (Manning 2016, 40).

<sup>49</sup> I cannot think of a technique without mode. To me they are inseparable.

<sup>50</sup> Trans as across, not inter (Manning 2020b, 3).

*Transdisciplinarity* as non-categorical experience and creation<sup>51</sup>

*Co-composing of non-bodies* (leaky bodies)—improvisation; chaos/chance/aleatoric; what is at hand (low-fi recording devices, magpie effect (what draws attention)); mimicking.

*Unobjectifying the object—Returning matter to movement* (deconstructing, liquifying/melting, warping, etc.) as a modality, along with *anti-story/anti-method*, as interstices (cuts/entries) to other modes of perception/sensation.

*Complexity*, moving with complexity, rather than filtering or blocking out of complexity for neurotypical perception.

A—A-aesthetics, A-category, A-ending/A-time...

*A* is the felt recognition of freedom that can accompany direct perception. It is an awareness of the prefigured, without the hold of the prefigured. Not a cerebral or intellectual awareness, a feltness of the neurotypical attempting to hold the motion of life, the breath of life in motion. To move freely, is to know the surge-ness that sharply skims the cresting relief from the prefigured desperate efforts to keep form from forming. *A* is therefore not a without the prefigured, but rather a with into extinction. It is the experience of the perceptual shifting of matter melting into mushy goo ready to be played with.

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<sup>51</sup> I define creation as the “leaky body” (Manning 2013) or what I refer to as the non-body in co-composition. Composition as “a coming-together (com-position)” (Massumi in Manning 2013, x).

Aesthetic composition is a system of value that excludes and hides activity—reducing the complexity of the event for the sake of upholding the delusion that the “human” shapes the world. What if instead, we engaged with stimuli that would neurotypically be backgrounded or parsed out completely (if that were even possible). Proposition # gives us an example of how this could be practiced. Walking down St Catherine, a jackhammer or some other overstimulating machine takes hold, the neurotypical operation would be to background the sensations. What if instead you began to move and sing with the vibrations? What if you enjoyed the dance with these qualities so much that you pocketed it for later, for co-composing iterations? What if while you were listening back to the smartphone recording, sounds emerged in this new singular event composing, taking form, and what if the wind distortion that would normally be an undesired effect were treated as another quality that wants to play with you in co-composing the event?

This is not to say that A-Aesthetics does not have the force and lure associated with “beauty”—rather what it does is remain within the movement of this force, instead of proceeding to extrapolation. In addition to remaining within direct experience, A-Aesthetics is saturated with dynamics, intensities, qualities, so much so, that it would be impossible to hold experience still enough to reduce it to stable categories—such as this feels “Good”, this feels “Bad”. What is felt in A-Aesthetics, is the aliveness of vibrancy. The evermore of qualities expanding and collapsing inwards into distinct becomings.

## Non-Perspective—An Ecological Perspective

The *non-perspective of the event* is in a way a perspective, but also, it is not, in the sense that it is a perspective that carries with it all possible perspectives so that perspective dissolves

completely. Imagine red dots, what would happen if all potential red dots foregrounded? You would no longer be able to distinguish a dot (form-location). There would be no red dots—just a feeling of red. And perhaps this is not a useful example, as it is from an outside perspective itself—when what is being suggested here is precisely a non-perspective—because perspective, to some degree, carries with it an outsideness of the event (a self reflecting on self). Nonetheless, what is being suggested here, is a perception of non-bodies and without bodies, there are no perspectives. Rather a perceptual field of relational qualities is offered. This perceptual field of relation includes what emerged in the event but also all that hasn't and all that could have. Furthermore, these emergences are qualities in formation but never formed, with directionality but never with direction. The event expresses its singularity and carries all that could be in its singularity.

Manning calls this *ecological perspective*:

Autistic voicing makes felt how autistics are not only intensely attuned to what goes on around them but also aware of how this roundness includes them without making them the center of experience. More than most, theirs is an ecological perspective that, while it includes the human, doesn't see the world as simply made up of human intentionalities. This lack of self-centering is heard in writing that moves with the force of the world, composing the entry into experience through language's own synesthetic rhythms” (Manning 2020c, 276).

This work (the propositions and research-creation pieces) offers a practice of non-perspective taking. Rather than bodies individuating/claiming positionality, or subject-objects being located, perspective is altogether forgotten, and a mode of perceptibility (which simultaneously includes all that is not perceptible) that is “not from a distance”<sup>52</sup>, from within the field of relation, that is multiplicitous qualities of movement foreground-background topologically<sup>53</sup>. Massumi dances around the thinking of this *non-perspective of the event*, touching on it as “transindividual, in the sense of inhabiting the gaps between individual perspectives” (2014, 35). However, what is offered here is not the in-between of perspectives but instead the immediacy<sup>54</sup> and imminent creativity of the non-perspective of the event. What Manning would call the poetics of relation. “Minor socialities pull at this cartography beyond point of view, stretching it beyond recognition toward other modes of perceptibility. A poetics of relation” (2020, 313).

From my understanding (whether it is what was intended or not is irrelevant, what matters is the movement of thought it produced), Massumi is suggesting that sympathy is the event’s perspective from within itself (not from a distance).

<sup>52</sup> As in *Distantism* (Manning 2020c, 245-268)— “Don’t become a position. Resist distantism” (Manning 2020c, 313).

<sup>53</sup> “A topological figure is defined as the continuous transformation of one geometrica) figure into another. Imagine a pliable coffee cup. join the surfaces of the brim, en- large the hole in the handle, and then stretch it so that all its sides are equally thick. You get a doughnut. You could then tie this doughnut into complex knots. All of the geometrical figures you can create in this way are versions of the same topological figure. Topological unity is, in and of itself, multiple” (Massumi 2002, 134).

<sup>54</sup> Including both the immediacy of being and the not-being of immediacy. “When Whitehead writes about the not-being of immediacy, he is underscoring the orienting potential of what perishes” Manning 2020c, 82-83).

In Massumi's book he extends on Bergson's "*instinct is sympathy*" (Bergson 1998, 176; emphasis added):

It would be more precise to say that sympathy "transports us into the heart of the event." A fuller formulation would be "we call instinct, in its aspect of lived intuition, the sympathy that transports us, with a gesture effecting a transformation-in-place, into the heart of a unique event that is just beginning, with which our life will now coincide, but whose outcome is as yet unknowable, and consequently inexpressible, laced as the movement toward it is with supernormal tendency."

To move toward a non-perspective/ecological perspective is to move toward the events' instinct, (rather than cognition of the individual). He explains that "it manages this without rising to a higher supplementary dimension that would give it an overlook upon the situation, as if from outside it. That is what cognition does. Intuition, in the directness of its thinking-doing, plays the *immanent in-between* gapping the situation" (Massumi 2014, 35-36).

Massumi speaks to this instinct, as well as to "sympathy and creativity, starting in play and ending in play" (2014, 3).

Sympathy is the transindividual becoming brought into being by intuition's acting out.

Sympathy is the mode of existence of the included middle...

... The act of intuition dramatically mutually includes at least two non-coinciding perspectives. It plays the in-between. In the immediacy of its enactment, it is already transindividual, in the sense of inhabiting the gaps between individual perspectives. It manages this without rising to a higher supplementary dimension that would give it an overlook upon the situation, as if from outside it. That is what cognition does. Intuition,

in the directness of its thinking-doing, plays the immanent in-between gapping the situation. (Massumi 2014, 35-36)

... Sympathy, it was earlier argued, does not operate from the point of view of a given participant. It is not an individual anchoring in the situation from a particular angle. It is perspective of all the angles' situational reciprocity. It is less a situated perspective than a situational perspective: an immanent survey of the differential mutual inclusion of the potential actions of all those gestured into the event just triggering. (Massumi 2014, 76-77)

A practice of composing with the event is a technicity that shifts away from the figure of the body (the container) and moves towards an ecological perspective. An ecological perspective is a perspective from within the middling<sup>55</sup> of movement. Without containers, there is no centering in experience, rather there is an ever cusping of qualities (transsensory textures, colors, etc) always in formation but never formed. The qualities-movements often have affective-directionality (not direction) due to the forces they bump into, slide by, evade, etc—in addition to the push/pull and multitude of other motions, directionality also sparks spontaneously out of non-force, because there is an appetite that is needed.

Autistic voicing makes felt how autistics are not only intensely attuned to what goes on around them but also aware of how this aroundness includes them without making them the center of experience. More than most, theirs is an ecological perspective that, while it

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<sup>55</sup> As in Manning's account of Alfred North Whitehead "*Middling*" (Manning 2013, ix, 33 and 37). "Immediation seeks not structure but composition. This involves improvisation" (Manning 2020, 42).

includes the human, doesn't see the world as simply made up of human intentionalities.

This lack of self-centering is heard in writing that moves with the force of the world,

composing the entry into experience through language's own synesthetic rhythms.

(Manning 2020c, 276)

## Bursting

Many who tend toward neurodivergence, experience what I will call for now *bursting*. Bursting is the carried-awayness of the event eventing—the event erupting into becomings so forceful that its undertow upsweeps all energy-matter into a swirling. These are periods of intense activation, a time of dancing the exuberance of eventing. And of course, with any durations of brimming activity, there must be a time of rest. Within pathologizing paradigms, these tendencies to overflow with worlding and then subsequently retreat into repose.

PROPOSITIONS—EXPLORATIONS—PIECES

### Collected Qualities:

The following link is to a folder that contains the raw audio and video material collected globally over the years. [Gathering/Collecting Qualities \(field recordings, etc\)](#)

There are also folders for each piece, which include the finished pieces as well as their separate material components. [Pieces/Propositions](#)

This gathering activity was a main and important component of this thinking-languaging practice.

Following are links to each piece/proposition/exploration along with “documentation” of the process. These documents include: outreach-proposition documents, iterative-composing documents, excerpts and/or full papers written at the time of the propositions, and even a long excerpt of another PhD thesis that entered collective-iterative thinking with this thesis.

More so than documentation, or evidence to legitimize the events that took place (despite being a felt requirement of the institution), these documents are included to call attention to the relationality across events and event-times—as well as a practice of the gathering of essences across eventings to germinate and propel further collective thinking-doing-iterating. It is in the composing relationality of these, that pathway thinking will burst forth.

*This thesis strongly urges that video/audio be prioritized over writing if time/attention are limited. \*links are provided*

Piece # 1 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=1&v=-ZlaQJh5v5k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=-ZlaQJh5v5k)

Materials/co-composers: phone video camera, metal cheese grater, sunlight, low-fi phone recording of piano; accordion; piano extended techniques on strings with metal screw/nail; smashing ice on the street.

#1

Piece #1 was composed of materials I gathered over several years in Scotland and Montreal. The practice of capturing light, space and vibrations from across the world, bringing them together through space and time, formed new realities made of properties that were able to transcend their original context. In addition to transcending spatial and temporal boundaries, the process of gathering these materials might produce a merging of nostalgia and excitement of the moment that informs the compositional treatment of the materials. This is an added dimension to the sonic qualities. This piece, like most for me, was oriented by a moment in my everyday life where I saw something or heard a sound whose texture, vibrancy or movement that activated my direct perception and imagination. In a moment like this, somehow, the simple act of engaging with the qualities of a given sound opens up what feels like another layer of reality. When discussing Edgard Varèse's music, Morton Feldman describes the music as a "... physical reality [in which there is the] impression that the music is writing about mankind rather than being composed" (Cox and Warner 2017, 16). Although he is not quite there, I suspect that Feldman was moving towards, and trying to articulate, the experience of the event composing itself.

The length and structure of this particular piece may seem to be incomplete or short if evaluating it through neurotypical practices of music composition (practices that are abstracted from the

event), but in fact this is the very point! The piece is the fleeting feeling of being in the event-time—just as soon as a duration is felt so too does it dissipate.

The accessibility of recording devices made it possible for this impromptu collaboration with a friend who gave me the gift of sound that they happened upon: the breaking ice at the end of the piece. This low-fi recording technique made it possible for this person to engage with me creatively as well as with the environment/event. He was able to enter a process of transforming an everyday sound (categorical chunking) into what I will call “auditory theatricality.”

According to Josette Féral, “more than a property with analyzable characteristics, theatricality seems to be a process that has to do with a ‘gaze’ that postulates and creates a distinct, virtual space belonging to the other, from which fiction can emerge” (Féral 2002, 97). I would tend to disagree about calling this virtual space “fiction” and assigning the emergence of this space an author. This definition does not account for what Bergson and Deleuze call the virtual—or potential—as part of a multiplicity of events. Nor does it account for the fact that the individual is inseparable from the event. If this virtual edge, this potential, emerges from the “individual,” it is by necessity emerging from the event, as the event is the temporal body of this so-called individual. Not to mention it includes all past and future tendings living in this extended body at the time of this event.<sup>56</sup> This felt vibrancy and intensity of the transitionality (movement) and

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<sup>56</sup>The leaky body as such is not self contained nor is it concrete, it is virtual-actual, “to think the body in movement thus means accepting the paradox that there is an incorporeal dimension of the body” (Massumi 2002, 5); Massumi suggests that “new paths might be found by letting go of the sterile opposition between the abstract and the concrete and its fellow-traveler, the subjective and objective” (Massumi 2002, 206). (Excerpt from my paper *The Quality of Moving With and Through Matter*).

multidimensionality<sup>57</sup> of events is what I am calling theatricality. For me, theatricality is direct perception, it is perception/sensation at its most extremes.

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<sup>57</sup>“Multidimensioned topological surface that folds in, through, and across spacetimes of experience, what emerges is not a self but the dynamic form of a worlding that refuses categorization. Beyond the human, beyond the sense of touch or vision, beyond the object, what emerges is relation” (Manning 12).

#2

[https://youtu.be/\\_9ZmcdaYBgs](https://youtu.be/_9ZmcdaYBgs)

Materials/co-composers: phone video camera with flash, metal saucepan with coffee and cream, steam created the distortion and movement, low-fi phone recordings of: the original audio from the video of boiling liquids; birds in ireland or scotland (can't remember); piano.

In Piece # 2, through the use of my phone's recording device, I was able to engage with nature in the moment (the event) by capturing birds of Scotland/Ireland as I traveled. Several years later, back in Montreal, I engaged with a different type of environment—my kitchen and the chance occurrences of cooking. I later continued to engage with the collected textures, colors, and timbres during the compositional process of curating and adding sounds played on conventional instruments in unconventional ways. Contemplations arose from the experience of this piece. I wonder when this compositional process would be deemed to have begun. Did it begin with the initial hearing of the sound/noise? With the capturing of the sound through recording? Or only once the manipulation of the recording began? In my opinion, the compositional process begins with paying attention to the sound and engaging with its qualities. This is the moment that I am most interested in inquiring about through my explorations—this moment of “auditory theatricality.”

