

Entering Through the Vestibular

Listening to your voice, wind-form sound passing through the chords of an elder long needle pine. This is where I find myself, aglow, hearing my thoughts spoken to me.

Within the cognitive embrace of this volcanic tree, the fusion of binaries into dyads

(ir)radiate new forms of thought that spill across a spectrum. I, con•fused, sift through now abject transformations of psyche (selves endured and sacrificed, entire lives in and of their own), stacked and compressed into sedimentary layers, and overflowing the borderline of the unconscious at a point of tectonic rupture. I seek a language of the visceral, to navigate my return from the dark places of mind.

Unbridled mimetic personalities, shadows uncontained within a fractured disembodiment, motion toward a deeply subtle and metastasized notion that the slurring of language, ideas, and hearts, at once, joined in an utterance of the expanded body, might offer a common thread; Molten arcs of transformation arriving separately into a point of hot convergence before parsing, and departing, together; Self-organizing gardens of mutually composting, intra-dynamic beings; Creative systems between entities in flux, who plunge feet first into the underworld to encounter the Earth, and so reenter physicality.

I exercise my sense of balance, and meditate on dichotomies that polarize my fluid experience into discrete units. I *depossess* my mind from a colonial ontology by *spilling out containers of knowledge (and identity) - the release and reexamination of captured potentials*. To carry what Kristeva described as the “weight of meaninglessness, about which there is nothing insignificant, and which crushes me.” Naming the

Cartesian worlding as a subset of many otherwise possibilities prompts first an internal interrogation, and a subsequent deconstruction of the cognitive architecture dividing my existence into mind over body. From the fusion of mind and body, quantities of knowledge burst open, releasing a ubiquitous and fluid, co-creative process.

This investigation of internal experience, a self-explored somatic psychotherapy, out of necessity for the reconstruction of psyche, channels the restorative power of art therapy — a function of interplay with materiality, how language frames material experience, the transformations that generate meaning out of chaos — and locates these processes within the thoughtful body. What is the co-incidence of a tacit material interplay with its verbal rationale? Where (or when) do I hold the dyad of intuition and articulation? How do I reformat my thought to allow for the diverse expansion and motion of subjects, both internal and otherwise, in a process-oriented world?

I'm looking for a method of bridging modes of knowing and ways of being, a link that seats knowledge in my embodied experience - and reveals meaning through physical relations. Bruno Latour's dialectic on process ontology and science studies positions the term **articulation** within the senses¹, which leads me to reconsider how my words affect what I perceive. With language, I use my senses to parse raw signals into patterns of meaning. Codifying verbally the fractal dynamics between subjects articulates my senses with linguistic augmentations. As my linguistic faculty develops, so does my ability to apprehend the subtle qualities of reality. The contrasts between these qualities co-define their perpetual nuance; Propositions of relational boundaries, moments when identity becomes more clear in

¹ Latour, 2004

relation to the dissimilar, catalyze the destabilization of *things* in fixed containment by foregrounding a process reality of *beings in relation*: An articulation of quality destabilizes quantity - creation of fractal space to empower diverse subjects to multiply². By articulating my relations, I shepherd words into the world, and thereby augment my senses and detail the contours of form around me. "What cannot be said can be articulated,"³ that is, what cannot be captured in fact, can be proposed as an interface. Latour is offering a framework of discourse for speaking *toward* the fleeting essence of process, a framework that both evades the western propensity for stabilization, and foregrounds a participatory, multidirectional interchange of language. Speaking as such, I co-create this experience of reality with *you*.

Then how does tacit consciousness, the prereflexive mode of awareness, factor into this creation of reality? The word tacit is from the Latin root *tacere* - to be silent. Wordless cognition supplies relational potential to the creative encounter, creating space for both internal and external sources of inspiration. In terms of creative pedagogy, prereflexive material engagement reveals unique physical qualities to the artist, causing multidirectional transformation⁴ - internal monologues pause, my body receives information, I respond in process. This is how I understand the mimetic encounter of my artistic practice.

Cognitive researchers isolate the function of tacit cognition within the right-cerebral human brain hemisphere by analyzing the effects of traumatic brain injury. This research also suggest that, because speaking and listening modes of cognition are

² *I parse your
breath over
Petals and edges.
Remind me not
To over speak,
Or risk to lose you,
My wind*

³ Latour, *Ibid.*

⁴ Cornock, 1984

dis-integrated processes, I rapidly switch between tacit and verbal thought, between left and right hemisphere dominance⁵. The question changes from how to *when*: When does the silent space emerge from a mind occupied by worldly articulations?

