Being & Metaphor:

Variations on World

Eben Hensby

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Foreword

Living well is the result of an attuned sensitivity and responsivity to beings around us. We miss the opportunity because we tend to close off from others. Thus, we need a renewed sense of responsibility; we need to shift our mindset from a human-centred ethics to a broader ethical way of being.

This broader sense means we come to be aware of what it means to live in the midst of a multitude of divergent ways of being — animals, plants, so-called inanimate things. Only in this way does our world become more meaningful and responsive. And yet we're stopped from this experience by patterns of thought that insist on a unity to nature or being. So, we must transform ourselves and our ways of thought.

We must relinquish our habitual patterns to arrive at a new experience of other beings. In this book, we'll spend most of our time tracking and being tracked by this kind of experience, seduced by and seducing it. *The shape of this experience is the shape of living well.* What we see on this journey is similar to what a tracker sees when they take in a vista; thus, we will pause on traditional philosophical issues, like truth, space and time, ontology, metaphysics, aesthetics, and the self, amongst others. On our quest, not merely intellectual, we strive together for a rigorous, enactive philosophy that opens us to the mysteries of being. For philosophy is one way to rigorously try to live a good life.

The central transformation of this book is to transform one's world and self from an everyday way of being to a more open, responsive way of being: I call this a *phenomenological transformation*. Through this shift in our experience—in *how* we experience—we're struck by things in their particularity. Things take on senses that don't stem from us. Things reach out to us, show us their character, and stand forth from out of their world.

I explore this concept of "world," for our responsivity must be engaged from out of our world and towards the worlds of others. Thus, I draw on Martin Heidegger, for whom humans are in a world, where world is: the totality of involvements, how meaning hangs together, and the set of pragmatic relations, all ultimately based on how beings are disclosed to us. In other words, our world is where beings are what they are.

But there isn't just one world. First, there are different *human* worlds: historical and contemporaneous, for our world is not that of the ancient Greeks, nor that of contemporary indigenous Amazonian peoples.[1] Second, there are *non-human* worlds: animals and plants. Third, and more broadly, *all* beings have worlds, their own worlds—which are shared and distinct for each *group* of beings—for all things maintain themselves while opening beyond themselves—they maintain themselves while opening to all others, i.e., to beings as a whole. I call that which has this structure of maintaining and opening *opening-while-holding-back*.

In each case, worlds are where beings are what they are. They're encompassing ways that all things are, which are ultimately not reconcilable to any *one* world or perspective. Nonetheless, and paradoxically, each world constantly reconciles and is

[1] "Our" means 'us' in our group, in the Western tradition and in Canada or America, though I hope this book finds resonance outside this group.

reconciled by other worlds and ways of being. To understand this irreconcilable reconcilability, I draw on Canadian poet-philosopher Jan Zwicky's ideas on metaphor.

Metaphors say X *is* the case while implying that X *is not* the case (X *is* and *is not* Y). That is, metaphors gesture to the similarities between contexts (the 'is') while maintaining the essential distinctiveness of the contexts (the implied 'is not'). In our society, we tend to notice the distinctiveness of things (which we take as separability or independence) and similarity (which we take as the reductive identity or sameness of things): thus, we take things to be both independent and interchangeable. Contrarily, metaphors emphasize what is common between contexts while respecting their difference. Like a *hinge* that connects and separates things, metaphors first bring contexts and entities together and then allow them to return to their own contexts. Thus, things are simultaneously dependent and unique: that is, *dependently-independable*.

How does metaphor help with the multiplicity of divergent worlds? By "metaphor," I don't mean something representational or linguistic, though metaphors are something we use in language. I mean something broader, for I'm interested in the *structure* of metaphor. *Different worlds relate metaphorically*. This doesn't mean we represent this relation in consciousness; it means that the structure of how different worlds relate is the same as how a metaphor is structured.

There are different ontologies, ways of being, or worlds occupying the same space: though they share aspects in common, worlds are distinct. Because each wholly encompassing world opens its own way of *being* which overlaps with others (e.g., a bear's world is not our world), I speak of *metaphoric ontology*. Metaphoric ontology describes how Being *flashes out* as distinct worlds that are always already interacting, irreconcilably reconcilably.

I delve further into this by drawing, as Zwicky does, on the Necker cube: . This gestalt figure is a cube that projects either upwards and to the right, or downwards and to the left. The Necker cube is a metaphor for being, which projects in different ways: i.e., as distinct, overlapping worlds. The Necker cube is another way to show the *structure* that underlies how different worlds relate; while the two projections of the cube share aspects in common, they are distinct. In other words, metaphors and the Necker cube are similarly structured, and I use both to gesture to the structure of distinct worlds.

Thus, with Zwicky, I caution against our societal tendency towards *reductionism*—insisting the cube's ultimately a set of lines we interpret—for reductionism focuses either on what is in common at the expense and collapse of difference or on difference at the expense and denial of commonality.

Likewise, though worlds are distinct and multiple, they do overlap, share aspects in common, and interact with one another. Every world is open to every other, and only exists *because* it's open to others. The multiplicity of worlds finds a kind of unity in each distinct world; all worlds are shared worlds. This is how they're irreconcilably reconcilable.

We glimpse other worlds from our world. For example, when we're *struck* by a thing's particular *this*ness, we may see how the world could be for it: we see the whole

through *this*.[2] We glimpse a *wisp of world*, which is how worlds appear in other worlds. An *ontological transformation* is to explicitly open oneself to the world of an other.

Because other beings appear in one's world, worlds are ongoing negotiations with others. And we can be inattentive, neglectful, or outright violent towards others. And yet, they strive for their own relations and, if we let them be (or even if we don't), an *auto-ontological transformation* may occur: the uncovering of their own world and ways of relating. Before imposition on others, *power* is to be called by and placed into relations with things. Only secondarily does power function as imposition of one's way of relating onto others.

Inattentiveness can be unintentional. To bring ourselves to an understanding of the multiplicity of worlds requires we transform ourselves and our world onto-theologically: on the level of principles of how beings appear and are gathered together in a world. In our tradition, we're led by an ever-increasing reconciliation of being in our transition from Homeric gods to the Judeo-Christian God, who becomes replaced by the *One*. This is the principle of objective relation and the view from nowhere, and it informs atheism, science, multiculturalism, and managerialism. The One is the onto-theological reconciliation of all ways of being in a single unity. Thus, it hinders awareness of other worlds, for its reconciliation is based on reductions. Therefore, we need an *onto-theological transformation*.

However, in this book, our guiding thread is the phenomenological transformation—the transformation of our mode of being. This path is how we arrive at other transformations.

Transformation involves ethics: we *attend* to beings and their ways of being in the world; we enliven all beings and our relations to them. This is an enactive and practical philosophy.

This book is about the importance of attending to one's attention; it broaches an ethics of attentiveness. It's a mystery how and that we are called to beings.

A note on structure:

This book isn't a scholarly work. It comes from outside academia, which provides freedom from some academic convention. Although I write in the genre and style of philosophy, my hope is that those less acquainted with the nuance of particular discussions and philosophers will derive meaning from this text — that references to 'big names' or concepts can be glossed over without much loss.

The book's for those who are interested in responding to calls from other beings all around us: environmentalists, anthropologists, those who love plants and animals and other cultures, those who are fighting to dismantle colonialism and the dominion of capitalism, and those who feel responsivity is at the core of living well.

[2] Jan Zwicky, *Wisdom & Metaphor*, 2nd ed. (Kentville, Nova Scotia: Gaspereau Press, 2003, 2008), LH53–5. Zwicky's *Wisdom & Metaphor* is composed such that the left hand (LH) and right hand (RH) pages are given one page number (e.g., LH2 and RH2). The left-hand page of each spread consists of her writing, and the right-hand page consists of parts of works by others, which she has compiled and arranged.

The book is organized in a series of *sections*. Within each *chapter* (I-III), also called *layers*, there are 108 sections. Sections flow successively (horizontally, so to speak): e.g., in the first chapter, front-to-back, are sections 1.1, 1.2, 1.3…1.108, then comes the next chapter (2.1, 2.2, 2.3…2.108), and then the third. Sections also flow, we can say, vertically: 1.1, 2.1, 3.1. I call these sectional *overlays*. Thus, we can leap through each chapter and read the first sections together, then the second sections, and so on. In theory, we could even read vertically without reading consecutively: 1.1–3.1, then 1.4–3.4, and so on. Thus, the book is structured so one can read successively (front-to-back) or by leaps.[3]

The book has resonances both *within* layers (successively: e.g., 1.1, 1.2, 1.3…) and *between* layers (by leaps: e.g., 1.1, 2.1, 3.1). Yet, while there are intra-layer resonances available to be explored, the text is meant to be read, at least at first and most completely, in the regular front-to-back direction.

Each layer has a unique flavour. The first layer, chapter I (e.g., 1.1, 1.2, 1.3), is tightly aphoristic in structure, concerned with the theme of transformation and an introduction to basic concepts. The second layer, chapter II (e.g., 2.1, 2.2, 2.3), is written in prose paragraphs; it engages more overtly with the history of philosophy and draws out some arguments and assumptions of layer I. And the third and final layer, chapter III, is a quasi-theology, a mythic layer, that strives to think the onto-theological differently.

Like a bell or curtain drawing us across a threshold, each layer begins and ends, opens and closes, with what I call a *bow quote*. These quotes introduce an intentional element—they strike a dominant tone for the chapter—as though we're *bowing* before entering a *dojo*, *kwoon*, or hall, and again as we leave. Or, as though we draw the *bow*, ready for a target; ready for the cello's strings and its resonances. Our intention, focused, like a graceful ribbon, knotted; a boat that sets out to sea, and returns to harbour. In each layer, we set out on an adventure, and return.

Because each layer resonates with previous and future layers, our journey traces a spiral: a whirlpool, where each circle occurs on a slightly different plane and level of resonance. Thus, we approach the middle of a circle: the transformative experience, that which draws this text into being with its gravity and the space it creates. Thus, imperceptibly, we approach the experience of transformation. But, at times, we ripple *out* from the experience, a reversing whirlpool, a pool with a stone tossed in the middle. — We move, at turns towards, at turns away from the middle, in a tidal system created by the experience of transformation and the attempt to write about it. We do not travel in a simple, unbroken line.

In tracing this path, I found I couldn't write as if things were settled: it's as though I've seen shapes and figures in the distance, with glimpses of them here and there up close. Not that my text is ill-defined or needs more precision, but this just may be how this landscape is. Thus, I invite the reader into this particular vein of unsettled thoughts, where writing forges its own path, forced into and forcing its own twists and turns, like a river in the heart of a forest. Writing is never fully transparent. It's as though you have in your hands a sheet of stained glass. Or perhaps three sheets, layered on top of one another.

[3] For the PDF version: clicking on the first word of a section will link you to the next section in the overlay. So, clicking on the first word for 1.1 will link you to 2.1, the first word for 2.1 will link you to 3.1, and the first word for 3.1 will link you back to 1.1.

I tend to think aphoristically — thoughts bubble to the surface from the din of many voices, like horses in battle who suddenly breach the enemy's lines. The first layer is the most aphoristic in form, which is why I've provided the reader with this foreword as a kind of guide. If the first proves too austere, the reader may wish to start on the second layer, or skim the first, and return to the first layer in more depth at a later time.

My thinking is indebted to many who have come before. In addition to Heidegger and Zwicky, my influences include Wittgenstein, Nietzsche, Husserl, Foucault, Deleuze, Rancière, Watsuji, and Derrida. Again, this book should be of interest even if you don't know these thinkers at all.

Thanks to the places that have welcomed me in and given me space to write, think, and respond. Thanks to the Pacific Northwest, Vancouver Island, and pockets of Victoria, B.C. May they retain their beauty as emplacing places, and may they foster more beauty; may we have the wisdom and courage to allow such places—and places everywhere—to become well-established and intense.

Thanks to my relations. My work is indebted to my friend Jarrad Reddekop. Our discussions have fueled many of my reflections. I've been influenced by informal discussions, but I'd be remiss to not cite his dissertation, which shows the depth of my debt to him.[4]

Of course, while ideas emerge from relational contexts, they've passed through me, for better or for worse. Voices of others come through, but ventriloquized by me. – Thanks to my friends, my family, to my wife, to my daughter.

In all honesty, I'm probably a bad philosopher: what you have here may be better described as a painting or musical composition, with swatches of colour and tones struck at various intervals. — Perhaps it's a bell, several bells, tolling from across the intervals of a city, one rooftop to the next, from buildings for which no one can remember the use. May the tones be pleasing—engaging and helpful—and may this place be welcoming to you in your time here.

[4] Jarrad Reddekop, "Thinking Across Worlds: Indigenous Thought, Relational Ontology, and the Politics of Nature; Or, If Only Nietzsche Could Meet a Yachaj" (PhD diss., Western University, 2014).

I

And it was, of course, connected with the very nature of the investigation.
For it compels us to travel criss-cross in every direction
over a wide field of thought.[5]

1.1 It is possible for our world to be transformed. This transformation hinges on what is common between our world and others.
– The trees are still there, the rocks are still there, but everything has changed.

1.2 What does this mean, that it 'hinges on what is common'?[6] — Jan Zwicky talks about metaphor as a gesture that brings two or more contexts together on the hinge of what they have in common before releasing each to each:[7] good metaphors enable insight into commonalities and differences between contexts.[8] We notice commonalities within difference, and vice versa.[9]

The transformation involves an *experiential* shift that is structured metaphorically. We experience commonalities within difference.

1.3 The transformation is like a switch is flicked, though the profundity of the change depends on a variety of factors. Things shift into place.

This experience, a possible or latent experience, reveals fundamental philosophical insights. The experience transforms other experience; its possibility transforms possibilities.

1.4 The transformation is of the world, and thus of all things.

1.5 Though the hinge—the hinge of what is common (§1.1)—is not on, or attached to, the outlines of things, it almost is. It is *as though* the outlines of things remain while things themselves are transformed.

The transformation involves concentration—a stilled breath—a focus of being.
Then, it happens.
It's easier, for me in any case, to experience the transformation in particular forests.
But, shortly thereafter, I lose it and return to the familiar way I experience things.

[5] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953, 1958 (1972)), preface, p. 3.
[6] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH51, LH62, LH67, LH80, LH83, LH98; both 'hinge' and 'what is common' are terms from Zwicky.
[7] ibid, LH51.
[8] ibid, LH4.
[9] ibid, LH32, LH59, LH62.

1.6 — *"It is the essence of our experience of gestalt figures like the Necker cube […] that, however adept we become at performing the gestalt shift, we can never see the two figures simultaneously. So in the awareness of one is always the shadow of the loss of the other."*[10]

There are several key ideas here: the cube can be seen as projecting upwards to the right or downwards to the left, but we never see both figures at once; each figure carries the loss of the other; and, with that said, we can get better, more adept, at performing the shift.

1.7 Zwicky's concept of *this*ness[11] is important to understand the transformation. That is, the importance of *this particular* thing. (*This* day, *this* tree, *this* song.)

1.8

> *"Deer come out of the poplars just as day becomes night. […] They see me standing by the woodpile. They stare. I stare. […] The deer show out from around the word 'deer' and they have no name. The world is its names plus their cancellations, what we call it and the undermining of our identifications by an ungraspable residue in objects."*[12]
>
> "*The* this *strikes into us like a shaft of light. […] [W]hat is* this *is unique, it has an utterly distinct […] fragrance."*[13]

1.9 The tree you're walking past shows itself, reaches out. It shows its character.

1.10 As you walk past, the tree hovers beside you and commands your attention.
As you heed it, the very space of the encounter changes.

1.11 *"[…] to return sensation to our limbs, in order to make us feel objects, to make a stone feel stony […]."*[14]

1.12 Trees show themselves. They aren't all the same: a tree is not a tree.

1.13 The shift (§1.3) is to sense all things and the world differently.
— Which always includes you.

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[10] ibid, LH56. On the Necker cube in Zwicky, see also LH80, LH97–99, and *The Experience of Meaning* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019), p. 12–13, 17, 149–150.
[11] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH52.
[12] Tim Lilburn, "How to Be Here?," in *Living In The World As If It Were Home: Essays* (Dunvegan, Ontario: Cormorant Books, 1999), p. 3, 5, quoted in Zwicky, *W&M*, RH76.
[13] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH53.
[14] Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Device," in *Theory of Prose* (Champaign, Illinois: Dalkey Archive Press, 1929, 2009), p. 6.

You are changed. —— You must change your life.[15]

1.14 But *why* should someone seek out this transformation? Why bother with it?

The transformation opens new ways of relating, grounded in a deepened responsivity. This is a way we can learn to live a good life.

1.15 In our culture, we hear "transformation" and think that means we need to 'wake up.' We imagine an 'awakening' down the road, but we need a teacher, a lover, a push or a shove. We feel we need something external or internal.
— But because our sense of things is off, we go astray.

1.16 You cannot look elsewhere. We must turn to things.

1.17 'Awakening' is a concept, a calcified metaphor,[16] one that obscures things.

1.18 Much recent philosophy has been concerned with thinking the conditions for something to be the case — e.g., for our experience to be what it is. This focus on conditions of possibility has been useful and has helped open a long tradition that had become turned in on itself.

The tradition is turned in on itself again in a different sense that, in time, will need to be opened yet again, beyond us and towards things.

1.19 Rather than conditions of possibility, I'm concerned with *onto-ethics* — the inseparability of ontology and ethics. The transformation affects our world, our self, and our relations.

1.20 We're called on by things and worlds.

1.21 And we may sense fragments of worlds, *wisps of worlds*, other ways of being, if we're attentive.
These stretch over like a bridge.

1.22 Metaphors also create taut, partial, temporary bridges. There's a torsion, oriented around the hinge (the hinge of what is common). Metaphors connect distinct contexts and call on us to see what certain things have in common within difference.

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[15] Rainer Maria Rilke, "Archaic Torso of Apollo," in *Translations from the Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*, trans. M.D. Herter Norton (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1938, 1962), p. 181; cited in Jan Zwicky, *Lyric Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Kentville, Nova Scotia: Gaspereau Press, 1992, 2011), RH219. *Lyric Philosophy* is composed in a similar way to *Wisdom & Metaphor*: see footnote 2 for information on book and citation format.
[16] 'Calcification' comes from Zwicky: e.g., *W&M,* LH8, LH11.

Wisps of world are metaphoric (§1.2).

1.23 To be receptive to a call is to be vulnerable, which is to be strong.

1.24 Our receptivity is blocked by our usual ways of beings. This everyday sense is strongly policed and patrolled. While some calls are heeded, many are muffled, neglected, or suppressed.

But certain things call. There are "*ways in which particular aspects of sense call for a resolution or response—a fulfillment—in another aspect of sense. The body's grasp of one such aspect of sense sets up in that body a felt need for—a propulsion toward—the other. The dots impel me to notice their regular pairing, and the music propels me to dance. In other settings, a doorknob calls to me to grasp and turn it, an open highway urges me to drive quickly, and the smooth, repetitive undulations of sand dunes invite me to wander aimlessly.*"[17]

1.25 In this text, we'll wander as well. And yet, the goal's to come home, in a transformed way.

1.26 This involves stillness. Other thoughts, other concerns, pull you away.

1.27 Things can shine crisper in our encounters.

1.28 We have so much to learn from the world.
(Hear the heron at night; see the waves crash on the shore; feel an arbutus growing up to the sky.)

1.29 What, really, is wind?

1.30 No, look again. — Use your senses.

1.31 Ask the same of water, fire, earth.
(The Presocratics can be helpful here. As a thought-experiment, perceive these (wind, water, fire, earth) as they were before so much was piled—linguistically, conceptually—on them.)

1.32 Of course, you can't entirely encounter them without language or concepts. That's not the point. The problem's the calcification of thoughts — the particular orientation ours take.
Ask the water how it is with it.

[17] John Russon, *Bearing Witness to Epiphany: Persons, Things, and the Nature of Erotic Life* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), p. 14.

1.33 We come already with answers, and they fit the world nicely — of course they do.

There are many ways to see ‘the’ world.

1.34 Ways of seeing fit the lines just so.

1.35 Each way of seeing is a whole. It fits all the lines.
But this also means you can’t fully understand another way of seeing unless you fully understand it.

1.36 This doesn’t mean you can’t learn something anyway.

1.37 While each way of seeing fits all the lines, there’s always slack. There’s always room to change harmful practices.
Seeing is a practice.

1.38 We’re immersed in our worlds and attempts to understand or reach beyond limits fall within our world.
— This doesn’t mean there aren’t better and worse ways of understanding.

1.39 The world offers us feedback. We can sense if our orientation isn’t quite right.
— We can ask the water.

1.40 What do we ask it?

1.41 Or, we ask other things; for example: What’s an animal?
— A distinct way of being in each case.

But this answer is not sufficient.

1.42 *“Things are, and are not, as they seem.”*[18]

“*We step into and we do not step into the same rivers. We are and we are not.*”[19]

1.43 The point isn’t just to feel the stoniness of the stone (Shklovsky; §1.11) —
It’s to encounter the stone *as* stone. The stone shows a particular way of being — a particular take on being. The stone sits in its—and our—world.
(It seems to draw things in to it.)

[18] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH79, LH81.
[19] Heraclitus, *A Presocratics Reader*, trans. Richard D. McKirahan (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996), frag. 63, p. 36.

1.44 Our categories aren't innocent. They don't float free and descend onto the world; they enmesh with it, enabling certain things to show themselves or be unconcealed in particular ways, and certain other things to be concealed in other ways.

— Transformation comes from within.

1.45 Every unconcealing is partial.
There is no totality.
Though each unconcealing fits all the lines (§1.35), there are lines trailing off into the distance.

1.46 Lines trail off like paths into the woods. And each path leads to a new view of the whole.

1.47 The cube — — is a metaphor for worlds, for how each world takes all things differently. The cube can be seen in different ways.
Yet, importantly, the *image* of the cube, an image for divergent takes on things, emerges from *one particular* take on things. It comes from within our world. And so, to be accurate, it *should* (but does *not*) enfold back on itself.
— Though this is saying too much.

The cube is my version of Wittgenstein's ladder: "*My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he [sic] has used them—as steps—to climb up beyond them.*"[20]

1.48 Can poetry transform our usual ways of engaging with the world? Can it help us return to things in a world dominated by technology, subjectivism, and capitalism (e.g., as diagnosed by Heidegger, Baudrillard, and others)?
— Not poetry 'proper.' But perhaps poetic thinking.
Poetic thinking responsively dwells with things and can help us overcome calcified concepts.

1.49 Is the transformative experience or what is revealed by it, something universal, necessary, or absolute?
— I don't think so, but I'm not sure what these questions mean.
It's not as though there are veils—decorated and designed by various cultures—on top of true reality.
There isn't a reality existing under all appearances.

1.50 A colonizing logic will come and say 'now we've found the real basis.'

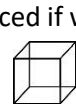
[20] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1921, 1961), §6.54, p. 89.

For example: structuralism; Maslow's hierarchy of needs; Locke's primary qualities; Marx's base; Heidegger's Being; even the , if understood in certain ways.
Philosophy is and has been bound up—often essentially—with colonizing logics.

1.51 Heidegger *can* open us to what we took to be limits or margins of thought: the question of Being; *Dasein* (i.e., the being of humans as being-there); the clearing; being-in-the-world; being-towards-death; world and things; hermeneutic phenomenology — these are important insights in Heidegger's texts. But they're insights from within a particular tradition and understanding. This should be obvious. Being's not transcendental.[21] A culture isn't better because it has thought that "*the being of being 'is' itself not a being*"[22] — profound as that is, for us.

One could try devices to remind ourselves of this—putting being under erasure—but all signs necessarily become calcified in time. There's no way to guarantee meaning or communication. Which is part of the insight of Derrida's *différance*.)

Heidegger revolutionized how we think of world, things, and humans. But he lagged in how we think of non-human animals. And this isn't just a problem at the edges of his—or our—thought.

1.52 We aren't more advanced if we were to somehow catalogue various ways things are seen — if we index how the  is (or could be) seen.
Such a project tries to step outside its own mode to gather facts and data independent of its context. But we are always in our world.
Such a list would be part of how the is revealed to and for us. — It would not leave it behind.

1.53 There are better and worse ways to be responsive.

1.54 There are many different ways to see.

The cube is not a box. It's not hermetically sealed.

This is why there has been a transition in the discussion, which the reader may have noticed, from other ways within our world to intracultural ways.

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[21] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1967, 1997), p. 23: "*the sense of being is not a transcendental or trans-epochal signified […] but [is] already […] a determined signifying trace […].*"
[22] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York, 1927, 1996), 6/5. For citations of *Being and Time*, I will, first, cite the German page, followed by the English, translated page.

Worlds are always with others.

And yet, Wittgenstein and Derrida are right: each death is the end of a world, of the world, each time.[23]

Worlds open at the edges like shores to the sea. They are *like* totalities, yet not contained. Worlds are not spheres.

1.55

> *"Because [Aphrodite] denotes a permanent reality which draws everything into her power, and bestows her spirit and impresses her character upon the whole realm of the elemental and the living, she is a world—and for the Greeks this means a divinity."*[24]
>
> *"It is in the full sense a world, that is to say, a whole world, not a fraction of the total sum of existence, which Hermes inspirits and rules. All things belong to it, but they appear in a different light than in the realms of the other gods."*[25]
>
> *"This applies also to the supreme gods, Zeus, Athena, and Apollo, the bearers of the highest ideals. None of them represents a single virtue, none is to be encountered in only one direction of teeming life: each desires to fill, shape, and illumine the whole compass of human existence with his [sic] peculiar spirit."*[26]

1.56 Worlds show themselves and recede. They come to us as wisps of worlds (§1.21).

1.57 We pay attention to things because they call us.

> *"Everything is blooming most recklessly; if it were voices instead of colors, there would be an unbelievable shrieking into the heart of the night."*[27]

We do not bestow our attention, like a torch, to enable others to appear. Others appear and call forth to us — they cross over. Like a *metaphor*.

1.58 We're in constant exchange with the world around us. How we comport ourselves is a matter of ethics and character.

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[23] Jacques Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 95, 107, 115; Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, §6.431, p. 87.
[24] Walter F. Otto, *The Homeric Gods: The Spiritual Significance of Greek Religion*, trans. Moses Hadas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954, 1964), p. 100.
[25] Otto, *Homeric Gods*, p. 120.
[26] ibid, p. 160–1.
[27] Rainer Maria Rilke, letter sent to Clara Rilke, April 8, 1907, in *Letters of Rainer Maria Rilke, 1892–1910*, trans. Jane Bannard Greene and M.D. Herter Norton (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1972), p. 274.

Are we good listeners?

We swim in the streams of our relations. Thus, it's a question of how well we pay respect to these connections.

1.59 *"The world is the totality of facts, not of things."*[28]
Instead of facts, let's say relations (which is, in part, what Wittgenstein is getting at).[29]
But let's not follow Wittgenstein too closely here, or too quickly.

1.60 Things, for Heidegger, are also never just 'sitting there.'

1.61 Things show their sense in how they are together. They call forth wisps of worlds, like tattered pieces of fabric.

1.62 It may *seem* as though I'm arguing for something formal or structural (§1.49). But things just show themselves.
'How?'
In their particularity.
'— Isn't that formal, too?'

1.63 No. Particularity is just that: particular. A tree shows itself as the tree it is.
There are different ways of being and different ways of attending to them.

1.64 *"Ontological attention is a response to particularity:* this *porch,* this *laundry basket,* this *day. Its object cannot be substituted for […]."*[30]

"Ontological attention is a form of love."[31]

1.65 We've come to see things as liquid, fungible, and entirely interchangeable. All space is the same, all time is the same, each atom is an atom. Forces act with uniformity and constancy. All is thrown into a massive indifference, blanketed in 'the same.'
All 'others' are the same others.

There's a complete and utter formal equality. Think of the term 'universe.'

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[28] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, §1.1, p. 5.
[29] Facts are states of affairs (Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, §2, p. 5), which are states of things (§2.01, p. 5), i.e., how things are disposed, related, and combined (§2.01). Things are possible constituents of states of affairs (i.e., they combine to be facts) (§2.011, p. 6). Things are always open to relations (§2.0121, p. 6) and stand in determinate relations (§2.031, p. 9). It's unthinkable that things are not internally related (§4.123, p. 32). In addition, things are the unalterable form that allows for world (§2.022–2.023, p. 7; §2.026, §2.0271, §2.0272, p. 8); so, while there must be things, their configuration's concrete, particular, and variable. All this means that things are always in relations that determine states of affairs and facts, particular things (as distinct from things as unalterable form) are always relational, and the world is this totality of relations.
[30] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH52.
[31] ibid, LH57.

1.66 We're called to a "linguistic responsibility",[32] for words enmesh with things. For example: when a tree is called lumber, timber, wood product. But, even earlier: when a tree is a tree (§1.12): each and every tree. Any tree will do.

1.67 When you've agreed to the terms, the rest is simply negotiation.

1.68 And yet, this equality isn't straightforward.

As Derrida shows, binaries are set up, with one term purified of the other, valued over and at the expense of the other: male/female, white/racialized, cisgender/transgender, form/content, active/passive, human/animal, animal/plant, plant/inanimate, organic/inorganic, etc.
These binaries are the result of a continual, ongoing operation and disavowed violence. Purificatory rites maintain (a semblance and version of) order.

Things are controlled by being the same, with a vicious hierarchy imposed upon this background. ('All women are the same.')