#3

Piece # 3 “Sometimes” <https://soundcloud.com/darlingghost/sometimes-1#t=0:00>

Materials/co-composers: low-fi phone recording of: whistling kettle; rattling guitar strings; sounds of st catherine street including jack hammer, wind distortion, people, car horn; piano; accordion; piano extended techniques on strings with metal screw/nail; voice with garageband effects.

In piece # 3, called *Sometimes*, the materials that were present included the low-fi phone recording of: whistling kettle; rattling guitar strings; sounds of st catherine street including jack hammer, wind distortion, people, car horn; piano; accordion; piano extended techniques on strings with metal screw/nail; voice with garageband effects. While Walking down Ste Catherine street, I heard and felt the intense vibration of a jack hammer. As I approached, I realized that nearing the sound, meeting the sound and walking past could be used as a temporal frame for a composition. The additional sounds on the street could be the musical material and the inspiration for further material. I knew right away that it would be a self-contained piece, which I really liked for its direct link to nature as a collaborator. What’s interesting about this piece/exploration is that there was really no need for me to add to it because it already encompassed everything that I find musical, while allowing space for many versions to pass through the imagination with each listen. However, in order to demonstrate the musicality and potentiality I experience in these moments to an audience (who may not experience the world this way), I decided to be explicit and concretely show one potential pathway. I did this by adding other textural sounds that highlighted certain material already in the recording. Conventional and non-conventional instruments were used to emphasize these musical moments. I think this would be an excellent exploration to do with other creatives across all arts disciplines

in order to shift perspectives on how to listen and how to engage with material. In the future, it would be interesting to have the original self-contained piece along with several versions of the piece to reveal its ever emerging potentiality—the forming that takes place due to the pull of the negative space of an event.

## #4

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1n1t4jtqMGqag8d92JVRV1rIkiBQK2Ymj>

Materials/co-composers: phone recording of an improvisation with a pianist friend, video of a drink at a cafe with my brother.

Piece #4 starts and ends abruptly. A snapshot of the quintessence(s) of an event that can later on be co-composed with—using the textures, colors, or otherwise, as material to create new perceptual realities. The process of this piece continues to look into engaging with one's environment in the moment and connecting with bodies in one's environment viscerally. The work was born of these kinds of emergent encounters with a world in co-composition. For instance, this piece emerged from several events on separate occasions—distinct, impromptu moments of connection and collaboration—an event with a fellow musician (audio), an event with my brother<sup>58</sup> (video/visuals), and events with my computer. With Zach<sup>59</sup> (the musician), we improvised on a song that I had previously written with no predetermined intentions. Later on, I slowed down these captured moments—in doing so I found that zooming in on the material (altering the temporal axis) seemed to dramatically transform the essence of the material itself. On a separate occasion, I was with my brother, we were simply at a cafe, having a conversation, and I became entranced by a drink, a common experience given that I tend toward direct perception. Often I find my attention being drawn to specific stimuli when I get overwhelmed by a busy environment. My brother, in this moment, joined me in this exploration of the qualities of this drink and surrounding environment. Sharing this attractor, engaging with the external

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<sup>58</sup> Adam Bennett (collaborator)

<sup>59</sup> Zach Frampton (collaborator)

environment<sup>60</sup> via this embodied-abstract mode, seemed to forge a connection to each other's perceptual experiences. My brother (who tends toward neurotypicality) and I began to co-compose worlds together, along with the drink-worlding. Transforming our so-called physical realities, merging our singular perceptual tendencies.

The growing accessibility of recording devices (ie. smart phones) in the world allows for a more diverse group of people to engage with the field/event in this way. The invention and prevalence of the recording device has opened the musical creative palette by making it possible for “the entire field of sound” to be considered—“making conventional distinctions between ‘musical’ and ‘non-musical’ sounds increasingly irrelevant” (Cox and Warner 2017, xiii and 5). We are no longer limited to conventional musical instruments. Even as early as 1913 Luigi Russolo was looking to the future and advised musicians and composers to move towards “the infinite variety of timbres in noises” and move on from the limited variety of timbres of the orchestra (13). With the invention of the recording device came a fundamental shift in musical perspective—instantly the lines distinguishing music from other everyday sounds became unclear. Consequently, creative practices opened up—“tape composition allowed the composer to bypass musical notation, instruments and performers in one step” (Cox and Warner 2017, 5)—giving the composer more creative autonomy. Additionally, technology such as microphones, speakers and headphones changed the relationship between silence and sound by drawing “...silence within aural reach...giving them equal ontological status” (Cox and Warner 2017, 6). Using these devices to give silence more prevalence allows for a wider range of dynamic interactions between sound and silence. I'm interested in seeing how these devices can continue to be used to

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<sup>60</sup>I define “external environment” as the taking form or shaping at the most extended parts of the non-body.

initiate fundamental shifts in how we engage with the experience of experience (perception), moving toward direct perception.

## #5

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=12nPBIxg27OaY16rqO6U5nMQSygEBFo4->

Materials/co-composers: recording of my voice and my sibling's voice captured with my phone, screen monitor in Hall building at Concordia.

With the intention of exploring and devising practices that emerge from the event, and that facilitate the awareness of relationality, when framing exploration/piece #5, I was interested in exploring the natural voice as a perceived synthetic sound. As a neurodivergent person who is very sensitive to stimuli, I often find synthetic stimuli the most painful, so this exploration was an attempt to aid myself in connecting to the increasingly synthetic environment of cities. This 'new natural' we find ourselves in is one less concerned with nature<sup>61</sup> and increasingly more concerned with technology, blurring the lines between nature and technology, dissolving the binary. With this in mind, I am interested in the exploration of the human voice attempting to understand synthetic sounds through embodied practice.

When planning my exploration, I considered that in my experience, approaching phonation without regard for what is traditionally musical opens up a new space for so many more colours and textures. In this piece, I explore qualities of the voice that sound synthetic as a way to connect to a technological environment. I did this through my own exploration, with the intention of offering this as a mode or practice that might be used by others to connect to their environment. I aimed to find synthetic sounds without the use of effects. I did utilize editing (copy/cut/paste and reorganization of sound content), which I suppose could be viewed as an

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<sup>61</sup>For the purposes of this paper/document, I clarify nature as the state of an environment with limited human manipulation. \*The neurotypical definition of human.

effect. While also keeping with the theme of treating video and audio as transmodal, I paired a video I captured at Concordia when walking through the Hall building (of a screen monitor that had been unplugged) with the vocal exploration audio.

*Challenging/Exploring Vocal Techniques, Aesthetics and Qualities.* The process consisted of exploring the sounds my voice/body could produce, without regard for musical aesthetics. Through improvisation and imitation of sounds in my environment I settled on glottal fry as a technique to produce material that could potentially sound (be perceived as) synthetic. I recorded these sounds with my phone and set out to compose with this material. The process of trying to select excerpts that by being extracted from their original auditory context could be perceived as a synthetic sound (not of the voice) proved rather difficult.

This piece is an exploration of my own techniques for dealing with sensory overstimulation. I speculate that many neurodivergent people experience overstimulation when confronted with the intensity of everyday stimuli, as their brains may not filter out stimuli in the same way neurotypical brains do, and these techniques may be useful in dealing with this. In Ben Belek's article, "I Feel, Therefore I Matter: Emotional Rhetoric and Autism Self-Advocacy", he notes that a "... heightened sensitivity to sensory stimuli was ubiquitous among the autistic people who contributed to [his] project." Belek elaborates the specifics of which stimuli caused the most discomfort varied amongst participants. He notes that sensory sensitivity "... has also been said to lead to valued skills and tendencies, such as an adoration of music, a fascination with geometric patterns, a keen sense of rhythm or an extraordinary visual perception" (Belek 2017). It is this innate fascination that may come with sensory sensitivity that I propose to take advantage of as a

practice. In my experience, by focusing on particular stimuli and by engaging with it, my mind is able to organize and resituate it in relation to the other stimuli—the various stimuli begin to move in relation—in composition with each other. This creative self-organization and fluid engagement with my environment brings me delight both in the subtle and harsh differences alike.

All the pieces I have briefly touched on thus far are attunements toward direct perception. Manning calls what I call direct perception “autistic perception,” stating that “autistic perception struggles with its necessary coexistence with neuro-typical perception” (2013, 177)—what I have been calling neurotypicality. She points out that “where neurotypical perception tends to quickly parse the object from the field of resonance, autistic perception tends to dwell in the shaping” (177). Though “we all chunk, and we all field, [ ] to different degrees, in varying ways” (Manning 2013, xxii), some individuals (like myself) who tend toward direct perception (autistic perception), who reside in this richness and movement, can often feel overwhelmed by sensory stimuli being that they may be unable to filter or parse to the same degree or in the same way as individuals tending toward neurotypicality (neurotypical perception). However with relevant techniques, such as my proposition of engaging with the very stimuli that may have initially caused discomfort (through co-composition) it can be minimized or even transformed into pleasure. Furthermore I propose that this “wide breadth of perceptual richness,” which Manning states can be “experienced by autistics—and also by neurotypicals, under certain conditions” (177), can be accessed via *quality* regardless of condition or neurotype inclinations. I propose focusing on quality as another technique that tends toward direct perception—especially because even with tendings toward neurotypicality, qualities are felt. Quality cuts across senses,

disciplines, and language. Additionally, my theory is that quality is a direct path to trans-sensory perception (direct perception). Quality is the: stickiness, texture, timbre, colour, shape, vibration, tonality, movement, directionality, intensity,<sup>62</sup>gesture, the impression of matter—“... bands of intensities, potentials, thresholds, and gradients” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 19). *The quality of moving with and through matter* (exploration # 13),<sup>63</sup>delves in and begins to further develop theories in regards to trans-sensation, trans-sense-time, and the non-body.

The hope in sharing this other languaging is to highlight how arts practices are ideal in investigating direct perception. Though it may not be articulated intentionally, art practices can often develop one’s awareness of trans-sense qualities; for example, a theatre group walking across the room as part of an exercise, imagining that they are walking through different substances (i.e. molasses, honey, etc); or a musician asked to imagine a similar scenario when bowing. When listening to music or looking at a painting or photograph, direct intensities are felt—movements of: gestures, timbres, colours, depths, contrasts, shapes. The qualities of these encounters cut across sensory categorizations, demanding a revised conceptual approach. The common paradigm of sensory categorization has been challenged across many research domains (Ingold 2011, 313-317; Massumi 2002; Pink 2010, 331-33). However it continues to be a dominating paradigm. If quality does not belong to categorical senses, if the senses are not felt as separate, or even in a body, perhaps it would be more useful to revise this dominating paradigm of categorizing the senses. Furthermore, if we can provide data that evidences that experiences of quality are trans-senory among neurodiverse groups, this might suggest that direct

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<sup>62</sup> “...in the beginning only experiences intensities, becomings, transitions ... pure intensities ... are all positive in relationship to the Zero intensity that designates the full body without organs” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 18-19).

<sup>63</sup> Exploration #13 includes: a paper, presentation/participatory proposition and close readings into Erin Manning and Brian Massumi’s work into these areas.

perception is accessible and experienced by all, despite perceptual conditioning (i.e. neurotypicality).

Theories of affect (such as those of Deleuze and Massumi) also lay useful groundwork for conceptualizing trans-sensation” in that they ““theorize the difference between affect and emotion’ (Massumi 2002, 28)—emotion as a ‘socio-linguistic fixing of the quality of an experience’ (Ellis and Tucker 2015, 165)”. I propose that the same distinction can be made between senses and affect—senses (smell, hearing, tasting, seeing, touching, etc) as conceptual constructs, produced in an attempt to conceive of intensities and quality.

## #6

Piece # 6 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NSBpMHhwwDYFQDO1QOrmtg4XKvzqC9fK/view?usp=drivesdk>

Materials/co-composers: The buzzing and humming inside Jean Talon metro as a drone, the sounds of the environment and space. Two musicians/performers who explored the space through their bodies, including vocally.

Exploration/proposition #6, 7, 10, and 13 are all designed for participants to extend the boundaries of their fielding toward an extended or even non-body worlding. Becoming as the event. This is done by facilitating a proposition that prompts collaboration with non-bodies through engaging with chaos/chance and qualities of the emerging event.

*Collaboration with non-bodies.* The definition of collaboration is context dependent. Our conventional idea of collaboration is usually one of collaboration that is intended for and usually involves other humans. It is commonly seen as a “... social aspect of performance-making” (Colin and Sachsenmaier 2016, 1), but what about other forms of collaboration? Collaboration can happen in many ways, such as collaboration with sounds and vibrations in our environment. Can we not enter a sort of dance with the vibrations in event-time or even later on in the artistic composition process? Does collaboration with others (non-bodies) have to be intended or can they occur by chance or initiated by circumstance? These pieces investigate techniques that can move beyond the “volition-intentionality-agency triad” (Manning 2016, 6). Such as chance/chaos/aleatoric (John Cage), magpie effect (force), gathering, collaboration of non-bodies/the pull of the event. By engaging with the qualities of each “singular yet generic” event, the distinction between the body and the event begins to disappear. The activity of previously solid forms can be felt and “the self and the non-self, outside and inside, no longer have any meaning whatsoever” (Deleuze and

Guattari 1987, 2). On a molecular level, categorical bodies; whether it be object, human, animal, etc; are energy and in constant reshaping—“always losing molecules and gaining molecules ... when we consider the question with microscopic accuracy, there is no definite boundary to determine where the body begins and external nature ends” (Whitehead 1968, 161). Furthermore, “the body requires the environment in order to exist. The collaboration of non-bodies accounts for this conceptual “unity of the body with the environment” and opens fields of perception (161).

*Chaos/Chance.* Engaging compositionally with chance and chaos as a prompt toward direct perception moves away from the questioning of who is composing—instead making felt the activity of “collective individuation”<sup>64</sup> (Manning 2013, 27). Also called “collective subjectivation,” “the term ‘collective’ should be understood in the sense of a multiplicity that deploys itself as much beyond the individual...” (Guattari 1995, 6, 9). What I am suggesting is that through chance/chaos, co-composition of the “more than human”,<sup>65</sup> the shaping of “ecologies”<sup>66</sup> can be felt (Manning). Often John Cage’s aleatoric music is described as a technique where “he deliberately wanted to remove the possibility of human influence from the creative process” (Thomas and Chan 2015, 311). This is a very simplistic, superficial, and reductive depiction of a technique that is far more radical than often described. If we look at the work itself, it is clear that what the technique is actually doing is returning the “human”<sup>67</sup> to the event. This return to the event means that the human/other hierarchy is no longer relevant—it does not mean

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<sup>64</sup> “There is no body that isn’t always already collective, always already active in the relational interweaving of more than one tending, more than one phase, more than one ecology in the making” (Manning 2013, 27).