Are these modes of tacit empathy and linguistic parsing, binary orders of conscious operation in perpetual oscillation, hardwired matters of cerebral physiology? Or might these polarized constructs of Cartesian worlding — one that creates sameness and another that generates difference — be supplanted by an embodied mentality, an enlightening somatics that open space for both mimicry and individuation in simultaneity?

How does One emerge within one? As *(o)ne*, I embrace the multitudes as my self, just as I integrate the shadows of my mind, each opening new forms of empowerment, yet also with import of mass.

A blue bird flies high to an open perch, scanning for your movement in a field of motion. Ki doesn't have a name for you, grasshopper, at least probably not like I do, yet Ki distinguishes, from a hundred feet of distance, the itching of your legs from the flicking grass. If I want to know what I see the way Ki knows, do I refine my vocabulary to trace your fractal contours, articulating our relationship to infinity? Or do I surrender my inner monologue and become a vessel for your voice? And after I name you, grasshopper, to what else do I become blind?



In the silent fertile soils, I focus on a point of creative germination, taking root in the visceral, and growing mosslike across a lattice

of linguistic artifice. While my senses tune verbally, the world around me takes form. In search of the root, I reach for the form of awareness that exists before the augmentation, before subjects individuate. I seek the prereflexive language of the body, a form of communication through mimicry of an external source.

Latour offers a contrast between **language** and *mimesis* to direct a framework for expansive communications⁶, but without distinguishing variance within the mimetic faculty. Languages create potential openings for knowledge to generate. Mimesis imitates what already exists, or even subsumes the individual into the whole. Accordingly, language is a path toward greater diversity, while mimesis moves toward singularity. Room exists for further analysis between the two. The proclamation that “[l]anguage has immensely more resources for being rooted in reality than mimesis,” firstly begins to deepen when I practice loading words into the world — the exercise of speaking toward my sensory relations creates multidirectional changes in reality — and secondly suggests that mimesis does have a potential to diversify - to become rhizomatic like a language.

Language, as a dynamic garden, is both fed by a rooted material substance, and also reciprocates the exchange of content to affect the state of the soil. Mimesis, through the same metaphor, enacts an exchange of content, albeit through the reductive, or reproductive, encounter that assimilates variance and imitates the source. Does the articulated sense, having undergone a verbally trained attunement, then enter a reformed wordless awareness, or do the linguistic delineations permanently override my capacity for prereflexive relationships? Is *Planetary Mimesis* necessarily articulated as a premise in order to create the delineations necessary for diversity? If so, then how does a cognitive *planetary mimetic* architecture function to affirm *and exercise* the existence of colonially dismissed intelligences to create a harmoniously diverse world? Most importantly, where is the permeability in the cognitive architecture, through which a planetary mimetic germination might augment the form of the lattice itself?

⁶ Start using specific page numbers

“...Qollahuayas ‘understand their own bodies in terms of the mountain, and they consider the mountain in terms of their own anatomy’... The human body and the mountain consist of interrelated parts: head, chest and heart, stomach and viscera, breast and nipple. The mountain, like the body, must be fed blood and fat to keep it strong and healthy. Individual sickness is understood as a disintegration of the body, likened to a mountain landslide or an earthquake. Sickness is caused by disruptions between people and the land, specifically between residents of different sections of the mountain: the head (mountain top), heart (center village), or feet (the base of the mountain). Healers cure by gathering the various residents together to feed the mountain and to restore the wholeness and wellness that was compromised. ‘I am the same as the mountain’ says Marcelino Yamahuaya the healer, ‘[the mountain] takes care of my body, and I must give food and drink to Pachemama,’⁷



⁷ Scheper-Hughes, Lock: 1987. 20

Dancing the *Kompaku*: a horizontal passage of the dead into a place “nowhere out there”⁸ - creating a vacancy of self to foreground the circulatory unconscious, enacted in a series of fluid archetypal transformations, generated from the depths of the soul to reclaim locomotion from the empty rituals of the social and the daily. The Butohist aspires to authenticity and presence, and moves in search of core identity. The somatic notation of this *planetary mimesis* might follow:

“long pipe
combing
resting chin on the table
tying a knot in the string
carrying a cup
weaving cherry blossoms branches
hair ornament
lipstick
stop!
cutting the string with teeth
stretching the string
outline of your face
loose hair
big nose
three streams of rain crossing in front of your face three times
TOKIWA
ogress”⁹

“Butoh is a corpse standing straight up in a desperate bid for life.”¹⁰ *A wounded healer who, by dancing with the shinigami, from the spotlight, draws a crowd, to usher into the yami*¹¹. I notice the death of a body, and the following decomposition, marking a point of rapid transformation between forms, at last exceeds itself, becoming the matter of new growth. “The disappearing history of the flesh trails behind the metropolis of the flesh... In our body, there is

⁸ Nakajima, “Ankoku Butoh”

⁹ Nakajima, *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Tatsuo Hijikata, quoted by Nakajima, “Ankoku Butoh”

¹¹ *Yami* - shadowy place

*something that sometimes goes astray, and sometimes surfaces*¹². And the trailing history of flesh, at the edges of time, also surfaces a metropolis.