However, our options needn't be limited to either removing all difference or emphasizing/reinforcing such divisions.

1.69 One way to understand part of what I'm driving at is as follows:

> *"The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."*[33]

1.70 Though, Marx's dichotomy is false: 'interpretation' (depending how we think the term) *is* bound up with changing the world.

1.71 'Interpretation' isn't when we throw an understanding overtop of a real material thing. It concerns something more primordial, which I earlier called 'unconcealing' (§1.45).

1.72 There are multiple unconcealings, leading in divergent lines, never originating from an originary convergence. There's a plurality, a polyphony,[34] at times a chaotic jumbling falling over itself. The word 'perspectives' doesn't capture it for the same reason 'interpretation' is insufficient.

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[32] Karen L.F. Houle, "A Tree By Any Other Name: Language Use and Linguistic Responsibility," in *The Language of Plants: Science, Philosophy, Literature*, ed. Monica Gagliano, John C. Ryan, and Patrícia Vieira (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), p. 155–72.
[33] Karl Marx, "Theses On Feuerbach" in *Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), thesis XI, p. 173.
[34] Jan Zwicky, "Being, Polyphony, Lyric: An Open Letter to Robert Bringhurst," *Canadian Literature* 156 (Spring 1998): p. 181–4.

1.73 (Because when one uses the master's tools, one is still indebted to the master, this path I'm tracing reintroduces the problems it tries to diagnose. – And yet there is, nonetheless, a need for such paths.)

1.74 These divergences are traced not only through different 'cultures,' but also through and across any attempts to delineate speciation: animals, plants, and so on. These, too, have worlds.

We live in different worlds.

1.75 The hinge I described above—the hinge of what is common between contexts or worlds (e.g., §1.2, §1.5)—is *not* where we *touch* the world, as though what things have in common is more real; 'the' world is always already touched.

1.76 What is error?

Error is touching the world in a way in which it or we recoil.

Error has improper traction in the world: it is not how things are.

1.77 But what *is* a stone's world (§1.43)?
The stone's world is how it holds its surroundings open, through resistance to annihilation.

'But it doesn't have a perspective!'

You mean it doesn't have senses, life, access to beings around it. (Or, if you believe that non-human animals don't have worlds, it doesn't have consciousness, reason, a concept of selfhood, etc.)

—— The stone holds open a space for itself.

1.78 'Well, but what doesn't do that! What could you possibly mean by a world, then?'

A world is a way of relating to other beings. It's an openness to being related.

1.79 'We can't go on multiplying perspectives — or whatever you want to call them!'

The principle of parsimony, Occam's Razor (and Morgan's Canon) — these are meant to keep things simple. But they can't tell us what simplicity is.

1.80 My goal's simply to get my foot in the door. And then maybe we'll see there are other rooms to explore.

1.81 'But, surely, we can agree that stones don't have their own worlds.'

The very thing that's in question is how we should proceed, for we cannot determine in advance how our discussions should go. It's only in discussing, in really listening, that this may become clear.

1.82 'The stone doesn't have a world!'

Maybe it doesn't. But maybe it does.
How shall we find out?

1.83 Criteria always emerge from within a particular form of life and particular language-games.

We cannot step outside of our unconcealing or disclosure to see 'how things really are'; we cannot step outside to see what accords best with 'reality.' Rather, 'how things really are' is revealed to us through and in our very disclosure.

1.84 There's no neutral resting-ground.

1.85 'Neutrality' is always tainted.

1.86 We cannot simply appeal to practical aims to determine criteria, for these aims are determined within our disclosure. This in itself isn't bad (it's unavoidable), but it means they already come with certain ontological assumptions which are placed in question when we ask about other worlds.

1.87 *"Once I have exhausted the justifications, I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: 'This is simply what I do.'"*[35]

This doesn't mean that 'what I do' is right.

1.88 We can always listen more, listen better.
We should strive to be alive to the connections among things.

1.89 Forms of life aren't simply what we do; forms of life—forms of living—are how the world appears (i.e., is) to us. They emerge from responsive engagement with the world.

Forms of living can conflict. One form of responsivity can appear irresponsive to others.

1.90 No world is hermetically sealed, nor can a world define itself.

1.91 Violence and rupture precede any security or identity. They come after, too.

[35] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §217, p. 91.

1.92 (Common sense, self-evidence — these are terms for ruts of thought and being. Sometimes such ruts are useful or necessary. But this doesn't mean appealing to them is going to solve anything.)

1.93 Let's consider this phrase:
'The gods war amongst each other.'
— This seems to come out of nowhere, and yet it offers a different kind of vision from how we're used to seeing things. Held in our disclosure, which acts like a background, this phrase can leap to the fore like a flash of lightning.

When we consider this phrase, we aren't partaking in an intellectual game or poetic fantasy; the stakes are real. (We can sing a song in this key.)

In the flash across the gap between its vision and ours, it lights up our ways of thinking, including our ruts.

1.94 We might see how our steps tend to fall in certain ways.
How for so long we've tried to guarantee or secure progress (e.g., development, teleology).

But these attempts are thrown into question if the gods war and don't ensure consistency.

1.95 But this flash doesn't just light up our ways.
It lights itself up.

While we can never fully inhabit such an idea (along with whatever fuller context it may be a fragment of), we glean something from it.

We glean how different the world would be. What this phrase would require of us.

1.96 The gods war amongst each other.
This means there's no final arbiter.

Without casting poets out of the republic,[36] without the transition from many to one god (Judaism-Christianity-Islam), without the transition to the *cogito* — if the gods war amongst each other, the Western (philosophical) tradition would be vastly different.

[36] Plato, "The Republic," in *Great Dialogues of Plato: Complete Texts of The Republic, The Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Ion, Meno, Symposium*, trans. W. H. D. Rouse (New York: Signet Classic, 2008). In Books II, III, and X, Plato speaks variously of the censorship or banishment of poets. He doesn't advocate casting *all* poets out; instead, he censors or refuses entrance to imitative poets: p. 224–5, 480, 482–3. He also prohibits poets from claiming that "*gods war against gods*" (p. 199; see discussion on p. 197–207).

1.97 The transition from the Erinyes to the Eumenides:[37] one more marker of a changing landscape of thought — an increased centralization, brought about by a subjugation of previous ways of being.

1.98 For Freud, there are various forces—like secularized gods—at work in our lives. While untethered to the sovereign subject, they're tethered all the same to a centre, to the subject of the unconscious, subjected to Oedipal triangulation: the (non-sovereign) subject is the point through which experience and all things get filtered.

> *"When the break between Freud and Jung is discussed, the modest and practical point of disagreement that marked the beginning of their differences is too often forgotten: Jung remarked that in the process of transference the psychoanalyst frequently appeared in the guise of a devil, a god, or a sorcerer, and that the roles he [sic] assumed in the patient's eyes went far beyond any sort of parental images."*[38]

> *"[I]t has always been thought that the center, which is by definition unique, constituted that very thing within a structure which governs the structure, while escaping structurality. This is why classical thought concerning structure could say that the center is, paradoxically,* within *the structure and* outside *it. The center is at the center of the totality, and yet, since the center does not belong to the totality (is not part of the totality), the totality* has its center elsewhere*. The center is not the center. The concept of centered structure — although it represents coherence itself, the condition of the* epistemé *as philosophy or science — is contradictorily coherent. And, as always, coherence in contradiction expresses the force of a desire."*[39]

1.99 Why should we accept the account that things are made up of atoms (and quarks, etc.) and that this is what *reality* consists in?

'The account explains the phenomena.'

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[37] Aeschylus, *The Oresteia Trilogy*, trans. E.D.A. Morshead (Mineola: Dover Publications, 1996), p. 140–51. The Erinyes (the Furies) are blood and earth female deities. They're responsible to haunt Orestes, who killed his mother Clytemnestra (as vengeance for, in turn, her murdering his father Agamemnon); however, the Erinyes are overruled by a council-court of Athenian gods. At this, the Erinyes are filled with rage until Athena offers them a place within the Athenian *polis*. Here, they change from the Erinyes to the Eumenides (the blessed ones), as well as from earth deities to secondary deities within the Greek city-state.

[38] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Helen R. Lane, and Mark Seem (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), p. 46.

[39] Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*, ed. David H. Richter (New York: Bedford/St Martins, 2006), p. 915–6. In this passage, Derrida is drawing out the contradictions inherent in a kind of structural thought, which he argues is older than 'structuralism.' These contradictions provide coherence to the structure, but this situation can only maintain itself by "the force of a desire": i.e., people *want* the structure to cohere, even at the price of contradiction.

Are there no other ways to explain the phenomena?

1.100

1.101 Why should we accept that what we eat is, in essence, nutrients? Or that scientific laws best explain natural phenomenal regularity? Or even that the principle of non-contradiction is essential to truth?

1.102 The bogeyman of 'nihilism!' is a cry of one unwilling to move from their rut.

1.103 To hold up an idea (e.g., the gods war amongst each other) is a metaphoric undertaking. It's "*to recognize that if one context or conceptual constellation is laid over another, just so, aspects or outlines will spring into focus, a common pattern will be discernible—one that makes a difference to our grasp of the individual constellations or contexts separately*."[40]

It's to see that other ways fit the cube, just so.
And some other ways, for instance, do not hold to the principle of identity, or the essence/accident distinction.

1.104 Imagination and art can also open us to variations.

> *"A reader lives a thousand lives before he [sic] dies. […] The man who never reads lives only one."*[41]

1.105 We never leave our world.

This doesn't mean we're immured within a form of living. It doesn't mean we must be assimilative or colonizing towards others. Rather, it points to the necessity of listening attentively and responsively.

The inevitability that we will fail and fall short of a sufficient response is no deterrent.

1.106 Reductionism's an enemy to responsive living, which includes when we reach for apparently easy solutions.

There are forms of reductionism. For example, technology: in the technological enframing,[42] wherein all beings appear susceptible to technological handling (as standing-

[40] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH24.
[41] George R.R. Martin, *A Dance with Dragons* (New York: Bantam Books, 2013), p. 490, chapter 34.
[42] Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1977), p. 19.

reserve), we lose or miss something about the world, about being and beings, and about ourselves.

Technological enframing and its cousins have manifested themselves in many ways: managerialism (all things can be managed), capitalism (all things can be exchanged), *modern* capitalism (all things can be replaced), legalism (all things are susceptible to laws), and so on — i.e., the form 'all things are susceptible to….'

We're already experiencing catastrophes—climatic, pandemics, geopolitical, and so on—brought about by insufficiently responsive (reductive) ways of living.

1.107 What must be the case for a *metaphoric ontology* to exist?

Things must be mutually attuning and resonant. There's a quivering, a distancing that enables space and sound, gaps and ruptures, and openings to the violence of meaning. Tremblings, stammerings: different ontologies.

The transformation (§1.1) is an immersion into this *kind* of a space. That is, talking about gaps, ruptures, tremblings, and stammerings provides a scent of what I mean by the transformation, a scent we'll pursue as we sail between various Scyllas and Charybdises identified in this layer.

1.108 Is there a onto which the fits?

No.

The is a metaphor.
There is no outside.

I want it to swallow its tail.
It cannot.

Perhaps this book will be understood only by someone who has […] already had the thoughts that are expressed in it—or at least similar thoughts. […]

Its purpose would be achieved if it gave pleasure to one person who read and understood it.[43]

[43] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, preface, p. 3.

II

Listen: even now, behind this
you can hear faint music,
the lilt of voices
in some other tongue.[44]

2.1 "It is possible for our world to be transformed. This transformation hinges on what is common between our world and others."
This means that a transformed world is perceived, a new world that never fully leaves behind the old one. – But does this mean that we live in two worlds now? That there are two worlds in one? From whence comes this other world? Does it come from above or outside the old world, or from some mental projection?

This 'other world' comes from things themselves. Minds are always grounded in world and there's no outside or anywhere else from which a world could come. This world comes from seeing things, allowing things to show themselves, differently. As with the projections of the cube ( ), this projection doesn't superimpose itself on top of things, but is rather a way that things show themselves. Things themselves bear different senses of world.

There can be two worlds in one. This is because we never leave our world, even while it's open to others — a claim to which we'll return. Having these two—or more—worlds in one can be a source of tension. Not necessarily because we deplore contradiction (though some of us do), but because our sense of world—that place of familiarity and sometimes home—has been ruptured and exposed as not definite.

The trees are still there, the rocks are still there, but everything has changed. Everything becomes more expansive, in a sense. As though things have been given back to themselves.

2.2 To help us understand this, allow me to introduce the concept of *metaphor*. As described by Zwicky, a metaphor depends on both an 'is' and an implicit 'is not': a metaphor (which, for us, includes things like similes) says that X is and is not Y.[45] 'Her eyes are like spiders' — obviously this means her eyes *are* like spiders: they wait for their opportunity, scurry after things, and are ominous and patient.

But this also says that her eyes are *not* like spiders: X is *like* Y implicitly includes the recognition that X is also *not* like Y. Again, obviously, her eyes do not create webs, aren't independent organisms, won't actually eat their 'prey,' and so on.

[44] Jan Zwicky, "Small song for the sky in spring," in *Thirty-Seven Small Songs & Thirteen Silences* (Kentville, Nova Scotia: Gaspereau Press, 2005), p. 41.
[45] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH5.

A metaphor creates a temporary hinge or fulcrum that draws two terms from two contexts together.[46] In coming together, it's as though a lens focuses light through them: we see things more clearly than before. But this similarity, this 'is like' or 'what is common' between the contexts, is only one facet of the metaphor: we also see how the metaphor brings differences into focus, including when it releases the two terms back to their original contexts: there's an appearance of commonality as well as irreducible difference (i.e., 'is *not* like').[47]

After a metaphor's been set up, it can change how we view the two terms: we see how eyes are (in some ways) like spiders. But a metaphor changes not only how we view one term: it changes the other:[48] we see how (in some ways) spiders are like eyes. Neither term is left unchanged from the interaction.

A metaphor sets this dynamic exchange up between two contexts, like how a bee acquires pollen from a flower. A metaphor's a dual *process*: re-seeing/refocusing, and releasing/relinquishing. In this way, a metaphor respects both difference and similarity. It doesn't prioritize one over the other.

This structure of metaphor isn't primarily literary. Instead, it's broader: in encounters with others, understanding hinges on the discernment of difference and similarity in relation to ourselves and others. Thus, the metaphoric structure is experiential before it's communicative: a literary metaphor gestures to an experiential one. If done well, it may help us notice and respect difference and similarity.

And so, when I say that: "It is possible for our world to be transformed. This transformation hinges on what is common between our world and others." — I mean there's a way that a different world can be 'transposed' as though upon our world, like the shifting of lenses into place, so that commonalities and differences are noted. – There are other ways— similar but different, irreducibly different—that 'interpret' the 'same' phenomena that we see that still make sense of them.

2.3 While enabling the transformation is like the flicking of a switch, it's not binary (either off or on). Rather, it's encompassing: you can't just change one aspect and then the next, for they have internal relations to one another.[49] The cube helps us see this: .

This may seem unrelatable, like I'm describing an experience that I've had, and you have not, and I'm trying to convince you that it's worth having.

[46] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH18–9, LH24, LH62.
[47] ibid, LH106.
[48] ibid, LH76–7.
[49] For "*internal relations*," see Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, excerpts from §4.122 and §4.123, cited in Zwicky, *W&M*, RH98; see also LH98.

But is this different from other works of philosophy? You may retort that philosophy makes reasonable cases for accepting something as true. I agree. But let's recall we've only just emerged from the aphoristic layer and my case will now be more overt. The question is also the role of argumentation, for arguments and reasons are ways to lead you to see what the philosopher has seen. *"I have myself always thought of a mathematician [or a philosopher] as in the first instance an* observer*, a man [sic] who gazes at a distant range of mountains and notes down his observations […]. [W]hen he sees a peak he believes that it is there simply because he sees it. If he wishes someone else to see it, he* points to it*, either directly or through the chain of summits which led him to recognize it himself."*[50]

For any philosophy worth its salt, this seeing entails a corresponding transformation in the seer. *"Metaphysics is a questioning in which we inquire into beings as a whole, and inquire in such a way that in so doing we ourselves, the questioners, are thereby also included in the question, placed into question.*

"Accordingly, fundamental concepts are […] concepts of a properly peculiar kind. In each case they comprehend the whole within themselves, they are comprehensive concepts *[Inbegriffe].*[51] *Yet they are also comprehensive in a second sense which is equally essential and which ties in with the first: they also in each case always comprehend within themselves the comprehending human being and his or her [sic] Dasein [i.e., there-being][…]. Metaphysical thinking is comprehensive thinking in this double sense. It deals with the whole and it grips existence through and through."*[52]

Am I implying a distinction between (at least) two kinds of philosophy (e.g., transformative and more 'mundane' philosophy)? — Perhaps there's philosophy that renovates the house, adds an extension on, and then there's that which tidies it up. Perhaps these are tendencies.

2.4 Philosophy and the transformation are always also about the world. The world. We speak of the world as though there's just one, a totality. As though, if we counted all the facts, we'd have a picture of the world. As though it's one thing, one spacetime container, that contains all objects.

But we don't sit inside the world like water in a cup.[53] Rather, our being's such that we are, in Heidegger's term, *being-in-the-world*: that is, put simply, world's the set of our relations. — Because I'm largely drawing on Heidegger's concept of world throughout the text, we need to work through this concept.

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[50] G.H. Hardy, "Mathematical Proof," *Mind* 38 (1929): p. 18, quoted in Zwicky, *W&M*, RH64.
[51] German included in original text.
[52] Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 9.
[53] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Toronto: Harper & Row, Publishers, Incorporated, 2008), Sect. 12, 53–4/79–80, 56/82. (Note: when I use "*B&T*" I'm referring to this version.)

In our everyday way of being, we're immersed in our world, engaged with things, and we don't, for the most part, thematize our surroundings. For example, I ride my bike to get to where I'm going; I'm absorbed in the world of my concern, engaged with the task at hand.

Things with which we're engaged are *ready-to-hand*.[54] Ready for engagement, ready to be taken up, not as isolated things, but as part of a totality of things.[55] The bike light fits in with the bike and its interactions with traffic laws, routes at night, and batteries. Isolating a thing is artificial, for things are always within networks comprised of *assignments/references*,[56] for each thing refers to/is assigned to, and thus is involved with, other things. In our example, the bike light is assigned to and involved with the project of bicycling. Referential structures are made of *involvements*.[57]

Each involvement has the structure of 'in-order-to': for example, a bike light is 'in-order-to' bike at night, 'in-order-to' commute from A to B, and so on. If we inquire continuously into the network of involvements and follow the lines of the referential structure, we reach what Heidegger calls the for-the-sake-of-which: *Dasein*.[58] *Dasein*, German for 'there-being,' is the term coined for the kind of being of a human. For Heidegger, *Dasein* is what *lets* the ready-to-hand *be* as such;[59] it engages itself within these totalities by assigning itself to projects. In assigning ourselves, we engage with the totality of involvements: *this totality of involvements is the occurrence of world*.[60] Thus, world's not understood spatially, but is instead this totality of involvements wherein *Dasein is*.[61]

In our engagement with the totality of involvements, we encounter the world as *familiar*.[62] We can never not seize up *possibilities*, for we're always involved and our being cannot be without world. Furthermore, this structure of involvements is characterized by *meaning*: when we take up projects within the horizon of world, we do so within a horizon that always already makes, or has the possibility to make, sense: e.g., the meaning of the bike light is found in how it relates to the totality. We're always engaged with things and projects that are meaningful for us. Because we encounter things, the world, and involvements before us, and find ourselves immersed in and thrown into fields of sense, we say we're characterized by *thrownness*.

We always have, even if implicitly, an *understanding* of things and their involvements. As thrown within a mood, we're attuned to things and encounter the world meaningfully and as understandable. The bike light, for example, is understandable prior to anyone

[54] ibid, 69/98.
[55] ibid, 68/97.
[56] ibid.
[57] ibid, 84/115.
[58] ibid, 84/116–7.
[59] ibid, 84–5/117.
[60] ibid, 86/119.
[61] Ibid, 64–5/93.
[62] Ibid, 86/119.

approaching it. Our world is this meaningful set of involvements wherein we find ourselves always already engaged with things and possibilities afforded by them.

But, since we're first and foremost immersed with things in our world, how is it possible for us to 'emerge' from this immersion and grasp the world: i.e., to be able to perceive and discuss the concept of world at all?

When a thing becomes conspicuous,[63] our absorption's interrupted: the thing's unsuitable for the task. When the bike light stops working, we're taken aback. The thing's readiness-to-hand may recede and the thing, in retaining its readiness-to-hand, announces what's called *presence-at-hand*;[64] its readiness recedes and the thing conspicuously protrudes *as* a thing that's present-at-hand.[65] Because ready-to-hand's taken as our primary mode of engagement, to take a being *as* a thing is based on a disruption of our engagement.[66]

When the bike light stops working, this thing and its context stand out and become noticeable. We become aware of the thing in question and survey our surroundings to think through possible solutions. The bike light's just *there*, and yet, it doesn't lose its readiness-to-hand, as our problem-solving mode reveals: we check the batteries; we give it a shake. If nothing works, what was absorbed in the world now sticks out. Nonetheless, we've glimpsed its worldliness in catching sight of the item's 'in-order-to,' even if only in a subtle or implicit way. This glimpse is enough to start a wedge that becomes a gap essential for theorizing, thematizing, and philosophy.

— However, if world's the set of relations—the set of meaningful involvements—that depend always on *our* involvement with this set, i.e., that we ourselves are implicated in world—that we ourselves partake and enable the structure of *worldhood*[67]—then, I claim, *there isn't just one world*. There are different worlds for different peoples: i.e., both historically and contemporaneously. For example, the ancient Greek world isn't the same as our contemporary one because the totality of relationships and involvements have changed. Nor is our world the same as the contemporary world lived by indigenous Amazonian peoples, for instance, for the same reasons. The horizons of meaning—how things make sense—and hence possibilities are different.

Worlds are comprised of sets of meaningful involvements within which we're always already entangled. Our world enables an understanding of what things are and how they fit together, and this means that another world—another way that things fit together—comes with a *different* understanding of what things are and how they fit together. Therefore, a world's *an ontology*: i.e., a way that things *are*. In saying there are different worlds, I'm

[63] ibid, 73–4/102–4.
[64] ibid, 73/103.
[65] ibid, 71/101.
[66] ibid, 61/88.
[67] ibid, 65/93, 86/119.

saying there are different ontologies. For things becomes what they are based on how they fit together with other things and the possibilities they afford.

It could be countered that divergent understanding or different worlds are about what or how subjects *know* or *believe* (i.e., epistemology) or arbitrary convention (i.e., practicalities), and not what or how things *are* (i.e., ontology). However, Heidegger helps us see that ontology must precede epistemology and every epistemology must be grounded in an ontology, because the question's about how beings are before it's about how we know them.[68] In other words, beings can appear epistemologically (e.g., as uncertain-entities, or as entities invested with cultural and subjective interpretation), but this is still a mode of how they appear as beings. Every epistemology has already made ontological assumptions about oneself (e.g., as a doubtful subject, or as a cultural subject), others, and relations between them: epistemology requires an ontology within which it makes sense. To engage with something practically or as an object of knowledge, the thing must already appear as it is (i.e., as a being involved with other beings).

To adopt the position that other worlds are *beliefs* or epistemologies is to take one's own position as fundamental, objective, and ontological.[69] But then the question arises how one *knows* one's own position or that one's position is fundamental, and also how one knows one's own position is ontological and not just another epistemology. But can we have epistemologies without ontologies? Of course not; for epistemologies rely on ontologies. We're primordially open to engagement with things in our world.

An 'understanding' of being more fundamentally emerges from an encounter and immuration withing being: it derives from how being appears to us.

In being gripped by different ontologies—i.e., different metaphysics, different takes on Being, different worlds—beings reveal themselves to us differently as reflected in practical orientation. Therefore, radically different understandings of beings, which can be displayed practically—i.e., the display of fundamentally different totalities of meaningful involvements—reveal different ontologies.[70]

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[68] ibid, 59–62/86–90, 202–3/246–7, 218–9/261, 220–2/263–4. For a related approach that shows that, in Heidegger, any project (pragmatic or epistemological) must be grounded in being-in-the world and temporality, and thus grounded in how *Dasein* discloses beings (i.e., in ontology), see John Richardson, *Existential Epistemology: A Heideggerian Critique of the Cartesian Project* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 90–113; see also Charles B. Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983), p. 147–94. Richardson shows that, for Heidegger, epistemology is a founded mode of interpretation, based on an unthought reliance on the temporal mode of presence (i.e., entities as present-at-hand). A position that would try to interpret different dispositional modes (i.e., worlds) as 'epistemologies,' even if we understand 'epistemologies' to mean 'bodied/practiced epistemologies' or 'pragmatics,' requires a particular present-at-hand ontology. But theorizing that takes entities as present-at-hand emerges from a ready-to-hand context (see also Richardson, p. 90–113).

[69] For a similar point from a different angle, see Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, "Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 4.3 (1998): p. 478.

[70] For other approaches to this problem, see Jarrad Reddekop, "Against Ontological Capture: Drawing Lessons from Amazonian Kichwa Relationality," *Review of International Studies* 48.5

What this means is that there are different ways that things hang together, different ways that beings are and can be disclosed.[71] Perhaps, in a transformative experience, it's even possible for the horizon of meaning to change *now*, *within* our world, for us. Perhaps *this* is the possibility of 'two worlds in one.' – On the hinge of what is common between worlds, our world can be transformed.

2.5 It's *almost* as though, when we undergo this transformation, the outline of things acts as the fulcrum or hinge on which the world transmutes into this other world that also fits the lines of the outlines just so.

I say "almost" because world and things are intricately and intimately connected. They're both part of a mutual gathering of being,[72] which means, roughly, that things are always determined as things from within their context, which is that of the world. The world's the way all things hang together; but the world's never to be found except in things, which display and open us up to the world within which they hang together. Thus, world's not only sets of pragmatic relations (§2.4), but also comprises an understanding of the thingness of things, for different engagements with things in a total context entail different understandings of things more generally. I'll call this the *ontological gathering of beings*: things are gathered in a world as ready-to-hand within an understanding of being, *Dasein*, and so on, which are based on how being appears. Pragmatic engagement entails an understanding of what a thing *is*, and how it relates to oneself and other beings.

And so, I say "almost" because, if we're speaking of transforming the world, this makes sense only if we're also thinking of transforming things; a transformation of things wouldn't leave their outlines intact, not in the way we currently understand them. Another way to put this is that the outlines are part of the world under consideration for transformation.

"*The experience of understanding something is always the experience of a gestalt — the dawning of an aspect that is simultaneously a perception or reperception of the whole.*"[73]

"*The fundamental 'formula' of Gestalt theory might be expressed in this way: There are wholes, the behaviour of which is not determined by that of their individual elements, but where the part-processes are themselves determined by the intrinsic nature of the whole.*"[74]

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210521000486 (2022): p. 858, 859–62; Reddekop, "Thinking Across Worlds," p. 27–37 (where Reddekop uses the "world" terminology); Mario Blaser, "Political Ontology," *Cultural Studies* 23.5 (2009): p. 877.

[71] Eben Hensby, "The Metaphoricity of Being and the Question of Sameness: Heidegger and Zwicky," *Dialogue* 61.1 https://doi.org/10.1017/S0012217321000111 (2022): 177–96.

[72] Martin Heidegger, "Language," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2001), p. 197–200, 203–4. While Heidegger arrives at this conclusion through the lens of language, I'm setting language aside for now.

[73] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH2.

[74] Max Wertheimer, "Gestalt Theory," in *A Source Book of Gestalt Psychology*, ed. and trans. Willis D. Ellis (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1938), p. 2, quoted in Zwicky, *W&M*, RH78.

The transformation seems to require concentration and stilled breath, and is easier in particular forests or on particular blocks, in part, because of their familiarity. But what does this mean? It has to do with a certain way that a space, an environment, certain relations have opened up and cleared a space for you to be in; familiarity involves a deepening of relations. But there are plenty of familiar environments within which the transformation doesn't occur, and I can undergo the transformation in unfamiliar places. It has something to do with the particular relations offered and opened by the particular place.

One's touched by things in their particularity when one's touched: this isn't simply tautological. We pass by things all the time without paying them attention or noticing them, or, only noticing them as example of a general or universal phenomenon. It's less common for us to encounter things in their raw particularity. When we're touched by them, when we notice them, we're touched by them: we can be opened to them and drawn into their particularity.

The exposure of particularity can enable a space to grow within which a transformation becomes possible. As though we're opened to a whole through particularity. As though opening to a particular thing can cause a transformation in our world.

For instance, there are particular trees, more expressive trees, that enable this transformation more easily than others.

2.6 The metaphoric relation, which I've likened to the transformative experience (§2.2), is one of loss. It's rife with loss—the outlines that subtend the gestalt shift are the ones that held up the other image a moment ago (§2.5); the gesture of presence traces out a shadow of absence: . But notice that, even on the cube, the outlines aren't the same outlines they were before (don't let their status as 'lines' deceive you). When the cube projects one way and you then experience a shift so it projects the other, the outlines that are the hinge of what is common between the two change: structurally, they're not the same (this one 'travels' to the other side of that one; this one now bears the weight; etc.).

It's quite remarkable that we can never see both projections of the cube simultaneously—that each projection emerges from the loss of the other[75]—but also that we can get better at switching between the two. Sometimes we get to the point where we can alternate between one and the other so rapidly it feels as though we should be able to see both at once: but we cannot.