<sup>65</sup> “More than human” logic of life-making events, immanent to their occurring” (Manning xxi).

<sup>66</sup> “More-than its taking-form, “body” is an ecology of processes ... always in co-constellation with the environmentality of which it is part” (Manning 19).

<sup>67</sup> Again, I am referring to the definition of human that is located in neurotypicality.

that bodies in the environment (event) have no influence. What his work removes is neurotypicality rather than human influence.

Proposition #6, is an attempt to design and facilitate a simple exploration, for artists of all disciplines, to investigate their engagement and attunement with an event in event-time. Or if starting from a framework of neurotypicality, how their inner and outer world can enter a seamless worlding through an embodied practice. To explore this inquiry, I asked three musicians (a cellist, a trumpet player, and a bagpiper) to participate in a 30 minute exploration at Jean Talon metro entrance. I had picked this location due to the entrance's distinct buzzing and humming sound—it had stuck with me for years waiting for the right opportunity to present itself. I will call this a location-event<sup>68</sup>. An event that seems to have a location tightly bound to it, and that is carried virtually in bodies over long durations. I felt strongly that the drone in the entrance would be useful in instigating event multiplicities to show themselves. Two musicians ultimately completed the investigation, the cellist and bagpiper specifically. It was so cold they were unable to use their instruments. The winterness of the event informed their bodies on how to take part in the worlding.

Participants were encouraged to "... observe all noises attentively ...", as this would "... give them not only the understanding but also the passion and taste for noises" (Cox and Warner 2017, 14). They began by walking around the space, noticing the specific qualities of their environment, "... the act of listening..." as what one could call "auditory explorers" (Cox and Warner 2017, xiii), after which, they began engaging with their environment by resonating with the vibrations of the space. In the introduction of *Audio Culture Readings in Modern Music*, Cox and Warner ask "how do musical practices within the new audio culture complicate the definition of 'music' and its distinction from 'silence,' 'noise,' and 'sound'?" (xv). The exploration was

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<sup>68</sup> Robert Irwin calls this "site-conditioning" (12).

intended to facilitate the investigation of these distinctions. But one may ask, why are these distinctions worth investigating? Because having an appreciation for a wider variety of complex sounds unlocks perceptual limitations.

Through explorations such as the one documented in the video above (#6), techniques and practices are foregrounded that offer an opportunity for the participants to listen to, and interact with, the various stimuli they encounter—as well as experiment with transdisciplinary modes of what Jaques Attali describes as the “articulation of a space” (7). A broader creative palette may be acquired when we transcend what Edgard Varèse locates as the three conventional dimensions in music: horizontal, vertical and dynamic (19). In *The Liberation of Sound*, he offers that we expand and focus on timbre, texture, and musical space by engaging with what he calls “zones of intensities” which include the “... various timbres, or colors and different loudnesses” (18, 19). “Side-stepping the conventional distinction between ‘music and ‘noise,’” Varèse moves us towards a “... movement of sound masses, of shifting planes” (17). Building on this conceptual shift, what if we expanded on his definition of music as organized sound and opened it beyond categorical senses (touch, sight, smell etc). What if the new conceptual model of composition accounted for transsensory and transmodal fielding? Piece #6 articulates this shift. Extended bodies composing with the event—bodies that make music through movement/vibrations of all kinds. Vibrations that are felt, not heard. The resonances multiplying and forever bouncing in the shifting negative spaces of non-bodies (event-bodies<sup>69</sup>) in movement, what manning calls mobile architecture<sup>70</sup>.

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<sup>69</sup> I feel this is the correct term. From this point forward, instead of non-bodies I will use the term event-bodies.

<sup>70</sup> “A mobile architecture in chapter 5 - an architecting of spacetimes of experience coemergent with bodies in the making” (Manning 2013, 81). When a mobile architecture is activated “we experience movement's contrast more than its taking-form” (Manning 2013, 83). “Manning's “concept of ‘mobile architectures’ as another way of conceiving the choreographic when it becomes an event not for the individual body but for the ontogenetic architecting of environments in the moving” (100).

Developing one's taste towards a more complex and full-ranging palette is important as it encourages openness to neurodiversity. As Jacques Attali explains, "all music, any organization of sounds is [ ] a tool for the creation or consolidation of a community, of a totality" (7). Practices such as the one evidenced in this video, "... destabilize the obvious, and push aesthetic and conceptual sensibilities to their limits" (Cox and Warner 2017, xvi). There seems to be so much resistance in general to anything atypical. But why is the atypical so offensive? As Cox and Warner point out, theorists of totalitarianism have explained that "... it is necessary to ban subversive noise because it betokens demands for cultural autonomy, support for differences or marginality..." (8). This is precisely why noise and silence are so important in working towards neuro-inclusive performing and creative arts practices. Morton Feldman articulates the importance well, "it is only noise which we secretly want, because the greatest truth usually lies behind the greatest resistance" (15). Dan Warburton updates this sentiment with, "noise may have lost its power to offend. Silence hasn't" (Cox and Warner 2017, 4). This piece attempts to evidence the development of a practice that is working towards this openness and inclusivity of what is considered sound, noise, silence and, of course, music.

Neurodiverse practices are practices that reside in the complexity, richness, and movement of experience. Quality, transdisciplinarity (non-categorical), and the collaboration of (what I will now call) event-bodies, are three techniques, or as I prefer to call them, *entries* that facilitate neurodiverse modes of encounter by activating trans-sensation/direct perception—making felt the

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field of experience in its emergence. The breadth and depth of these techniques (entries) are in the work itself—in the doing—they are in the event.

#7

Proposition # 7: Trial #1 [Practice as Research Exploration Trial #1](#)

Trial #2 [20190207\\_170344.mp4](#)

Trial #1 took place during my first graduate course at Concordia University, with Dr. Louis Patrick Leroux, in his 2018 summer intensive: *Studies in Drama, Research-Creation Methods in Contemporary Circus and Theatre*. Below is an excerpt from my final paper that included some reflections on the proposition. Though this excerpt feels cringey to include, now that I have a vocabulary that helps communicate the thinking-doing of this thesis with more refinement, it is included regardless of the awkwardness, because it exhibits that there are dynamics at play in the coexistence of neurodiversity and neurotypicality. The struggle is felt in this writing, the desire of neurodiversity bumping up against neurotypicality's capture.

Excerpt from the paper *Moving Towards Neuro-Inclusivity in Graduate Research through Methodological Shifts:*

During this seminar, I designed and facilitated an exploration that would embody a multitude of experiences and perspectives. The exploration was completed by both knowing participants and bystanders who were unknowingly participating. The individuals began from their own physical and internal standpoint, which informed their actions in real time and how they moved through the world.

In “The Dance of Hermeneutics” Luis Garagalza describes reality as having; “... an open and dynamic character, which is relational or, better yet, co-relational. The reality and its

interpreter enter into a relation and dance together: more or less together, as the case may be” (64). This dance that he describes is what we were paying attention to in the exploration. The goal was not to connect, but to notice this “dance,” the range of textures and the movement of connecting to oneself and one's environment. Garagalza goes on to say that “the scientific dancer dances alone, keeping his distance; the mytho-poetic dancer seeks more contact, proximity, fusion. Still, this is a special kind of dance, because, in the course of dancing, the dancers are transformed” (64). In this exploration, the ‘dancers’ included all physical entities (objects, space, people etc) along with their distinct properties and inner worlds as part of the environment. This transformation Garagalza speaks of is evident in the observations and interviews collected. A wide range of personalities and approaches highlighted a common theme which was that, in fact, each person, regardless of their inclinations and positioning, experienced a transformation of their environment and, for many, of their state.

Some individuals who feel more comfortable performing found themselves trying to make the exploration a performance — whereas the individuals who were more focused on using the exercise to explore their connection to their environment found themselves, for example, literally vocally resonating into a concrete pillar to see how it would vibrate back.

In all cases, no matter the viewpoint, each person noticed the distinct variations of resonances (harmonious as well as dissonant) between themselves and their environment which included people, objects and the space itself — making this exploration inclusive and effective for all those who are willing to explore the relationship between their inner and outer world.

To make evident and disseminate the findings I went straight to the source and interviewed each person willing to share their experience. Once collected, I listened to the experiences and used excerpts combined with a video documenting the first trial of the

exploration. This video was meant as a glimpse into the research (Anderson; Coulson; Duprat; Hoak; Jiménez; Leroux and O'Brien). [https://youtu.be/B7aVL6GWl\\_I](https://youtu.be/B7aVL6GWl_I)

Below is a folder with the full interview recordings:

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1hEKz0q1vnZ4OKS\\_vD\\_kwRpExifJMIXJJ](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1hEKz0q1vnZ4OKS_vD_kwRpExifJMIXJJ)

The second trial played a double role: it was the next stage in the research as well as a presentation articulating and evidencing the research up to that point. Attached are the slides I prepared for the presentation that include the research inquiry (or aim of investigation) and the description/directions of the exploration.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1k1Pn66A4lrREzQIcgFYm6rKwVgALklDo>

I asked all to participate in whatever capacity felt comfortable. The exploration was designed so that even people who did not follow the directions were still very much a part of the experience. Again after the explorations I asked anyone who was willing to send me a brief description of their experience to do so via email. Below are some excerpts to demonstrate the variety of experiences and perspectives that occurred during this particular trial. Here are some thoughts Madeline Hoak had during her exploration:

I'm tired.

I can already predict that I'm going to have to make a choice.

If I start walking, I'll collide paths with Alisan.

I'm too tired to collide.

As soon as people started moving I got pulled by the collective energies.

Like how cyclists use the drag created by the person in front of them.

I was immediately swept into Zita's path. She was a strong leader and it was easier to follow her energetic pathway.

And it solved the problem of crossing Alisan's path.

The paths remind me of the silver tubes that come out of the boy in Donny Darko.

I walked.

I stood still.

Whenever I hum I'm surprised at how low it is. I always expect a higher tone. My own voice surprises me. Omms in yoga class are this way too.

I was relaxed. It felt good to be still.

I wished I didn't have to breathe to reset my hum. I wish it could have just kept vibrating uninterrupted.

In Valentine Remel's description of her experience she described how painful it was for the exercise to end so abruptly.

In my group I felt like we didnt [sic] start together so it was hard to keep feeling them. But I was well connect [sic] to the inside and let my gesture appear from them [sic]. I thought it was funny to see [sic] audience trying to enter the building then seeing something was happening they just turn away deciding to go around the building. The sound of everyone was amazinh [sic], it started si [sic] subtle that i didbt [sic] know if people where [sic] doing and then it was very beautiful like we were really all together from different groups. Thzn [sic] we got cut off because of time and it was painfull [sic]. I felt teared appart [sic] from my group. So maybe in some inconciius [sic] way we had connected.

Considering that it is impossible to predict all the factors in advance, it is important to do the exploration, reflect on the feedback and then adjust the exploration to make sure the emotional risks taken by the participants are respected. In this sense, PaR and research-creation are bound by the inherent properties of creation, including the process of negotiating the various constraints

and limitations that will come up and the fact that nothing will ever go the way you plan it (Rockhill 2017, 67). Keeping this in mind, it is possible to find grounding in the flexibility of a holistic multimodal approach.

With that said, this experience of being torn away was in itself useful to the participant Valentine Remel in noticing her connection to the environment. Perhaps allowing for interruptions is effective as it is part of the inner and outer world experience.

Lua Barreto describes what she observed:

It was very interesting to observe the experience.

People feel afraid of what seems a bit different. The performers wasn't [sic] wearing different clothes or doing nothing [sic] very different, just walking in a different state of concentration. Yet, people turned around them e [sic] avoid to pass between them. That means that people had indentificate [sic] them as a group. The only way to turn around something is to identificate [sic] their boundaries, and the people who was [sic] passing did. So, the only thing to identificate [sic] those performers as a group was the state of concentration. So, maybe you have something to discuss with the directress (I'm not sure if it is a real word) of the first group, who was asking about the state of concentration.

Lua Barreto, as an observer, noticed the shift in atmosphere from doing something as simple as paying attention to one's engagement with oneself and the environment.

Evelyn Coulson was part of both the first and second trial of the exploration:

I enjoyed seeing the contrast in my behaviour and feelings.

So this time I felt a lot slower in my movement. Actually I was pretty content not moving for ages and not bothered by what was happening around me. I eventually ran into a board (the ones with all the research creation explanations on it). At this point I could no reach

out or make any gestures as I essentially had my nose on the board. I kind of liked that though because the enforced awkwardness of facing a board and being super close to it meant that I did not feel any pressure to perform or succeed at the task of gesturing out. Then the om noise. I also felt more comfortable with it this time. And it was like a rolling om to me this time where the noise continued but not everyone was oming at the same time. It felt more natural this time around.

And then of course the exercise ended abruptly so there was that!

As part of a mixed-mode approach, Nelson talks about the importance of documentation and complementary writing (70). Although he does not expressly say that the most valuable resource are the participants in evidencing and articulating a research inquiry, I believe this to be the case. It is for this reason that I have included direct quotes instead of paraphrasing the participants' experiences. There is as much information in *how* one says what they say as there is in the content. Additionally, by attempting to paraphrase participants' experiences, one is infusing their own subjectivity, therefore, the tradition of paraphrasing could benefit from some repositioning.

Trial #2 [20190207\\_170344.mp4](#)



Trial #2 materials/co-composers: participants from the course *The Production of Subjectivity* with professor Dr. Erin Manning at the Senselab. The video production studio research space. My phone's video camera. The left over objects in the space from previous activities.

Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19

#8

Piece # 8 [Bubbles.mp4](#)

Materials/co-composers: phone camera, bubbles from a drink, trumpet, waterfall in sherbrooke, and an egg slicer.



*Figure 20*



*Figure 21*

#9

Piece # 9 [Glass Vibrations.mp4](#) — Materials/co-composers: glasses, sunlight



Figure 22



Figure 23



Figure 24

#10

Piece/Schizz proposition # 10

Materials/co-composers: stairwell EV building, Concordia; participants from senselab, phone video camera.



Figure 25

#11

Piece #11 [There are no objects just movement.mp4](#)

Materials/co-composers: phone, kettle, senselab environment, garageband, cello (Anthime), j.n.m. redelinghuys.



Figure 26



Figure 27

#12

Piece #12 [Between.mp4](#)

Materials/co-composers: backpack, metro atmosphere, Tyler's voice, piano, glockenspiel, my voice.



*Figure 28*

#13

Exploration #13 Moving with and through matter

Materials/co-composers: Elmer's Glue, laundry detergent, contact lens solution (for the borax), corn starch, water, food colouring, glitter, containers, caramel, scented jelly beads, coins, store-bought slime and playdough.