Seen as a continuum of materiality, this bracketed time period pronounces a physical unity when/where the **Naturalistic Oneness**¹³ is most clearly articulated, while the contours of the individual slur polymorphously. A Butohist sheds the habitual skin, the mechanistic roles engendered to service a Capital engine, tracking down domesticated motion, as the hunter, or interrogator, and reacquaints the expanded self, the body metropolis, forever listening in locomotion.

*"Trailing my body
In amazement, I walk
Into stillness awake"*¹⁴



¹² Fraleigh, "Natsu Nakajima: Becoming Nothing/Becoming Something" quoting Natsu Nakajima. 108.

¹³ See below

¹⁴ Ibid. 109.

Ishi wo tatenkoto - a phonetic transcription of the Japanese phrase for “creating a garden”. Literally: standing rocks upright¹⁵. My grandmother Yoshiko Nakayama was excommunicated from her family in Chiba Prefecture after expatriating her nation with an American soldier. The act of emigration for love violated customs placing familial and national identity well above the individual¹⁶, and dispossessed her of these networks of support. An uprighted stone, in the context of the dyadic binary term *teien* (garden: *tei* - wild expanse; *en* - contained and cultivated land)¹⁷ evokes a scale-shifted mountain vista. For the garden participant, this aesthetic obligation between subjects — the human and the bracketed landscape — creates an opportunity for relational contemplation¹⁸: An intervention in the landscape on behalf of the Wild interrupts blind habits and creates a space for reconsideration. The upright stone also signifies agency for the land through vertical orientation; The stone, symbolically reorientated to verticality, indicates a rising up from passive assimilation.

*I became familiar with this act of uprighting the stone, buried partially beneath the earth. I felt your weight against my body, pivoting over my bare heels in the dirt. A territorial dispute in the teien. To uproot a boulder, I dug around the edges deep into the surrounding earth, finding the shape of your curve. I scraped at the ground with my fingers. I used my bonded shovel, the familiar extension of my arm, to unlock your rooted position. Attempting to pry you free, to set you upright, I made scars across your surface. Two of the same kind, one searching for truth, the other in blank resistance. I felt your deep mass lift reluctantly again and again, through my handle, until on the final stone I snapped across the brace. I felt this coming with each boulder repositioned, but I let you signal the end of our collaboration. Remorse for my broken tool followed only from habit, and deeper I cherished this act of communion. I mimic your stubborn ignorance and ask you to show me all that I knew. Always I seek your wisdom to guide the chaos of my wandering path. **Or is it your chaos unguiding me, showing me new ways?***

¹⁵Keane 1996

¹⁶ Scheper-Hughes, Lock: The Mindful Body. 14.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸Chung 2018

My paternal family carries a self-proclaimed genetic impulse for rebellion to established order (alongside a paradoxical esteem of familial conformity). Somewhere this lineage through me transpires to a core virtue for relational anarchy that, due to communication failure, has yet to transcend the religious and political divides separating our felt sense of kinship. Left-leaning nihilist countercultures prime decolonization, a profound sense of displacement from mainstream artifice, and the challenges of deep psychological transformation in awakening to an elevated consciousness. I knew only by instinct — or intuition — that a rift between self and body (wrought in Christo-centric priorities to break the wild grounds of physicality into subordination under divine law) must be reacquainted, healed, bridged, or through cracks renetworked, before flourishing. I moved from religion toward the secular intellect, learning in theory about the nature of the mind through psychology. For a time I experimented with the mind-altering potentials of medicinal substances, and later the exploration of phenomenology in the arts inspired an alchemical activation of the subtleties of space and form. A formal creative education led that understanding through a sharp demystification (and disenchantment, for a time) of material intervention, but also catalyzed the core psychological transformation for a radical ontological shift, placing material reality and the articulated senses engaging it at the premise of my being: A creative process of negotiated identity, of spilling containers of language, the slurring of words to rearticulate my relationship to familiar concepts, where the cognitive framing of self and knowledge becomes a pliable raft, mobile, swaying with the tides of the body. I sought to understand the potential healing effects of Jungian transformation, out of necessity, dissolving the persona to reach a more profound state of existence in the divine feminine, and then coagulate around a new daily purpose. From the sifted dust I negotiate my self-thoughtful body along the boundaries of relational engagement.