It's difficult to provide a reason for this. (But, then, why do we want a reason? It's simply a fact.) It has to do with the reorientation required in the gestalt shift to see one projection in distinction from the other: parts of the outline have to play different roles in different projections.

[75] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH56.

The cube, in my text, is a metaphor. The transformation of the world involves a new alignment in the relations of things and world. It doesn't just reveal new possibilities, it reveals new possibilities for possibilities; because possibilities unfold within the horizon of our world (§2.4), a transformation of the world transforms the basis of possibilities themselves. We see a new projection of the world, analogous to a new projection of the cube: we shift from one world-projection to another.

Each way of seeing occludes other ways of seeing—this is the basis of the possibility of transforming the world—yet none is fundamentally more 'natural' than any other. This occlusion points to the absence and loss inherent in seeing. Not as loss of parts from a whole, for there's no perspective from which we could see all projections; rather, loss as ontologically constitutive, as the condition of any presence.

But we can get better at switching between projections. Imagination's one way of this: we get better at seeing how things may be for other ways of being. For those in other cultures. For other lifeforms. Imagination doesn't mean picturing oneself *as* another; it's a sensitivity to the ways of being of another (which is simultaneously reveals one's own ways of being).

Other projections of the cube aren't solely subjective determinations; they're grounded in the structural possibility of a gestalt shift. The cube "*could not* be *the one without also* being *the other (whether we see this or not).*"[76] Things themselves enable other projections. Zwicky drawing on Wittgenstein calls the 'failure' to see one or the other projection aspect-blindness (i.e., the failure to see an internal relation): "*a* failure *to see what* is there."[77]

2.7 In being pierced, we see how this thing *is* and *is not* everything (§2.2). First, a particular thing can reveal to me how my care, love, or ability to attend to it is limitless because it means the world to me (it *is* everything), and yet it's also clear that it is not everything: actually, its power comes from it precisely *not* being everything else: it stands out, unique (it *is not* everything). Second, a particular thing is only the thing it is (it *is not* everything) thanks to the infinite context of relations around it: any given particular thing is what it is because it has been contextualized, shaped, placed by the things and relations around and transpiercing it (it *is* everything). In partaking of these relations of 'is' and 'is not,' we see that *this*ness has a metaphoric structure (§2.2).

Zwicky's *this*ness shares many of the features I was just discussing. To start with, *this*ness partakes in a metaphoric structure, which I will show. Because the transformation's of the world, and the world only *is* through things (§2.5), the transformation involves a return to things themselves. When we return to things, we're struck by their particularity, by their irreducible *this*ness (§2.5). But the experience of *this*ness cannot simply be willed: we can't stare at a thing and expect to be pierced by its *this*ness. Only certain things pierce and draw

[76] ibid, LH98.
[77] ibid, LH25.

us in. Openness to *this*ness is a mode of engagement typically occluded by everyday comportment, thus linking it to our transformative project.[78]

To be struck by a thing's *this*ness is to be struck by its losability,[79] which reverberates through our being and bones. We can feel it. To love something's to always already have lost it, just as to lose something's to always already have, if not loved it, found a place for it and been concerned with it. If transformation's constitutively bound up with loss (§2.6), *this*ness shares this connection. Our openness to loss isn't only to the vulnerability of the other but also to our own: being open is a wound. This isn't meant to make us morose. Rather, it's meant to be freeing, to dispel any notions of pure replenishment and wholeness.

*This*ness has the power to change our world, for it pierces through everything with its metaphoric structure, vulnerability, and particularity. If we're affected deeply, we can experience a kind of *transformation* in and of the world, that is, if the *this*ness shows us something of its way of being.

Things call to us, draw us in, and pique our interest; and because each thing is placed within the context of the whole—is related in its way to each other thing—to be pierced by a particular thing's to feel the pressure of the whole expressed through it, to see the whole gathered in a particular way through the particularity — like hearing *sygyt* funnelled through one mouth.

2.8 *This*ness and its metaphoric structure subvert attempts to capture the experience in language. This is why it's difficult to explain the transformative experience in words.

Language is rooted in particular gatherings of beings/being. It's not that language is placed overtop of the world, lain down over things. Rather, the ontological gathering of beings (§2.5), which gathers things as the things they are, also gathers language; for there to be a word for a thing, it must appear as amenable to language. What we encounter is already 'in' language: it can already be spoken to, even if the word's lacking or uncertain. The structure of our grammar's already there: this is a noun-thing; this, a verb-thing. The structure of our language is deeply rooted in a particular gathering of beings.

Nonetheless, while beings are gathered, and language too in its being is gathered in the gathering, there can be a slippage between the two — for they live different lives. Languages fit the world *just so*. But beings have different faces: different aspects can dawn. When this happens, when a new wisp or fragment of beings and world becomes manifest, we may only be able to speak to it by shifting our language.

[78] ibid, LH53–5.
[79] Zwicky, *Lyric Philosophy*, LH70, LH89, LH147, LH243, LH302.

It's also undeniable that there are things we cannot put to words and not just because we cannot find the word right now. – A being, any being, *can* reveal aspects that escape any given language. Much of the experience of a particularity, of a *this*ness, escapes language.

Lyric language and poetic expression, as Zwicky points out, try to precipitate just such an experience: rather than trying to precisely index the experience, we realize we can only properly speak to it if our language takes on the form of the experience in its expression, sending reverberations through to the listener.[80]

Lyric poetry often deploys metaphors, which short-circuit our regular linguistic pathways and thus our perceptual/ontological pathways. They short-circuit the *calcification* of language (tied to calcification of thoughts, perception, ontology, and so on): i.e., the ruts of our linguistic use that preclude us from sensing other aspects of things around us.

2.9 *This*ness reveals new aspects of things, as we're opened to the particular way of being, or character, of a thing.

As we walk, *this* tree wisps past, like a ghost; but also, it intrudes. Surely, not all trees have the same strength of character, not all mesh with everyone (what I see as strength of character, you may see as weakness). Different beings have different characters, different ways of engaging with the world.

Trees can reach out. — They aren't just sitting there, present-at-hand, nor are they just there for our projects, ready-to-hand (§2.4); they aren't just raw material for use. Each tree exhibits a particular way of being: engaged with their surroundings, they respond, dynamically, in their environment. — But what do I mean in saying they can reach out? That they physically move towards something, for example, phototropism? No, I mean they're not just lying there, inert, contained. They're engaged, open to encounter.

'But, surely, you're not saying that a tree encounters you? How would it even know you're there?'

The tree's open for encounter. This doesn't mean that the tree's consciously aware of your presence. It simply means there can be an exchange between you and a tree.

2.10 Things demand attention. We've become used to seeing nature as backdrop and landscape, so often the things that demand attention are the things *designed* to call attention to themselves: signs, automobiles, buildings, etc. But if you're walking in a forest or on a quiet residential street, you'll find your attention drawn to particular plants and trees — not to all or just any, but certain ones beckon.

[80] ibid, LH68, LH73, LH111–2, LH133, LH155, LH181, LH216, LH219, LH239. Zwicky, *The Experience of Meaning*, p. 27–8, 31, 44.

Different phenomena have different ways of capturing our attention. Signs are tasked with breaking through the circulation of the everyday so they can be noticed. Some signs, such as stop signs, are part of the everyday, yet each must grab our attention. — On the other hand, trees, for instance, aren't 'designed' to break through this circulation. And yet, sometimes they *do* break through.

Plants are taken up in the circulation of the everyday. Be it as houseplants or garden plants, landmarks, scenery, backdrop, and so on, plants tend not to be considered as beings in their own right; they get taken up as things we pass by.

When a plant gets noticed, it can grasp us, changing the space of encounter for us. In the encounter, time slows down, and the tree takes up a broader sense of space; this is why it seems to hover beside you (§1.10). This is based on observation: encounters with others bring with them distinct sense of space and time. Space and time are (only) found in encounters with things; they're that within which encounters occur. But, more specifically, encounters only occur within places.

Places are always specific instantiations of space and time: space and time, understood in an absolute or universal sense, are abstractions or reductions from places.[81] Places are how and wherein particularities—you, tree, and all other things around you—encounter. Particularities encounter within particular instantiations of space and time; we can only arrive at absolute or universal space and time by taking 'what is common' and disregarding what is different and unique.

Even if our being in a Heideggerian sense is one of distantiation and temporality,[82] our *placeness* is even more primordial: it's because we can be placed that we can open to distantiation or temporalization and hence to space and time; space and time do not spring forth merely from our being but result from encounters with other beings. Our placeness, which is always a specific *placedness* (i.e., we've always already been placed), enables particular inflections of time and space.

The tree hovers beside us because our placedness—how we're placed—has changed. Its placedness has changed too: hence the dialogic quality of the encounter.

2.11 In encounters informed by sensitivity, stones become stonier, trees hover beside us, and non-human animals come more into their own.

[81] Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 151–4 (on space and place).

[82] I use 'distantiation' to gesture to how spatiality involves a determining or instantiation of distances, which is influenced by Heidegger's use of deseverance and directionality, aspects of being-in-the-world's spatiality. *De-severance* is how *Dasein* brings close entities it encounters circumspectively (i.e., entities ready-to-hand), and *directionality* is how it orients itself within a region of circumspective concern: see Heidegger, *B&T*, 139–43/105–8; see also 110–3/145–7 on how these make possible something like Cartesian space. On temporality, see Heidegger, *B&T*, 326/374.

Different kinds of animals encounter beings in different ways. This is, I think, what Uexküll was getting at:[83] while, for us, the chair and floor can (usually) be distinguished by their sitting and standing tones, both have sitting tones for a dog. Tones are rooted in perceptual, bodily, sexual, and social differences. Thus, the things we find ourselves surrounded by are encountered in different ways by different kinds of animals.

Animals live in different worlds — different from one kind of animal to another. But such a thesis isn't without difficulties. For instance, Derrida traces out the immense machinery of the Western philosophical tradition that works to deny that non-human animals are open to something like a Heideggerian world (§2.4). It even denies that non-human animals can respond as opposed to react.[84] All this bleeds into the immense machinery of factory farms, agribusiness, scientific experiments, and so on.

As example, Heidegger famously declared that "*the stone is worldless, the animal is poor in world, man [sic] is world-forming.*"[85] He wants to say that animals (all animals equally, yet not humans) are deprived of the 'as such': while they encounter beings, they never encounter beings *as* beings, beings *as such*.[86] This subtle point means that a dog encounters its food, but not *as* food, not *as* a being that stands out over there against the dog.

In Heidegger's account, the dog's an organism encircled by a ring of drives. When it encounters a disinhibitor, a particular drive's disinhibited, which drives the dog until the drive's satisfied and re-inhibited. The animal's always being-driven and is never open to encountering beings as such. In this way, Heidegger provides ontological grounds that could underpin stimulus accounts of non-human organisms.[87]

In Heidegger's account, non-human animals encounter disinhibitors. But which precise beings are disinhibitors for it are always enfolded within and pre-determined by the organism itself. The organism's a totalization of possible encounters. It *needs* a disinhibitor to drive behaviour (i.e., to be disinhibited), yet it never encounters the disinhibitor *itself* (i.e., *as such*); the non-human animal's merely driven.

But is it possible for something to open to an other without being open to an other *as such*, i.e., to an other *as* an other? Are all non-human animal responses prescribed like knee jerk reactions? For a drive to eat to be disinhibited, mustn't the organism first recognize the food *as* food?[88] Otherwise, how does the drive encircling a non-human animal 'know' to

[83] Jakob von Uexküll, *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans*, trans. Joseph D. O'Neil (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).
[84] Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, trans. David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008). On Western machinery in and alongside the tradition, see in particular p. 25 and 101; on reaction/response, see p. 122–6.
[85] Heidegger, *FCM*, p. 185.
[86] ibid, e.g., p. 193, 197–8, 210, 241, 247–8, 287.
[87] ibid, p. 254, 256–7.
[88] Ka-wing Leung, "Heidegger on Animal and World," *New Yearbook for Phenomenology & Phenomenological Philosophy* 10.1 (2010): p. 248–9.

loosen itself for this being? How do drive and being connect? Mustn't there be an openness on the part of a non-human animal to the being, or even, an openness of the drive to the sensation? – 'There's a connection, but the animal's never aware of it.' — What's our evidence for this claim?

There are a few assumptions at play here. First, all animals, except humans, can be lumped in one category: Heidegger draws on experiments involving bees to generalize to all non-human organisms. Second, lab experiments can isolate one variable of non-human animal behaviour (without introducing new unaccounted-for variables). Third, drivenness precludes openness to the 'as such.'

Lumping all animals but humans together is untenable: it both treats vastly disparate animals the same (the honeybee, the red-eyed tree frog, the lantern fish, Rothschild's emu, the Asian elephant) while treating humans as somehow entirely distinct, and it disregards overlapping categorizations that depend on the attribute or relations in question[89] (e.g., 'animals that use tools' may overlap with 'animals that pass the mirror test').

Furthermore, considering the role of adaptation, which Heidegger discusses,[90] how could an animal adapt to its environment if there's only an openness to what's given by its disinhibiting ring, as pre-programmed and pre-enfolded?[91] It seems to me that adaptation should be understood as part of a dialogic encounter with an environment. That is, animals are beings that struggle with and interact with a shifting and changing environment in an openness beyond predelineation.

Another way to put this is that, for Heidegger, a disinhibitor's always paired with a drive, which matches with what he calls a "capability" of the organism.[92] But how could the organism be originarily capable (i.e., how could it come to acquire the capabilities it has/starts with) or how could its capabilities change (i.e., presumably in response to environmental shifts, for example), if it is not open beyond prescription? Capability must refer to and be directed by and to an environment—a particular capability has to 'fit' 'between' an organism and an environment—and so it must come to be, or to change, through an openness to an environment that can't be predelineated.

In short, I find Heidegger's account unsatisfying. And yet it, or something like it, is at play throughout our society for non-human animals. We challenge these cultural attitudes and practices when we turn to the onto-ethical level. That is: we question the move that lumps all animals except humans together (which includes the subsequent move to extract certain animals from the animal-lump based on similarity to humans 'intelligence,' for instance—for this uses humans as the yardstick for others); we see all animals (including humans) as a dialogic result of environment and beings interacting and co-responding; we see non-

[89] Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, p. 29–31.
[90] Heidegger, *FCM*, p. 264.
[91] ibid, p. 242, 256.
[92] ibid, for example, see p. 221, 231–2.

human animals as open to their own world, that is not the same world to which we're open (due to social and bodily differences and unique dialogic histories); we deny Heidegger's implicit distinction between 'as such' and 'not as such' and instead see a plethora of modes and ways that beings appear, even for us[93] (e.g., when we're driven compared to when we're calm, or when things move at different speeds or with different intensities, and so on); and we deny the hierarchy of organisms, reaching from us on one end to something like single-cellular organisms on the other.

Heidegger's account is strangely reductionist. Strange, because he's careful to argue against reductionisms (when they pertain to humans). Just because we can talk about human or non-human animals in terms of stimuli doesn't mean that this is ontologically primary, for there's a holism to phenomena. And just as we surmount the problem of other human minds through sensing meaningful gestures, so too, barring speciesism, we sense this of non-human animals. The approach I'm taking here is to ask, through watching and sensing, how is it for particular animals to be in the world, in *their* world? – This isn't to reduce their world to ours: for we do *not* inhabit the same world. *And yet*, we're in a dialogic encounter with animals, open to one another.

Why do I use the word 'world' with non-human animals? Because world is the network of meaningful relations and possible involvements (§2.4). Animals move within such networks. This seems patently obvious to me.

2.12 Trees also have meaningful relations. They're related and open to soil, light, water, mycorrhizal fungi, pollinators, and so on.[94] It seems to me that there's no strong reason, besides a lack of (direct) access combined with a lack of imagination, that we should deny that plants, and living beings more generally, have their own worlds.

The proposition that plants have their own worlds may be uncomfortable for us. One could retort that, as with non-human animals, plants aren't open to their surroundings in the way we are; they merely react to stimuli and are under the dictates of laws of nature. But, again, the fact that we can analyze something through the conceptual lens of stimuli doesn't

[93] Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, p. 156, 159–60.

[94] David Chamovitz, *What a Plant Knows: A Field Guide to the Senses* (New York: Scientific American/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012). David George Haskell, *The Songs of Trees: Stories from Nature's Great Connectors* (Australia: Black Inc. imprint of Swartz Publishing Pty Ltd., 2017). See also, as examples: Marcus Anhäuser, "The Silent Scream of the Lima Bean," Congress Report, *MaxPlanckResearch* 4 (2007): p. 60–5; Kevin J. Beiler et al., "Mapping the wood-wide web: mycorrhizal networks link multiple Douglas-fir cohorts," *New Phytologist* 185 (2010): p. 543–53; Monica Gagliano, "In a green frame of mind: perspectives on the behavioural ecology and cognitive nature of plants," *AoB Plants* 7 (2015): p. 1–8; Monica Gagliano, "Learning by Association in Plants," *Scientific Reports* 6.38427 (2016): p. 1–9; Monica Gagliano, "The mind of plants: Thinking the unthinkable," *Communicative & Integrative Biology* 10.2 (2017): p. 1–4; Suzanne W. Simard et al., "Mycorrhizal networks: Mechanisms, ecology and modelling," *Fungal Biology Reviews* 26 (2012): p. 39–60; Suzanne W. Simard et al., "Net transfer of carbon between ectomycorrhizal tree species in the field," *Nature* 388 (1997): p. 579–82; Yuan Yuan Song et al., "Defoliation of interior Douglas-fir elicits carbon transfer and stress signalling to ponderosa pine neighbors through ectomycorrhizal networks," *Scientific Reports* 5.8495 (2015): p. 1–9.

mean that phenomena begin or stop there;[95] we must ask what makes *openness* to stimuli possible (if this is the model we're using) (§2.11).

World's the totality of meaningful involvements (§2.4), of sense and significance. Worlds are how other beings stand forth and are oriented and gathered for the enworlded being.

Trees show their character (§2.9), for they aren't all the same, but are distinct. In their placedness, they have distinct relations to things. These relations are relations of directedness (towards/away/etc.) and thus reveal meaningfulness for the plant in question, for meaning resides in directed behaviour, not in reason, intelligence, or consciousness.

Many plants are phototropic: they move towards the sun, which draws them towards itself. They're oriented to water: they move towards it, and it draws or calls them. There's a meaning-full economy of give-and-take and call-and-response. And different plants have different styles and ways of being.

Meaning occurs when, for beings that can orient themselves, things fit.[96] Things cohere in their relatedness to one another: their relatedness is a making of sense.

Plants engage with the world in a way similar to animals insofar as, in Uexküll's sense, there are different tones to different things for them. And so, building from what I said above regarding animals (§2.11), I take this to mean that there are plant worlds, and life worlds more generally.

2.13 Acknowledging that one's surrounded by this multitude of interlocking, interweaving worlds—by nature divergent—can be unsettling. Simply to entertain the thought that the world's not held together or oriented around 'the human' can be disconcerting, and entails a shift in one's understanding and in one's self, for one's sense of self is intimately bound up with one's sense of world and one's sense of others: one cannot come out unscathed.

The self's not an extensionless point—an agent, actor, or will—confronting the plethora of world over and against a subject: the idea of an actor who deliberates and then enters the world's based on a misconception of a separation between self and world. The self's always embedded, bodied, and contextual: the world and things to which one's related are already impinging upon oneself.

Just as the world cannot be without a self or self-like concrescence (i.e., a world's a relational totality that leans towards a for-the-sake-of-which—§2.4—and we cannot have a view from nowhere), so self or self-like concrescences cannot be without a world (i.e.,

[95] For example, see Heidegger on how this type of analysis wouldn't capture the phenomenon of being human: *B&T*, 55/82, 181/226, 232/275, 246–7/290–1.
[96] David Morris, "From the Nature of Meaning to a Phenomenological Refiguring of Nature," *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 72 (2013): p. 329–30.

intentionality). The self's always intentional and responsive: it's always directed and directs itself.

And thus, if our world's such that it makes room for other worlds—life, plant, non-human animal, and other human worlds—the self, too, is changed. For the self isn't the centre, the *arche*, the *telos*, nor the source for criteria. The self is, instead, a responding to its situation — which is now, as always, the situation of overlapping enworlded beings striving within their own worlds. One's self is thus intimate with countless other beings, openings, and ways that things are taken up; it's a negotiating fluidity, an intentionality, intentional beyond its own intentions.

2.14 It can be difficult to explain why one should undertake this experience. Alternate ways of thinking emerge from a struggle with dominant ways of thinking and being.

Nonetheless, I'll try to explain. The type of experience to which I'm gesturing seems expansive, maybe freeing. There's something that seems right, that accords with a sense we may have, a sense about what according is. Zwicky expresses this sense when she writes that *"truth is the asymptotic limit of sensitive attempts to be responsible to our actual experience of the world."*[97]

We often overlook aspects of our experience of the world. I've argued for an expansion of beings to which we customarily assign "world," and for the correlative challenge this poses to our sense of self (§2.13). Truth, in Zwicky's sense, is both epistemological and ethical. We live in the truth through sensitively striving to accurately respond to our situation, which means to other beings with which we're related; or, better, we aim *at* the truth, for this sensitive, responsive engagement is an ongoing practice.

2.15 "Awakening" is one way to express the gestalt shift of transformation, and thus a movement towards truth. Awakening involves practice. Transformative philosophy must walk: the philosopher must wander and stumble, and not just in 'thought.'

Thought isn't an activity that transpires in the head; thoughts aren't ideas hovering in mental space. In part, they permeate how we (implicitly) understand and navigate even the most basic things: *"When I go to the door of the lecture hall, I am already there, and I could not go to it at all if I were not such that I am there. I am never here only, as this encapsulated body; rather, I am there, that is, I already pervade the room, and only thus can I go through it."*[98] Thinking's an orientation and openness to understanding beings around us. Though, thoughts can also have a more explicit sense.

"*Thoughts come at random, and go at random.*"[99]

[97] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH102.
[98] Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 155.
[99] Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A. J. Krailsheimer (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1995), par. 542, p. 190.

"We never come to thoughts. They come to us."[100]

Thoughts of all kinds never simply start or stop with a subject: they come from beyond us. They come from places, intertwined with others of all kinds, as they visit and stay for a while.

We must transform thought. But practice and thought aren't opposed. My thinking attempts to lead towards a new kind of practice and a new kind of thought: moving in thought differently, changing our orientation to beings. This practice cannot be delimited or defined ahead of time: it can only be uncovered by walking towards it, by *preparing* for it. — When we 'go to sleep,' really, we prepare ourselves for sleep; we get ready for bed. Sometimes, sleep doesn't come. — Such preparation is a kind of offering.

We cannot just think or do philosophy on the side. Since the modern era, Western philosophy's often forgotten about an enactive side: in many Eastern traditions this divide was never instantiated. (Of course, there are exceptions, for instance, Pascal,[101] Marxism and critical theory, and other praxis-oriented philosophy.) We need to disable our safe compartmentalization: over here is thought, over there is action; over here is philosophy, over there is the everyday. Instead, we should see how the first term, in both cases, bleeds into and taints the second; otherwise, we haven't *understood* them. Understanding isn't merely intellectual. Living responsively—coming transformatively to the truth—involves our whole being.

Our ethical or practical question is: how do we carry on in the face of this?

2.16 There's an urge to shirk responsibility and to look elsewhere — e.g., to defer or wait for a transformation — but we must turn to things themselves. Yes, waiting and being patient are part of transformation. But this transformation only happens by a turn to things themselves as it's about finding a new way of relating within our world.

The call to turn to things themselves isn't new: we hear it from classical empiricists and contemporary phenomenologists.

But we need to clear up a common misconception. To turn to things themselves isn't to be rid of metaphysics, as though we access the naked thing, with things (physics) on the one

[100] Heidegger, "The Thinker as Poet," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 6.
[101] Pascal, *Pensées*, par. 418, p. 124–5; par. 808, p. 244; par. 821, p. 247–8; par. 954, p. 307. For Pascal, reason's insufficient to lead us to God alone. Faith's required, which comes as a gift of God. Thus, while we wait, we do as others have done (this immediately follows Pascal's famous wager): "*They behaved just as if they did believe, taking holy water, having masses said, and so on. That will make you believe quite naturally […]*" (par. 418, p. 125). Practice or habit can lead to faith: "*The habit makes the doctrine*" (par. 954, p. 307), for "*we must resort to habit once the mind has seen where the truth lies, in order to steep and stain ourselves in that belief which constantly eludes us […]*" (par. 821, p. 247). Thus, there's an enactive side, wrapped densely in a metaphysics not amenable to the position I'm staking here.

hand and metaphysics on the other. These two are always already bound to one another: *physics* is already *metaphysics*. 'Meta' doesn't mean going beyond physics in the sense of leaving things behind, for example, in another realm. Instead, physics itself is a going-beyond — physics becomes possible within a metaphysics.

Physics is a going-beyond because it embodies a meaning of being and beings; it involves an interpretation of things, including what and how things are. 'Physics' is how a particular metaphysics conceives a collection of things; the study of 'metaphysics' is the explicit theorization of going-beyond *this* collection. But the concept of 'physics' *already* goes beyond beings.

Our understanding of things always involves more than bare things (e.g., space, time, value, etc.) because things themselves are always involved with more than themselves: in being related to countless others, they, too, go beyond themselves. Any engagement with beings involves going-beyond.

Our task, rather than getting rid of metaphysics (which we cannot do), is to make our metaphysics, or our engagement with it, more responsive to our situation.

I renew a call to turn to things themselves. To try to look elsewhere is to try to shirk our responsibility (§2.14). Of course, to look elsewhere *is* a response, but an inadequate one. We're always already responding, always already open to responding. How are we going to respond to our responding? – How do we take up our situation?

2.17 Awakening, once an active metaphor, has calcified (§1.17).

'Calcification' comes in Zwicky's discussion of metaphor.[102] She argues that metaphor's based explicitly on an 'is' and implicitly on an 'is not' (§2.2). "*Why, then, is metaphor, as a linguistic trope, dependent on an implicit 'not'?—Metaphor results from an over-riding of calcified gestures of thought by being.*"[103] "*The implied 'is not' in a metaphor points to a gap in language through which we glimpse the world. That which we glimpse is what the 'is' in a metaphor points to.*"[104]

Calcification's when insight and dynamism are replaced by lifelessness; for example, a dead metaphor's when a metaphor recedes into the background and the general circulation of things.[105] But as a dead metaphor can be re-enlivened, let's try to re-enliven the calcified concept of awakening to see how it relates to the transformation.

Awakening carries with it a strange metaphysics. It speaks to the transformation from one state to another, from one level to a higher level of awareness, from illusion to reality. This

[102] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH8, LH11.
[103] ibid, LH8.
[104] ibid, LH10.
[105] ibid, LH68.

is based on our dominant views on dreams and sleep: in sleep, we're shut off from the world, with ideas or neurons bouncing around without traction, producing a meaningless display we call dreams. This state represents a continual possibility and thus the need to be vigilant (what if you're dreaming right now?).

Setting aside the contentiousness of many of these views (e.g., that we are shut off from the world in sleep), let's focus on the metaphysics. Dreams are taken as illusory, displaced forces within our psyche. In what sense are they illusory? They cover over sensory input, evidenced through intersubjective relations: these states aren't objective because other people don't see or experience the dream. Instead, they must come objectively from the individual in question. Our senses and reasoning aren't perfect; our finitude and subjectivity limit and obscure experience of the world. Thus, we need practices like science, an institutionalized and intersubjective practice of knowledge that works towards precision and accuracy, and that aims at knowing what's out there.

This is *a* picture, with a hierarchy from direct knowing (i.e., an infinite being, the absolute), to human senses, sensory deception, and hallucinations and dreams. – But what if we question this picture? What if we insist on the reality of dreams and hallucinations? For when we're dreaming, that's where we are: that *is* our reality. This is also the situation for the one hallucinating. Dreams and hallucinations are ways that aspects of the world reveal themselves. Let's allow the phenomena to speak to us again: what really is a dream? Let's heed what dreams show and how. Hallucinations are often connected to one's surroundings: what and how do they show? Dreams are meaningful in that they hold resonance and show how things relate to one another.

Therefore, when we *awaken*, we awaken to a *different* 'reality,' a different and more responsive way of being in our world. We don't 'awaken' to the real opposed to the illusory; if what we 'awaken' to is more true, it's because it's more responsive (§2.14). In becoming more responsive, even in dreaming, we already awaken. Thus, awakening's responsive immersion: a transformation, a gestalt shift, a rearranged fit.

2.18 Addressing our situation, *awakening* to it—presuming we've rescued something of the term—is a major task of philosophy. There's often an impetus in philosophy to *describe* the world: not 'what is the case' but 'what can be the case' (e.g., logically) or what makes 'what is the case' possible. One problem's that this impetus tends to ossify historical contingencies as either transcendental principles or necessary stages of development. (For example: Freud, Kant, Husserl, Heidegger, and so on.)

Perhaps I should be more precise: the problem's that this impetus to describe the conditions of the world *always* ossifies historical contingencies, for any articulation necessarily derives from a moment within a world and so brings forth metaphysical and historical particularities.

This isn't to say that such projects aren't worthwhile. Nor that such projects don't open up new possibilities for thought. But such projects needn't be the limits to thought either.