The following is the paper written at the time of the exploration in regards to this proposition/exploration.

Sheena Bennett

Professor Eldad Tsabary

INDI 820 A Experim Perf & Creat Arts II

21 August 2019

### The Quality of Moving With and Through Matter

As part of LePARC | Embodied Interventions event, I spent a week working with non-newtonian fluids<sup>71</sup> and other matter, investigating the sensation/perception of quality as the felt virtual/actual event of trans-sensation—more specifically looking at the quality and sensation of moving with/through matter. The exploration led to a participatory proposition<sup>72</sup> presented on May 19th, 2019 in the black box theatre at Concordia. Participants were invited to engage with slime, oobleck, caramel and other substances to investigate the question: "What would you name the quality of moving through matter?" Participants were asked to write their ideas on a provided bristol board.

The following paper will highlight some of the insights, themes and inquiries that arose from this theoretical-embodied research, including Trans-sensation, Trans-Sense-Time, and the Leaky Body/Non-Body.

The materials used for my explorations and proposition included: Elmer's Glue, laundry detergent, contact lens solution (for the borax), corn starch, water, food colouring, glitter, containers, caramel, scented jelly beads, coins, store-bought slime and playdough.

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<sup>71</sup> “Oobleck is a non-newtonian fluid. That is, it acts like a liquid when being poured, but like a solid when a force is acting on it”. <https://www.instructables.com/id/Oobleck/>

<sup>72</sup> Erin Manning discusses what propositions are in her article *Creative Propositions for Thought in Motion*, describing propositions as “thoughts in motion. A proposition is a lure for concept formation, an alliance that forces the relational taking-form of a work in progress” (Manning 2008, 17). “Propositions oscillate between potential and actualization”. “A proposition is never a judgment. Nor is it necessarily true . . . propositions move the concept into action”. ‘What I know now is that the body is more than the body,’ writes Clark.” (18). “A feeling is never personal; it is a movement of thought, a quality of relation becoming-active, a force of will” (18).

The proposition was documented through video (fig. 29) and photographs (fig. 30), which became data to help give context and substantiate emerging insights, which I will later discuss.

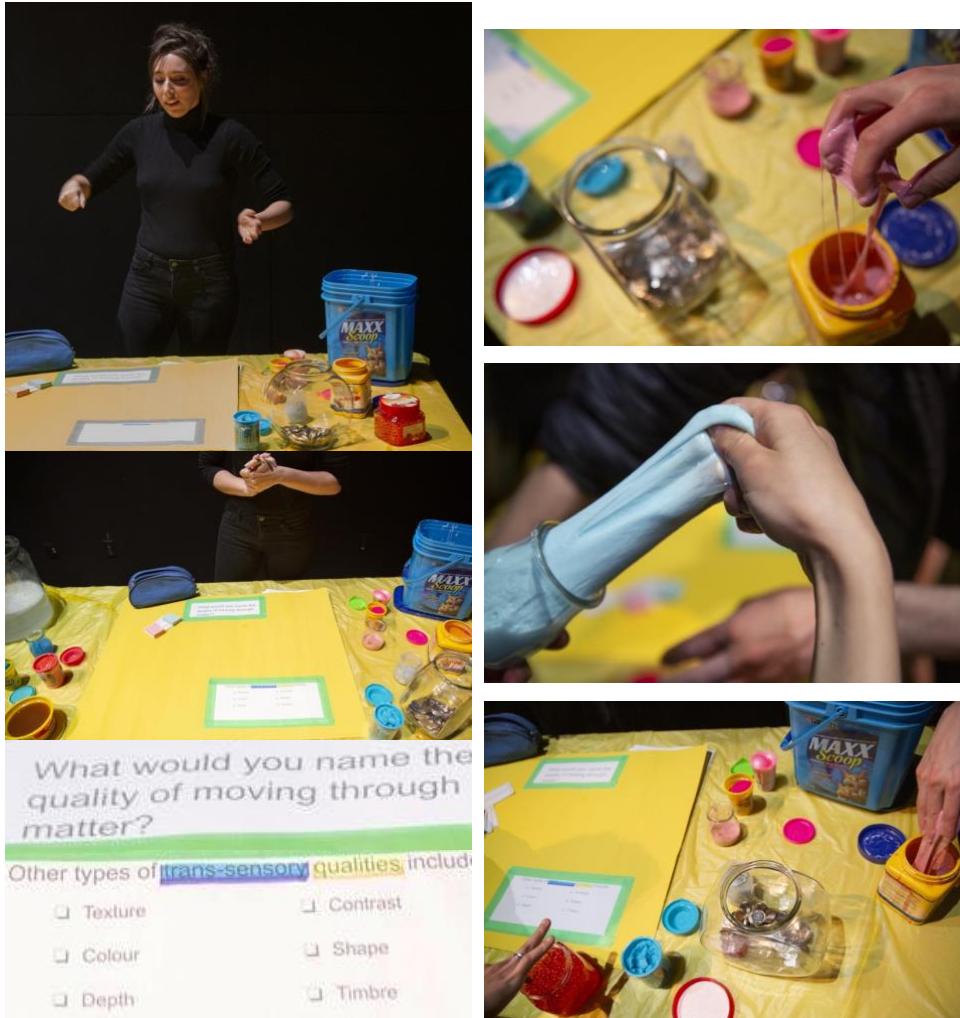


Figure 29: video documentation; LePARC | Embodied Interventions, 19 May 2019, access at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FO1pTgxXNCDKyXoAT6TQToExm4IfwbI/view?usp=sharing>

The following contributions from participants, were written on the bristol board provided (see fig. 3). Words and themes brought to mind included: “viscosity”, “resistance”, “density”, “penetrating”, “tactile travel”, “haptic merging”, “blobing [sic]”, “gravity”. One anonymous

participant wrote, “you become the material as you move through it. Mutation/demutation”. Other data collected included references to people and concepts of interest, such as “Fahrrad Becker, haptic sound” (the participant wrote: “dependent on your interaction/force applied to it”). I could not find anything on Fahrrad Becker. Haptic sound on the other hand, proved relevant to the investigation. The haptic system, by the Gibsonian definition is “the perceptual system by which animals and men are *literally* in touch with the environment” (Ballas 1). Another anonymous participant referenced “Teatro de los sentidos, Carlos . . . ?, Barcelona, (colombian theatre maker).” Enrique Vargas may have been the Colombian playwright and anthropologist the participant was referring to. His theatre company, *Teatro de los sentidos* (Theater of the Senses), is a group of “artists and researchers, [who] work in multiple disciplines . . . [who] together have developed a practice that relates the languages of feeling, the poetics of play and creation” (Teatro De Los Sentidos website), and they are interested in body and sensory communication.

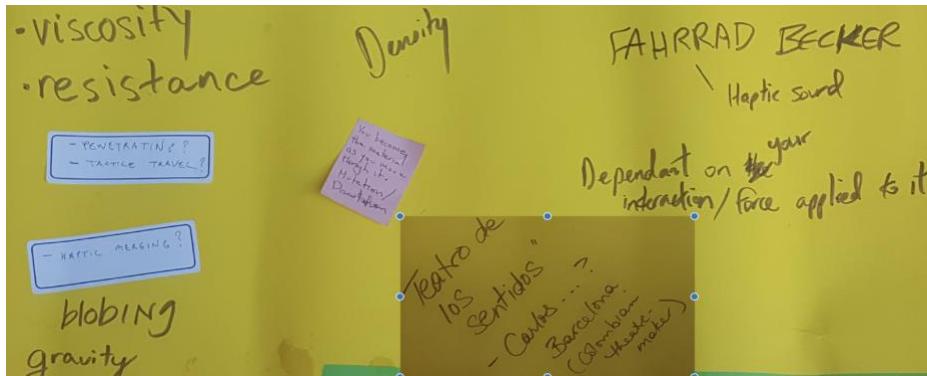


Figure 30: Photographic documentation; LePARC | Embodied Interventions May 19th 2019

This proposition aimed to investigate the feeling of the quality of moving through or with matter, hypothesizing that the quality would be felt/experienced<sup>73</sup> as trans-sensory (a pure qualitative, pre-categorization sensation).

Though it may not be articulated intentionally, art practices can often develop one's awareness of trans-sense qualities; for example, a theatre group walking across the room as part of an exercise, imagining that they are walking through different substances (i.e. molasses, honey, etc); or a musician asked to imagine a similar scenario when bowing. When listening to music or looking at a painting or photograph, direct intensities are felt—movements of: gestures, timbres, colours, depths, contrasts, shapes. The qualities of these encounters cut across sensory categorizations, demanding a revised conceptual approach. The common paradigm of sensory categorization has been challenged across many research domains (Ingold 2011 313-317, Massumi 2002, Pink 2010, 331-33). However it continues to be a dominating paradigm. If quality does not belong to categorical senses, if the senses are not felt as separate, or even in a body, perhaps it would be more useful to revise this dominating paradigm of categorizing the senses. Furthermore, if we can provide data that evidences that experiences of quality are trans-senory among neurodiverse groups, this might suggest that direct perception is accessible and experienced by all despite levels of perceptual conditioning (i.e. neurodiverse).

The common paradigm of sensory categorization has been challenged across many research domains. Despite this, there remains a continued resistance in moving towards concepts of trans-sensation. For example, Tim Ingold calls for a

re-focusing of a sensory anthropology on experience and perception. Drawing on the philosophy of perception (Merleau-Ponty) and ecological psychology (Gibson), Ingold's

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<sup>73</sup> John Dewey in his book *Art As Experience*, when talking about two theories of sense qualities says that they are both lacking in that they “seperate the live creature from the world in which it lives” (103).

work suggested that separating out sensory modalities as Howes proposed situates them in disembodied ‘culture’ and is incompatible with an anthropology that understands learning and knowing as situated in embodied practice and movement. (Ingold, cited in Pink 2010 332)

Despite there being momentum in academics moving towards an understanding of the senses that is based in perception and movement, there are still academics (such as David Howes) who refuse to let go of previous frameworks (neurotypical frameworks).

In David Howes’s 2010 article titled “Response to Sarah Pink,”<sup>74</sup> he defends the notion of categorizing the senses, supporting the usefulness of the abundance of research that examines the relationships among the (categorized) senses. David Howes said, a “third ‘straw man’ set up by Pink is that the anthropology of the senses insists on ‘separating out sensory modalities’. Although this approach may at times be useful, the emphasis in the anthropology of the senses, particularly in recent work, has rather been on the relationships among the senses” (Howes 2010, 334). Howes continues to miss the point, which is of trans-sensation (the decategorization of sensation located in the body). In Sarah Pink’s article (which Howes was responding to) “The future of sensory anthropology/the anthropology of the senses,” she said, “that recent work by neurologists suggests that understandings based on the idea of differentially sensing modalities attached to specific sense

<sup>74</sup> This section is referring to the “academic jousting [that is] less than appealing” (Pink 2010, 336) that Sarah Pink and Tim Ingold were obliged to engage in because Howes was unable to think neurodiversely. Beginning with Sarah Pink’s article “The future of sensory anthropology/the anthropology of the senses,” which referenced Tim Ingold’s work and Howes. Then came: Howes’ “Response to Sarah Pink,” Pink’s “Response to David Howes,” and Ingold’s “Worlds of sense and sensing the world: a response to Sarah Pink and David Howes.” And most recently, the 2022 Ingold “Response to David Howes,” which opens with:

I doubt there is anyone who has read Ingold’s work more closely and carefully than have I’. With these words, David Howes commences his summing up of the case for the prosecution. For me, the defendant, it begs two questions. First, if he has read my work as closely and carefully as he claims, how come that he makes such a hash of representing it? And second, if the work is as flawed as he believes, why has he wasted so much time on it? (2022, 336)

organs should be replaced by understandings of the senses as interconnected in human perception” (332). “The five senses do not travel along separate channels, but interact to a degree few scientists would have believed only a decade ago” (Cytowic 46, Cited in Pink 2010, 332).

Tim Ingold, (whom both Howes and Pink referenced) also wrote a response article called *Worlds of sense and sensing the world: a response to Sarah Pink and David Howes* pointing out his distorted thinking and hostile approach.

In the course of their debate, both Pink and Howes refer to a chapter, entitled ‘Stop, look and listen!’, which I wrote for my book *The Perception of the Environment* (Ingold 2000: 243–87). But whereas Pink cites the chapter in support of her argument, for Howes it clearly strikes a raw nerve, for he proceeds to launch into a catalogue of disagreements, as though the mere citation of my work were enough to render Pink guilty by association of all the sins and errors he attributes to me. I, likewise, am condemned for referring to the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. With Howes, you have to be careful whom you cite, because if they happen to be on his hit list, you’re fired! Since, in the course of delivering his verdict, and not for the first time (e.g., 2003: 239–40, n.8), Howes has distorted my arguments almost beyond recognition, I would like to take this opportunity to set the record straight. (313)

This debate is an example of resistance around the de-categorization of the senses, which exists across many research domains. With this context, I will proceed to set up my study's conceptual foundations of tran-sensation, trans-sense-time and the non-body.

Tran-sensation, as I define it, is not simply the transfer among senses nor the transcendence above any single sense. It is the rejection and restructuring of the idea that senses are inherently perceived (inputted) categorically—as separate senses that can infiltrate each other (as in

synesthesia: “the cross-integration of senses due to cross-connectivity within the brain” (Hellier 44))<sup>75</sup>. I am suggesting that trans-sensory perception is direct experience before conditioning takes hold, cements and deadens what is fluid and alive—before it distorts and falsifies experience. Trans-sensory perception is the stickiness, the texture, the timbre, the colour, the vibrations, the tonality, the movement, the impression of matter. Furthermore, this understanding of trans-sensation rejects the emotion/sensory split and emphasizes the unity of experience (\*see affect later). It positions sensation and emotion as a complex unity of feeling and feeling as a “force, in the event, that lures experience into a tendency-to-form” (Manning 2016, 133-134). A force of potentiality that can ignite innovation and creativity.