As my awareness sharpened, so did the contours of what I understand to be my relational boundaries - points of interaction where I negotiate my embodied psyche with an entity dissimilar to me. The art that exists along these

edges is the constant process of redefinition enacted collaboratively within the space between distinct, but mutable, entities. This art evades fixity, exceeds containment, permeates borders. With time, it is itself a flux, the webbed contextual entanglement evident only in glimpses through material substance. Objectification of the encounter produces a corpse from which the soul of art slips free. Relational boundaries are constructed verbal articulations where identity is defined in contrast to the dissimilar. They are the negotiations of my life path.

In mimetic relationships, some otherwise entity permeates the flow of my being, influences my sense of perception, and makes alterations to my self-image. I reduce the primacy of my ego, my power-instinct, to adopt qualities found externally. When I articulate myself through contrast, I become subtly dissimilar to other entities. Through mimesis I become more similar. Is there a way to fuse these binary processes into a dyad? Sam Durrant identifies a variance in mimetic relation that offers framing for the expanded identity to integrate diversity, rather than assimilate differences. Durrant models “planetary mimesis” from Animist ontologies, where the spirit-self extends beyond the limits of the physical body, out toward and through the more-than-human entities otherwise¹⁹. Perhaps this spirit is a perception of how my physically material body exceeds its form, integrating new entities with every breath, and radiating cells with every movement. **Planetary mimesis then is a cognitive mode that, in contrast to identitarian assimilation, integrates the multiplicity within the individual, where mind collapses into, and the self is seated within, a linguistically augmented physical body that extends beyond its form as well as its individuality.**

Where is the practice of drawing boundaries enacted within the cognitive mode of planetary mimesis? Perhaps, what does it look like? At what point in cognition does it occur, and in what ways do I define myself as part *with* the mutually infinite individuation in fractalized cosmologies?

¹⁹ Durrant 2023

Bayo Akomolafe invokes the **trickster** archetype, and wisely advises this invocation is more of a surrender than a channeling²⁰. The surrender here is a risk of engaging with the monsters, the Other. Surrendering to the trickster allows for slippages of the individuated self, the con•fusion of self and other (and vice versa), and in this way, breaks open binaries, destabilizes quantified packages, slurs the boundaries that contain bodies and words. To engage with the trickster is to risk instability, to risk becoming unfamiliar, to risk control over ways of being, to risk securities of both psychology and wealth. *Why would I, or anyone choose this?*

I have known *you* well, though less in choice than circumstance - my childhood home, placed (unwittingly) in a geomantic architectural reversal. Approaching the house, one enters first through the basement door and into a dim hallway, then up a stairs to the first floor landing. To enter the “front door”, one must walk around the rear side facing away from the drive in. One might say I was architecturally cultivated to navigate the inversion of entry; Child-rearing in the belly of the trickster.

The psychopomp, Shinigami, the kami of death, is a form of the trickster who ushers the recently deceased into the underworld. *Are there words to invoke this kami to usher me back into the underworld of my body?* Out of the ubiquitous necessity for healing traumas, I grew deeply sensitive to what my body speaks to me through signals of pain and pleasure, position, change, subtle feedback from material, sensory, and psychological stimulus, of the resting state in any given context and through the wash of emotions, all in layers. All of these told me how to describe my embodied experience, yet none are the experience itself: My body, *taceri*. Out of necessity I learned a meticulously focused observation of my inner experience, without actually living a body as the premise for my being. *I call upon the vestibular organs for balance and orientation.* Psychopomp, Shinigami, risking the trickster is to risk being ushered into a body that experiences the flow of Chi, which reacquaints traumatic discontinuities. This body risks the fundamental motion between and within the materially unified organism, far beyond my individuated notions of self and will. *If I must, and I must, how do I reckon with your voice? Am I speaking you, or are you*

²⁰Akomolafe and Powell, “The Edges of the Middle”

speaking me? You are more than the name on this form. You are the voice by which we speak. In my bosom, or a place lower still, I hold sounds that, with air, interface us. The air, thick, weighing on my lips, moving sluggish, sweetly, as One, fills the sails in my belly.

My body, as a system of entities coming in and out of synchronicity, at times occupying a region in simultaneity and at times separated by great distance, feels, the more I articulate my senses to your presence, like I'm less of my own (as in ownership), than perhaps a vast territory, a wild expanse, of participants.

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