Of course, in this text, I'm also discussing conditions of possibility. But I'm trying not to make this the beginning and end of thought. On the one hand, such conditions need to be subverted, seen to recede beyond our grasp for essential reasons: i.e., because they're always laden with particularities.

On the other hand, it's become important to think not only conditions or grounds *but also to think new orientations*. Such reorientations can only take place within world, and so must be precipitated within relational contexts infused with our tradition, into which we're thrown and which we never simply leave behind. This means that we must, in some sense, repeat what we find in our tradition but with a difference: i.e., not simply expanding on or stepping back[106] from a supposed originary or grounding moment, but also reorienting ourselves relative to things and world. This aims at a new interpretation; or, at least, points in the direction of one (e.g., interlocking multiplicities of worlds).

— Philosophy grabs you, and makes your soul the stake.

2.19 What do I mean when I say I'm interested in onto-ethics rather than conditions of possibility?

'Onto-ethics' gestures to the inseparability of ontology and ethics: every ontology includes an ethical understanding, just as every ethical understanding includes an ontological understanding. This is in distinction from our tradition, wherein it's often through these two are separate concerns.

Determining what ethics consists in—for example, our responsibilities—is inextricably bound up with other concerns: what is responsibility; to whom do we owe it; who is the agent of responsibility; and so on. So, if we decide that responsibility's linked to individual agents who must stand responsible and hence are punishable for their acts, we have a whole metaphysics and ontology involved here: what agents, choices, and acts are, and what it means to be and act in the world.

From the other side, determining an ontology will always be defining the realm of possibilities within which ethics is to be concerned (e.g., to reverse the example above: to determine what a subject is, what various objects are, how to categorize them ontologically, and so on, entails ethical possibilities for response). For example, if we take a rock to be an inanimate object, then it's not the kind of thing towards which we feel any direct ethical responsibility.

[106] See Derrida's imaginary discussion with Heidegger on this matter in Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 110–3.

Ontologies involve ethics in another sense: they're only determined through *responsive* openness to being. But because we already come with a sense of things (i.e., we never start from nowhere), our openness and responsivity are already conditioned by an ontology. Therefore, to be responsive, we must heed our sense of ontology — be ethical towards it. Ontology and ethics inseparably dovetail, like a Möbius strip.

In what sense do I prioritize onto-ethics over conditions of possibility? I'm shifting from an emphasis on a *descriptive* project—what enables things to be the way they are—to a *descriptive-prescriptive* one: what enables a better responsiveness to how things are.

2.20 We're called on by worlds and things. But how can this be? How can things call to us? How can worlds call to us?

These questions come from the point of view fostered by Western culture, from a standpoint wherein only what has a voice can call, and voices are sounds that carry meaning. While we think some non-human animal sounds carry *some* (emotive) meaning, elevated above these are human voices—language—that carry full emotive and intellectual meaning.

And yet, what I'm drawing to our attention is simply that our attention can only be drawn to something because it's amenable to being noticed and when we turn to pay attention to anything we do so because our attention's been called to it. We direct our attention towards something only because it stands out for us, which means that *it stands forth for us*.

If I scan the room absent-mindedly, certain things grab my attention in certain ways; I'm drawn to certain encounters. If I cultivate a meticulous sense of attention to detail, so that, next time, I scan the room and patiently take in as much as I can, still only certain things grab my attention. Opening to things is a response to a prior being-called.

Even if as humans we're structurally 'predisposed' to certain types of experience, we're fundamentally a receptivity to things. Receptivity means we don't determine which things appear to us or how. – The tree in bloom suddenly grabs our attention.

'*How* can things call us in such specific ways?' Things and us lean towards one another. This is how we can encounter them; we couldn't encounter things if they were fully withdrawn into themselves. Things aren't constituted as identities that subsequently call; rather, things are being constituted at every point. Things continuously reach out and maintain themselves in the face of others. Opening to others is a readiness to impact and be impacted, encounter and be encountered, by them. It's other things that make things how they are, the relating of this thing with others: how it opens and responds to interactions and impacts with others. Things are as they are through relations with others. Things are an 'internal' relating—making the whole the thing it is—and an 'external' relating—with things *other* than it. Things face outwards. In this way, things are responses as well as questions.

Things call to us because of our relations with them; things call to us because of how they fit in and stand out amidst other things. They stand out relative to other things. We notice things because of this differentiation. But things stand out *in relation* to us, so we must take us into consideration.

We likewise call on things, for we *are* precisely this calling and being called. We aren't a pre-constituted identity that only subsequently calls and gets called; we're only ever being constituted because we're called and calling: we're constituted relationally, by and as openness (§2.13). We've already responded before any response can be formulated. We aren't a pre-constituted self, but rather our self's an ongoing negotiation: it's a calling amongst various voices, held together by their calling together. So, for example, memories, habits, perceptions, unconscious desires — all these, and more, interrelate and relate 'outward' to others: this is what we call our self. As new factors are brought into play, depending on how deeply they cut, they change who we are. We're enticed, teased, seduced by worlds and things to come forth and respond.

What this means is that things stand out because of our mutual interrelations. We're always engaged in projects and activities that throw us into particular dispositions. We always come to things with our particular character and style. We always come to things carrying other things: e.g., our memories or unconscious desires that tie us to things. And we always encounter things as humans within a particular world. All of these show how we're a relational nexus.

But, as we saw, things are also relational nexuses. In encountering them, new nexuses are formed.

Thus, things stand out for us because of the ongoing processes involved in who we are, but also because of the processes involved in what they are. Things call to us because we're open to them, but openness would still be waiting if things didn't stand out. Likewise, things are open for how we stand out and approach them. What we bring to things (disposition, character, etc.) doesn't dictate what we notice: it only pre-disposes us to ways of relating. Particular things align or cut across pre-dispositions in coming to our attention.

We notice particular things because of how we are, because of how they are, and because of how we are together.

Things call to each other because they are, fundamentally, opening to and leaning toward each other.

2.21 Responsive listeners, because they're engaged with things and their calls, may experience and express things and world in ways that we call 'mythological,' in order to express particular ways of relating. Subsequently, mythologies themselves can become things to which we respond and which can harbour renewed ways of engaging things.

Walter Otto's one who seeks to understand how the Homeric mythology was lived. He interprets the mythology in a quasi-phenomenological way, as a way of being and experiencing.

Each god casts different lights and reveals things in different ways: e.g., Hermes reveals things differently than Apollo. *"And so in the case of each deity we find anew that it is most intimately bound up with the things of this earth, and yet it never denotes one single facet but is an eternal form of existence in the whole compass of creation."*[107]

While these gods each open their own sense of world, the latter aren't somehow hermetically sealed. Rather, gods open to each other: they even war amongst each other. While Otto tries to downplay the warring side,[108] it's important to see, first, that Plato takes them as warring,[109] and, second, *they do certainly conflict*: there's no way to live in the midst of *all* gods since each encompasses the whole; instead, certain gods show the world in certain ways, and others recede.

In this picture, each god encompasses the whole, which never aligns into some greater totality. Because these gods are all within the ancient Greek world, and Otto's use of 'world' (§1.55) isn't the same as mine, I'll say that the gods reveal *colourations* of the world.

We slight or honour the gods. — We *cannot* honour them *all*. But we *can* cultivate ways of relating to make room for a particular god. Perhaps we'll catch a glimpse of a colouration of world.

2.22 A good metaphor offers insight that's surprising and enticing.[110] It resonates with us as true.

A metaphor sets things up, as though on a table, in a certain way: the scene is set for a connection to be made.[111] Aphorisms and metaphors focus attention, reveal and release tension in leading us to see the connection, to see the dawning of aspects.

A metaphor doesn't *point* something out exactly, as *perhaps* an assertion does; a metaphor *shows*.

With a strong metaphor, we *feel* its truth. We *feel* something's the case by how it hangs together. We're drawn into proximity with it, and if the metaphor's strong enough, we even see how we're implicated in it; at times, we must even set parts of ourselves on the table, too — we must rearrange ourselves for insight to dawn.

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[107] Otto, *The Homeric Gods*, p. 162.
[108] ibid, p. 250–2. But see, e.g., p. 170.
[109] Plato, "The Republic," Book II, 377A-378C range, p. 199.
[110] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH45.
[111] Charles Simic, "Notes on Poetry and Philosophy," in *Wonderful Words, Silent Truth: Essays on Poetry and a Memoir* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), p. 64, cited in Zwicky, *W&M*, RH2.

I've placed many things on this table for us to see. Parts of you and parts of me.

Our way of being oriented to our language is part of the gathering of our world. There are other ways to speak and other ways to listen. Metaphoric engagement with language and world is a way of being responsive, sensitive, and receptive to what calls.

2.23 To be receptive to a call is to be vulnerable; it's to open to letting others move you. Of course, we *are* this inevitable openness to being moved – we *are* this vulnerability through and through. Things have meaning for us *because* we're fragile, where meaning's an arcing across things that are facing, open to and quivering in the face of one another.

While openness is inevitable, we adopt various dispositions towards it. We can imagine all kinds of independence and security: we say we're secure, but when this inevitably is challenged by the world, we can get angry, driven by vengefulness, acting violently to, as it were, restore ourselves as secure agents and re-establish our security. We take out violence against the world in response to being violated, and take all sorts of steps to try to guarantee hermeticism. But we're always already impinged upon, and these attempts at restoration are, of course, *responses* and so betray notions of independence and security.

To try to seal oneself off reveals a weakness — a vulnerability that tries to deny itself.

Meaning is violent. – This is true not only from a position of supposed inviolability: *no* position can sufficiently accept this violence.

We don't simply create meaning from out of ourselves, for we don't have the power to do this. If we could create our own meaning, it would be meaningless, because meaning's always relational — meaning's the result of encounters. Meaning's an exchange that points beyond ourselves.

To open to the receptivity of a call is to be vulnerable, but it's also to be strong. The strength isn't that of stone, but of water or the reed that bends in the wind. The nature of ethics is to be wrong, because we're always relating to things beyond our horizon, comprehension, and perspective. Strength's what it is in facing both the other and the vulnerability at its root. It's maintaining integrity while being open to the world: adaptable, flexible, patient, and welcoming. These are the values of transformation.

2.24 Let's turn to an obstacle to this kind of openness. People learn, with precise responsivity and vulnerability, how to fit in through glances, gestures, facial expressions, body language, and tone. We learn how to answer, to whom or what and how much, to whom to yield, when, and so on. This ongoing regulation never ends — it must be re-established, reaffirmed. — The investment requires constant energy and attention.

This situation can lead to *ressentiment*, a drive for revenge in those who've had to bend in various ways.[112] This revenge, this weak grasping towards security, is taken out on those who don't bend in the same and 'proper' ways.

There's a code of sensations, a patrolling of insights, an adjudicating morality of and for spaces and time. One passes by what calls and addresses itself to you — the trees, the birds, the sunshine. Sociologically, psychologically, and aesthetically, we're blocked by the patrolling of the sensible instilled in us — where the 'sensible' isn't only what's available through our senses, but that which makes sense.[113]

Limits can be made explicit through transgression. Even minor transgressions are resisted. Some forms of response are governed by law; others, by custom. There are various ways to punish transgressions: ostracization, which operates on many levels, from the gross to the subtle; glances, postures, gestures, conversations; people and behaviour are labelled furtive, suspicious, odd, weird, crazy, insane. There are responses up to and beyond incarceration; behind symbolic violence lurks very real possibilities of physical violence.

If this sounds hyperbolic, pay attention to pockets of behaviour, which happen within particular language-games, in particular contexts, in particular institutions, with particular actors and characters. Pay attention to gendered, racialized, classist, marginalized, and normalizing differences of all kinds. I'm drawing our attention to *micro-behaviours*, *micro-gestures*, that codify everyday experience.[114]

There's nothing wrong with micro-gestures. They aren't avoidable for a species like ours (probably for many species).

Nonetheless, politics, or any transformative project, must contend with micro-gestures and the level of the sensible. Thus, Zwicky's concepts of *this*ness and metaphor are political, for they think around the contours of the everyday fungible experience of things as objects. Transformation is political.

What we need is a 'bravery': to listen and let be, not necessarily to, but in spite of the micro-gestures. We must work around particular micro-gestures when they deny parts of our experience.

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[112] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. Carol Diethe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 20, 33, 93–4.

[113] These thoughts—the realm of the sensible and its rupture—are indebted to Rancière, whose politics are discussed in §2.67. Jacques Rancière, *Dis-agreement*, trans. Julie Rose (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1999), p. 28–31, 40, 55, 104; *The Politics of Aesthetics*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (New York: Continuum, 2009), p. 12, 64; "Ten Theses on Politics," trans. Rachel Bowlby and Davide Panagia, *Theory & Event* 5.3 https://doi.org/10.1353/tae.2001.0028 (2001): par. 20, p. 8–9; Davide Panagia and Jacques Rancière, "Dissenting Words," trans. Davide Panagia, *diacritics* 30.2 (2000): p. 114–6, 124, 125.

[114] I suggest we see Rancièrian politics operative on the level of micro-gestures. See §2.67.

2.25 I strive to express myself clearly in these writings. Philosophy in the 19th–20th centuries, in particular, is often difficult to read and relate to. This difficulty falls on *both* sides of the 'analytic-continental divide.'

With that said, philosophy will always be difficult for common sense because philosophy's trying to go against what we take for granted. Thus, some difficulty's unavoidable because philosophy reaches to express new ideas.

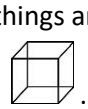
Philosophy should strive to be as clear as it can without giving up on its basic insights.

2.26 The way of seeing I'm aiming at involves stillness, a holding-to-one-side of overt thoughts, otherwise, those thoughts may pull one away, for they have the whole traction of their history, ruts, and projections. Stillness can be the first step to opening to one's openness.

Pulling a thing out of general circulation might also pull yourself out of it. Short-circuiting the given circulation is done in the service of a deeper, more respectful attunement. – The capitalistic circulation is, on the whole—often and structurally—not a respectful one.

There are different ways to engage with value, ways that don't assume humans or the system of general circulation, which actually devalues humans, are the bestowers of value (the idea that humans are the harbinger of valuation is a fantasy of the system).

The question's whether the system adequately and respectfully speaks to things as we encounter them. Stillness is an attempt to listen to things.

2.27 Particular things are open to being re-encountered in a way analogous to the transformation:  . Though, to enable the transformation at the level of things enables the transformation at the level of worlds (§2.5): when we notice the thing change, we may not notice that the world that houses it changes as well.

Things become crisper when taken on their own terms. They show more of themselves to the one who's opened and showing themself in turn. This is an ontological transformation (which may indicate an auto-ontological transformation, when beings are uncovering their own relations).

The transformation of the world gets us back in touch with things, and how it is for things to be the things they are. Things shine outwards—they radiate from themselves into the rest of the world (§2.7)—like a tuning fork with sympathetic resonances, reverberating through space and time (§2.10) and things.

One metaphysics—which permeates our experience—is questioned by other metaphysics (§2.16).

The transformation allows things to shift into place. — This can be quite exhilarating.

2.28 What can we learn from things, say, a heron, waves, an arbutus? Not just simple facts. We don't simply learn new ways to do things. Instead, we can learn ways and styles of being. For all these things—herons, waves, arbutuses—are responses (§2.20), styles and forms of responses — they are being-responses. The world's a giant vibrating, reverberating arena of conversation.

But they aren't just responses. They're promises and memories. Beings etch and are etched by temporality and others; they're their temporality through and through. Temporality's a horizon for any being: beings show how time is for them.

Herons that congregate in trees at night are in constant responsiveness with the things around them: night, other herons, nests, trees. They bring with them and bear their whole past. They *are* the passing of each moment *and* the yet to come of the next. Their memories, of which they aren't necessarily consciously aware, are held in the way they hold themselves. Likewise, memories are held in the smoothness of a stone caught in the waves at the shore: the stone is its pasts and its passing past; it carries marks from what it touches, in dialogue with the transient waves. This arbutus tree carves its past in its corkscrew journey through the sky: its history of responsiveness, shedding layers of skin.

In each case, these beings don't *carry* promises: they *are* promises. They're promises to be responsive, open and vulnerable, and to persist for a while. Response carries the promise of future response: responding once is opening to response for all time, till one is out of time. Each response opens an endless possibility of revisiting and revising, re-responding to the situation or the response itself. – There is no closure.

"*It is not possible to step twice into the same river.*"[115]

And yet, what we learn from these things is never something as empty as a general response, promise, or memory. We learn something that can't be put to words: the particularity of *this* heron, *this* seashore, *this* arbutus.

We learn what it's like for other particularities to be.

2.29 Is wind a thing? What about air? What kind of beings are these?

The answers we're prepared to give reflect contexts within which they're legible and make sense (language-games, worlds).

Facts are constituted as facts by their context.

[115] Heraclitus, *A Presocratics Reader*, frag. 62, p. 36.

How we've come to understand phenomena can be changed by phenomena themselves.

The wind can be questioned and investigated, though we must be attentive to our methodologies and style: *how* do we question? How we question reveals an onto-ethical disposition: it reveals what we think something is (even if in broad outline) and what we think an appropriate approach and engagement with the phenomena could be.

2.30 Empiricism's a methodological and stylistic position that focuses on our senses as sources of our (accurate) ideas. Of course, we need to rely on our senses to encounter the world. But what I'd like to question are the assumptions that go into an *empirical* observation.

When we sense something, we do so within a context, bound up with sets of practices, institutions, etc. We never seize upon something just sitting there, unbound from our and its context. (This is partly addressed in Heidegger's description of the ready-to-hand and present-at-hand; §2.4.) As example, a scientific experiment's a particular way of observing phenomena.

The best way to observe and engage with a phenomenon can only be determined by a network of concerns: our aims (explicit and implicit), our practices and institutions, our traditions and customs, our conceptual map (i.e., our concepts of what we're observing and how the concepts fit into larger contexts, e.g., of our world), and what the phenomenon itself demands, to name just a few.

When I ask about wind, I'm implicitly asking about our context, about how we answer such questions. Asking about wind is a call, in part, to put ourselves in question. We put ourselves in question insofar as we ask which answers will satisfy us and why.

When we have a conceptual map and network of concerns in place, we anticipate how things fit. – It's possible for things to question these assumptions.

2.31 Why question wind, why not water, fire, and earth too? The elements — those 'things' that make up all other things.

Raising this question allows us to sense how our questions, historico-culturally, tend to point towards what things have in common as their foundation (the smallest units), and how we've tried to narrow this down to one single, unchanging thing: a constancy meant to explain and underpin diversity; stability meant to explain and underpin change. It's apparent that 'elements,' which reflect a set of metaphysical commitments, are central to our way of thinking and being.

Let's observe the 'elements' again. Let's imagine what it was like for the Presocratics, for example, to think about the elements, before we piled all our understanding onto them. —

'But what's the point of this activity?' — The phenomena may shine through and reveal other facets of themselves.

— When we spend time with a friend, new aspects are revealed. We're surprised. — We can't help but be.

Notice, though, that wind, water, fire, earth, too are concepts. We needn't think of these as the discrete entities that we do. We needn't feel as though an instance of fire's a mere particularization or instantiation of a universal, and 'fire,' as atomic definitional essence, explains and underpins it.

'But I don't understand what you're hoping we get out of this. Sure, I can go look at a pool of water, or a dirt path, but what am I trying to do?'

Ontological attention is a way of opening to a thing.[116] Opening to a thing is opening to the possibility of being surprised by it. If we know how things are, then things appear regular and regulated and we notice nothing else, except deviation. The deviation/norm pairing, the subsumption of particulars to generalities or universals, and the lawfulness of nature have informed how nature appears to us.

My call is for a different approach. One method might be imagination (§2.6): imagination can reveal how things touch the world. For example, one could ask how the wind could be otherwise understood. Without already knowing what wind is, let it tell you how it is. Observational imagination can be receptivity to phenomena.

2.32 The goal, though, isn't to experience phenomena without concepts or language. The goal's to reinvigorate the latter two to better perceive the former.

Certain expressions can feel as though they're puncturing through language to things themselves (poetic expressions or Zen language). However, an interpretation that says we're puncturing through human artifact and reaching the reality of a thing is going too far. Certain uses of language feel as though we're approaching and according more with the thing because of an avoidance of calcified ways of speaking, thinking, and being.

We can pay ontological attention to language and be struck by its *this*ness: words and phrases, yes, but also a particular language or even language itself as phenomenon. When words feel wrong, in some ways it's language itself telling us this. Language comes forth from the world.

We can pay heed and respond to both linguistic and thingly beings, and their ways of being together. This means we can choose *how* we attend to calcified expressions: we pick them

[116] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH52, LH55, LH 57–8, LH100.

up, as though ready-to-hand (§2.4), or see their relations with thing *as* calcified and, so, as a sign to return to things themselves.

In returning to things, new expressions and forms of language can emerge. Like when you dip your foot in the water: the fish scatter, and return shortly after, darting, nibbling at the edges.

2.33 There's a difficult point here and it's that our way of being fits the world just so — it fits it as well as any other way does (§1.34–1.35, §1.37). If this is so, how can I argue for a transformation? Why wouldn't we stay with our current ways of being?

Even when calcified ways of being still fit the world, they call for a renewed response. The call for transformation only emerges within our world at a particular juncture: a moment of decision that makes possible particular responses — some, like Copernicus's epicycles,[117] seek to patch and maintain current structures; others call for a deeper vision.

How we respond is partly based on how our selves are gathered as relational nexuses (§2.20). Our tolerance in being able to stomach calcification or change relates to what Nietzsche calls will-to-power. Though our will never starts with us (in an absolute sense), it does pass through us. But, if we're called to transformation, we're ready on some level.

There is no perfect fit. Ways of being have more to learn and room to improve their responsivities. The sense of things is constantly tested and prodded by things themselves. Ways of being have inconsistencies and *aporias* (e.g., the mind-body problem). There'll always be *aporias* because the world's open in countless ways. It's a question of how we respond to this.

2.34 Many (perhaps most) of our concepts fit together and they (mostly) fit the world.

We generally don't see how such things fit because we think we're at a centre, and don't see how the position we take up is rounded about by a concurrence of pushes and pulls within our world.

We miss our essential *thrownness* in the world, never just the moment of our birth, but how we're constantly thrown into and find ourselves in a world that pre-exists us, including a horizon of meaning.[118] Our thrownness is a constant being-drawn, being-siphoned, and being-propelled onward. Caught in the draw, we think of ourselves as sitting in the midst of calm. We miss that we're in motion amidst a gathering of past senses of interpretations and understandings that carry forward; we're thrown into a stream of group meaning (history and tradition), and yet we think we're acting 'naturally,' 'independently,' 'spontaneously,' or 'freely.' Things are always interpreted within this horizon.

[117] Zwicky, *The Experience of Meaning*, p. 67.
[118] Heidegger, *B&T*, 179/223, 284/330.

You may scoff at what (erroneously) appears as idealism. You may attempt to point to the real, outside of us, allegedly free from this draw. But kicking a stone as Johnson did ("*I refute it* thus"), albeit in a different context, is no refutation: it's to miss the point.[119] For this gesture, too, reaffirms our thrownness.

This thrownness is part of the gathering of our world. There are, however, possibilities of re-orientation — it's worth thinking about how this is possible: how the draw isn't totalizing; how there's always a gap, a disjunction, an irreparability.

2.35 If there was a world that *fully* encompassed us, a *real totality*, we could never know, for we could have no distance from it.[120] Because there's no distance, there could be no deviation and so could be no question of ethics and no question of decision. No question of ethics, because our ethicality's our responsivity, which is our responsiveness or our responsibility to things; if our world was a totality, there would be no 'otherwise,' for all would be encompassed. Thus, how we respond would be predelineated — there would be no other and no surprise.[121]

We know things aren't like this. We can speak of worlds, different disclosures, tensions inherent in worlds, and the varying takes on or in the world. However, we can also say that worlds are *like* totalities.

Worlds are like totalities insofar as one can ask what it would be like to be immersed in *this*. Though they trail off or show fragments, they show in these cracks how one could be immersed. They beckon one to consider this possibility: they say, 'Look at things this way.' Worlds appear, at times, as *fragments* of worlds, tatters of world, wisps of world; all worlds are fragmentary and never full totalities.

Thus, we're always inside our world, which is always open to the outside: this is how any world is. The limits are, shall I say, fuzzy. There's no need to doubt that worlds can encounter, because the fact is they do: you already catch glimpses of other ways of being from within your way of disclosure.

It isn't a question of fully and authentically experiencing another's way of being. A desire for such is, like the desire to completely disregard them, akin to being colonial.

2.36 Trying to see how another form of living sees is fraught with difficulties. There are many dangers: removing agency; trivializing; over-glorifying; understanding or attributing

[119] James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson LL. D.*, ed. John Wilson Crocker (New York: George Dearborn, 1833), 1763 AETAT. 54, p. 209.
[120] Even those who've (implicitly) tried to maintain one world nonetheless argue for some other 'realm': e.g., the *noumenal*, the real, the outside, the supersensible, beings without being.
[121] This is Heidegger's fantasy of animals (§2.11).

the wrong things, or the right things but in the wrong way; claiming full understanding. As with any phenomenon, something's shown, and something pulls away.

The urge may arise to fully and authentically experience another's way: as though one could, with or without leaving behind one's world and metaphysics, fully immerse oneself elsewhere. This is impossible, so one smuggles one's world into the other's or assimilates the other, sets up foreign standards for authenticity from one's own disclosure, and then purports to understand the other (even as the other supposedly can't fully access one's own world). One doesn't notice the caricaturizing reduction of the other.

The opposite urge may arise: 'I'm not that; I can't possibly know what it's like. I'll leave it as it is, I'll be as I am, and we shall part ways.'

This opposite urge, like the first one, is over-hasty. While it masquerades as coming from a place of respect, it reveals itself as having a different underbelly: laziness, indifference, superiority, rejection, maybe even disgust or hatred. That is, 'I can't possibly understand that way of being, so why bother?' (Huntington's clash of civilizations.[122])

Respect, while letting-be, is intertwined with listening. Phenomena want to be heard: while sometimes they demand seclusion, often they demand attention. Phenomena continuously show themselves, showing that we haven't got it right (we never will, yet we can always do better).

Here, we encounter the asymptotic limit of truth (§2.14): asymptotic because of the ongoing interplay in the call and response of things. Calls demand response but there's no response that addresses all aspects of a call.

Phenomena often suggest how they want to be heard.

No matter how good one thinks one is at listening, phenomena can demand a different focus. They turn and *demand* listening: the fact of listening and *how* and to what one should in fact listen (i.e., an ethics of listening). There are better and worse ways of listening.

One learns from different ways of being, but in a way that's probably always violent and disrespectful. But this isn't to imply complacency: one should be driven to sensitivity, for violence and disrespect are amplified and thought through *more* poorly in the situations of assimilation or rejection.

— It's mysterious how phenomena *demand* attention, especially when they don't 'speak' with human language (§2.20).

[122] Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs* 72.3 (1993): p. 22–49.

2.37 ‘Are you an idealist?’
— Well, I don’t think the real is constituted by our minds.

‘So, you think there’s a real world out there?’
— I think that, though the question’s poorly formulated, the world’s constituted by things that are really there. There’s a sense in which things aren’t mind-dependent.

‘But how can you think this when you seem to subscribe to some kind of divergence theory of truth, i.e., even though you gesture towards asymptotic convergence (§2.14), you multiply worlds?’
— You seem to imply that truth is true if and only if it converges on one thing or one fact.

‘Why shouldn’t truth be restricted in this way?’
— Why should it?

‘Are you a relativist? Relative either to a culture or to the individual? Wouldn’t you say that if someone believes something crazy they’re entitled to it insofar as it’s true *for them*? Doesn’t this remove all ability to criticize the practices of others?’

I’m not sure why we need to speak of entitlements, but maybe this will help. Today, I saw an inebriated man treat a rivulet of water as though it were a river. — Would I say that for me it’s a rivulet, but for him, his truth, is that it’s a river? — No. Because I can inspect the phenomenon; I can examine the rivulet. And then I could, if I wanted, ask others around me. We could discuss the rivulet and the man’s reaction. All this evidence would support the idea that he’s wrong.

However, we could ask him why he acted that way. Perhaps his shoes have holes in them. Perhaps he was surprised by the rivulet and that surprise played out in his body. Perhaps the context of his inebriation provides reasons. Perhaps there are even reasons that emerge from a differing set of metaphysical assumptions, themselves from a different way of being, a different world.

— So, something may be reasonable *to him*?
Of course. But it may also turn out that he erred. *Nonetheless*, he acted in a specific way, and the action emerged from a context for him.
But what if he insists that the rivulet’s in fact a river?
— Well, if the point’s whether or not I would concede that this was true for him, I would not, for truth isn’t relative to an individual. Truth has to do with opening and responding (corresponding) to phenomena as they unfold within our world-horizon. And our world, into which we’re thrown, is an intersubjective world: it’s always already constituted by (as Heidegger calls it[123]) being-with, that is, by others. We’re fundamentally and essentially

[123] Heidegger, *B&T*, 118/155.

open: an opening, a clearing.[124] This clearing of being's always open to others (humans, but also others — not just animals or plants, but all others, every or any other thing): Heidegger calls this *ek-sistence*.[125]

Am I a cultural relativist? For I've seemed to admit the existence of other worlds. Well, but first, let's bracket off non-human animal and plant worlds, which suggest my relativism, if I'm a relativist, is broader than human cultures.