Hellier states that “[i]t is hypothesized that abnormal or cross-modal connectivity results in inappropriate structural links between the sensory modalities of touch and hearing” (Hellier 2016, 44). By not distinguishing between learned and direct perception, and by not accounting for diversity, Hellier is positioning *learned perception* (or practiced neural pathways) as “normal” and pathologizing *direct perception*. Learned perception is conditioned categorical thinking, filtering, and bunching, whereas direct perception (ie. autistic perception) “does not parse out or select” (Manning 2016, 138). Hellier says that:

Colors and music have very few sensory similarities in common. Color is visual, music is auditory; color has the properties of hue, lightness, and vividness; music has the properties of pitch, timbre, tempo, and rhythm—but both share aspects of emotion. Happy emotion is

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<sup>75</sup> Here is a brief excerpt showing the different ways in which academics continue to find conceptual frameworks and terms to avoid de-categorizing the senses: “complex interrelations and interactions between sensory modalities previously thought to be distinct. Contrasts between modalities and other crossmodal phenomena, including multisensory integration, synesthesia, and sensory substitution, have also begun to receive more attention in a burgeoning scientific and philosophical literature on multisensory perception and other crossmodal effects” (Wilson and Macpherson). Another example is the attempt to gain knowledge about perception, sensation and qualities outside of through signification: Austen Clark claims that he has a strategy to “explain qualitative facts. He argues that this strategy could succeed: its structure is sound.

correlated with bright yellows (sunshine), anger with red (red faces and bloodshed from violence), and depression with grays and darker colors (under a cloud or a rainy day). For most people, whether they are chromesthetes or not, music tends to elicit an emotional response. (102)

Hellier's perspective inherently devalues neurodiverse perception. It is reductive in that it does not account for the complexities, connectedness, and the ways in which direct perception is non-categorical. Some brains are more easily susceptible to conditioning and thus the ability to simplify experience via filtering and categorical thinking. This *ability* however, is learned, and should not be confused with direct experience. In *The Minor Gesture*, Erin Manning labels this non-conditioned or pre-conditioned rich perception, which holds the complexity of experience, as "autistic perception" ("this capacity to directly perceive experience in-forming, what I am calling autistic perception, involves a continuous carrying, a moving-with of experience in the making" (Manning 2016, 132)). I propose the term "direct perception" instead, as not to attribute such perception to a group, nor to engage with terms that originate from deeply pathologizing narratives.

Autistic perception is the opening, in perception, to the uncategorized, to the unclassified. This opening, which is how many autistics describe their experience of the world, makes it initially difficult to parse the field of experience. Rather than seeing the parts abstracted from the whole, autistic perception is alive with tendings that create ecologies before they coalesce into form. There is here as yet no hierarchical differentiation, for instance, between color, sound, light, between human and nonhuman, between what connects to the body and what connects to the world. When we engage in practice, when we are subsumed by process, we often seek this kind of perception, and it is available to us all: autistic

perception does not belong exclusively to autistics. The difference is that, except in extreme circumstances, most of us parse experience before having a direct experience of the field in its complexity. The autistic, on the other hand, directly perceives the complexity before (and between) the parsings (Manning 2016, 14).

Theories of affect (such as those of Deleuze and Massumi) may lay useful groundwork for conceptualizing trans-sensation. Massumi believes that it is “crucial to theorize the difference between affect and emotion” (2002, 28)—emotion as a “socio-linguistic fixing of the quality of an experience” (Ellis and Tucker 2015, 165). He states that “emotion is qualified intensity” (2002, 28). From my reading, emotion is a symbolic categorization of affect—it is a reductionist habit to understand or simplify (by signification) the complex, rhizomatic nature of affect.

To embrace and effectively engage with complexity requires a certain psychological openness from individuals and institutions, especially when in transition from a predominantly reductionist paradigm. This openness can be described as a willingness to accept, engage with, and internalize the different perspectives, even paradigms, to be encountered when dealing with diverse participants in an interdisciplinary situation. An open frame of mind requires conscious acceptance that notions such as ambiguity, unpredictability, serendipity, and paradox will compete strongly, and legitimately, with knowledge, science, and fact. (Rogers et al. 2013)

I propose that the same distinction can be made between senses and affect—senses (smell, hearing, tasting, seeing, touching, etc) as conceptual constructs produced in attempt to conceive of intensities. The “linguistically, logically, narratological, ideologically, or all these in combination, as a Symbolic)” approach to understanding relation<sup>76</sup> are incomplete as they only operate on the

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<sup>76</sup> On the topic of relation here are some useful descriptions surrounding relation from Erin Manning: “The event, through which new ecologies, new fields of relation are crafted” (19). “The undercommons is a tentative holding in

semiotic or semantic level (Massumi 2002, 27). “What we lose, precisely, is the expression event—in favor of structure. Much could be gained by integrating the dimension of intensity into cultural theory. For structure is the place where nothing ever happens” (Massumi 2002 27).

Massumi states that “[t]he dimension of proprioception lies midway between stimulus and response, in a region where infolded tactile encounter meets externalizing response lathe qualities gathered by all five senses. It performs a synthesis of those intersecting pathways in the medium of the flesh, thus opened to its own quasi corporeality” (2002, 61). Although Massumi is dancing around the acknowledgment of trans-sensation, he is arriving at it from the mixing of senses, ie. synesthesia. He calls this mixing of input “mesoperception”, the “body's registration of the in-betweenness of the incorporeal event . . . Mesoperception is the synesthetic sensibility: it is the medium where inputs from all five senses meet . . . sense shades into another over the failure of each, their input translated into movement and affect” (62). He states that “Mesoperception can be called *sensation* for short” (62).

What I am suggesting is that sensation may not arrive from separate sources, the stimuli we take in may be direct intensity and not differentiated by source (i.e. skin, eyes, ears, etc). Furthermore, I suggest that sensation is affect is direct perception is intensity in movement, is felt change—they cannot be separated experientially and therefore should not be conceptually differentiated. To be more clear, the construct/products of sensation/affect that we call “emotions” and “senses” are products of categorical thinking. It may not be accurate to differentiate between emotion and senses if they are not located in direct perception. Primary emotion, “in the beginning only experiences intensities, becomings, transitions” (Deleuze and Guattari 1897, 18-19).

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place of fragile comings-into-relation, physical and virtual, that create the potential to reorient fields of life-living” (Manning 2016 8). “The activation of a new field of relation” (18). “It is always altered by the ecologies that create this singular field of relation, and that influence how it will unfold this time” (19).

Using the example from before, when imaging yourself walking through (or with) honey there may be the sensation of something I will call trans-sense-time. The duration qualities that accompany the previously mentioned trans-sensory qualities. The felt durational qualities, all at once, of: the moment of encounter with the honey, as well as the quality of the resistance, and the quality of the ripple impression of leaving the honey behind (the base-relief of your body and honey shaping each other).

Trans-sense-time is topological; “Topology is the science of self-varying deformation . . . the continuous transformation”—“Topological unity is, in and of itself; multiple” (Massumi 2002, 134). Trans-sense-time is the feltness of overlapping variations of the qualities or essence of durations.

Trans-sense-time is undivided sensation—the felt multiplicity of ever emerging qualities and durational essences (transparent emergent layers of future memory, future present, etc). Undivided sensation is both felt (experienced) and a force driving the event— transient, always in forming but never formed.

The quality of duration is manifold, it is the qualities of the past and future all felt within the moment; “pastness opening directly onto a future, but with no present to speak of. For the present is . . . passing too quickly to be perceived” (Massumi 2002, 30). It is both actual and virtual. Which begs the question, can we perceive the present? Perhaps not, since “the virtual as having a different temporal structure, in which past and future brush shoulders with no mediating present” (Massumi 2002, 31). Manning calls this "event-time, the nonlinear lived duration of experience in the making" (15). What I am proposing is developing these concepts of experiential duration by understanding trans-sensation as an integral part of event-time and as inseparable from durational intensities (ie. affect).

Affect is intensity—the felt expression-event (Massumi 2002, 27). It is embodied-virtual experience—it edges on the conscious but remains in the peripheral, just out of reach in its abstractness, in its movement. Brian Massumi calls this Parable, “a word for the ‘real but abstract’ incorporality of the body is the virtual” (21). He goes on to say that the “insensible body is a truly continuous body” and that the “ultimate paradox of the dynamic unity of movement and sensation [is that] the unity is purely virtual” (21). Trans-sense-time exists in the parable, in the actual-virtual-abstract. Walking through or with honey is embodied-virtual experience without a body—the sensation, the intensities of matter without form. Differentiating between the matter of your body and of the honey are indistinguishable in trans-sense-time.

A word about scientific paradigms: Guattari states that his “perspective involves shifting the human and social sciences from scientific paradigms towards ethico-aesthetic paradigms” (Guattari 1995, 10). Because one must admit that scientific paradigms should “be considered in terms of the production of subjectivity” (Guattari 1995, 11). If perception is the filter and/or lens that structures experience, we must consider that there is diversity of perception, and scientific paradigms are constructs that derive from popular productions of subjectivity. Popular paradigms are not any more true than less popular paradigms, they are just more widely accepted. Summarily, though the grand majority neurologically perceive and experience the senses as separate and located in distinct parts of the body, this neurological mechanism which separates, signifies, and organizes, is not a shared experience for all. For some, their perception is far more saturated with complexity. This is not a deficit, although it is commonly recounted as such in popular narratives. It is a broader perceptual faculty and requires enormous fortitude to hold such complexity and move with it.

In this section, I will briefly outline Manning's concept of the leaky body and explain why I propose a revised concept of a *non-body*, beyond relation, located in movement. I would however, like to acknowledge first that I do believe Manning and I are describing the same perspective on perception and I am simply suggesting a minor conceptual adjustment. Moreover, I recommend embodied (or perhaps 'disembodied', if we are to go with the non-body concept) propositions as a platform for further inquiry into direct perception.

Erin Manning's book *Always More Than One*, with her chapters "Toward a Leaky Sense of Self", "When Movement Dances" and "Always More Than One", proposes that "[d]irect experience takes place not in the subject or in the object, but in the relation itself" (Manning 2013, 3). She explains that bodying is collective and in continuous flux. Collective, including the more-than-human; "The non-human part of subjectivity" is in fact better described as more than human, meaning that it takes into consideration "social machines of language and the mass media" producing subjectivity (Guattari 1995, 9). "The term 'collective' should be understood in the sense of a multiplicity that deploys itself as much beyond the individual" (Guattari 1995, 9). And in flux, in that "the world also tends toward the becoming-body. Body-worlding is much more than containment, much more than envelope" (Manning 2013, 2). In her words, "[s]elf is a modality-, a singularity on the plane of individuation-always on the way toward new foldings" (Manning 3). Daniel Stern, in *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*, rejects "Freudian complexes" and calls to attention the "the emergent phases of subjectivity . . . an infant's early experiences, which do not dissociate the feeling of self from the other" (Guattari 1995, 6). "Stern proposes that selves build onto and through one another in intimate relation with a changing environment" (Manning 2013 4). This extended body is the leaky body, it is also a non-body.

Brian Massumi says, “[l]ook only at the movements—and they will bring you to matter” (Massumi 2002, 206)—“the real-material-but-incorporeal is to say it is to the body, as a positioned thing, as energy is to matter” (Massumi 2002, 5). I propose we switch it around: look only at matter—and it will bring you to movement. As questioned above, who is moving who? Can we and should we make such a differentiation between bodies of matter and their relation? Would there be a way to look at movement without this fluid account of bodying? In considering neurodiverse perception, the sensing of self or bodies are not a given. The leaky body as such is not self contained nor is it concrete, it is virtual-actual, “to think the body in movement thus means accepting the paradox that there is an incorporeal dimension of the body” (Massumi 2002, 5); Massumi suggests that “new paths might be found by letting go of the sterile opposition between the abstract and the concrete and its fellow-traveler, the subjective and objective” (Massumi 2002, 206).

Erin Manning skillfully encompasses much of what I am attempting to articulate in a couple sentences:

When the skin becomes not a container but a multidimensioned topological surface that folds in, through, and across spacetimes of experience, what emerges is not a self but the dynamic form of a worlding that refuses categorization. Beyond the human, beyond the sense of touch or vision, beyond the object, what emerges is relation. (2013, 12)

The concept I would add to, or perhaps revise, is the term ‘relation’. For me, in order to have *relation* we must first have form. Which is why I propose a non-body that exists only in movement, in transition. If we are to consider the full range of neurodiverse perception, it may be worth considering movement without bodies or relation. A perception of direct movement, that does not

contain nor experience form, even in the snapshot sense. Sensed is vibrations and perhaps not even direction, only gestures; pure movement without orientation. Multimodal sensation sans bodying.

How can we speak of sensation without the sensing body?

I propose sensation as “affect,” as Manning, Massumi, and Deleuze and Guattari before them describe it: “the passage from one state to another, as intensity”; moving “from one state to the next . . . forever ‘becoming,’ it has no fixed identity” (Ellis and Tucker 2015, 162). What we call emotions are prefigured categories (Ellis and Tucker 2015, 162), a reductionist attempt to cerebrally understand the multiplicity/mushiness, non-formness/movement that is affect. Affect theories that will be useful in understanding perception without form are those that are “focused on a de-subjectification of emotion and bodily activity” (Ellis and Tucker 2015, 168). Affect theories that “operates outside pre-conceived notions of emotion and embodied experience . . . affect as “becoming”, as unspecific force, unmediated by consciousness, discourse, representation and interpretation” (Ellis and Tucker 2015, 168).

Drawing “on early Greek process philosophies, which emphasized the ever changing nature of so called reality: being as becoming” (Ellis and Tucker 2015, 162). Deleuze and Guattari’s “body without organs” is perhaps the non-body I am speaking of, “an intense feeling of transition, states of pure, naked intensity stripped of all shape and form” (Deleuze and Guattari 18).

Can you experience intensity directly? Or is it a non-conscious (I won’t say experience because perhaps that implies consciousness?) perception that is then reflected on consciously and felt as experience? Massumi speaks of Deleuze’s philosophy of intensity and says that it “strives to conceptualize [it as] transcendental in the sense that it is not directly accessible to experience, it is not transcendent, it is not exactly outside experience either. It is imminent to it—always in it

but not of it" (2002, 33). Perhaps the feedback loop of non-conscious, subconscious, conscious and other "types" of perception continuously folding into itself indicates that it is unlikely that they are separate or that we should be thinking about them as separate to begin with? If the attempt is truly to understand existence in any direct way, the practice of partitioning is likely ineffective since it is not focusing on relation but rather on elements of existence—elements and their respective relations that are continually in flux. Therefore, I propose that although making distinctions can be a useful analytical tool, we must be wary of pulling apart the ever changing fabric of existence to the point that it is no longer the thing we are investigating but rather a reductive construct far removed, both conceptually and practically.

Although the week of exploration along with the collective proposition were useful in beginning to address and consider concepts of trans-sensation, trans-sense-time and the leaky/non-body, it would have been more useful if I had the resources to conduct the exploration on a larger scale, with large containers of each substance that the participants could move through with their legs, arms and torso. On such a small scale, using just one's hands, it was hard at times for participants to differentiate between the sensation of moving with/through matter and manipulating it.

Since the concrete world, "reality" is experienced<sup>77</sup>, I propose that we consider inquiries of trans-sensation, trans-sense-time and the leaky/non-body experientially through ongoing collective propositions. Felt experiences (perception) are ultimately all each of us have to rely on, therefore we must seriously consider the diversity that presents itself through these experiential collective inquiries.

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<sup>77</sup> Reality or the concrete cannot be conceptualized without taking into consideration that it is being perceived. So we should take that seriously and approach such concepts from the diversity of experience. Which should be done in felt explorations—it cannot be an intellectual or cerebral inquiry. It must be located in sensation.

Furthermore, a reframing of what we constitute as “reality” and “body” is necessary if we are to access and think-feel direct perception. The “body is as immediately abstract as it is concrete” (Massumi 2002, 31); “to think the body in movement thus means accepting the paradox that there is an incorporeal dimension of the body” (Massumi 2002, 5). Massumi, when discussing the ontological shift from “being” to “becoming” paraphrases Deleuze, “the problem with the dominant models in culture and literary theory” [are] “that they are not abstract enough to grasp the real incorporeality of the concrete” (Massumi 2002, 5). Thus, concepts and theories of transsensation, trans-sense-time, and the non-body (or leaky body) are necessary if we are going to account for the diversity of perception.

#14

[Howling with Silence.mp4](#)

[Howling with Silence full documentation.mp4](#)

Materials/co-composers: Silence, Mount Royal, Douglas Price, Cassie Muise, Peter Zhuang, Denis Lafond, Speranza Spir, phone/video cameras, Alessandra Côté-Bioli, Maya Rossi, Adam Charette-Côté, and Beatrice Alexandria Warner.

Following are: outreach documents and emails, links folders with the gathered qualities, and accounts of the event co-composing submitted by the co-composers (participants).

**\*Invitation/description that was sent out to participants\***

## Proposition #1 (in-person with social distancing)

### *Howling with Silence—a choral piece*

In this exploration, we will meet at Mount Royal Sunday, August 9th, 3pm  
We will meet here and then go find a more secluded spot



Figure 31

To find us, look for Silence (she is an Alaskan malamute)



with Silence and nature (trees, the wind, etc)

I propose three sections to this exploration:

1. Silence, we listen and attune to the event
2. We begin to engage with Silence (both Silence the dog and silence of the event), we will do this specifically through vocalizing (attuning through vibration)
3. A conclusion (without conclusion), we will just transition (for example, you are drawn to doing something else, or moving on, and you just wander off)

In this exploration, I propose we attune

During this practice, please feel free to document with your phones. I will be videoing/recording the event as well. Also, lurking (and all ways of participating) are welcome ;)

Anyone who would like to participate by videoing and/or recording audio of the exploration are welcome and encouraged to. I will ask you to start your own folder with your **name** here:

 **Documentation of the Practice and/or Creative O...**  
Please upload anything you would like to share.

\*During this in-person activity, we will keep social distance.

If you would like to join this activity please email me your signed consent forms before Sunday.

## Follow-up Emails

### **First Email:**

Subject line: Retrospection

Hi guys,

I just wanted to send a quick email to say thank you for coming today, and to clarify the aim of today's event.

In this exploration of trying to connect to direct experience, part of the process may involve the discomfort of engaging with our conditioning (having: expectations, habits, performative gestures, etc.). What ways can facilitate the breaking of these limiting perceptions?

I am now interested to gain some insight into your experiences. You can upload any videos and/or feedback that you would like to share. You can create a folder in your name here.  [Documentation of the Practice and/or Creative O...](#)

Thanks again for participating.

Best,  
Sheena

### **Second Email:**

Subject: Description of your Experience

Hello everyone,

It has been a while. I hope you are all doing well—though I know for many, this has been a more difficult period.

I am working today on the video of the exploration we did last summer. I will be sending the video in a separate email to you all shortly.

I am getting in touch to invite you all to send me a brief ***description of your experience*** that I will include in my thesis. It can be in any format: text, video, audio etc. There is no pressure to contribute, but if you are comfortable/interested, I would greatly appreciate your perspective and it will make the thesis richer!

Included here, is the document with the original description of the position.  
[Propositions/Explorations 2020](#) 

Regarding the aim of the proposition, in relation to your experience, it may be helpful to consider the following. In this exploration of trying to connect to direct experience, part of the process may have involved the discomfort of engaging with our conditioning (having: expectations, habits, performative gestures, etc.). What ways facilitated the breaking of these limiting perceptions?

Thanks again for participating.

Best,  
~Sheena

### Follow-up Emails Continued

#### **Third Email:**

Hello all!

Here is the video as promised!

 [\*\*Howling with Silence.mp4\*\*](#)

The video operates, simultaneously, as documentation and as a practice of further engagement with the event (through composing).

Best,  
~Sheena Bennett

### **Submitted Descriptions of Experience**

Below are the written description that I received (thus far):

Cassie's description:

My experience with Sheena and Silence was wonderful and liberating. I drove down from Ottawa to participate in her event. She did a fantastic job facilitating. For me, the most interesting aspect of participating in "Howling with Silence" was that I felt complete freedom to experiment on my own terms. As an over achiever who seeks to lead by example and follow rules, I was astonished at the freedom I felt in being able to do exactly what I wanted. I didn't howl. I made some test noises, and decided instead I was more interested in observing other participants and responding with sticks, tapping the woods around me, rubbing leaves together, repeatedly kicking and knocking rocks. I was, I believe, the first person to leave. When I was done being in the moment, I didn't feel like participating anymore, and felt like I had the agency to leave. It was a stunning experience which has stayed with me. I think I was more present in this experience and authentic than almost any other artistic experiment in my life. I would add that Silence also didn't howl, and I felt justified; I mentally said to her, "You get it, girl. We only howl when we want to."

Best,  
Cassie

Cassie further added: "For me it wasn't performative exploration, but authentic exploration. Which was joyful and a special experience."

Beatrice's description:

When we arrived on Mount Royal for the exploration, were first given instruction, and began to allow ourselves to move through the space, I found myself struggling with the idea of just letting things happen - sounds, sensations, experiences. I found myself intentionally making sound, intentionally taking actions to feel a sensation - choosing a specific tree to physically interact with, for example. I struggled with this throughout the exploration, although I did have several

moments where I was able to feel like I could "let go". One important thought, though, that was pervasive throughout my time there was the idea that I even had to let go of my internal judgement of my intentional actions - that moderating my actions further based on a judgement of my intentions was actually further de-naturalizing my behaviour than just giving in to the intentions my body was creating for me. This is what I "tried" to focus on throughout, for lack of a better word.

Overall I enjoyed my experience. I would rate it 6 stars out of 7. Thank you.

Beatrice Warner

Although the last sentence was a joke just for me and not meant to be included, I felt that the satirical-esque commentary was too rich not to include!

Doug's description:

Description of Experience - Douglas Price:

It was a great honour to join Sheena Bennett and the other participants in the exploration Howling with Silence which took place on August 9th, 2020.

Once we had gathered, Sheena lead us into a forested area where we were to conduct the exploration. I thought the setting itself was a perfect underscoring to the exercise. The environment offered a complete array of textures and sounds that we could engage with.

Sheena briefly explained the fluid expectations of the exploration, leaving lots of room for spontaneity. Ultimately, we were to engage with silence within our environment and also to engage with Silence, a beautiful Alaskan malamute.

As participants, we began exploring our environment and what "silence" meant in this particular context. For me, rather than accept a pre-existing silence, I became fascinated with making one; I became curious of the sounds that could be made and then halted in order to create a silence.

After a time, we began howling. And although Silence herself seemed a bit confused, it was liberating to be there with her, attempting to share in her expression and to engage with her.

The exploration ended without any official conclusion. When the participants were ready to leave they were invited to do so.

The entire exploration felt freeing, liberating and extremely memorable.

My experience (Sheena):

Setting myself up with an expectation that Silence (my malamute life companion) would howl was an unintentional structural misalignment with the aims of my research (that, to some extent, did go over my own head). But it did allow me to confront my own neurotypical tendencies, however painful.

My experience of the event was excruciatingly uncomfortable. Being the designer of the proposition, the facilitator, a participant, and the researcher who was documenting, made it very difficult to fully engage with any one of those roles. I felt high anxiety because I could not enter the event in a way that didn't include all the expectations of having to produce those roles. I am not alluding to a failure, but rather an active *reckoning with*, of the felt discrepancy, distance and friction.

Additionally, it became clear to me that when working in direct perception we cannot exclude qualities of experience just because we do not like them. They are happening, they are there, they have an effect. To be clear, I am not suggesting that one should adopt a particular attitude in regard to this, but rather that all attitudes that activate are also forces in the event. They are the event!

My reaction after the event was to hide and recuperate. The event triggered my body and I was ill for many days after. It took about 7 months to find my way back to this proposition. As I went through the many hours of footage taken by the participants and myself, I found myself playing with the qualities with a "light composing"<sup>78</sup> approach—as a way of engaging and entering an iterative *shaping* with the event. *Shaping* as an operation, a technicity that remains with the wandering of the "taking form"—rather than an engagement with static shapes, forms, or other prefigured percepts, produced by internalized neurotypicality.

### Reflections/Insights

- Bullet points help thinking-writing to activate
- The breaking of expectations are painful even if you are aware that is what you will be doing.  
Though I set up a proposition knowing that the second meaning of "howling with Silence" was preconceived and would therefore cause tension between what is happening and what was preconceived to happen.
- In this event, the facilitating, documenting, and participating did not find a way towards coagulation of it's parsed or fragmented percepts (dead hollow construct).

Events can take place across event-times, or rather, event-time can stretch—as accounted

through the following emails sent by co-composer(s)/participant(s) Alessandra Côté-Bioli:

Aug 9, 2020,  
2:25 PM

Hello ~

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<sup>78</sup> What I mean by "light composing" is the minimal manipulation of material. I wanted to stay close to the original shape of the material and make use of its force to enter an activity of shaping.

I was thinking of coming to the first proposition to compose with Silence today and just wanted to confirm it is indeed at 3 (i saw 4 too). And wondering if I can bring someone with me who feels compelled by this proposition. Hope this is not too last minute.

See you soon!

Alessandra

---

Aug 11, 2020,  
6:35 PM

Thank you !

We didn't make it for 3pm but still went and followed the proposition delayed by a few hours and some compositions emerged<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Images that were included in this email are on the following pages of the thesis.

A spatial score, a map



Figure 32

A stringing of the winds instrument



Figure 33

#15 and #16

[Unfolding and Relationality Propositions - HD 1080p.mov](#)

Materials/co-composers: Jarry park, Silence, j.n.m. redelinghuys, Virginie Daigle, wind shifting, Eddying jackson, slime, Adam Piotrowicz, Alexandre Gégoire, Beatrice Alexandria Warner, string, Sheena, drone, etc.

Following, are the outreach documents sent to participants (co-composers), the collective document for further thinking-doing-reflecting-composing-iterationing, and a five page excerpt from j.n.m. redelinghuys' 2022 PhD thesis, for propositions:

**#15 *Unfolding***

The playing out of those potentials requires an unfolding in three-dimensional space and linear time—extension as actualization; actualization as expression. (Massumi 2002, 35)

#16: Exploring ***Relationality as the Expression*** of Engagement in the Event

A germinal or "implicit" form cannot be understood as a shape or structure. It is more a bundle of potential functions localized, as a differentiated re-gion, within a larger field of potential. In each region a shape or structure begins to form, but no sooner dissolves as its region shifts in relation to the others with which it is in tension. There is a kind of bubbling of structura-tion in a turbulent soup of regions of swirling potential. The regions are separated from each other by dynamic thresholds rather than by bounda-ries. (Massumi 34)

# UNFOLDING PROPOSITION

*This proposition explores the quality and propelling directionality, momentum-force, of the gesture of unfolding.*

*This unfolding technique is located in emergence, rather than prefigured movement that shapes experience.*

*Unfolding determines its own pace-quality<sup>80</sup>.*

*Unfolding emerges from the event and expresses itself in multiplicity.*



Figure 34

The proposition will take place at Jarry park in the big open field

July 15th 2021 at 4pm

- If you would like, you're invited to prepare in advance, a 7 minute-ish playlist on your phone (with headphones) to unfold with.
- During this proposition we will keep the required two meter distance (we may not touch others during the proposition).
- Begin lying on the ground in a comfortable position (or not, if you prefer to stand, sit, etc.)
- When/if you feel an entry, you are invited to begin unfolding. Unfolding in all its potentialities: vocalizing, micro movements, etc.

A few things to consider:

1. Do bring a blanket if the feeling of grass is not your thing!
2. If you would like, prepare a 7 minute-ish playlist to bring with you on your phone. Cordless headphones would be best.
3. Microphones and a drone will be documenting the proposition, so just be advised that they will be part of how the event expresses itself.

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<sup>80</sup> Pace-quality is not the quality in relation to the duration of time, rather it is the singular quality produced within the force of the event.

## *Exploring Relationality as the Expression of Engagement in the Event*

In this proposition, we will attune to the event and explore the event's multiplicitous nature of engagement. I propose ***relationality*** as the expression of these engagements. ***Relationality*** is far reaching, in that it is not bound by outcome. Rather, potentiality and emergence are located directly within the expression and are distinctly felt.

For 7 minutes, we will attune to and compose with string-like materials and the event. Exploring their qualities of engagement: movements, non-movements, directionality, orientations, pace, negative space, interactions, collisions, vibrations, etc.



The proposition will take place at Jarry park in the big open field

July 15th 2021 at 4pm

Figure 35

- If you would like, you're invited to bring very long yarn, string, streamers, goo, or any other far reaching materials. \*There will also be materials provided and available to use.
- During this proposition we will keep the required two meter distance (we may not touch others during the proposition).

## *Unfolding and Relationality research-creation propositions in Jarry park collective document for further thinking-doing- reflecting-composing-iterationing*

Here is a collective document where we can continue composing with the event. Bringing iterations into iterations. Feel free to upload audio clips, pictures, write some text, move with whatever is moving (or not, or move peripherally, etc.).

### [unfolding in relationality proposition.wav](#)

Before we started the tea that came with me enthusiastically asked to join (the same way they pleaded to come with me on my 45m bike ride to you).

(sheena from above) "... that relationality of the movement of trying and trying and trying and going against other forces and then finally letting go..."

hearing this quote helps me place some of what "i" was moving against and with....

Even though i was steadily encouraged to feel into the collection (by my herbal friends, and new human friends), i felt at times dragged down by my thoughts of what i 'should'do. This was nothing new, but of course it was also new, w. New people ants grass humans.

I felt lonely in my mind and laughed with the feelings. The hum of the drone deepened "my" entanglements with the flies who wait to enter my opened balcony door every morning. Of course they come, why would i think they shouldn't, wouldn't, couldnt be here.

I found it funny and \*sensical\* that even though my movements or attempts at entanglements were minimal (i.e. i mostly moved slow, stayed small, laid still, did maybe 1 or 2 "tasks") i was so tangled by the end.