Let's think what we mean by cultural relativist. We may mean that truth's relative to cultures. Or that morality or ethics is relative. We may mean we have no grounds on which to base criticism of another culture's practice.

As a preliminary point, I don't think culture's the right way to think about this. I'd rather speak of *groups* with shared histories, traditions, languages, etc.—i.e., shared *worlds*—because 'groups' touches more directly on the assemblage of beings (whereas 'culture' can mean trappings, ideas, beliefs, or some surface phenomenon). In addition, 'groups' works better for non-human animal and plant worlds.

Groups are never immured in themselves—there's no way to transmit an exact meaning generation to generation—and they may be, and often are, geographically dispersed. 'Groups' isn't a locational, but an ontological category: a group, in my sense, is the nexus for a shared world. With that said, we cannot draw strict lines around groups: groups are symbiotic with and always already open to other groups and things; groups aren't static, stable, or essentializable.

Truth and morality *are* relative to groups because disclosures or worlds are relative to groups. Worlds disclose an onto-ethical (§2.19), metaphysical (§2.16) horizon of understanding (§2.5) and thus of correspondence (§2.14) for truth and ethics.

— If that's the case, can we criticize another group's practice? Of course; we do it all the time. What's required, however, is that we acknowledge that this criticism occurs within a particular disclosure, reaches towards another, and gains its force there, in the relation between the two. However, there's no full understanding, and conveying meaning requires that bridges are built, not once and for all, but constantly each time. One strategy may consist in trying to show an internal contradiction within the group's thinking.[126] Criticism is better or worse, depending on how much of the practice and its context are understood. For *even if* a group has justifications for a practice, borne out by history and traditions, such

[124] ibid, 132–3/171; Martin Heidegger, "Letter on 'Humanism'," in *Pathmarks*, trans. Frank A. Capuzzi, ed. William McNeill (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 248.
[125] Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth" in *Pathmarks*, trans. John Sallis, p. 144–5, 147, 150; Heidegger, "Letter on 'Humanism,'" p. 248–9.
[126] This may be a Rancièrian-inspired strategy. Rancière's theorization of politics will be introduced in §2.67.

that the practice makes sense and fits within a larger scheme, it may be that the group's practice doesn't heed phenomena and silences resistance.

Possibilities of error, situated within particular disclosures, show that—to take up the image of the cube again—while the lines may fit the cube, they leave room for slack. The goal of transformation isn't to fully tighten the relations between the cube and the lines: there'll always be slack, but it's a question of what kind. – Why will there always be slack? There's no absolutely consistent way to understand all phenomena because phenomena hang together in various ways, they constantly and relationally reveal new aspects of themselves, we can't (adequately) respond to all that calls us, and we're also always changing. Phenomena and how they're arranged always leave room for gestalt shifts and other ways of seeing.

There's room to change harmful practices, which often come from inattentive relations. Harmful practices come from an urge to speak for someone or something other, or to deny that this other can speak.

Seeing's a practice: it's something we do. And it's something we can work on.

2.38 Because we're immersed in our world and never leave it behind, we never access the limits of our world. To think of a limit is to think of its other side, it's to transgress the line, but these experiences can only occur within our world.

'While this may be the case, is it not also the case that we can at least *know* that there are such limits, even if we can never *fully* know them?'

Certainly, we know there are limits to my perspective (not solely visual, but 'situational' perspective) insofar as there are others, world insofar as there are other worlds, and my being insofar as there's the possibility of 'no-world' or 'not-being.' But these limits and how they're conceived is disclosed within my world. — There's no neutral position from which to observe them.

'But, then, how can you know about the multitude of divergent views you speak of? Don't you have to infer limits to delineate this multiplicity?'

Only if 'inference' is a spontaneous connection we only retrospectively call inference. My enworldedness reveals that other beings are also enworlded: that they have meaningful relations trailing off in various directions. But I can't fully know their worlds. My claim that there are other worlds—as with my claim that there are other perspectives or, more traditionally, other minds—comes from within my world (my perspective). While I can know *that* my world 'ends' at a certain point (not a linear point, but a blended, overlapping, fuzzy 'point' that's not really a point but instead occurs at all 'points'), I cannot *directly experience* my world ending. Derrida makes a similar claim regarding death: I cannot directly experience my death and any imagination of it instantiates a phantasm by which I

survive it (i.e., there's always *my* perspective *there*, 'watching' myself after death).[127] – So too, here, I survive, persist, and insist through any projection 'beyond' my world.

Nonetheless, there are better and worse ways to take up this fact, grounded in part in feedback given from things themselves. We must *imagine* what it's like, or rather, what it *is* or *could be* for the other. Yes, you can never directly experience nor ever know fully—there's no such thing, not even for the one in question—but you can learn in part. As with death, you cannot experience your death 'as such,'[128] but this doesn't mean that it isn't important to work through confronting death. Nor can you avoid these transgressions any way (i.e., we cannot avoid thinking about and imagining others, our death, and our limits).

Non-human animals, like death, demarcate a limit for *us* and our worlds. Undoubtedly, something like Morgan's Canon, the directive against anthropomorphizing non-human animals exists for good reason. There's a problem with a facile transference of too many facets between two contexts just because they have some facets in common. Yet, there are several responses here.

First, the same facile transference occurs amongst that diversity that we call 'the animal': i.e., *all* non-human animals are presumed to be alike in fundamental ways or, put otherwise, humans are presumed to be utterly unique compared to all other animals (§2.11).

Second, when we notice a commonality, the directive's applied to stop us from assuming that there are further commonalities: e.g., birds chirp and others respond, which is similar to what we do with our vocalizations, yet Morgan's Canon says we shouldn't assume that chirping's a form of language. In this way, we maintain anthropocentrism. But how many of the things that we attribute to ourselves, under the concept of 'the human,' do we actually have in the (exclusive) way we think we do?[129]

Third, the directive blinds us to commonalities. We end up erring on the side of difference at the expense of similarities, and so we miss commonalities-in-difference (§1.2, §2.2).

Fourth, just because the directive says one shouldn't attribute some facet to non-human animals doesn't mean a.) they don't have it (either at all or in part), b.) they have its

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[127] Jacques Derrida, *The Beast & the Sovereign, Volume II*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 117, 130, 157, 160. See also Sigmund Freud, "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. XIV, trans. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press Limited, 1957), p. 289: "*It is indeed impossible to imagine our own death; and whenever we attempt to do so we can perceive that we are in fact still present as spectators.*"

[128] Jacques Derrida, *Aporias*, trans. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 76.

[129] Derrida asks this question about death as such, the other as such, deception, auto-reference (in deictic terms), and so on. Derrida, *Aporias*, p. 76; Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, p. 94–5, 133–6.

negation or lack, or c.) they're inferior to humans. (There are attributes they have that we wouldn't attribute to ourselves.)

This directive's a methodological principle that emerged from phenomena. But when it's used (even if implicitly), for instance, to question whether non-human animals can feel pain in a way that matters[130]—when it's used to deny non-human animals world and view them as outside ethics (§2.11)—we need to ask whether it continues to be the best way to respect difference. Yes, there's a danger in too hastily attributing, but there's the opposing danger in too hastily denying.

Another principle, which we may perhaps do well to heed, *in conjunction with its opposite* (which leads to the concept of *resonance*: similarity in difference), might run as follows (though I'm sure others could refine it better):

> Do not withhold attributing commonality without good reason; or, positively put: Assume there is commonality unless you can show more substantial difference.

These principles, taken together (i.e., don't leap quickly into either emphasizing difference or commonality), may act as a prophylactic against our tendency to block imaginative leaps, blocks which restrict better approaches to thinking and imagining limits.

2.39 When I say that the world offers us feedback (§1.39, §2.38) and that we can sense if our orientation isn't quite right, I'm restating the idea that things demand attention, not just once, for things *are* this demanding of attention. Things demand attention because of the dynamism of their relational web (i.e., how they're situated in our and their world), for various relations tighten and relax, built up and collapse, and are fostered or neglected. Things call because of these differentials.

How can things, across worlds, appear in so many ways at once? They appear one way to one group, another to another group, partly because of the differentials situated in relational webs of world. Things appear differently—they *are* different in different disclosures—because of different world-relations.

That is, enworlded beings have certain possibilities open for them based on certain characteristics. For instance, their particular, bodily, perceptual nature. In each case, the relations that an enworlded being has to being as a whole varies. It's related to different kinds of beings, each related to other beings, which inform how beings appear for the enworlded being, and vice versa. Relations, of course, include histories. Each world-disclosure's a deep set of metaphysical, ontological relations. — As I'll show, we don't need identity at the core of this differential set of relations.

[130] I.e., whether they can consciously experience anything, which includes pain, and thus whether their pain has any moral concern for us (it's argued that they only have nonconscious experiences which are of no moral concern): Peter Carruthers, "Brute Experience," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 86.5 (May 1989): p. 258–69, see p. 268.

— How can things appear in so many, non-convergent ways at once? – Because things are relational.

2.40 'You implore us to ask the water (§1.39), as though it'll somehow tell us if our orientation isn't quite right. But what does this mean? What do we ask it?'

This is precisely the question!

What do we ask it? – That is, we can ask ourselves what we're already asking it ('what *do* we ask it?,' i.e., 'what are we already asking it?'). It's also a prime question to ask; we can go to water, for instance, and ask: 'What do we ask here?' (What can, what *should* we ask?)

Before any specific question seeking an answer, we should be puzzled by the question itself; we're put into question through our encounters. The questions leave marks: '*?*'.

Asking 'What do we ask it' puts *us* and our questions back into question. – *What* do we ask *it*?

2.41 Let's suppose we approached phenomena with this kind of questioning attitude. What might, for instance, an animal respond? Well, there's no essence of animals, let alone of *the* animal. And yet, we can say that non-human animals are other ways of being.

Other animals show us ways of being in the world: they show us possibilities for navigating the world; they show us what our orientation could be like if we were in their place — which is a way to see from our place how our orientation could be. — Don't say that all (non-human) animals do is orient themselves to sex, food, predators, shelter, and so on! And it doesn't help to say that these are what, at base, we do because the problem's the reductive abstraction. While this explains something, it over-generalizes and passes over lived particularities and reduces worlds to externalities. These problems are connected as one.

First, it draws a connection across diverse ways of being—the otter, oyster, orangutan—and lumps variegated behavioural phenomena into a small number of categories (e.g., 'predator'). In doing so, it risks foreclosing on investigation, as one might think 'what more is there to know about otters? They're like all other animals, aside from some details, which we can now work out' — but the exactitude of the otter's predator isn't a 'detail'! As though you have 'the animal' in the skin of the 'otter' and all the rest falls into place.

Second, world's reduced to externalities. To better understand this, let's think about structuralism. Structuralist anthropology, for instance, has thought we can investigate other cultures and say, 'here's what *they think* they're doing, but in *reality*, they're doing X' (a similar gesture to Marx, insofar as we distinguish consciousness or ideal superstructures from real material conditions or some other such basis). What this amounts to, then, is the

claim that 'we can know from outside, externally, what's *really* going on better than those who are inside.'

While undoubtedly this is a way to think about things and interesting patterns have been observed, this doesn't mean that the 'inside perspective' should be discounted. What we have here, at the very least, are two *contexts* of explanation butting heads: 'don't you see, *this* is what you are *really* doing?'; 'no, I mean, while that may be interesting, that's *not* what we're *really* doing…the *reason* we do X is because of Y.' In other words, this way of looking at things reduces worlds to externalities: to observations from 'outside.'

My concern's not to think of inside/outside, necessarily. What I'm gesturing to is the disclosure of worlds; this is what I mean by 'contexts.' There's a meaningful horizon within which things make sense, and in anthropological work we see a conflicting and confluence of two such horizons.

And so, in the case of non-human animals, the claim runs analogously: non-human animal worlds are reduced to externalities. People may use as justification here that non-human animals lack language, for without language we seem to only have the one context of explanation. And yet, we could ask: what is language? Do only humans have language? Why would that be the case? — How do I know that you have language? You use it, you respond to my use of it. Well, when a dog barks at another, does the other dog not respond to it? And are we not, if sensitively attuned to the situation involving the dogs, also drawn into a glimpse of a realm where we could respond to this take on things? Why would a bird chirp if not to be heard?

Language is a way of projecting possibilities into the world that *make sense* (can be sensed) by those properly attuned. Languages are ways of being-together meaningfully, of gesturing towards and meaningfully responding to world and things, even if not in the form or style of a statement or assertion. Likewise, non-human animals' behaviour, which is responsive engagement, shows us the same. Humans show, display, and say how things are for them. So, too, do non-human animals: they show, display, and say—as with humans—'through' their way of being.

There are languages extending in various directions, like so many gardens of moss.

The reduction of externalities is related to over-generalization: in not paying attention to the particularity of what's in question in both cases, we miss the phenomena. Our concepts float free.

And yet, generally, I'm also not trying to 'give back' to non-human animals a subjectivity we've denied them. This isn't merely addressed, then, by conceiving of non-human animals as, for example, perspectival centres. Instead, I'm questioning a model of subjectivity. We need to avoid a complacency and co-option in which other animals are brought into our likeness insofar as they are perspectival centres, have worlds, and so on: there's a way that

other animals are *not like us*, and this mysteriousness and this gap should reverberate to our core.

Other animals show us a way of being in the world. And yet, this statement isn't sufficient. Not sufficient how? It, too, is insufficiently general, and is intended to point us in a better direction.

2.42 In a sense, though, it's true that animals *should* be taken up as perspectival centres. It seems obvious that animals have a variety of meaningful relations with things around them based on how they sense things.

Yet, it's also true that animals aren't reducible to such perspectives. First, 'perspectival centre' isn't a formal, general characteristic that's applied to different cases; just as consciousness is always intentional, so a perspectival centre's always intentional, relational, embedded, enworlded, and directed: it's *particular* in each case, and commonality shouldn't be reduced to sameness. Second, our work's not done when we find this commonality, for we must sit with the vast differences, the abysses, that exist as well.

The abysses between us and other animals are vast, indescribable, and irreducible. This is true between all kinds of animals: the abyss from bird to bear, bear to fish, fish to bird. (And, to push the point, are all birds 'birds'? Just how similar are hummingbird and emu, penguin and woodpecker?)

We must ask ourselves anew, how do phenomena present themselves? Try to imagine transposing yourself into a squirrel. How would we do so? What would that be like? Would it just be 'you' *in* or *as* a squirrel? There are innumerable difficulties with questions of access, and we find we get pushed away. So, how does the phenomenon, which holistically includes being pushed away, reveal itself? As an ambiguous possibility of access; as an epistemological and abyssal limit.

Animals, some more than others, reveal ways that they come close to us, approach us, share some features with us; yet they also, some more than others, reveal ways that they don't come close, recede, have features we don't understand in their irrevocable difference. — In other words, as with all beings, they reveal and conceal, approach and recede, share and withhold.

Too often, our society reduces non-human animals, and both difference and similarity can be used oppressively.

If, on the other hand, we let non-human animals be the beings they are, then we see that they show us, through similarity and resonance, something other, something *fundamentally* other: they show us a fundamentally different way of being. – 'If this is so, how could we learn from *that*?' – Is the implication that we can't learn from something that's other than us?

— It's not hard to see why certain peoples have encountered certain non-human animals as majestic, mythical, absolutely terrifying beings.

2.43 Other animals show us ways of being in the world.

Stones also show ways of being in the world.

'But, surely, now, you're stretching. While the point above may have been that we aren't simply trying to give back to non-human animals a subjectivity, personhood, or perspectival centre, surely this is a big part of your argument: if non-human animals have worlds, it's because they have meaningful relations, which seems to be how you've defined world. We could even grant the possibility to plants, which seem, in some limited sense, to have a 'perspective' and be open to their environment. But with a stone, you've gone too far! A stone has no access and no possibility of meaning: a stone has no openness to world! This *should* be clear!'

Yes, this is how we think. — Heidegger, in his comparative evaluation of stones, non-human animals, and humans on world dismisses stones from consideration ("*the stone is worldless*"[131]): *"No, we reply, we cannot transpose ourselves into a stone [….] It is impossible because the stone as such does not admit of this possibility at all […]."*[132] And yet, he also says: *"there are ways and means belonging to human Dasein in which man [sic] never simply regards purely material things, or indeed technical things, as such but rather 'animates' them, as we might somewhat misleadingly put it. […] What is at issue here is […] the distinction between quite different* kinds *of possible* truth.*"*[133] But even with this remarkable aside, he still tosses the stone aside.

Let's instead tarry with possibilities here. It doesn't seem controversial to state that a stone has a particular way of being: that is, it displays how it is in the world (our world). We come upon a stone and see it, resting in the ditch. The stone *is*; it *exists*. That is, it is a being. The stone *is*, only *as* a stone. — Again, I don't take any of this as controversial.

But, how *is* it for the stone? — We can ask this question. It isn't nonsensical. We can investigate it; we can inquire into how the stone is what it is.

How *is* it for the stone? — This stone sits in our world in a particular way. — But it's not ultimately dependent on us. Instead, the stone opens and holds open a space within which it can appear. It doesn't just sit there, as a stone, but rather it's in tension with a variety of forces it resists (and we need not posit consciousness for resistance) as it maintains itself. It 'pushes out,' so to speak, against an outside (i.e., it stands firm), which has the

[131] Heidegger, *FCM*, p. 185.
[132] ibid, p. 204.
[133] ibid.

consequence of the stone maintaining a kind of integrity: a wholeness and distinctness.[134] (The fact that it gains or loses particles, or even chunks, isn't an argument against my claim here, though I'll bracket this concern for now.) We might even be inclined to think in terms of verbs: the stone *stones*. It 'stands out' from its surroundings. It is what it is because it maintains itself as such: it *continues* to *be* what it is. *"Each thing in so far as it is in itself endeavours to persist in its own being."*[135]

In maintaining itself against an outside, and through a cohesion of an inside (§2.20), the stone exhibits the (fuzzy) boundary required for an enworlded being. Enworlded beings inhabit worlds, which are ways that all things are meaningful for them, i.e., all things are meaningfully related or relatable to them; a stone can encounter other things on its own terms. This is meaningful not in the sense of meaningful for a subject, but in the fit between stone and others; its ability to encounter others (impact or be impacted by them) means it fits with them on terms set out between it and this other. It's able to encounter others because it's open in advance to others in its own, stony way. Its openness is always an openness to others, both particular others and in general, and thus shares the kind of structure of world-intentionality. The stone is with-others. It exhibits a persistent way of being on its own terms, but also, relationally.

Though I've only brushed the surface of this large question, to which I'll return, we may glimpse why we shouldn't be so quick to deny that stones have worlds.

'But *all* things stand out from their surroundings!'
— In some sense, yes. Things stand out, stand forth, get subsumed or offer resistance. — This is the basis that enables them to call to us (§2.20), to penetrate our attention, our realm of sensing.

However, this is *not* an argument for *noumena*. How so?[136] How is this not claiming that things exist outside all disclosures? – Because I'm arguing against thinking that disclosure must be connected with perceptual perspective. Disclosure is a being's openness to other beings. Openness is being open to encounter or being impacted or influenced by the other. Beings precisely *are* as disclosed. Yes, they *are*, for us; but they also *are*, in or for themselves, i.e., in their worlds. They're disclosed, with others, for themselves. Since disclosures happen in a world, there's a world for each being.

2.44 But what about our categories of understanding? For instance, we're the ones who call this a 'stone.' How could we say that the stone has a world if it's called this merely by convention and there are no actual boundaries that correspond to our naming? As Varzi

[134] Inspired loosely by Evan Thompson, *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 48–9, 64.
[135] Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*, ed. G.H.R. Parkinson and trans. G.H.R. Parkinson and Andrew Boyle (London: Guernsey Press Co. Ltd., 1989), Prop. VI, Part III, p. 91.
[136] For a different take on the *noumena*, see Eben Hensby, "Kant and Heidegger: The place of truth and the shrinking back of the *noumena*," *Philosophia* 49 (2021): p. 1507–24. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11406-020-00319-x.

writes: *"On closer look, material objects are just swarms of subatomic particles frantically dancing in an otherwise empty space."*[137] He writes: *"Take this cat, Tibbles [… ;] Tibbles is eating a chunk of tuna […] now it is in Tibbles's mouth: is it part of Tibbles? Will it be part of Tibbles only after some chewing? Only when Tibbles swallows it? Only at the end of the digestive process?"*[138] *"It is true that I had the impression of seeing the shoreline of Long Island from my plane; but it is also true that when you actually go there, ground-level, things look very different […:] an intricate disarray of stones, sand, algae, piers, boardwalks […]."*[139]

Do we just call it 'stone' for pragmatic reasons?

The fact that entities don't have strict delineations, in an ontic sense, doesn't really get to the core of the issue. To return to the discussion from the previous section, a stone that's broken in half, for instance, is now (now becomes) two pieces (or two stones?) that also show us particular ways of being in the world. This would be true of any number of pieces. When the stone's not broken, it coheres into a whole (§2.20).

'But the stone's already in these pieces: this is just what atoms are!'

Atoms show us a way of being in the world. As Koffka writes, *"The whole is something else than the sum of its parts"*:[140] the way of being of an atom is other than that of the stone. While these different levels are *nestled*, this doesn't affect my claim. This is also true in the case of, for example, ecosystems: we can travel 'upwards' (in scale) and notice that the berry is nestled in the context of its various relations, nestled in the context of a particular bush, a forest, and so on: and we can travel 'downward' to the atomic level. This inter-nestling is just part of how the world *is*.

This means that the (sub-)atomic structure of a given thing doesn't affect the thing's way of being (in the sense under discussion).

Ontology's not delineated by convention (§2.4). As I've alluded to above (e.g., §1.86), practices aren't primary. Our practices and conventions don't emerge from a vacuum but from our interactions with things. How things appear is in a dialogic kind of encounter with our practices. This is because, as I've mentioned, things aren't pre-constituted or eternally constituted things (present-at-hand) but are bound up with how we engage them (ready-to-hand), which has to do with our understanding and interpretation of *Dasein* (of our own being and of Being itself) (§2.5). Thus, the appearance of things and the horizon of our practices are both ontological. Beings are the beings they are as revealed through practice

[137] Achille C. Varzi, "Boundaries, Conventions, and Realism," in *Carving Nature at Its Joints: Natural Kinds in Metaphysics and Science*, eds. J.K. Campbell, M. O'Rourke, and M.H. Slater (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011): p. 129–53, see p. 136.
[138] Varzi, "Boundaries, Conventions, and Realism," p. 140.
[139] ibid, p. 139.
[140] Kurt Koffka, *Principles of Gestalt Psychology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1935), p. 176.

or engagement, and practice can only take up beings as the beings they are. Beings can also call out to be taken differently.

Therefore, first, the argument of scale misses that entities on different levels still have ways of being and, second, convention doesn't precede ontology. The fact that a stone appears to us as a thing doesn't mean we've made this up; its appearance as a thing is made possible by *its appearance*, i.e., by its way of being.

Furthermore, language and concepts are bound up with things and aren't merely conventional or artificial modes we impose upon reality. As practiced, languages reveal a deep engagement, a deep entanglement, with the world. Our categories are enmeshed with phenomenal appearances: they enable or hinder, reveal or disavow, certain relations. Language is part of how things are gathered.

— Philosophy's concerned with this gathering and, thus, with language and concepts. It's concerned with precision, the criterion for which can only emerge from its activities. – To be careful with language is to be concerned with how one is in the world.

2.45 Gatherings are wholes insofar as they gather all things orbitally: a world's a *gathering*, a relational *nexus*. – Meaning emerges from the particular arrangements and arrays, from the gaps, spaces, and proximities of one thing to the next.

In a different gathering, things rearrange; the relational nexus shifts and pulls in different ways: there's a different set of resonances, orbitration, and solar system—which isn't to say that all things revolve around a central spot akin to the sun; a solar system's always situated within a vaster, more complex system, even when things *seem* to revolve around a centre.

If all things are gathered orbitally in a relational nexus within a world, it's also true that things exert their own gravitational push-and-pull: things are, on their own, exerting themselves to likewise gather things around themselves orbitally (and, from their 'perspective,' they do — which is *their* world). Thus, we can, so to speak, observe interference patterns.

'Ah, so the other solar system over there would be oriented like ours.' — The metaphor doesn't *quite* work: it's not as though *here* is one gathering and *there* is another and they're all laid out in one space. Rather, gatherings are overlapping: things are *simultaneously* differently organized such that they conflict with one another.

While we can experience interference patterns, we can't ever simply travel to those other solar systems.

Therefore, the wholes—never totalities—trail off, so to speak. They reveal cracks, divergences, re-organizations — all ultimately non-totalizable.

Love's the feeling when we see how things are, or can be, gathered around some thing. We see that thing at the (or a) centre: *this* thing (§2.7).[141] It's not that we try to merely imagine how *this* is or could be a centre; rather, we pay ontological attention to its way of being. We let ourselves be drawn into its way of standing forth in the world, catching a glimpse of a tear in ours.

— The centre cannot hold,[142] for it cannot remain both central and exempt (the centre outside the system; §1.98). The centre cannot remain as centre: it collapses for it's always already internal to the 'system,'[143] to the gathering, which is itself always part of a larger disarray of, and thus decentring by, other gatherings.

2.46 As Heidegger points out, we don't encounter being anywhere except 'as' beings; and we don't encounter beings anywhere except 'as' *this* stone, *this* stream, *this* deer, and so on. This isn't due to some limitation on our part: it's because this is how these 'concepts' '*are*.' – Being '*is*' a hinge of what is common between worlds.

To feel the *stoniness* of the stone (§1.43) isn't simply to feel the stone as it rests in your hand in your world; it's to feel how *the world of the stone is stony*. The stoniness of the stone is the way of being of the stone, which is the way of the stone's *world*. This is how it opens to things as a stone: its world is stony. The stone sits on a path, and this path's stony for the stone; the stone rolls into a root, and rolling and root are both stony for the stone.

The world as stony is always also un-stony, for this stone stonily encounters things that aren't in the way of being of a stone. Such encounters (possible or actual) are what determine the stoniness of the stone. To feel the stone's stoniness is thus also to feel its un-stoniness; how it would never, could never, make everything stony. This is what allows it to be stony.

In this way, we *are* and *are not* how we are (§1.42). Ways of being are metaphoric, crossing-over, for they always cross over towards other ways of being. Everything we encounter is both like and unlike us.

2.47 What does my repeated use of the image signify? What's its referent?

It's hard to say. It's not a universal structure. There are certain definite steps, which trace through the history of our tradition and philosophy, that lead to the possibility of its use and understanding. It's not the naked truth upon which varying interpretations and cultural

[141] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH52, LH54–5, LH57.
[142] William Butler Yeats, "The Second Coming," in *Anthology of Twentieth-Century British and Irish Poetry*, ed. Keith Tuma (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), line 3, p. 40.
[143] Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," p. 915–6.

understandings are lain. It's gesturing to something and for someone within certain horizons of meaning. (Of course, it might speak to others as well.)

— Any possibility of change comes from within.

But why *this* image? It tries to subvert rigid structure or structuralism—which either take the cube as exclusively one of its projections or reduce it to a series of lines—by showing other possibilities internal to a given picture. And it shows a way of moving, a dynamism. That is, it subverts rigid structure with metaphoric structure (let's say 'structure,' for it doesn't reduce gestalt shifts to an underlying structure, which would just be another form of rigid structure). It, too, is a metaphor: a metaphor for metaphors (§2.2). It's like Wittgenstein's ladder (§1.47): it tries to do the impossible.

"6.54 My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he [sic] has used them—as steps—to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.)
"He must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world aright."[144]

Wittgenstein's ladder comes in the penultimate subsection of the *Tractatus*, prepared for by definite steps. Ultimately, however, neither the cube nor the ladder, despite Wittgenstein's claims for the latter, lead to a higher place to "*see the world aright*",[145] nor can we simply throw them away; rather, they can only lead sideways or in a circle; they're caught in the gust of a historic throw, an inescapable whirlwind of context, from within a particular disclosure. Nobody can climb out of this, or beyond themselves. Additionally, if they've led us to see something, these steps stay with us, for they've shown us something from a particular angle.

I want the cube to be 'enfolded' back upon itself. What would this mean? The cube, and images like it, try to express the inexpressible. The cube tries to point outside its particular disclosure while acknowledging it cannot do so: it tries, impossibly, to acknowledge its own limits. And yet, there's something responsible about the attempt, despite the impossibility of success.

Nothing that matters is guaranteed. Ethics precisely emerges from the impossibility of doing justice—responding adequately or sufficiently—to the situation. Confronting this impossibility often leads to two insufficient responses: a.) throwing one's hands up and forsaking ethics; b.) attempting to rationalize or secure a guarantee.

But (a) is impossible: we cannot but respond; we can't forsake ethics. It's a question of whether we do a good job or not.

[144] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, §6.54, p. 89.
[145] ibid.

And (b) is impossible because we can never guarantee that we've adequately responded to what phenomena demand. Any rational system we create and subsequently apply will have necessarily been created prior to a particular situation; it'll miss relational intricacies and gloss over and occlude aspects. This is a question of methodology: *meta-hodos* — a following after,[146] for a method always comes too late. Not too late to be of use, but too late to found a new beginning.

2.48 Poetic thinking, thinking rooted in metaphoric structure, can see things differently. – Not poetry as a literary form. Poetry can be, but needn't be, poetic; just as the poetic can be, but needn't be, poetry. (It follows that not all poetry's poetic.)