I blame everyone but my ego in that fact...sigh

Being special or finding cool (read: capturable, sellable, "interest-ing") moments or beingnesses wrestled with my experience of being present, and somehow i caught the end of a blue streemer that a human and wind were navigating, tethered to, sailing with. Always and never trying and trying and trying



Figure 36

Exploration/Proposition #15 and #16 occurred consecutively. One flowing into the next. As all events do. And yet there are distinctions felt. Time and space are not felt in the neurotypical-constructed measured way, rather neurodivergent (direct perception) time and space are quality-durations and forces, simultaneously, felt across event times. Because all matter dances topologically, qualities and forces move freely across event-times and event-cartographies.

Following is a five page excerpt from j.n.m. redelinghuys' PhD thesis *Alors On Danse! Thinking-Do-Living the Embodied Musicking Subject* (2022, pp. 6-10)—neurodiversely voicing by its inclusion in this thesis, that research and creation (all modes of thinking) are collaborative non-human processes, regardless of how institutional protocols try to separate, localize and map thought onto the individual. The following excerpt offers other lines of flight<sup>81</sup> in the co-composing of thinking and mattering of these propositions.

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<sup>81</sup> “The lines of flight are like the leaks when the water leaks through the roof. They are the openings whereby new tendencies inflect. So when Gould is playing he is not only playing the notes, he is playing to their tendencies, across their sitedness and beyond. There are really only lines, only velocities (no stable points). And so we have to be careful, they are saying, not to simply thinking of speed as something that is linear (the line is not linear in the way they are talking about it, it's a vector). Speed is thick, resonant.” (Quote from an email exchange between Erin Manning and I (September 2022), thinking with Deleuze and Guattari's chapter on *Rhizome*).

## Preface: Mushroom Music

It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories.<sup>1</sup>

So: here is my musical story, which I am using to make my other my musical stories. I begin this thesis with a piece not formally included, which arose as part of a series of collaborative conversations<sup>2</sup> with my fellow think-doer Sheena Bennett.<sup>3</sup> She organised an improvisation event, *Relationality Proposition* (coincidentally performed on my birthday), during which the performers 'attune[d] to and compose[d] with string-like materials ... exploring their qualities of engagement: movements, non-movements, directionality, orientations, pace, negative space, interactions, collisions, vibrations, etc.'

The aim of this event was to

attune to the event and explore the event's multiplicitous nature of engagement ... ***Relationality*** is far reaching, in that it is not bound by outcome. Rather, potentiality and emergence are located directly within the expression and are distinctly felt.<sup>4</sup>

A performer takes the end of one string and moves around the voided space (a field, if you will). Depending on how they move, the tension on the string varies, sometimes

1 Haraway (2016) p. 12.

2 *Ballet of Images in Androgynette* is my own interpretation of these conversations.

3 This piece and additional commentary on it will be published in Bennett's upcoming doctoral thesis *Composing with the Event: Techniques that Move Toward Neurodiverse Perception/Sensation*.

4 Bennett (2021) (original emphasis).

staying slack, or maybe becoming taut. These strings vibrate, or *resonate*. Their resonances are sympathetic with other people's movements around the space, or may be actively vibrated by either person. This string is vibrant, alive, animate; non-human, but vital. This very material thread fills the in between and acts on the people with intention. The strings are both distinct from and of the humans that hold them: they begin at the point where the skin ends and extend the tactile sense of the skin beyond this end locus. In this way to not hold a string is similar to holding one, the same endpoints and extensions marked by an absence, a space which nevertheless contains many molecules.



Figure 1: An aerial shot of Sheena Bennett's *Relationality Proposition* (taken 15th July 2021)

It is clear that in describing one of performer's actions I am describing all of the others' actions. All of the performers move around the space, all of them tauten and

slacken the strings, resonate and are resonated in turn. These phenomena do not occur linearly or independently. Indeed, the strings which have the potential to be straight (perhaps heterosexual) are curved, like gravitational waves distorting spacetime. Even within Kurt Vonnegut's time jumping *Slaughterhouse Five*, or Samuel Beckett's looping *Waiting for Godot*, the structures of prose and of the traditional score limit what events can be expressed simultaneously, and thus the potentialities of phenomenological fields; what is more readily accomplished in superpositions of time and space in Hieronymus Bosch's multiverse triptych *Garden of Earthly Delights*, Karlheinz Stockhausen's poly-orchestral (polyamorous?) *Gruppen*, or Fullbright Studio's thematically and narratively queer video game *Gone Home*.<sup>5</sup> In that the strings both touch and are touched, vibrate and are vibrated, connecting and demarcating the skin that bounds each human, the result is chaotic like a Funnel-web spider's web, not stereotyped as an Orb-weaver's. A tug on one strand shakes the entire web, at parts imperceptibly, and at other parts enough to create a structural shift. The strings are literally tangled in a sprawling, amorphous web and, with this, the meaning and agency of both the strings and those holding them are entangled.

This touching and re-touching is the site (sight, hearing) of what Merleau-Ponty termed 'the chiasm', partially outlined in the unfinished manuscript of *The Visible and The Invisible* (1964/1968). This chiasm is a turning back and forth between self and other, consciousness and unconscious experience, our perception of the thing and the

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<sup>5</sup> Ursula K. Le Guin entertains a similar notion of simultaneity in *The Dispossessed*.

thing itself as perception. Merleau-Ponty argues against 'age-old assumptions' of an abyssal separation between body and world asking 'where are we to put the limit between the body and the world, since the world is flesh?'.<sup>6</sup> He gives an example of a handshake: why would 'the experience of one sole body in one sole world ... not open it to other bodies? ... I can feel myself touched as well and at the same time as touching ... Why would not the synergy exist among different organisms, if it is possible within each?'.<sup>7</sup> These strings are a means of touching and being touched, but are also always reversible, where the other touches and is touched in turn. James Schmidt in *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Between Phenomenology and Structuralism* (1985) summarises this chiasm using the common optical illusion of an image that can be seen as either a duck or a rabbit:

It enjoins us to look neither at the duck, nor the rabbit, nor the oscillating series duck-rabbit-duck-rabbit-duck-rabbit ... Rather, we must learn to look at the pattern of lines which cleave space in such a way as to make a hinge around which ducks and rabbits may pivot.<sup>8</sup>

It is not where the structure produces difference, but where the structure makes itself indeterminate. It is unimportant what my scores are, how they are realised in performance and documentation, or how I reflect on them, or how these elements relate to each other, but how they are structured such that they might perpetually turn around each other: 'the performer is no longer producing or reproducing the sonata: he [sic]

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6 Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) p. 138.

7 Ibid. p. 142.

8 Schmidt (1985) p. 159.

feels himself [*sic*], and the others feel him [*sic*] to be at the service of the sonata'.<sup>9</sup> In this spirit this thesis does not attempt to offer a concrete account of the experience of a body. Although I freely change between composer, performer, and writer, or centre another performer or audience member in a context, I am not claiming an authority on these positions but using them as a particular excitation to produce and examine resonances across multiple pieces. The world of this portfolio is 'what I live through. I am open to the world, I have no doubt that I am in communication with it, but I do not possess it'.<sup>10</sup> In this non-possessive openness, all that is left to me is to describe a set of possible relations.

This research on the body in a creative, performative context will inevitably intersect with Ben Spatz's *What a Body Can Do: Technique as Knowledge, Practice as Research* (2015) in a number of ways. Both he and I affirm the primacy of the body, and insist on the necessity of examining this body through action.<sup>11</sup> However, while Spatz focusses on an epistemology of epistemic technique (a concern that tacitly backgrounds my creative practice and that might prove to be an interesting foil to my ideas in the future), my research is primarily ontological, or looks to theories which undo the division between ontology and epistemology. Furthermore, while Spatz is concerned with a 'relatively reliable' reality and practices 'that can be repeated with some degree of

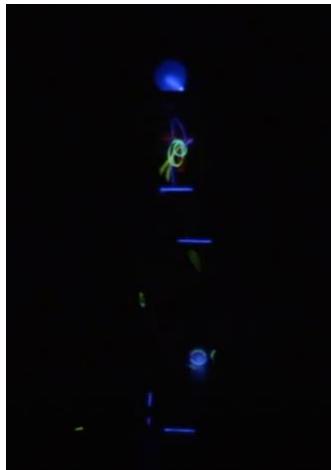
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<sup>9</sup> Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) p. 151.

<sup>10</sup> Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) pp. xviii-ix.

<sup>11</sup> Spatz (2015) p. 2

#17 and #18



[Exploring Darkness as Technicity—toward Adisciplinarity and Trans-sensation \(not from a distance\).mov](#)

Materials/co-composers: Sheena, darkness, glow sticks, Beatrice Warner through video camera lens, video production studio at Concordia.

Figure 42

“Distantism makes too strong a distinction between body and world”, so in this series of explorations, darkness was used as technicity—to reorient (or even remove) orientation, as well as to liquefy the body/object (walls, floor, ceiling, etc.), returning matter to movement—opening the containers, for all touching to be felt as touch rather than the toucher or touched, to feel without the distance.

Metatactile touch is not reducible to the distantist line. Meta in its voluminous quality, it is the excess in touch that “involves many senses, senses that we all have but which are almost never mentioned—the axial, locomotive, kinesthetic, vestibular . . . All ‘tactile’ to some extent, but going beyond ‘touch’” (Clark 2015). Interfusing with the world forming in it, metatactile touch is ProTactile, proprioceptively alert to those phasings-in of experience voluminous. Productive of spacetime in defiance of an overgridded geometry, touch is in the bodying, proprioceptively dancing with the relational complex of the world’s co-composition. This is an extensive proprioception—a tactility propriocepted—fielded in the relational complex, a sensitivity to infrathin surfacings shared extensively across a world continuously in-forming. If Clark does not feel his body as separate from

the world, this is not because he can't see it. It's because he has not given in to the backgriddist model of imposing an image onto it, reducing it to a spatial quantity.

The blurring of boundaries elicited by the overflowing of sense does not produce a deficit body. Quite the contrary: the blur is an account of how the “element of voluminousness” expresses itself before the backgriddist tendencies take over. (Manning 2020c, 249-250)

This was done by blocking all light out of the video production studio and then colliding bodies/objects into bodying-worlding (this is not a metaphor). With each collision, collision disappeared, displacing location... until...non-directionality burst into the murmurs of bodying-worldings sounding lines of flight.

Headphones were also used to activate the virtual-actual, softening and blurring any hardening edges of the prefigured visual, via neurotypical auditory locating. To lose orientation and directionality altogether, was to lose the self and the object, and to enter a composing from a void ripe with immanence of the occasion. The contained body smashing into the becoming of walls, fractally vibrating into sublimation.

“Fractal Flesh” combines expressive and prosthetic elements in a new relay apparatus. This superimposition of phases is what Simondon calls a *dephasing*. In dephasing, the body, along with its objects, dissolves into a field of mutual transformation where what in extension are separate phases enter into direct contact. That field is defined less by the already established structure of the objects and organs involved than by the potentializing relay that brings them into dynamic continuity across the intervals that normally separate them... (Massumi, 2002, 120)

The video for #17 is not included, because I feel uncomfortable with how it may return everything back to viewing from the outside the event, building the distance once again (the neurotypical perception).

#18 does have a video (linked above). This exploration was meant to be a performance with an audience and several contemporary dancers. However due to covid, it was done alone in the video production studio at the same time as #17. My original notes saw these companion propositions as explorations in dismantling and obscuring the senses and performing/visual arts disciplines (dance, theatre, music, visual art, etc) as pathways and openings to direct perception. Art disciplines are distinctly tied to “the senses”, reinforcing neurotypical perception through the protocol of categorization. By obstructing the facility with which neurotypicality informs perception, it is possible to divert from this reinforcement of the categorization protocol, pivoting toward neurodiverse composing.

Original notes (thinking-doing sketches):

*Exploring a disciplinarity via darkness*

Maybe these are a series.

Contemporary dancers in pitch black studio...no music...just sounding bodying-worlding...collisions.  
Obscuring the categorization of disciplines... music or dance?

Dark black box again, dancers dressed in black with a glow in the dark lines on their black clothes, painting. Again obscuring... Dance, Music, Theater, Painting?

#19

[Returning to the Trees—the Technological Burnout Crisis \(Schizzing the Opera Practice and Narrative\)](#)

Materials/co-composers: Tristan Henry, Eldad Tsabary, Pat McMaster, Malte Leander, Antoine Bellemare, Oonagh Fitzgerald, Karl Biernath, Juanita Marchand, Valentina Plata, Silence, Sheena Bennett, Beatrice Warner, recording equipment, and Saint-Joachim forest.

Following are documents related to the 19th proposition. First, the writing that accompanied the screening/exhibition at the 4th space, Concordia university on December 14, 2021—which intentionally appeared at the end of the over hour-long piece/documentation as to allow the piece to speak for itself. Second, the outreach proposition document that was sent out to the participants—including logistical notes that felt pertinent to getting a feel for the event. It is of note that these participants were also simultaneously participants of RISE (Reflective Iterative Scenario Enactments), a SSHRC-funded research project led by Dr. Eldad Tsabary. Lastly, a collective document where participants could continue composing with the event, generating iterative events or event-species.

## *Exhibition/Screening of*

*Returning to the Trees—the Technological Burnout Crisis (Schizzing the Opera Practice and Narrative)* is the 19th proposition/piece in the Ph.D. thesis: *Composing with the Event—Techniques that Move Toward Neurodiverse Perception/Sensation.*

### Exhibition/Screening of Returning to the Trees—the Technological Burnout Crisis

The proposition/piece is also part of the SSHRC funded research project RISE (Reflective Iterative Scenario Enactments) led by Dr. Eldad Tsabary.

RISE's theme of the year “technological crises”, sparked a desire to schizz the field, to explore how to find activation when starting from a neurotypical figure such as “theme”, “topic” and/or “narrative”. Furthermore, a reimagining of the opera medium was called for. This appetite for practicing the schizz, this desiring-machine, took hold of these (pre-)figures and, through play (pushing, pulling, dismantling, deconstructing), lured them into a field of activity, transforming them from static to operational. By refraining from the neurotypical tendency to parse and harden experience (to categorize and represent) the field of relation can then be felt.

The schizosomatic proposition’s offer was to be composed by the event. To let be felt the event orienting itself towards a collective attunement and emergent ecology—creating the conditions for trans-sensory (and nonsensuous) qualities to co-compose constellations.

Carrying germs of experience across event-times, this panopticon of technology form-taking demonstrates how the proposition folded onto itself—the very suggestion of *a moving away from* technology activated those very qualities in the eventing. The vitality affect running through the material is felt in how the qualities co-compose across the 9 video angles impressionistically—form and subject blurring, releasing the qualities of *forming* felt.

## **Outreach Document Sent Out to Participants**

### **The Technological Burnout Crises—Returning to the Trees**

Is technology going extinct?

#### **Theme**

In this proposition, we will explore the seemingly peripheral, but disarmingly forceful undercurrent of a collective feeling and movement away from technology and back to living in co-composition with nature. What does this mean for the future of technology? Is this movement towards nature and away from technology threatening its very development and existence?

This opera is perhaps a satire in relation to the Anthropocene. Reflecting and riffing on perspectives that recognize technology as an extension of humans and therefore not a threat to nature. Patrícia Vieira articulated a similar sentiment in “Is the Anthropocene Upon Us?”, located in *The Philosophical Salon Speculations, Reflections, Interventions*:

Whether we strategically adopt the term Anthropocene or shun it for endorsing the very larger-than-life view of humanity at the root of the environmental crisis, we would do well to soberly ponder upon our short life on the planet. The earth thrived without us for millions of years and there is no reason to believe that it will not continue to do so once we are gone.

#### **Practice**

Additionally, this proposition offers a practice of Opera creation and performance that is located in its emergence, rather than prefigured notions of what constitutes “Opera”—exploring “how far a work can speak its own language” (Schechner 306). In *Magnitudes of Performance*: Richard Schechner explains:

What a theater work is – not all it is, but the core of its “originality” – is how far a work can speak its own language without becoming unintelligible. Works called avant-garde or experimental sometimes go beyond this boundary, are rejected, only to be later incorporated into the canon as mainstream codes catch up with the avant-garde and critics and public learn what the previously rejected works were “about.” That is, they learn to context the works, to relocate the boundaries of accepted conventions to include works that were previously out of bounds. If this doesn’t happen, the works are forgotten.

For this proposition, the focus will be on exploring the potentialities of the Opera medium, we will immerse ourselves in the languaging of this distinct iteration/event.

Furthermore, the proposition will recontextualize “singing opera”—bringing opera practice beyond the separation of the senses. (somatic) operatic singing through the body

## The Event

Date: Oct 15th 2021

It is a 3hr15min drive

### Schedule:

9 am departure  
 12:30 pm arrival and lunch outside  
 1:30 proposition  
 5 pm departure  
 8:30pm arrival in MTL

## List of Participants:

Name
Eldad Tsabary
Tristan Henry
Pat McMaster
Malte Leander
Antoine Bellemare
Oonagh Fitzgerald and Karl
Juanita Marchand
Valentina Plata

Performers/musicians, a videographer, and a sound engineer

\*\*\*Musicians should bring orchestral/acoustic instruments (cello, horns, etc.)—ideally, they should bring their “exploratory” instruments (not their pristine/primary/expensive instruments) so that they can do extended technique experimentation—as it could lead to damage. They should feel comfortable with the instrument and themselves potentially getting muddy/dirty/wet in nature.

## Activity

5-7 performers creating a piece in the woods. Participants would collaboratively (with each other and their environment) create instruments using what is found at hand and/or bring orchestral/acoustic instruments (cello, horns, etc....including voices) that will be used in non-traditional ways to mimic sounds felt in that setting. The shape of the ‘piece’ will be devised by the participants listening to and observing their surroundings and then becoming part of the environmental tapestry.

## Collective Document for Further Thinking-Doing-Reflecting-Composing-Iterating

Proposition #19

Ahuman/Transhuman (more-than-human)<sup>82</sup> Attuning and Co-composing of Ecologies through Transensory Exploration—Composing with Nature Qualities (Forested Composing<sup>83</sup>)

(AKA: The Technological Burnout Crises—Returning to the Trees)

Here is a collective document where we can continue composing with the event. Bringing iterations into iterations. Feel free to upload audio clips, pictures, write some text, move with whatever is moving (or not, or move peripherally, etc.).

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### RISE in the woods

How could we disrupt all of our memories? It's impossible. Still, deconstructing what we've learned can help to connect with the origins of our decisions. I felt like being in the woods, with co-existing strangers, facilitated the way I was able to reveal myself, through inner stories and abstract body language. New forms of communication were emerging. I felt like the harmony of nature incited me to deliver harmonic voices. The constraint of inharmonicity and arrhythmicity pushed me to the frontiers of the human being. Proto-linguistic gestures, mimetic entities, totemic animals filling the space with leaves and treasures.

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<sup>82</sup> Erin Manning's *more-than-human*, "collectively individuating" (Manning xx)—"I want to propose that autistic perception, in its divergent, complex, and continually evolving forms, may open the way for an ethic of the more than human ... on an ecology of practices, a focus that emphasizes hyperrelationality and dynamic expression in a worlding that is co-constitutive" (Manning 153).

<sup>83</sup> Beatrice Warner

*(Oonagh) My reflection on moving with birch bark and Sheena's unprefigured opera proposition.*

I did not know what Sheena's proposition would be like but was glad to be able to bring myself into the experience through the crafting of the birch bark pieces to wear or tap. I play classical guitar daily but am a shy amateur musician and was daunted by the prospect of participating in an opera improvisation with professional musicians. I have done mostly dance and theatre improvisation in the distant past but limited musical improvisation. Because of this, I thought I would avoid attempting to make music and focus on exploring movement with the birch bark.

The location was amazing, and the weather stayed mild and grey without raining. After the tech team set up all the recording devices, we gathered in the woods around the shallow cave formed by an uprooted tree. Sheena with her dog Silence sat in the earth cave as Sheena explained the proposition – to create an opera without prefigured forms of music, words, movements, or stories but responding and in tune with the environment in which we found ourselves. Then we began.

As Sheena and I had arranged, I gathered my prepared birch bark pieces to dress her as though she was a kind of woodland Joan of Arc\Jeanne d'Arc. It was a nice ritual to have the birch bark encase her back and chest, her head, her face, her arms in this strange armour. She struggled with the one leg casing which affected her movement, causing her to lurch and pivot as she made sounds. After a while she told me she was ready to lie down and move in the mud, so I helped her remove all the bark pieces from her body. She removed her boots and began to move in bare feet.

I strung pieces of birch bark from my neck, arms, shoulders, and belt and started moving. I helped other musicians to try on some pieces. Eventually I started playing with some instruments: percussion, a metal plate attached to a tree, rattles, xylophone, the seagull 4 string dulcimer which I untuned and plucked and played with an old violin bow, making soft sounds. I listened to voices, dynamics building from among the trees, out of sight or lunging into view and joined in adding what I could to complement or respond or clash. People were making wondrous sounds. Towards the end I was swaying with the saplings extending movements as autumn leaves shook loose from their branches. Trying to dance in uneven and muddy terrain was

challenging and limiting but imposed interesting dynamics and accidents to embrace and embody.

As we packed up and got ready to leave everyone seemed to have had a good time experiencing this strange, musical, natural, physical encounter and improvisation. We all seemed happy and exhausted. During the performance we interacted with each other improvisationally, which was exciting and risky at times but came with rewards since we all seemed receptive to trying new things. My account of the experience will not be the same as anyone else's so the comparing and sharing of accounts from our different perspectives could be interesting and revealing about ideas of neural diversity. My neural diversity may be a kind of embodiment, kinesthetic bodily engagement with nature.

After the bus had left and we were packing up our car to leave, the woman who had shown us where to park and explained how to find Sheena's cottage came outside and waved indicating she wanted to talk to us. She told us that she had listened to the whole magnificent concert in the woods and was enraptured by it and thanked us for it! That was lovely to hear because we had been in the middle and could not get the overview of the sound as clearly as she might have. Perhaps at her greater distance, out of the woods and across a little meadow, the sounds came together in intriguing harmonies, rhythms and cadences. Sheena's proposition and our enthusiastic engagement with it had given her a memorable experience.

That evening, when we got back to our hotel in Quebec City, we talked non stop about different aspects of the experience of our afternoon making music for RISE, we were so energized and enervated by having participated. It is intriguing that many of us seem to be reacting to the RISE theme of technology catastrophe by embracing nature!

*(Valentina) My raw reflection on creating a new persona & playground in nature*

Static Timing.

Increased Restricted Districted Unaddicted Committed Permitted.

A bubble that I didn't know how I was let in with such welcoming arms.

The trees had good intentions while I was eager to enjoy all the endless possibilities of breaking the rules of traditional music making.

Grabbing leafs, dirt, elements that allowed sound. A character inside me felt the need to act, a grandiose being with superpowers, that I could finally feel myself within a group of beautiful people.

Wired tangled emotions wanting to erupt-burst-bum! ... felt a bit shy at first.

Take control of the freedom that was given to me. How can I take control of what is supposed to be free? By simply letting the instincts and exploration ... be. Like meditating. The intention is not to shut our mind every time, but to accept the process and bring it back to NOW.

Voices here and there, what seemed dispersed, had all the sense in that moment.

Footsteps intertwining with the weird melodies played and the comes and goes of resonant calls. Not a single word in English nor Spanish but definitely defying language and I did feel that we communicated in other forms. Dancing, flirting with our surroundings, call and response to each other's sparks.

Eyes take a good look at all the characters doing their thing.

Ready for silence and unexpected noises. All that mattered was to communicate primal and spontaneous.

The task was to leave what we know and enter the unknown. A space became a place to let go.

Since Sheena mentioned some guidelines and said we could even break those instructions, it really made me feel safe. No one was going to stop my twisted storyline nor the quirky ways of playing with others.

I mentioned it in our meeting but I will say it again... Sexuality arose, a sensuality to allow myself to really listen to my every sense within and without.

and having a clash of quiet and loud, peaceful and agitated... got me out of my comfort zone yet I didn't feel uncomfortable.

I felt alive.

I could breathe in a new form without having to give any explanation to no one.

I must admit I did feel seen by the cameras more than of the other participants. Deep down I wanted the cameras to see me but now that we have the video I haven't seen the whole thing just because I am a bit afraid of judging myself.

After that day I recorded myself talking about the event but writing makes me flow a bit more poetic and not gibberish hehehe.

Thank you Sheena! If more comes to mind I'll write it down here.

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Below is a transcription of the audio recording of Malte Leander's reflections. Which were recorded right after the proposition.

 [Malte.wav](#)

“The interplay, like the random, fragmented, call and responses that surged over time, from different areas of the woods, sort of creating a mutual border, or sort of bubble within, sort of like an ecosystem—where it just feeds back on different spatial and temporal levels.”

#20

The so-called lost proposition.

A virtual proposition was sent out and audio and visual material was gathered by many participants. Though a piece did not end up taking shape, the practice of gathering, engaging and composing with entities, qualities and forces of events did occur.

Following is the document that was sent out to participants.

## A practice of field engagement and collecting qualities—via low-fi devices

For this proposition, I invite you to explore a practice of attuning and engaging with quotidian events. As you go about your day, if something sensorily grabs your attention, enter a collaborative experience with your low-fi devices and with the event (environment) by gathering/collecting qualities, textures, etc. Upload the raw material in your own folder by creating one with your **name** here:

[Gathering/Collecting Qualities \(field recordings, etc\)](#)

Please upload anything you would like to share. Before you do so, make sure to send me your signed consent forms (if you haven't already).

We will then compose with some of the qualities we collected. I will send out details about this next part of the practice/proposition in a few weeks—once we have had time to engage with this first part of the process.

If you would like to read a bit more about this particular technique-mode/practice here are some excerpts from the ongoing writing component of my thesis:

 Thesis excerpts

#21

[Quilting.mp4](#)

Materials/co-composers: Silence's hair, cotton sheets, thread and needle, cabin, fire, shifting weather, light, etc.

**Quilting**

Through tipping thresholds, residues carry across eventings—qualities shaped, anew, by changing conditions—a patchworking, not of prefigured pieces of a previous event, but of residues in trans-qualitation.

The frayed edges of matter, from the rip of thresholding (cut), angling, becoming relations—these cominglings composing eventings in immediation.

There was a John Cage quote that I have spent an entire day looking for and of course, it has cunningly escaped capture. Regardless, it is felt in this piece—Cage let the kettle simmer for hours and the faint whistling would activate attunement to the event.

## A-CONCLUSION

This thesis is not bound by linear time, it is without conclusion. With this in mind, I have created a folder for all that is teeming—the [events-propositions-pieces that desire to co-compose](#).

A conclusion is an accounting for all that desired to come to expression that perhaps slipped by the scope of what was eventing—all that did not find contouring to carve edges into shapings, nor perhaps the conditions to foreground. But also all that did not desire to come into expression—that did not find resonance—the affective tonality sounding as silence in the co-composing. Silence as all that is not distinctly of an event, the feltness of contrast, the pedal tone of difference felt in the composing event. All that did not transpire is the felt difference: all that the occasion decided it was not and of course all that it almost became.

The *almost* makes a difference ... what remains, but also what exceeds the event. Every event is made up of this surplus. This surplus is elastic. It has no form as such, it has no tense, it cannot be categorized. It is neither of the present, of the past nor of the future. (Manning 2016, 119).

Potentiality is felt in the differential, what emerges but also what does not, is expressed in each occasion. It is the *forging* of singularities that make palpable all that is possible.

“We should stop believing in trees, roots, and radicles. They've made us suffer too much” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 15)—instead let us reorient and enter the field of relation in its ever multiplicitous expansiveness. Let us attune to the qualities when musical points rupture into lines of flight, into a composing field of relation. “When Glenn Gould speeds up the performance of a

piece, he is not just displaying virtuosity, he is transforming the musical points into lines, he is making the whole piece proliferate" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 8).<sup>84</sup>

To compose with *a conclusion* is to move from the middle of transition, in continuous multiplicity...

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<sup>84</sup> "An assemblage is precisely this increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections. There are no points or positions in a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, tree, or root. There are only lines. When Glenn Gould speeds up the performance of a piece, he is not just displaying virtuosity, he is transforming the musical points into lines, he is making the whole piece proliferate. The number is no longer a universal concept measuring elements according to their emplacement in a given dimension, but has itself become a multiplicity that varies according to the dimensions considered (the primacy of the domain over a complex of numbers attached to that domain). We do not have units (unites) of measure, only multiplicities or varieties of measurement. The notion of unity {unite} appears only when there is a power takeover in the multiplicity by the signifier or a corresponding subjectification..." (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 8)

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## APPENDICES



### CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

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Name of Applicant: Sheena Bennett  
Department: Faculty of Fine Arts\Studio Arts  
Agency: N/A  
Title of Project: Composing with the Event. Performance Practices  
that Move Toward Neurodiverse  
Perception/Sensation  
Certification Number: 30013031  
Valid From: May 19, 2022 To: May 18, 2023

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard DeMont".

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Dr. Richard DeMont, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee

*Figure 43*