Poetic thinking's differently attentive, as though it tugs loose strands woven through the world to reveal other patterns, other connections. Poetic thinking thinks in leaps.

This thinking responds differently, letting beings appear as the beings they are: not grounded in the general circulation, it interrupts this circulation through the unexpected, through surprise, through drawing together various axes of resonance for us, and finds patterns that aren't necessarily unilateral or linear.[147]

This style of thinking emerges from an experience of the world. It challenges and bends language to resonate with the experience. And it challenges the reader to respond to the provocation to see things like this; but to see things like this, you can't see things the way you usually do: the experience is disruptive.

2.49 'You've discussed the case of an inebriated man who mistook the rivulet for river (§2.37). But what about other related cases? What about the person who thinks that reality, at a deep level, isn't as it seems in experience? For instance, what could we say if someone insists that we're really just brains in a vat and all appearances are illusory? Or that we're brains in a lab and appearances are electrochemically induced by scientists, or aliens? Or that we're hallucinating or dreaming — we'll wake up and realize that we're actually in a padded room, in a computer simulation, or we're about to die and this is our life flashing before our eyes? — In other words, what about all-encompassing cases? Doesn't your thinking lead to the need to accept these as true or legitimate, for like the poet (§2.48) they all say, "see things like this"?'

How do you know you're not a brain in a vat, a madman hallucinating, or someone whose life's flashing before their eyes? — Well, but why would it matter? *This* is the phenomena you experience; *this* is the world within which you live.

[146] Douglas Harper, "Etymology of method," Online Etymology Dictionary, accessed February 11, 2022, https://www.etymonline.com/word/method.
[147] See Zwicky on uni- vs polydimensionality, axes of resonance, and integrity: *Lyric Philosophy*, LH3–6, LH172, LH181, LH195, LH234, LH239.

‘But how can you be happy with that? What about reality?’

This *is* real. We’re really experiencing this.

‘Well, but isn’t the reality of one who believes they’re seeing their life flash before their eyes informed by this belief? Based on what you’ve said so far, how would you deny that this view is a legitimate one?’

— Yes, their reality would be constituted in large part by such beliefs.
– How would I deny these beliefs? – They don’t gain purchase or traction in our experience. Sure, they’re *possible*…but what do we mean by possibility, here?

‘But the same could be said for strange cultural beliefs! Why should we take seriously other cultural beliefs as viable if you won’t take *these* ways of seeing as viable?’

Viability has to do with responsiveness to our situatedness. We say, ‘Could this be true? If so, how?’ How, phenomenologically, could these odd ‘beliefs’ be true? How would it be to see things this way?

Cultural beliefs emerge from an ongoing dialogic encounter with phenomena, and so emerge as responses to what-is. The strange philosophical thought-experiments—*our* society’s neuroses—*are* responses, caught up in the metaphysics of sensory uncertainty/rational certainty, and fallenness/enlightenment. How, phenomenologically, *could these* be true? If, precisely, we doubt our lived, bodied existence; if we assume some totalizing deception based on possibility and doubt. But how can we phenomenologically doubt our very phenomenology? Through universalizing particular moments of illusion or error, thereby reducing experience itself to a form of localized moment, i.e., through substituting the continuousness of experience with moments of error or, in other words, through self-refuting reductionism, reducing one’s experience to the experience of an error, to the error of experience.[148]

‘Well, but of course, these *could* be true. They say, “Look at things this way” and *reorient the totality*, just as, for example, Augustine’s view does: *“And to all things which stood around the portals of my flesh I said, ‘Tell me of my God. You are not he, but tell me something of him.’ Then they lifted up their mighty voices and cried, ‘He made us.’”*[149] How are you going to say such views are wrong?’

Here, we get to the core of the issue: what are the criteria for better and worse, for right and wrong, for true and false, if we accept my position? If I say criteria are contextual, how do we make a decision here? Let’s leave behind philosophical thought-experiments: how do we refute, for example, creationism?

[148] None of this is meant to deny the heuristic benefits of such thought-experiments.
[149] Saint Augustine, *The Confessions*, trans. Maria Boulding (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), Book X, p. 202–3.

One of the criteria has to be what best accommodates the phenomena/evidence, for our positions are always responses to what is. There are many cases in which several positions could equally well explain the phenomena. In such cases, we can learn from these other positions. We can ask them what would it be like to see things that way. Perhaps we'll learn that these positions are unequal in a deeper sense in terms of investments or commitments the positions demand (e.g., other claims they entail), and perhaps these corollaries aren't acceptable for they don't fit the phenomena (which might only affect the corollaries). Or, perhaps we won't find inequalities, and any of the positions will do. But, in the case of creationism (as opposed to evolutionism), the opposing position's better suited to accommodate the phenomena.

What about Augustine's position? His view entails a reorientation of the totality: a convergence theory of truth based on a distinction between creator and creation, where all things point to God but are not him. It's difficult to *argue* against such a position: I've offered an alternate view, which, in part, has to do with not seeing how creation/creator or a convergence theory of truth fit the phenomena. Do we feel that the horizon of meaning of the world is a harmonious one (e.g., creator God) or is the world a series of, at times harmonious and at times conflicting, forces (e.g., the gods war amongst each other)? Do all things point to a single creator, or do things stand forth in their being and spin off into their own constellations? Are things created and thus derive their sense from the creator (the centre outside the system; §1.98), or do things derive their sense immanently? Could it be, as Nietzsche declared, that God is dead; that God isn't needed anymore to hold things together (i.e., physically, morally, mentally), for if the this-worldly is held together by the this-worldly, what need have we for the other-worldly?[150]

We must be strong enough to face our situation without recourse to an everlasting entity, since there's nothing in our experience that points to this. We may be *inclined to want* an everlasting guarantee—including an immortal soul, a guarantee of morality and progress, an omniscient all-seeing confessor and bestower of rewards (an omnipresent accounting), and a continuity of transmission, as found in the One True God—but this inclination reveals more about our disposition: *viz.*, that we can't completely face up to our situation without it. A respectful stance, then—one that respects the phenomena—is a *strong* stance: it requires strength of spirit to face phenomena.

If my claims about the variety of worlds goes through (contemporaneous and historical human, non-human animal, plant, stone, and thingly worlds), then we should agree there's no über-world that encapsulates these various ones (§2.35), i.e., that harmonizes or acts as a convergence 'behind the scenes,' for such a postulate would necessarily extend beyond phenomenological experience.

[150] This 'other-worldly' should be understood as the heavenly or eternal realm.

2.50 At times, someone will say, 'now we've found the real basis' — which is a form of 'colonizing logic.' What do I mean? — Well, such a statement presupposes several things. It presupposes that 'we' have found the real; that 'we' have the knowledge that cuts through illusion. It says, 'what *you* thought was illusory' and negates the experience of an other, typically, of another group.

'But what if we *have* found the basis? It's not then respectful to pretend we haven't!'

What does this mean? That we've found *the* way to look at things? How can that claim even make sense? Perhaps the claim emerges when, for example, we've found the cure for a disease. Do we not then say that we've used our science and knowledge of the real to make the discovery? Well, but, first, neither the cure nor the disease are context-free. Second, we needn't suppose that we've tapped into 'the real' to make this discovery: rather, certain connections were made, and this enabled a certain structure of meaning, through which, we were able to uncover a cure. Which doesn't mean that there aren't other ways of looking at the phenomena.

Let's take up Maslow's hierarchy of needs, setting aside its accuracy, to criticize a general and related way of thinking. Physiological and safety needs are placed on the bottom and each 'step' must be secured for a person to be able to move on.[151] It's clearly a developmental hierarchy, a universal claim or blueprint,[152] that's often portrayed as deferring ethics, art, spirituality, and so on until the 'higher' steps. It assumes that underneath culture, we're all identical biological beings.[153] But why think this way? What sense is there in making claims about us 'under' our culture or group? What kind of operation must be done to perceive us this way?

Well, the response is that we see the truth of this in the deprived and poor who are reduced to 'bare life.' – But there are unwarranted assumptions here. There's no natural way to engage with the world opposed to an artificial/cultural way. Displaced peoples continue to carry with them group-based structures of meaning from their place of dispersal. Sure, practices change: radically new situations demand radically new engagement. Yet, we always approach things in particular ways, in metaphysical, enworlded ways, in and out of particular contexts.

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[151] A.H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review* 50 (1943): p. 370–96. See p. 375; this is the case even if by 'securing' a step, we mean partial, percent-wise 'securing': "*For instance, if I may assign arbitrary figures for the sake of illustration, it is as if the average citizen is satisfied perhaps 85 per cent in his [sic] physiological needs, 70 per cent in his safety needs, 50 per cent in his love needs, 40 per cent in his self-esteem needs, and 10 per cent in this self-actualization needs*" (p. 388–9).

[152] Which, undoubtedly, admits of some exceptions. See p. 386–9.

[153] P. 370. More precisely, we're all unconscious beings, but unconscious motivators are primarily rooted in biology: see p. 373–4.

People in these situations aren't devoid of ethics, art, and spirituality. We're ethical beings, always responding to our situation, at times better than others. If we steal food because we're starving, there's a particular context within which that theft takes place.

Our ethicality, our artistry, our spirituality — these aren't superficial qualities added to base biology; rather, they well up from our deepest recesses. They're fundamental ways of understanding our situation: hunger, for instance. They're ever-present modes of being-in-the-world, but not in the way we tend to think them: not as universalist Kantian or utilitarian ethics, or detached aesthetics, or pious spiritual pomp and circumstance. But, rather, as an opening to ethics (to response), an opening to artistry (to alternate response; a creative reassembling of meaning-arrangements in alternate displays), an opening to spirituality (to 'passive' response; swept up in meaningful arrangements, noticing the reverberating, resonating of things deeply rooted in their web of relations).[154]

The type of claim in Maslow's hierarchy is reductionist. It insists on its meaning above all others and has real consequences, in, for example, how structural adjustment plans are conceived. The ground's prepared for further colonial activity.

'But you haven't foreclosed on the universality of claims that purport to reach the real basis of things; you've merely argued against the particular claim of Maslow's hierarchy.'

Reductionism, in this kind of case—i.e., 'now we've found the real basis'—creates a world in which a distinction's made across the board between reality and illusion, after which zealous champions of reality emerge. — As a particular way of responding to things, it's one that denies and flattens the phenomena.

2.51 The is more primordial than Being. – That's not quite right. Rather, what the gestures to, or better, *how* the gestures is more primordial than Being.

Heidegger opens our thinking to our openness to Being. He shows how dominant modes of thought emerged from decisions made by the Presocratics in differentiating Being and beings. This originary difference subsequently became concealed.[155] For Heidegger, there's a quasi-teleological playing out of possibilities until we arrive at the culmination of metaphysics in Nietzsche, where metaphysics is understood by Heidegger as the gradual forgetting of Being and taking Being as *a* being: Being conceals and then reveals itself in various obscured aspects as this or that being through various epochs.

[154] None of this denies the importance of physiological and security needs.
[155] For instance, in how we understand truth and essences. See Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 50–1, 73; Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, trans. J. Glenn Gray (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2004), p. 152, 222–4, 227, 242; Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," p. 153.

For Heidegger, then, the meaning of the question of Being—the task for which *Being and Time* is a preparation, and the task that follows him throughout his life—needs to be revived or uncovered. This is done through a *destruktion* of metaphysics[156] to reveal the unthought in it: the originary difference that becomes concealed as it positivizes itself (the difference collapses and Being becomes a being).

For numerous reasons, in *Being and Time*, the path towards the question of Being works through rethinking what the being of humans is: i.e., *Dasein*, that is, being-in-the-world.[157] *Da-sein*, there-being, is the clearing,[158] the opening to and of world, to and of Being. This, for Heidegger, is reserved exclusively for humans. Thus, for Heidegger, *Dasein* leaps into beings and forgets the more primordial question of Being, yet in engaging with and turning towards beings, we already have an implicit understanding of Being.[159]

When Heidegger speaks of the importance of returning to the question of the meaning of Being, he does so within a particular, historical tradition. The thinking of Being derives its sense from within this tradition. This doesn't mean it's insular to that tradition, but it means that the way Being is thought only make sense in the context of that tradition: for example, one first needs to think of beings as beings; i.e., things need to have revealed themselves *as* beings. Heidegger's intervention's important: he opens the Western tradition in many key ways, but this doesn't mean that, outside the tradition, thinking through Being is necessary, advisable, or even necessarily possible. To insist on the thought of Being as the most 'real' thought, the most basic, is to reassert a colonial logic. There's no superiority in thinking the question of Being, for it emerges as a particular response to a particular set of problems.

We can create signs to remind or indicate to ourselves that the thought of Being emerges from within our tradition. One way to do this (which isn't why Heidegger did it) may be to cross out Being: Being. This gesture, however, is insufficient: not only because of the confusion over my use versus Heidegger's use, but also and relatedly because with time such signs become forgotten and altered. There's no monument that can concretize its own meaning: there's no letter that can guarantee the delivery of a set meaning. We cannot guarantee or secure transmission of an insight.

– It's part of our ethical response to heed an insight, an utterance, in the most responsive way we can.

Heidegger works through the hermeneutic circle in discussing Being. This circle describes the movement of understanding: Heidegger shows how the understanding of any given thing's bound up with our understanding of its being, the world in which it is, *Dasein*, and Being ('in general') (§2.4–2.5); our understanding circles through relational points of

[156] Heidegger, *B&T*, 19–27/41–9.
[157] ibid, 191/235.
[158] ibid, 132–3/171; Heidegger, "Letter on 'Humanism'," p. 248.
[159] Heidegger, *B&T*, 5/25.

understanding. Put otherwise: "*Things bear world. World grants things*"[160] (§2.5). The mutual openness of world and things passes through our understanding of *Dasein*, the being that we ourselves are (in terms of our openness to beings and how such an openness gets construed in history, tradition, projects, etc.). In other words, how we understand Being—how Being is revealed to us—is bound up with how we understand beings, world, and ourselves, where 'understanding' is never purely intellectual, but has to do with how we are in the world. We're 'within' a relational nexus (or rather: we *are* a relational nexus) that's always revealing its own dynamic shifts, tensions, and stops and starts. – The is an expedient I've used to indicate, in part, this hermeneutic ontology.

So, how is the more primordial than Being? For it seems as though the cube (because the cube *is*, i.e., it *is* in *being*) must be bound up within the relational nexus of the meaning of Being, i.e., due to the hermeneutic circle, *within* our world.

The cube shares a structure with metaphor. Metaphors (§2.2) bring two (or more) things together on the hinge of what is common before releasing each to their own context, prioritizing neither similarity nor difference. This relational, resonant, and respectful process is at the heart of the . Not only is the cube itself, as used throughout my writing here, a metaphor, but it also *shows* the metaphoric relation (§2.47): the two contexts, the two projections, are together and yet distinct. —— This is the relation at the heart of Being.

Being, which includes us, 'is' a dynamic process of shifting and transformation. Beings relate to each other metaphorically: when beings encounter, they come together on the hinge of what is common between them: this is a kind of dialogue. The leaf that falls to the ground is both open and closed to the wind, to the ground, to the one who sees it.

Furthermore, Being opens in different ways, in and as different worlds: as different *Beings*. The difference at the heart of Being isn't only between being and being, or Being and beings, it's primarily between Being and Being. Being 'is' and 'is not' itself. Being metaphorizes itself, but let's say that it *metaphorically 'is' itself*: that is, the disclosure happens differently everywhere in a 'fundamentally' non-'fundamental,' divergent sense—leaving space or room for encounters—and, *for us*, this disclosure reveals itself as 'Being.'

Thus, the cube is bound up within a world, within a disclosure of Being. Yet, it shows that Being ought to be thought by way of, is characterized as, and is always already subsumed entirely by *metaphoric ontology*. The 'structure' (the 'release') of Being is metaphoric.

And yet, Being is not the fundament. 'Being' is how—what shall we call it – the mystery? the disclosure?—the disclosure discloses itself. When I say that it "metaphorically 'is' itself,"

[160] Heidegger, "Language," *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 199.

"is" is a kind of verb: Being metaphorically 'is being, continually' itself. Being 'is' being itself (but not necessarily *as* 'Being'). There's no core, no thing, no singular Being or way of Being, that metaphorizes: there's only metaphorizing. (Which provides another possible justification for the use of 'Being.') Metaphoric events transpire and then there are worlds, one which enables the thought of and arrival to Being; 'Being' is the theorization of this event from within a world.

'Is this all just a game with words? Or are you purporting to describe something that's *real*?' – Words are caught in the same play as other beings, thrown and released, drawn and concealed. – There's no way out. There's no outside. 'It' metaphorizes. 'It' metaphorizes Being, for us.

'You're doing metaphysics!'

— And? I never said I was opposed to this. Actually, I don't think we or anyone can avoid this. The goal's to do metaphysics and philosophy in a way that's more responsive to our experience, and that gives more credence to our actual experience of things and world. (And what do you mean by 'metaphysics,' anyway?)

Let's put it this way. Every throw of Being, every disclosure of Being, reveals different relations.[161] They all fit, just so. This is metaphoric ontology: one sees things *this* way, or one sees them *that* way. Both fit the lines. (Which means both fit in an analogous way; which also means both miss fitting the lines — both show a similar kind of slack.)

But let's return briefly to the Heideggerian issue of the human exclusivity of world and Being. While Heidegger gestures to some of the issues I am above, he doesn't go as far. Not only regarding the metaphoricity of Being, but also the extent of worlds (e.g., non-human animals, plants, stones, and so on): for him, only *Dasein*, only humans, open to world. This possibility is, despite Heidegger's provisos,[162] closed to non-human animals (and certainly to stones).

Heidegger, who thought humans and much more so profoundly, was lacking in his thinking of animals. This isn't a problem merely at the edges of his, and our, thought, but permeates it through and through, for not only is his overt thematic treatment of non-human animals poor, but also his thinking of humans needs revision. If neither world, language, nor meaning are limited to humans, if Being 'is' not exclusively open to and for humans, if so many of his concepts aren't restricted to humans (which doesn't entail that they apply in

[161] As always, I speak from within my world. Here, I speak of other throws and disclosures of 'Being,' which shows how I'm still using the vocabulary of 'Being.' *For us*, worlds appear as other disclosures of Being. This is, like all ways, a provisional, situated way of speaking.
[162] Heidegger, *FCM*, e.g., p. 194, 211.

the *same* way to all others as well), then much needs rethinking. For his key terms can no longer be framed in a binary way: 'on' for humans, 'off' for non-human animals.

We need to rethink those sites where Heidegger privileges humans, including, for example: the special relation between *Dasein* and Being; the restriction of language to *Dasein*; the restriction of being-with to other *Dasein*; understanding, interpretation, and attunement as exclusive to *Dasein*. We need to rethink these terms as they apply to non-human animals or plants: for example, we'd say being-with (being structurally open to other beings) is an ontological structure belonging to many beings. In short, a metaphoric ontology requires us to refine, diversify, and rethink Heidegger's key terms.

2.52 To let metaphoric ontology affect our customary metaphysical habits requires that we be careful with how we understand the metaphoric structure of worlds.

For Zwicky, reductionism's partially the impulse and attempt to arrest the movement of a metaphor; instead of allowing two contexts to meet before being released each to each, reductionism tries to pin down what is common between the two contexts: it tries to hypostatize what is common and treat it as "*basic metaphysical* stuff."[163] Reductionism tries to prioritize similarity over difference, which it takes as sameness or identity.

But the hinge (of what is common between two contexts) is not itself a thing: rather, it's a metaphor. This has several implications. First, we're adopting a reductionist framework if we insist that the cube's just a series of lines that creates an illusion of projection; if we insist on the priority of what the two projections have in common, we reduce the phenomena to similarity and deny difference. We thus guarantee and ground sameness and identity by neglecting the true phenomenal appearance, for the cube's actually *both* of its projections.

Second, the cube itself is taken metaphorically to gesture to the way that Being 'is' disclosed: Being opens in different ways, just as the cube projects in two ways. Yet, when I claimed above that Being itself metaphorizes itself, it's reductionist to take Being as a basic metaphysical 'thing.' How Being 'is' is analogous to the hinge: because the hinge is a metaphor and Being 'is' the hinge, we should say that there 'is' no Being. There's *no* fundamental Being disclosed in different ways. Rather, there's '*fundamentally*' difference and divergence. Within every 'is' whispers an 'is not.' – There are different disclosures disclosing themselves. Disclosures disclose other disclosures, but never reconcile. There is no one.

To approach this problem from a different angle, let's take a tree as an example. This tree can be approached in many ways. It shows different aspects to a biologist in the woods than to a physicist. A gardener sees it differently. And yet, these ways of approaching it are

[163] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH80. 'Hypostatization' also comes from Zwicky: e.g., see *W&M*, LH62.

unified in its basic sense for us. However, it could also be encountered by someone in another world as an abode for spirits.

The reductionist move, which flattens the phenomena of the cube and takes it as a series of lines, would be to take the tree's similarity across worlds as indicative of a sameness. Instead, I'm taking 'this tree' as phenomenally appearing within different disclosures without grounding it in an objective, universal fundament. In fact, its appearing in one world is internally related to its appearing in other worlds. In other words, this tree could not *be* if it weren't also the possibility of being taken up differently. It 'is' and 'is not' 'this tree.'

The metaphoric structure of things isn't ontic, for I'm gesturing to how a being flashes into different ontologies—divergent Beings—which themselves flash out over all beings. In these different worlds, the thingness of the thing—e.g., that it *is* a tree—is up for grabs; it need not be individuated/ontologized *as* a thing in the way it is in our world (§2.5).

Instead of seeking an *essence* to the thing—a point at which to arrest all movement—we should rather see that the tree *gives* aspects differently and relationally in different disclosures and thus becomes different: for, in a disclosure, the tree *is* the aspects given. Several wholes occupy—not the *same* space—space in common, temporarily (§2.10).[164]

A more sensitive type and style of response would seek not to identify or determine the foundations of things or worlds (e.g., what they *really* are), but would *attend* to things, to fit or resonate with the thing in question.

Belonging-together in a gathering (§2.45) also includes violence: aspects must be ignored or shorn off to enable the hanging-together of things; or, to put it more precisely, aspects of things must be concealed for similarities to be revealed. Metaphoric ontology speaks to the similarity and reverberations amongst things, but holds tight to their difference: to collapse difference is to enact a different kind of violence, borne from inattentiveness.

Things *always* resist their gathering, the violence of gathering: this is why the lines are always slack; this is why we can be pierced by a *thisness*. Things call out to us, plead with us, to accept the display of other aspects. Attentiveness is to see that our concepts, our language, our perceptions and the gathering itself, aren't perfect — and could never be. — There are cracks through which all things bleed.

— — Any explanation's held in place by its context of relations, which includes this explanation.
— I want the snake to eat its tail. It cannot.

[164] Understanding a successful metaphor (a key component for Zwicky of wisdom) "*has to do with the grasp of wholes that occupy the same space, yet are different*"; *W&M*, LH93. However, even the spaces that each disclosure discloses aren't the *same*, but are divergent while sharing commonalities.

2.53 ‘How can there be better or worse ways of being responsive?’

What could we mean by ‘progress’?
‘To approach the truth of the situation. To get closer to how we should be.’
Well, in that case, I accept progress since it seems to align with Zwicky’s definition of truth (§2.14): *“the asymptotic limit of sensitive attempts to be responsible to our actual experience of the world.”*[165] Yet, I also accept that we don’t all have the same experience of the world.
‘But there’s that relativism again. ‘Progress’ should capture a sense of movement and gain: it speaks to moving along a particular, better path.’
Yes, progress requires a criterion.
‘And the criterion’s technological advance, scientific discovery, or some such thing! You can’t, in good faith, think that people who didn’t even invent the wheel, for instance, are as advanced as us.’
— But what, really, is the wheel *for*?

Criteria—for ‘progress,’ arguments, and so on—don’t extend outside their context and disclosure.

— — ‘If this is what you think, how could there be better and worse? How can your account differentiate between practices from other disclosures? For it’s not simply that facts are in dispute; the basis for discussion isn’t agreed upon! So, someone could come back and say that they pay attention to the phenomena in exactly the way you’ve described (e.g., §2.49): it’s just a matter of a different way of seeing the world, and their way’s just as legitimate as the other. How then can you differentiate? – What you need in order to distinguish is precisely what you’ve denied yourself: a criterion outside of various disclosures. Or, at least, a criterion from within a disclosure that can mediate other disclosures.’

There’s an openness of encounter before any encounter. This is an opening from my being to other beings: being-with. This prior openness is a deep affirmation, a deep resonance between my being and others. It’s an affirmation because it says ‘Yes’ to come what may: my being turns openly, affirmatively and in acknowledgement, towards all possible others.

From this openness, I enact a subsequent choice (though it may not be conscious but merely a reaction): I open and affirm it *again*, or I close off and try to deny it; the latter is *ressentiment*.

There is, first, a prior openness (in general); second, a response/reaction (to a particular situation); and, third, an openness to responding to our very responsiveness and the thing in question. Belonging to any responsiveness is a prior responding. We, therefore, have the opportunity to triply affirm phenomena. The second and third layers are part of the

[165] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH102.

antagonism of encounter: the opening/closing is a texture of various façades and feints, as things relate to other things. *Ressentiment*, too, is a way to relate, but by apparent denial (i.e., yet by secret affirmation, along byways traced out by Nietzsche[166]).

Things can demand attention, and they can demand how that attention is to take form. From one perspective, this demand is antagonistic: the thing exploits a rupture in you to call to your attention. If you sense the call, you can either turn to or away from it: you respect or slight it. But, let's disambiguate a term, for either way, you respect it. You respect the call insofar as you're an opening to it and it's able to appear; then, you respect it further (do it honour, so to speak) by turning towards it, or you slight it by turning away (your choice to respect it or not comes from a prior call).

All of this gestures to a way to evaluate claims. — Are they true to one's experience? – Do they triply affirm, triply respect, the phenomena? While we must slight some phenomena, we can do so respectfully. – Respect: not simply welcoming a guest in, but as the guest who needs to be welcomed in. One's both guest and host. – The house of being's not in us and not dependent on us: rather, we offer being(s) a kind of house: a place to gather. This doesn't mean they need us; we offer a crack through which they shine. – Likewise, things gather us — they offer a place for us to be gathered and shine. Being's a multivariate fractured shining that doesn't depend on us. It traverses beings in resonant relations.

Therefore, a general ethical stance is one of respect. For one couldn't be without the world: the world and its things give a place to be.

None of this means that one must or should simply accept everything. Some things don't offer fruitful resonance. Some things or practices don't seem to fit. Some responses aren't respectful. These call on us to be in ways that are limiting.

Massive destruction's not respectful. And particular ways of being occlude other ways; they deny them (i.e., they don't allow them to be, and deny that they even could exist). To think that your way's the only right way is to deny phenomena. To think that technological-capitalistic thinking can resolve our problems is to deny phenomena and perpetrate mass destruction: it occludes resonances and the possibilities of re-finding them. Yes, all ways occlude others—necessarily—but it's a question of greater or lesser violence, and the style of our respect and response. A good balance, as Zwicky puts it, is to "*allow communities of non-humans to shape us at least as much or more than we shape them.*"[167] Thus, we should be wary of *ressentiment* and metaphysics that overlook phenomena or resonant ecologies.

— But does this principle of respect reach outside all disclosures? ——— It *is* the basis of disclosures themselves. *How* it's understood is part of a disclosure. It's part of disclosures in that any disclosure involves openness and a way of adhering. — That's respect.

[166] Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, p. 84–9.
[167] Jan Zwicky, "Wilderness and Agriculture," in *The Eye in the Thicket*, ed. Seán Virgo (Saskatoon: Thistledown Press, 2002), p. 187–97: see p. 193–4.

2.54 Meditation on one's death can open one to the worldness of one's world: i.e., to possibilities as possibilities. It ruptures one's immersion in one's world (§2.4), for it makes various projects and their relations, including the for-the-sake-of-which, conspicuous. New possibilities, including possibilities of respectful response, become possible. It's not only humans who reflect on or encounter their own or another's death, nor do humans encounter death *as such* (since through any attempt, we're still there, surviving any such fantasy; §2.38). Nonetheless, meditation on one's death is transformative.

Death illuminates that being alive's an opening, a clearing, as thin as a knife's edge, such that experience is possible as it is, for us.

Death isn't outside of life; it permeates it in our experience of loss (with every choice, we lose possibilities), so that we will say, "*Life will have been so short*."[168] For death's etched into the structure of experience, marked in advance by irreplaceable loss. Each entity—in particular, those we love most[169]—traces its loss.

Nothing's ever fully present for we're all relationally, constitutively, and temporally distended: we're constituted by relations (present and absent), differential from all other things (for things are what they are through not being all others), in time (things are revealed in perspective through time). – This also means that nothing's ever fully absent. For we house the absent—wandering spirits—in one way or another.

Derrida and Wittgenstein are right: each death is the end of a world, of the world, each time.[170] Worlds aren't individualistic, though they're housed in individuals. The death of the individual isn't the death of the world, but it can feel that way: it's the death of a unique *site* of world.

No death's an *example* of death; just like no existence is an *example* of a situation of world. Death's the foreclosing of a clearing that was a *particular* clearing: *this* clearing's gone.

We can think towards our own death. Here, we're struck. Struck by the incomprehensibility of nothingness. (One imagines it black, but death's not closing one's eyes.) It 'is' 'nothing.'

But not as negation: 'placed' outside the binary of being/nothing, death removes us from where even nothingness makes sense. Thus, it's outside the binary of negation/affirmation. Death's not that there's nothing there; it's that there's no there at all. – In another sense, death's not negation: for one's being carries on in those left living.

'But why dwell on death? — It makes it hard to get on with things!'

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[168] E.g., Derrida, *The Beast & the Sovereign, Volume II*, p. 51; Derrida, *Aporias*, p 49.
[169] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH56.
[170] Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, p. 95, 107, 115; Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, §6.431, p. 87.

— Maybe that wouldn't be such a bad thing?
We re-evaluate what matters. – It can precipitate a transformation of one's self, a transformation of one's world.

2.55 Just as meditation on death can open transformative possibilities—through reflection on other possibilities for understanding world—so, too, can reflection on other orientations. On ancient Greece, Walter Otto writes: "*Belief in Athena arose from no individual need or individual longing of human life. She is the meaning and actuality of a complete and self-contained world […].*"[171]

In Otto's account of worlds and gods, the role of the Greek gods is to show a way that beings are gathered: they say, "*Look at things like this*":[172] 'this is how things would be if *I* (Artemis, Aphrodite, Hermes) was the sole gatherer.'

But what's equally important is that they're *not* the sole gatherers, not "self-contained," for they're from a larger gathering of Greek gods. Because they show world colourations (§2.21), that trail off into the distance, within the horizon of the Greek gods' world, even if "*each desires to fill, shape, and illumine the whole compass of human existence with his [sic] peculiar spirit,"*[173] they cannot do so.

Homeric gods were never supposed to be the final ones. The Greeks knew the Fates were spinning out the thread of their duration. – The Fates bring temporality into the onto-theological domain: temporality's at its core and has priority.

Thus, the ancient Greek world contained a variety of world-colourations, and, more primordially, unforeseen possibilities, for, because the gods were fated, other gods were possible. The ancient Greek world promised and embraced the downfall and succession of gods by other gods and other world-disclosures.

2.56 There's a polyphony of voices. Things don't merely clamour towards our light; things alight us. We clamour towards mutual co-lighting. If a world's an ocean, it laps on the shore: there are edges upon which it crashes. There are different oceans, different seas; there are eddies, wisps of other worlds. Things say, "*Look at things like this*."[174]

'But why should we accept this picture?'

— "*Look at things like this*."[175]

[171] Otto, *The Homeric Gods*, p. 60.
[172] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH38.
[173] Otto, *The Homeric Gods*, p. 160–1.
[174] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH38.
[175] ibid.

The principle of verification: Yes, statements often should be verifiable. Yet, verifiability, criteria, and methodologies derive their sense from their context. 'There are three ducks there.' Presumably we can check. But if this sentence occurs in a novel? It's not then meaningless. There's a kind of sense-making opened by the novel, and hence a way to see if it is (or could be) the case or not.

But what if we hear, 'There are gods in that tree?' How do we verify it? We ask she who said it; she can give reasons. '*I* don't see any gods there!' What does this tell us about *our* criteria? Is it the case, then, that *her* criteria (which necessarily go beyond her as an individual, for criteria are never confined to one person) are wrong? 'I don't see it!' – But does *she* have a way to verify her claim?

'So, you're painting a picture and then asking us—'*look at things like this*'—to see if the picture resonates as true?'

In a way. Some of the reasons for accepting the picture are within the picture itself. And yet, it isn't a picture or a *representation* of something. It's as though I'm gesturing towards mountain peaks,[176] or holding up a coloured transparency that reveals certain patterns in the things behind it.

– Not that there's anything wrong with the image of painting: it just depends on how we think about it.

2.57 We aren't the bringers of light, the ones who light beings up. The picture's too simplistic: if we enable beings to be the beings they are (for us), then they do the same; that is, as we enable things to appear (e.g., as *created* things, *extended* things, things to which we pay attention, etc.), so too they enable us to appear (e.g., as a privileged being in creation, as one who uses such and such, as one who recognizes or pays attention to such and such, etc.). Furthermore, they enable how we enable them to appear (e.g., beings reveal *themselves* as beings that can be understood as created; etc.). – We're in a Möbius strip, a weave of us, things, and worlds.

All forms of living are mutually co-lit in a similar way: a dog encounters beings with their particular body; so too a cat; so too a sweet pea. Even a stone co-lights other beings through their encounter. There's a co-responsiveness between things. It's not we who bring light, for light comes from multiple sources. — "*In perceiving* this*ness, we respond to having been addressed. (In fact we are addressed all the time, but we don't always notice this.)*"[177]

As we call to beings, so they call to us. We meet—suspended, distended, attended, taken out *and* put back into ourselves—in an analogous way to what Heidegger calls world-projection: "*this occurrence of projection* carries *whoever is projecting* out and away from

[176] Hardy, "Mathematical Proof," p. 18, quoted in Zwicky, *W&M*, RH64. See §2.3.
[177] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH52.

themselves *in a certain way […;] in this being removed […], what occurs is precisely a peculiar* turning toward themselves on the part of whoever is projecting."[178] This reaching out from ourselves, out towards the other and back again, has the structure of metaphor: a crossing-over. So, too, things *metaphorize* towards us: they, too, cross-over.

This crossing-over presupposes a distance; metaphors highlight commonalities by starting from difference and distance. – These metaphoric gestures respect contexts they never fully comprehend.

2.58 We *pay* (or don't *pay*) attention; we're in constant *exchange* with the world around us. – There's a transactional quality in my words.

Mauss initiated a discussion on the gift that was built on by others. The lineage I'm interested in travels through Mauss, Bataille, and Baudrillard. The following quote from Bataille, in the context of discussing and interpreting the northwestern Indigenous potlatch, shows one reading of 'the gift':

"*[The riches—the gift—are given by someone] to his [sic] rival for the purpose of humiliating, challenging and obligating him. The recipient has to erase the humiliation and take up the challenge; he must satisfy the* obligation *that was contracted by accepting. He can only reply, a short time later, by means of a new potlatch, more generous than the first: He must pay back with interest.*"[179]

In this lineage, the gift's a *challenge* that bestows an *obligation* to *reciprocate* (i.e., to offer a counter-gift) *after a time interval* and *with interest*. For Baudrillard, what makes the general political economy (the system of value; capitalism) so powerful is that it maintains unilateral control over giving (e.g., the giving of labour, wages, messages in the media, etc.)[180] through prevention of the return of a counter-gift, and thus prevention of an easing of one's indebtedness: i.e., the general political economy's condition is the active and ongoing exclusion of symbolic exchange (i.e., the form or logic of the gift).[181]

But, why should we accept the thesis on the gift? These thinkers have found a pervasive subterranean force that can be noticed. Socially and professionally, our lives are structured by how we respond to others, when, with what kind of rhythm, and so on. The one who doesn't reciprocate, who denies the mounting symbolic pressure, is the miser. When you buy a round of drinks or host a dinner party, you express power. Commercialized examples of holidays (e.g., Christmas) are closer to an exchange from the general political economy. But even here, stress and tension emerge from the factors we must weigh. Now think of

[178] Heidegger, *FCM*, p. 363. See p. 362–5.
[179] Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share: Volume I*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 2007), p. 67–8; Bataille's emphasis.
[180] Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, trans. Iain Hamilton Grant (California: Sage Publications Inc., 1995), p. 36–7.
[181] Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, p. 36. For an example, see Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, trans. Charles Levin (USA: Telos Press Ltd., 1981), p. 128.

the one who won't allow you to reciprocate – who treats you but won't allow you to return the favour. Power's expressed not only by taking, but by giving: a demonstration of excess and superfluity.

What makes dramatic narratives good is when they play out these relations of power inherent in giving: the challenge, the duel, the insult, but also the compliment, the display of affection, the extended hand, the smile, the gift, the present.[182] Saving face is to respond to the gift appropriately in the right tempo. Gestures *demand* response, and there are many strategies for dealing with the necessity for response (and I think paying back with interest is only one strategy). But, in this game, one cannot not respond: this itself is a response, and involves its own stakes.

What I'd like to suggest is that the gift-form permeates not only human interaction, but responses of all kinds. Granted, the game we play with non-human animals is often opaque, but this is also true when played with humans, just to a different degree and in a different way. We respond to beings of all kinds all the time: we cannot help but respond.

Response is wrapped up in the logic of the gift: we have strategies to deal with how things appear to us and how to respond to them. *Ontological attention*[183] is a counter-gift, a return of the gift presented by the thing present to us: we stand face-to-face with the thing. (Slighting's a mode of response as well.)

'But you seem to be ascribing agency to beings of all kinds!'

The point's not that I'm positing some agent in or behind things; I'm claiming that beings demand response, whether they're conscious or not. I'm proposing a different way of thinking about the gift-logic, for we're always in the game of response and responsibility. This is another way of saying that things call to us and we must respond.

We can be better or worse at responding to things. We can maintain or destroy relations through our choice of response, and because we're made up of our relations (§2.20), how we choose to foster or neglect these speaks to who we are, who we want to be, and how our world is.

— How we are with things reveals our character (§2.9).

2.59 Is the world the totality of relations? In some ways, yes. So, if we counted all the relations, we'd have a picture of the world? – Well, but do you think that, even if it could be done (an infinite task), your own stance in counting relations wouldn't enter the picture? The picture of the world as totality of relations is *itself* something to which we'd relate.

[182] Marcel Mauss, "Gift, Gift," in *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity*, ed. Alan D. Schrift, trans. Koen Decoster (New York: Routledge, 1997): p. 28–32, wherein he shows the etymological connection in the word 'gift' between 'present' and 'poison.'
[183] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH52, LH55, LH 57–8, LH100.

Problems arise when you take a relation as a thing. First, you purport to extract yourself from the picture; you ossify and solidify an ongoing process of negotiation and redefinition. You do the former insofar as you treat the relation as a thing over and against yourself without consideration of your inextricable relatedness to this relation. Relations cannot simply be catalogued because such a catalogue itself creates new relations: no catalogue can catalogue itself and the new relations it creates.

Second, if the world's the totality of relations, it couldn't be that if you somehow stepped back far enough you could see this totality, even in principle. Relations aren't added to one another like sticks in a pile.

If a world's a totality of relations, this totality fades into other totalities (other worlds), none ever fully total, for every totality's partially understandable from the perspective of another. There's no totality for all 'totalities' (§2.35).

An enworlded being relates to things external to their world; they relate to wisps of worlds like punctures in their world. Following a wisp is 'going through' a puncture.

A world's a partial totality of relations, bleeding into other partial totalities. A world's a *whole*, interacting and interlocking with other wholes. It's a mesh of relations, enmeshed with others.

2.60 It's wrong to conceptualize a thing as just 'sitting there.' This is the case for several reasons.

Things are always part of a larger temporal situation. The clock on my mantle's always 'active,' gesturing beyond itself, flinging one away from it back to the time reckoned for various tasks. The stone's trodden over as part of the path, enticing one along this route. That is, things are ready-to-hand before present-at-hand, the latter of which is a modification of the former (§2.4). This means that we encounter things from out of our thrown, projective, temporal world.

Things are never just 'sitting there' because they're always part of various throws, various worlds; because all worlds and all things are relational (§2.59) and differential (§2.54), and because relations are always changing, things, too, are never inert. A stone resting on the path's there for other lifeforms. Each of these encounter the stone from out of their thrown, projective, temporal world.

For itself, this stone's withstanding, holding itself open to encountering other beings, always already open to this encounter and this attempted withstanding (§2.43). Even without the possibility of experience, a stone opens temporally (§2.28) to come what may (i.e., possibilities) and to its own holding of its past. It finds itself in the midst of beings, be

they impactable or not (§2.43). Therefore, the stone, too, opens its own thrown, projective, temporal world. This stone's in its own throw.

As its own throw, this stone also throws itself into other worlds. Things never just 'sit there' because they actively implicate themselves into the worlds of others. They call out. Thus, not only are things taken up projectively, things also give themselves projectively: i.e., they're thrown in a world and throw themselves into worlds. Things intrude upon others.

Things gesture across worlds. In this way, they're implicated in a meshwork of meaning, stretching through various worlds.

Therefore, beings are actively and relationally involved with others, and are actively involved in withstanding and maintaining themselves. They can only be taken as just 'sitting there' if we do them violence and cut them off from their modes of being.

2.61 Wisps of world puncture our world (§2.59). We never leave our world, but we sense possibilities of gestalt shifts and reorientation of the way we see and do things.

Each thing shows or suggests how things would be or are for them from their 'perspective.' Everything's related to everything else: this means that any thing can take on a 'central' role — we sense how it would be for all things to be oriented and gathered around *this*.

The sense that things have for us emerges from an attempted reconciliation of phenomena (§2.52). This reconciliation's attempted because, from out of our being, we gather things together: i.e., we're enworlded. We're universalizing-generalizing beings. But particularities, different aspects, and wisps of worlds poke through.

2.62 'It almost seems as though, elsewhere in this text and despite your saying just now that we're universalizing-generalizing beings, you deny the existence of universals. But, surely, this can't be right. For example, kinaesthetic structure applies to people across cultures. Human bodies can only do so much: they have a range of motion. Sure, there may be exceptions, but the point is that there's a general *range* within which possibilities are housed: this range is universal. So, if you're adverse to universals as necessary and sufficient conditions, why not think of them as describing *ranges* of possibilities?'

Let's discuss bodily activity through examining *tai chi*. It may be said that *tai chi*, as a practice, applies universally to all human bodies. In response, I claim that what we call 'the universal' rides the wave of what is common (in this case, between human bodies — but, of course, not *all* human bodies). To get to this 'universal,' a particular person must express and figure it out for themselves in accordance with *tai chi* principles. — And yet, the 'universal' cannot ever really be said.

'Are you suggesting there's some kind of an enactive universalism that cannot be expressed? Is language the problem?'

— No. It's not language. Rather, the 'problem' (not a problem at all, really) has to do with the disclosure we inhabit, which is always a particular disclosure. Any universal's rooted within a particular disclosure, thus a particular relational web and a particular metaphysics. Universals gain their sense from this metaphysical, relational, differential context. Therefore, universals are universally true within particular disclosures.

'But that's gibberish! It's universally true that all humans have hearts.'

Let's suppose it is (– maybe we should say all humans have heart-like organs or attachments? — but the thrust of my point isn't that universal statements admit of exceptions). There's nothing necessitating that we think in these terms: 'human,' 'heart.'

'So, is your qualm with delineations? That we could think of humans as not restricted to skin, for instance, i.e., the border problem?'

No. It's not that simple.
It helps to see that concepts aren't just things in our heads that we lay over top of things. They're enactive: 'out there,' real, enmeshed with things (§2.44). – Thus, we're always in part also responding to concepts.

'But if you bring me a cadaver, set it down, I can cut it open and *show* you that there's a heart inside. I can repeat this with several different bodies. We'll all agree that all humans have hearts!'

Just because something's easy to agree with doesn't make it universally true; neither truth nor universals are determined solely by intersubjective agreement. Some statements may very well be easier to reach agreement on, and they may very well be true. But communication—reaching out across a gap—is never guaranteed and is never the conveyance of a nugget or some kind of core: for every truth, statement, aspect, or thing can and will be placed in different contexts and undergo particular shifts and changes, inextricably.

'Nonetheless, there's *a thing* (e.g., a human) *there,* right? There's an *X* that I don't create and that others can encounter.'

Yes. But this 'X' almost cannot be said. For *any* articulation we give, *any* perception we have, is contextual, relational, and differential. (Any *pre*- or *non*-articulation is *also* contextual and conceptual: in fact, concepts are 'pre-conceptual,' in the sense that they're implicit in our perception and experience.) '*But* there *is* a thing *here*.' – A thing here? But we needn't think in terms of things in this way.

'There's an X here' — you're already conceptualizing: you cannot help but do so. 'But there's *something* there!' — Yes.

‘So, all humans have hearts?’ In a sense. But look at the grammar. (Look at grammar as though it were a symptom: not in the sense that it grounds a real condition, but in that it’s linked with a gathering of being.) ‘All humans have hearts.’ – Why these delimitations? Why this grammatical structure? Why ‘have’? Why these concepts and why *this* way of looking at things? — Or, rather, why take *this* way as indicative of *the* way?

This addresses the second point: why we shouldn’t think of universals as connected with ranges of possibilities. – A range, or fuzziness, doesn’t change the fact that such a universal’s universal within a given context, within a given disclosure.

We’re universalizing-generalizing beings. — This means that we ‘universalize,’ or generalize, always within particular contexts. – Universalizing in this sense takes on different colourations, where any universals ride the wave of what is common between particularities. For example, the concept of the colour red is a particular concept that’s housed within particular disclosures, wrapped up in relationally differential, metaphysical webs (e.g., what’s a colour, what’s delineation, how does colour interact with things, etc.); it’s also a particular concept for each person who has it, for it’s derived from a finite engagement with experiences of red.

Our world makes particular expressions of universalizing-generalizing possible: we’re beings who see what is common between particularities and contexts; it’s in our world that these cohere into a particular gathering of the whole. Generalization’s open to different degrees of reductionism.

There are no claims that are always true everywhere. Not only because of changing conditions, borderline cases, and so on, but because of the different (and changing) worlds within which they appear.

‘But — *why* are there different disclosures?’

This is an interesting question. Perhaps there are different disclosures because we have different interactions with different kinds of beings from different points of view with our respective and responsive bodily being. — To encounter an other—to encounter any thing at all—there must already be this difference. — But, then again, why *shouldn’t* we think there’d be different disclosures? Why start from the assumption of sameness?

Does this mean that phenomena such as globalization (technologization, capitalism, the dominance of a small number of languages, etc.) indicate we’re approaching a homogenization point of contexts, cultures, and hence disclosures? – No. While we’re approaching homogenizations, contexts are always divergent and particular. – Let’s not fall prey to hypostatization.

2.63 A tree *shows* how it is with it in its particularity: *Here I am*, here is how things are right now. This can penetrate through any particular universalizing we try to do.

A particular thing shows its particularity, its *this*ness which, suggestively, opens onto a wisp of world: "*Its* this*ness, then, cannot be fully articulable since any such articulation would require the articulation of a* complete *context, which in all cases is the world.*"[184]

"This*ness is the experience of a distinct thing in such a way that the resonant structure of the world sounds through it.*

"*Each* this *focusses that resonant structure in a distinct way. But the structure so focussed is—of course—always the same. There is only one world.*"[185]

The complete context for a *this* is a constellation, ringing out from *this*, reverberating in everything else: it shows a particular way that all things can be gathered. Granted, this gathering may reflect something about the one struck by the *this*ness (i.e., how, *for me*, things come together around *this*), but it *may* offer insight into how things come together *for this*. We may *start* to see how things are drawn in and push out from *this*.

But, hold on — how is there only one world? Doesn't this go against what I've been claiming? Yes, and no.[186] There's one world in the sense that while there are different worlds, they each speak to the whole (each is a flash, encompassing all); they each speak to beings as a whole, for each world gathers things just so.

But it's also not the case that there's one world. I'm proposing a divergent view of truth and worlds. While each world speaks to the whole, other worlds leave traces and punctures that gesture beyond themselves towards other ways that things can be gathered, globally. And no thing has access to beings as a whole except by way of their world.

As we saw, Zwicky writes of a "*resonant structure*."[187] This structure is made possible by gaps between things, the way they're positioned and related in being-together; it's dynamic and transient, for it emerges and dissipates in new arrays. It's also an *internal* structure (§2.47), and doesn't have a centre outside (§1.98), if it has a centre at all. A resonant structure could only be the same so long as the world is the same, and no world stays the same.

2.64 Ontological attention is related to the concept of responsibility, because responsibility—being responsive—is intimately connected with paying attention: *"When we love a thing, we can experience our responsibility toward it as limitless (the size of the world). Responsibility is the trace, in us, of the pressure of the world that is focussed in a*

[184] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH53.
[185] ibid, LH55.
[186] Zwicky's use of "world" isn't the same as mine: see *W&M*, LH85.
[187] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH55, LH117.

this*. That is* how much *it is possible to attend; that is how large complete attention would be."*[188] *"The ontology of* this*ness, of ontological attention and address, has the character of metaphor: its object is, and is not, everything."*[189]

To pay ontological attention to something is to begin to let its way of being course through your veins. You're a host and a guest (§2.53), on the way to becoming a lover of a thing: the horse rider's a lover of horses, the pilot's a lover of planes, the poet's a lover of language — hoofs, clouds, words coursing through our veins. To love is to see things differently, to let yourself be changed by the thing you love: the horse rider becomes horse, the pilot becomes plane, the poet becomes language. At the same time, the horse becomes rider, the plane becomes pilot, and language becomes poet.

In all these exchanges, there are questions of violence, justice, and betrayal, for each becoming is violent, unjust, and betrays oneself and others—as is each non-becoming (though in different ways)—because no response can meet the full responsibility, the full attention, any particular demands, which betrays the other and oneself for we, too, are particularities.

To pay ontological attention to something is to pay tribute to it; one can pay tribute poorly or well.

2.65 'Ontological attention's all fine and good, as is paying attention to particularities, but the world just *is* composed of uniformity and constancy. Earlier, you said: "All space is the same, all time is the same, each atom is an atom. Forces act with uniformity and constancy. All is thrown into a massive indifference, blanketed in 'the same'" (§1.65). – But isn't what you're questioning or criticizing a description of how things *really are* as uncovered by science?'

It seems to me that contemporary physics is increasingly calling into question the idea of spatiotemporal uniformity in areas such as relativity theory, quantum mechanics, and superstring theory. And yet, there's still a dominant or common view that maintains and saves this uniformity: as example, Newtonian physics can be used on most scales with which humans are concerned. And even though space and time have been relativized (i.e., as spacetime) and aren't *absolute*, doesn't mean they aren't *uniform*; spacetime's relative to a perspective/an entity, but for each entity, space and time are uniform. In other words, space and time depend on the frame of reference, yet I encounter them structurally the same way as another does. In this picture, space and time don't really depend on other beings,[190] even while they're relative to each entity.

In general, seeing things under the rubric of uniformity, constancy, and sameness has been highly effective in securing ends we've had. Yet, every description, theory, and fact require

[188] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH57.
[189] ibid, LH55.
[190] Setting aside warping.

a web of support to lend them comprehensibility (§2.29): a fact on its own is no fact at all. A fact needs the world out of which it emerges.

Are there *no other ways* to describe things? Are there no other gestalt shifts that could explain the same phenomena from different metaphysical starting points?

The basic experimental model isolates phenomena from webs of relations to isolate constants and variables so we can determine causes for general phenomena. But what has to be excluded for this? Can we shear enough off any given experimental subject such that we *actually* isolate one variable? Can we shear it of its relations, of its particularity?[191] Are explanations or deductions from an experiment applicable outside the experiment? How could *this* be tested? How's the experiment itself constituting a set of relations that allow phenomena to be a particular way?

I'm not denying that there may be regularities or repeatability in the world. Scientific research emerges from and uncovers facts within a particular disclosure (a world) with particular metaphysically-laden assumptions, yet this doesn't negate the aspects it picks up on (i.e., these aspects cannot, in good faith, simply be denied).

The question, however, is whether we do in experiments what we think we're doing, whether analysis—isolating the smallest 'common denominator,' for instance—is the best way to think of things. What needs to be shorn off to claim 'sameness' or generality? The temptation's a reduction of all to a small palette of the *same* entities: elements. — Yes, we *can* see things this way.

2.66 Relatedly, we need to be careful with the words we use. It's not inconsequential to call a tree lumber or timber.[192] These aren't just ways of speaking. They show how things are revealed to us. And yet, prior to and enabling such interpretations is when we call a tree a tree, where variations are mere deviations from the basis of 'tree.' A tree is a tree is a tree; each and every tree's a tree. A general fungibility and indifference reigns. Responsibility involves attentiveness to words.

Concepts can be disrupted by paying attention to phenomena. They're ruptured by a thing's calling, which reveals a new conceptualness.

We need responsive ways of speaking, attending, comporting, acting, practicing, and responding. Otherwise, our comportment may preclude a deeper relationality with things.

2.67 To agree to the terms then subsequently engage in negotiation belongs to what Rancière calls the *police*. *Politics*, on the other hand, is the disruption of the established circulation and order of value, exchange, and aesthetics.[193] This circulation allows for the

[191] Is every atom of a given element *the same*?
[192] Or humans human resources or human capital.
[193] Rancière, *Dis-agreement*, p. 28–31.

smooth operation of the police order which says, "*there is nothing to see here.*"[194] Politics disrupts the realm of the sensible (§2.24) and allows things to *appear* other than they have.

To agree that trees are resources, timber, lumber, and product is to already have agreed to too much. Trees can grab us, capture our attention, and reorient our conceptions. Attentive to this possibility, our words can disrupt the realm of the sensible for others. This disruption of the realm of the sensible doesn't always begin with, nor is it restricted to, humans. — The world disrupts the world.

In this auto-disruption, there are two (or more) worlds in one. *Auto*-disruption is always *hetero*-disruption.

Why not accept that truths and worlds can be reconciled or synthesized in a grand vision of truth? Even if there are regional contexts for truths, why not accept that they can be lain just so and fit together like a puzzle?

Because this view isn't consonant with phenomena. It reconciles difference by over-laying it with identity.[195] It presupposes it can come to a set of objective or meta terms of truth or agreement. – But the challenge that someone like Rancière puts forth is that politics precisely involves such terms. To assume that we can come to a consensus on terms is to already have excluded or denied politics, divergent ontologies, and hence rupture.

'But why not think that through discussion, familiarization, and so on, we could come to a reconciliation of divergent ontologies? Perhaps they describe the world differently, starting from different premises, but couldn't we still piece them all together: e.g., we think that X is Y, they think X is Z, and both views are acceptable.'

So, a kind of tolerance, multicultural view? Yes, this is one way to respond. But we need to be careful for the issue is that this response often implicitly understands cultures, through individuals, to host *beliefs* or *interpretations* (which individuals 'have' in their heads and which lead to the enactment of customs and behaviours) that they use to understand reality, which we all agree is there: material that's atomistic, hard and solid, and so on. In other words, the picture's that we lay different interpretations over the same reality. This picture seems to legitimate other views, but actually only sees them as legitimate within the framework of reality it proposes and thus as beliefs or interpretations. However, such a picture is, in its entirety, *an interpretation*, in the sense that it's a way of disclosing reality and a way that reality's disclosed for or from a particular disclosure.

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[194] "*'Move along! There is nothing to see here!' The police says that there is nothing to see on a road, that there is nothing to do but move along. It asserts that the space of circulating is nothing other than the space of circulation. Politics, in contrast, consists in transforming this space of 'moving-along' into a space for the appearance of a subject: i.e., the people, the workers, the citizens: It consists in refiguring the space, of what there is to do there, what is to be seen or named therein.*" (Jacques Rancière, "Ten Theses on Politics," par. 22, p. 9.)

[195] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference & Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), see in particular p. 42–50.

There are better and worse ways to engage with divergent views. It doesn't seem that "*dragging […] understanding in its native costume into technocracy's court*"[196] or "*the isolated gypsy in the Tokyo Stock Exchange being asked to explain herself*"[197] are the most honest or responsible ways. A museum or anthropological mentality that thinks 'document these ways so that we have them before they change' isn't the most responsive way. "We aren't more advanced if we were to somehow catalogue various ways things are seen — if we indexed how the is (or could be) seen" (§1.52).

My divergent view (§2.63) tries to accord better with phenomena. It tries to take seriously that different ways of being are just that: different. There are different ontologies. Yes, we have no choice but to see them from within our own ontology — it's unavoidable that we must do metaphysics. The question's how much we respect difference instead of subsuming it to an identity whose terms we dictate. We undertake an onto-ethical skepticism: where we *know* we haven't fully or adequately responded to the phenomena.

'But how does your view not fall prey to the same criticism you level towards multiculturalism or tolerance? After all, you also bring in metaphysical claims regarding being (as metaphoric, for instance).'

My claims aren't making assertions regarding *the* reality of the situation, but are rather gestures to assert the *multiplicity* of the situation, the multiplicity of disclosures. 'But this is still a picture of the structure of reality!' Yes, in a way, it is and I've expressed concerns about this (e.g., §2.47, §2.52). But how I'm discussing my view's in a particular, situated way, and *how* one discloses something is inextricable from the thing so disclosed.

There's the famous parable that says that when I point, the one who's wise looks not at my finger but at the thing to which I point – but one who looks *at both* is wiser still.

Metaphoric ontology's a way to grapple with problems and questions that've emerged from a particular historical trajectory. It itself is posed as problem and question, not merely as response. Every response questions a question. — There's no final resting place.

2.68 The subjugation of difference by identity carries with it additional subjugation: binaries, where one side's favoured over the other (e.g., male/female). The line of a binary's effected by a disavowal: what characterizes the negative side is essential to the positive side (e.g., emotion over reason is ascribed to females — yet males constantly affirm their superiority through aggressivity).

[196] Tim Lilburn and Jan Zwicky, *Contemplation and Resistance: A Conversation* (Saskatoon: JackPine, 2003), p. 5.
[197] Jan Zwicky, "Dream Logic and the Politics of Interpretation," in *Alkibiades' Love: Essays in Philosophy* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), p. 100.

To illustrate, Derrida shows that what we take as characteristic of writing, which is seen as inferior to the full presence of speech (i.e., the presence of the speaker in distinction from the absence of the writer), is essential to speech: its deferral, iterability, and *différance* (i.e., differential deferral: where each term refers to another term, deriving its sense from how it differs from them and, thus, its presence is always deferred) as indicative of its never having had full presence.[198]

However, Derrida's move, as Lawlor traces out,[199] is not only an attempt at a Nietzschean revaluation of the binary, but, also, to show that the more originary sense of a binary's the 'negative' side: writing[200] is more originary than the split between writing/speech.

This revaluation cuts through attempts to cleanse and maintain the alleged purity of a binary: as example of the latter, non-human animals are sacrificed in countless ways to show their inferiority to humans. They're 'shown' as closed to beings as such, open only to stimuli. The 'evidence,' then, justifies how we treat them. For example, Heidegger marshals evidence without questioning the conditions under which such evidence can become evidence for the matter.[201] *Any* behaviour of non-human animals validates Heidegger's interpretation because his interpretation underlies *all* behaviour (and 'behaviour' for him is always animalistic). He takes all non-human animals as ontologically the same: i.e., what Derrida calls, *l'animot*.[202]

The upshot is that some binaries need to be rethought entirely. After deconstructing a binary, we may be left with what we had before. For example, we may no longer be able to maintain the operation of expelling undesirable qualities from ourself onto the other. Or, in the case of (non-human) animals, if the category's much too broad and violent to track anything in the world, we end up with a variety of distinctions depending on the criteria in question: for example, beings with consciousness or beings that use tools (§2.11).

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[198] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*.

[199] Leonard Lawlor, *This Is Not Sufficient: An Essay on Animality and Human Nature in Derrida* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), in particular p. 28–30.

[200] Or arche-writing. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 56, 69, 71, 86, 97–8, 159, 166–7.

[201] Heidegger, *FCM*, p. 241–6, 250–2.

[202] In French, Derrida's coined word *l'animot* sounds exactly like the word for the plural of animal (*animaux*) yet while singularizing it (*le; l'*): we hear, jarringly, the singularization in the plural. In addition, while *animot* sounds like *animaux*, *l'animot* is spelled differently, so as to combine the words for animal (*animal*) and word (*mot*). Derrida's point is at least threefold. First, it draws our attention to the discrepancy between those in the Western tradition (e.g., Heidegger) who've consistently spoken of 'animals' (as one large category that lacks something in relation to humans) but who mean 'the animal' (and, thus, try to capture diverse kinds of beings from emu to whale under one concept). Second, it implies the suppressed violence and thus pain (*mal*, in French) done through the concept of 'the animal' as loss of singularity (*l'animal*, the singular animal, is subsumed within the pluralization as *l'animaux*, and we thus cover over the suffix *-mal*). Third, it shows that 'the animal' is constructed as a word, a category that we who call ourselves humans have created. Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, p. 23–4, 31, 34, 37, 40–1, 47–8.

Binaries reveal something about our thinking: both conceptually and ontologically, and ethically and in terms of valuation. Reflect on what ours say about us (where the first term's prioritized over the second):

> male/female; white/racialized; cis-/transgender; form/content; form/matter; essence/accident; active/passive; strength/passivity; culture/nature; light/dark; white/black; dry/damp; life/death; straight/bent; human/animal; animal/plant; plant/the inanimate; organic/inorganic.[203]

Binaries reflect our way of thinking. For example, in popular narratives and stories, light triumphs over dark. This is at play in how we think about conflicts, wars, and struggles, and peace, love, community, and inclusion. In fantasy narratives, for example, there are orcs — unlike us in every respect. This fantasy reveals our orientation towards enemies: our enemies embody the darkness that we, as light, must eradicate. We make our enemies orcs. (We throw out to the other what more originarily characterises ourselves: i.e., dehumanizing violence.) We thereby miss both how we and they are, exacerbating and extending indefinitely the need for conflict.

Stories codify our world, reinforce views, and enable us to see certain outlines while others fall from grasp.

Ways of thinking infiltrate ways of being in subtle ways. While we can become better at detecting (some of) them and finding better ways to be and to respond, we can't detect every assumption we make. We're metaphysical beings, through and through. There's no outside to this.

2.69 There are many ways one can change the world. We can act *within* the world: rearrange entities and patterns of entities. We may have a certain aesthetic or ethical sense or ideal, for instance, according to which we try to rearrange such entities: we see a line and want to keep drawing it; we see an array and want other entities to continue it.

Or we act *upon* the world — not that one ever escapes the world, but this kind of action involves rethinking the terms of the world. It involves rethinking from things themselves, for these deny full adherence to the terms through which they're understood and thereby offer new ways of thinking. Thus, the world and things act *upon* you.

We cannot actually separate the first and second ways of changing the world. Engaging with things *within* the world entails an engagement with the world itself, acting *upon* the

[203] Binary-based thinking isn't as simple as I've portrayed it. For example, in the nature/culture binary, while culture's taken as superior to nature, it's nonetheless the case that some cultures are taken as natural. These cultures can be regarded as superior precisely because they're natural. This is also why heterosexuality or cisnormativity are insisted on above others. – The binaries operate as a mesh, a net, with interlocking dependencies, interlocking valuations. At times, this net's been called the patriarchy.

world is in actuality to act within it, and the world acts *upon* you in both cases. Acts of interpretation cause changes on both levels, because they situate us in relation to our world. Gestalt shifts also occur on both levels. But, nonetheless, there's a difference of emphasis.

Acting *upon* the world *can* involve seeing things in a new way: a transformation of self and world.

Why should one change the world? – There could be a variety of reasons, and it's questionable whether one could even choose *not* to. – A question posed within *all* philosophy is how one should live. Even in the depths, perhaps *especially* in the depths, of the *Tractatus* or *Language, Truth and Logic*, the ethical question persists. Even in the midst of linguistic analysis, onto-ethical stances are taken.

Why should one change the world? – Because the world doesn't accord with how we should best be.

2.70 But if interpretation changes the world (§2.69), then why quote Marx: "*The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it*" (§1.69)?[204] If I'm challenging the dichotomy around which this quote hinges—interpretation vs. change—why use it?

Philosophy often offers ways of interpreting phenomena without noticing it changes the world. Description's never neutral; it changes the world implicitly, subtly, deceptively, or slyly, or in strengthening an understanding of the world (e.g., 'common sense'), it resists change. Yet, even resisting changes the world. There are no positions to which conservatism adds nothing new. — 'Do I dare disturb the universe?'; do I dare to think that I could not?

Even if one thinks philosophy *can* change the world, some think philosophy can only act *within* the world.

So, I'm issuing a call for philosophy that's cognizant of its power. A call for philosophy that yearns to offer new visions, because the old ones don't accord with the phenomena. And a call for philosophy that blooms as a kind of practice that cannot be determined in advance.

Philosophy's already a set of practices. Institutionally, philosophy's practiced in specific ways: enacted through bodily postures and activities (e.g., reading alone, conference presentations, coursework, publications, online learning; etc.), within a range of acceptable tone and style, within institutional structures and facilities tied to an ethics of business and the market, and bound up with discursive practices embedded in power-knowledge

[204] Marx, "Theses On Feuerbach," in *Selected Writings*, p. 173.

relations. However, for reasons that are becoming increasingly clear and pressing, the institutional model and its practices may not be sufficient.

2.71 Interpretation isn't a subjective understanding on top of a real material basis. Rather, the so-called 'real material basis' is itself intimately and inextricably bound up with a particular kind of interpretation. We tend to interpret 'interpretation' as something that originates with the subject and is subsequently used to understand facets of the objective, passive world.

Instead, following Heidegger, interpretation's a way of making explicit our understanding of things,[205] which is itself bound up with our understanding of Being:[206] interpretation teases out how beings appear for us. It makes explicit by refocusing how beings are disclosed for us. Interpretation, then, further discloses what's been disclosed.

Conflicting interpretations play out within (temporal, historical) horizons of meaning. How beings are unconcealed leaves open possibilities for interpretation.

Of course, it's possible for beings to appear in an interplay of subject/object and interpretation/real material basis; but this is one possibility amongst many — one way beings may appear for us. The phenomena can dictate new interpretive understandings. For example, metaphoric ontology (§2.51) throws open interpretive horizons without a reconciliatory real basis.

Interpreting isn't something we could hold back from because it's how we respond to our situation: we're interpretive beings. The interpretive structure of being is the way that we're thrown and must take up beings in particular interpretive-perspectival ways, even with and within a freeing range of possibilities for disagreement and further interpretation.

2.72 'But is the rock not there, outside all interpretation, outside all disclosures?'

What could that mean, outside all disclosures? No, it's not 'there.' Nonetheless, there can be aspects in common *between* disclosures—for example, this rock.

—'So, the rock wouldn't exist without humans?'
No. Disclosures aren't restricted to humans, or even living beings. They aren't restricted to the sensory. The rock itself 'discloses' a world.

'But world, for Heidegger—whom you seem to, in very broad strokes, be following—is grounded in being-in-the-world: an essential-existential openness and relatedness to Being, with all the incumbent existential structures traced out in *Being and Time*. – Surely a stone isn't being-in-the-world!'

[205] Heidegger, *B&T*, 148/188–9.
[206] ibid, 5/25.

The way of being of a stone isn't the same as the way of being of, for instance, humans. A stone doesn't seem to have life, consciousness, awareness. But that a stone expresses itself and its power doesn't ultimately depend on our existence: the *way* that it shows up depends on our world, but so too our world depends on the way it shows up. That is, we're open to the being of the stone only because the stone's open to being for us.

There are many ways to understand and interpret this.

I've shown some difficulties with the concept of 'interpretation.' The same kind of problem presents itself in thinking of 'perspectives.' That is, the problem of the subject/object division. 'There are all these interpretations, all these perspectives, and so we need to find what's common, what we can all agree upon, to determine what constitutes the reality of the thing.' – So, we need to reduce the thing and ourselves to a play of commonality, which becomes identity. We don't see how this reduction's itself a particular way of approaching beings that we've taken up.

And so, while there's a tendency to reach for these as ways to suggest a revaluation (interpretations over 'truth'; perspectives over 'the view from nowhere'), there's always a risk: that we'll be misunderstood as upholding the old binary. Rather, the goal is similar to deconstruction (§2.68): the revaluation of one term's an attempt to implode the binary.[207] It's not just that we take 'perspective' up over and against 'reality'; rather, we see that the idea of *the real is precisely a perspectival view* and always has been. Perspective's the originary source of the perspective/real binary.

2.73 "*It is precisely the force and the efficiency of the system that regularly change transgressions into 'false exits.' Taking into account these effects of the system, one has nothing, from the inside where 'we are,' but the choice between two strategies:*

"*a. To attempt an exit and a deconstruction without changing terrain, by repeating what is implicit in the founding concepts and the original problematic, by using against the edifice the instruments or stones available in the house, that is, equally, in language. Here, one risks ceaselessly confirming, consolidating,* relifting (relever)*, at an always more certain depth, that which one allegedly deconstructs. The continuous process of making explicit, moving toward an opening, risks sinking into the autism [sic] of the closure.*

"*b. To decide to change terrain, in a discontinuous and irruptive fashion, by brutally placing oneself outside, and by affirming an absolute break and difference. Without mentioning all the other forms of* trompe-l'oeil *perspective in which such a displacement can be caught, thereby inhabiting more naively and more strictly than ever the inside one declares one has deserted, the simple practice of language ceaselessly reinstates the new terrain on the*

[207] Which needs to be indicated, e.g., arche-X, and then, presumably, moved away from, else we're stuck with the binary.

oldest ground. The effects of such a reinstatement or of such a blindness could be shown in numerous precise instances.

"*It goes without saying that these effects do not suffice to annul the necessity for a 'change of terrain.' It also goes without saying that the choice between these two forms of deconstruction cannot be simple and unique. A new writing must weave and interlace these two motifs of deconstruction. Which amounts to saying that one must speak several languages and produce several texts at once.*"[208]

— Is there a danger in my project of reintroducing colonial logics? – I think so. How? Well, insofar as we're inclined to think that an assertion that's truthful must be so universally, for everyone everywhere all the time. I introduce signposts, but I also claim that each disclosure's localized: I assert something universal that underpins all disclosures. But let's not take 'disclosure' as a metaphysical thing that underpins different disclosures. Instead, let's hold tight to metaphoric ontology.

As Zwicky reminds us, metaphor depends on dynamism of staticism: "*metaphor results from an over-riding of calcified gestures of thought by being*."[209] For Zwicky, humans are characterized by three styles of response: technological, lyric, and domestic. While we yearn for lyric experience (§2.8), we're beings who must use language, tools, etc., and so we're also beings with technological, logical, and analytic experiences. The key, for Zwicky, isn't to deride our nature, but to 'come home' in the tension between our lyric and technological nature: we come home in what she calls the domestic.[210]

For Zwicky, metaphors are a result from wrestling with techno-linguistic modes to express lyric insights: this tension results in the domestic mode of expression which we call metaphor.[211]

While this is a kind of digression, it helps us here. For while the metaphoric can be part of the deconstructive strategy expressed by Derrida, it does so by retaining traces of ways of thinking from the master's house while yet revealing this grounding to be *sur*-terranean on shifting tectonic plates. Metaphoric ontology aims to re-situate older colonial logics within a framework that changes their 'essence,' and even if it carries traces of these logics, it does so on condition that it reveals the metaphoric as a deeper 'foundation' and hence a subterranean shaking under all foundational moves.

Yet, my other point's that metaphors calcify (including the metaphor of metaphors). Our minds latch on: with time, we take these as solid and foundational. Even 'metaphoric ontology' is susceptible to this.

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[208] Jacques Derrida, "The Ends of Man," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 135.
[209] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH8.
[210] Zwicky, *Lyric Philosophy*, LH19, LH126, LH132–8.
[211] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH67.

Why, if this may re-introduce colonial logics, stick to such paths? How can this be ethical? — It seems to me there's no 'pure' path, nor could there be. It's a question of better and worse, listening and response, solicitude and respect, and so this isn't defeatist but demands vigilance.

Colonization happens on an enactive, ontological level (*all* ontologies are enactive). It insists on a set of ontological stories, ontological decisions, and refuses to hear other voices, other beings. Colonization 'knows' what things and world are and it says this (including in multiculturalism). It speaks this louder and more forcefully than other voices can speak, which it denies anyway.

I'm offering space in my thinking for other voices. But colonial logics are reinstated if one thinks that my way of thinking's foundational, necessary, or universal. My path offers a way to try to walk 'forward' from the site of ongoing colonial devastation. How much of this legacy my walking carries on isn't always easy for the one who walks to see.

2.74 Divergence is related to what Deleuze says in *Difference & Repetition* during his explanation of Leibnizian worlds: "*a series which converges around a distinctive point is capable of being continued in all directions in other series converging around other points, while the incompossibility of worlds, by contrast, is defined by the juxtaposition of points which would make the resultant series diverge*."[212] The "juxtaposition of points" at the end of this passage isn't specified. Whereas he may be saying that in the incompossibility of worlds the points on one plane or in one space diverge, I'd go further: the planes or spaces themselves diverge. Points can be plugged into different series, but points themselves are the points they are by virtue of to what they're related; a given point isn't the selfsame point in relation to every other point. Before we talk about a series of points, the points and their places are relative to one another; only then can points enter different relations of series.

Another way to put this is that things don't have a determinate meaning or identity because such this would require a principle of convergence that pins and holds together all beings. This pinning would require a pin that's not part of the convergence (else it couldn't guarantee convergence over the divergence of worlds and relations), but outside it, holding it together (as a pin holds the butterfly to the board but is itself not part of the butterfly).[213] If we attempted to construct the pin from materials inside, such as a butterfly leg, we'd distort the inside such that we no longer have the same totality, the same convergence.

These divergences are what allow things to have different meanings, senses, identities, and differences to different people (or life forms). I don't just mean beliefs, opinions, subjective impressions: I mean 'realities.'

[212] Deleuze, *Difference & Repetition*, p. 48.
[213] §1.98.

2.75 We sense divergence through the hinge of what is *common*, which is never of the *same*. "Though the hinge—the hinge of what is common (§1.1)—is not on, or attached to, the outlines of things, it almost is" (§1.5). This shouldn't be taken literally, i.e., reductively. That is, the hinge is a metaphor (§2.52). And so, I'm not saying that outlines of things are more real or maintain their existence through all disclosures. The world's not 'touched' at the precise point of the hinge. Rather, the world's always already 'touched,' from one gathering to the next, and in the metaphoric movement between them.

So, in what sense are the outlines of things almost the hinge? A particular gestalt shift's possible wherein 'what we currently see' is oriented differently (§2.1). Our usual way tends to gloss over things. But there's a way in which things reveal themselves, in a kind of global sense, more in their particular characters: things become more 'alive.'

— — — Mysticism, or many strands of it, doesn't start from 'somewhere else.' It's empirical, in its own way.

I'm not advocating for mysticism (and all that this is bound up with: in its standard opposition to reason and its contextualization within particular historical religious traditions, e.g., Christianity); I'm just trying to gesture to how different disclosures touch the world, just so.[214] And that there's an experience from within our world where everything shifts, which reveals new facets. Not new facets of old things, but new facets of things themselves.

2.76 "Error is touching the world in a way in which it or we recoil" (§1.76).

This doesn't mean that error doesn't touch the world. Suppose I think that woman over there's Rosalyn, but she's actually a stranger. It'd be a poor account of things to say that my error doesn't touch the world. My error's an error precisely because it inhabits the space of things: I thought *her* silhouette resembled Rosalyn's; her hair's the same colour, and she holds herself just so.

'I'm not sure what you're getting at. First, it seemed you were suggesting only truth touches phenomena, so error was a failure to see what's there. Now, you seem to be suggesting that error too touches phenomena, as some kind of illusion deviating from a clearer picture.'

Error *is* "*a* failure *to see what* is there."[215] Yet, it's also, in its way, seeing what's there: it isn't an illusion, as though error were somehow a mist overtop of reality. Phenomena *can* lead us astray; but in being led astray, we're still being led. To see the stranger as Rosalyn is

[214] Though, really, there's no world that stands over and against its disclosure; hence, there's no distance that would allow it to be 'touched.' That a world's gathered in a particular way is another way of saying that the world *is*.
[215] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH25.

an error, yet this error reveals something about the phenomena: that this stranger resembles Rosalyn in X and Y ways, that there's a resonance between this stranger and Rosalyn.

'But it almost sounds like you're saying we can never be wrong.'

Well, if that's what you're hearing, listen again. – To take this stranger as Rosalyn is wrong. It isn't borne out by the phenomena; and yet, it *is partially* borne out by the phenomena.

'Ok, but you picked two people who resemble one another in certain ways. What if I mistake someone who has nothing in common with Rosalyn for her? Or, better yet, what if I mistake a lamppost for her? Or even nothing at all — I've been up all night and I'm edgy, I think I see Rosalyn, but there's nothing there.'

Ok, let's take up your last example (for the others are still suggestive of similarity). – There's nothing in the surroundings that's similar to Rosalyn. Yet, perhaps we're concealing the problem with reference to surroundings. For in thinking this way we think ourselves as facing reality bound by skin. But we're also surrounded by thoughts. Maybe we were expecting Rosalyn or thinking idly about her; maybe we were doing nothing of the sort, yet Rosalyn's clearly someone with whom we're familiar. The particular situation *called for* the phenomena of mis-taking: something about the overall context *called forth* mistaking nothing for Rosalyn; the error's rooted in the overall situation. That you *think* Rosalyn may be there *is* phenomenal. Even if it's a wrongful projection, the projection's encountered, then determined to be false.

"Error has improper traction in the world" (§1.76). – Error *has* traction insofar as it's contextualized and understood *as* error.

Suppose at the moment when you think that Rosalyn's there but it's nothing, you exclaim—'there's Rosalyn!'—and someone nearby who knows her says 'that's not her, there's no one there!' You were always wrong, even at the moment when you were partially tracking the phenomena, for that was never Rosalyn even though you took it as being her.

'My senses were deceiving me!'

What an odd reaction. 'No: I sensed what wasn't in fact there. I jumped to an unwarranted conclusion. I should use my reason and withhold my assent to what my senses tell me to be the case.' – But that's not remotely how things happen. You *could not* withhold your assent. You *didn't* jump to a conclusion; you were pulled right in. And you also sensed what was there, with your reason involved. Of course, you can change how you react to such a sensation, but the point I'm making is that neither your senses nor your reason are strictly deceiving you: they're showing something that's there. To deny this in favour of 'grasping the whole thing as it is' (i.e., not as Rosalyn but as whatever it 'really' was) is to deny an aspect of the phenomena (§2.37).

Error isn't the only way phenomena is partly taken away from itself. There's also obfuscation: for example, the tyrant who just says so. The tyrant rules by fiat, overriding alternative perception. 'The rivulet *is* a river because I say so.'

To evaluate a claim, we cannot simply look at what someone says of their experience, nor simply what people do: phenomena can betray both. We must turn to the phenomena. Yes, this may involve turning to what someone says of their experience or what people do. But in the case of the tyrant, we may sense ill will: the rivulet cannot appear as a river. (There's no internal relation that allows for this possibility.)

Obviously, real cases will be more persuasive. Yet, while it may be difficult to see how, for example, spirits reside in a particular river, we could take steps towards seeing how this could be the case experientially: we can't take these same steps in the case of the tyrant, short of denying the phenomena. As we approach the claim in question, we see if and how it fits. Some claims don't fit. For example, some claims betray a reliance on ontological assumptions that don't do justice to the world (e.g., grounded in *ressentiment*) — they don't affirm the world as it is.

'This talk of spirits and gods doesn't fit!' — Are you sure you understand what's meant by 'spirits,' 'gods'?

2.77 Stones have worlds.

A stone resists; it holds open a space for itself. This stone's a maintaining of itself, even if it's microscopically losing parts of itself or it's nestled in various ways (§2.43–§2.44): this stone's still a maintaining of itself. It withstands, which doesn't mean there's something beyond or behind the stone that withstands;[216] it means that the stone *is* this withstanding. Eventually, it succumbs. — Any opening to world can and will be destroyed.

'But you want me to think that a stone has a world…!'

"*Look at things like this.*"[217]

'But…the racist says, Look at things like this! Or the one who's full of hatred. The mean, the depressed, the anxious! *Why* should we look at things like *that*!'

— Ok, first, I'll deal with the attunements in the second 'half' of your objection. Many of these aren't by choice: one's drawn into them (anxiety, depression). We can, perhaps we should, "*Look at things like this*"[218] — without getting drawn in. When we see things 'like this,' we do so with one foot firmly planted in our world/self. Different attunements, even

[216] Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, p. 26.
[217] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH38.
[218] ibid, LH38.

within the same world, if extreme or intense enough, can begin to show *how* things would be, how things could hang together, just so: they reveal coloured tatters of worlds. We can – perhaps *should* – look, but we *also* say 'no' to the draw. Why say 'no'? Because what we see, what we sense, isn't how we want to be in the world. (We could cast this in terms of *conatus* or power;[219] i.e., it isn't a question of error.)

Ethics is what we do when faced with such situations—our preliminary response—as well as (if we look) what we do when we see how things could be that way—our subsequent response. We respond as ethical, imaginative beings. We don't say 'no' like a hero who confronts absolute darkness (good/evil; light/dark; etc.); we respond like one who wants to live a good life.

Conatus isn't always improved by fleeing from so-called 'negativities' and sticking to so-called 'positivities' (e.g., happiness, cheerfulness). We heed and attend to our situation, which isn't always pleasant. — To take pleasure as something sacrosanct is to deny swaths of phenomena. You can respect phenomena like *angst*. To struggle with it and fight against it exacerbates the situation. *Angst* needs to be heard: not to get rid of it (we don't heed 'negativities' to reach 'positivities'), but to understand, respect, see how it appears, respond sensitively to it, and feel how it's grounded in the core of our and others' being.

Let's return to the first 'half' of the objection: the racist, the one full of hatred, the mean. Going beyond the second 'half,' these dispositions don't only swallow up or narrow down phenomena, they also deny them. I can heed the phenomena of racism, hatred, meanness, but I cannot accept how they colour the world through their denials and pettiness. Depending on the situation, I can understand rivalry, the identification of an enemy, struggle, and combat, but not hatred as petty, blatantly reductive, or consuming and raging, rooted in a desire to rid the world of its enemy. Hatred's wrapped in irresponsibility.

When we "*Look at things like this*,"[220] we do so in many cases without getting carried away.

2.78 There's no thing that isn't related: a thing precisely is a way of being related. If a thing wasn't open to being related, it wouldn't appear at all (and hence not be a thing). Things bear worlds and are related to every other thing. They don't start from a core and work their way outwards; beings are always already outside themselves, and their 'core' is always already exposed, never contained, isolated, or secured within their confines. Thus, beings are always already torn open towards all others.

This doesn't mean that beings are pure visibility and pure display: beings cover themselves over. Beings are tricksters.

[219] Spinoza, *Ethics*, Prop. VI–VIII, Part III, p. 91; Prop. XII, Part III, p. 94.
[220] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH38.

Beings are what they are through particular disclosures and perspectives and they're always open to further exploration, investigation, questioning. They can always be related to differently; we can adopt different relational stances, which bring forth some aspects and conceal others, and it's in this relational betweenness that the thing and we become what and who we are.

Beings keep some of themselves back, but not as essence or core; their relatedness is constituted by the revealing-concealing interplay of aspects. This also means that a being isn't most itself for itself — a being isn't one hundred percent in itself, and subsequently gives off one hundred minus X to others; *a being is itself for others and with others*, it's constituted in its relatedness to others, and hence is itself through reaching out beyond itself. This constitution includes faces it shows and ones it could show with further investigation. No being's transparent, nor fully present to itself.

Because other beings surprise us, and because beings require us and others to be what they are, we can surprise ourselves: we don't know how we'd react in every situation. We may also think of ourselves in a given way, and yet others may see closer to the truth, for we cannot fully see ourselves.

In turning away from itself, a thing becomes itself.

2.79 Perhaps you wish to use Occam's Razor to simplify my picture, but it's not clear what "simplify" means here: maybe the picture of singular being is 'simpler' for us, but is it if it drifts from experience which favours a relational, contextual, and multi-layered multiplicity? – 'But—to use a theological example—one God's simpler than many gods.' – Based on what criteria? In a general sense, what makes an option simpler than another? – We almost want to say: the simpler path is simpler! But that, of course, doesn't say anything.

Simplicity needs something further to motivate or clarify it, perhaps a pre-determined, untheorized, aesthetic or practical sense we have.

Simplicity's certainly never neutral. It's a way of gesturing to the self-evident (even at the expense of evidence). Occam's Razor's like a cross warding off evil spirits and evil multiplicities: like a razor, it can be violent.

— Why do we think unity's simpler than multiplicity? That one's simpler than many?

Perhaps having multiple perspectives is simpler; perhaps multiplicity is simpler than unity, the many simpler than the one. – Simpler how? Perhaps it 'saves' the phenomena in fewer steps, with fewer corollaries. – But then we also need to ask why simplicity should be our goal, anyway. What evidence do we have that a simpler explanation is more likely to be true or accurate?

2.80 I'm trying to show that there are other rooms to explore. Though, this metaphor doesn't mean that there are inert spaces that our attention has so far passed over; rather, the rooms we inhabit are constantly shifting in subtle ways.

Philosophy doesn't try to make us a home nor does it try to disrupt our home; rather, it heeds how our home changes. Our homes change whether we want them to or not.

Philosophy attends to the world because the world calls and interpolates the philosopher; they've been summoned to respond to glimmers of things. Your character's at stake, for character is determined by responsivity.

One doesn't become a philosopher; one philosophizes for a while.

2.81 Listening cannot be determined in advance, for it depends on what we're listening to; we cannot pretend to know what listening is.

The first step is to learn how to listen to listening, how to attend to attending. This can't be emphasized enough. If you *know* what respect is, you've already shown that you don't.

A quintessentially ethical position is uncertainty of your ethical position.

'The best way to do things' always begins with listening and respect. Listening doesn't simply mean listening to familiar things around you. Listening, what you listen to (things in the world), the listener, or that 'wherein' you listen (the world) aren't simply given: all these facets—listening, things, self, world—are interwoven. Foreclosing on investigation of one forecloses on investigation of all.

Listening calls for reorientation, for it opens to itself as to the openness of a question (§2.40). Receptivity is openness to being given the openness.

2.82 Reorientation doesn't come from a simple return to our senses, our empirical experience, but from a return to our particular being-in-the-world.

In a sense, we're returning to our senses and empirical experience, but first we must rethink these. We must become attuned to how perception's shaped by our metaphysics, the context of our understanding, and interpretive tendencies. If, for instance, we perceive things under the expectation of axioms and causes, understood as efficient cause,[221] things show themselves in a particular way. Concepts aren't free-floating, we don't first perceive things then apply concepts, but rather they're formative for how things *appear* for us. We pragmatically engage with the world (§2.4) from how things appear to us, with

[221] E.g., see Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*, trans. William Wood and Joseph Devey (La Vergne, TN: Kessinger Publishing, 1844, 2009), par. 99, p. 42.

concepts/theorization emergent from our engagement. Concepts emerge from engagement, which depend on appearance.

Each thing carries traces in it of aspects we haven't grasped: things are never reducible to theorizations. Things—as relations between all things and worlds—aren't totalizable.

'Ok, but it sort of seems like your answer is: let's check the phenomena — but when I do this, I don't see stones, for example, as the kind of thing that could have a world. I cannot make sense of it even if I withhold dissent and do as you say: I look at things *that* way. You can't simply hide behind claims that I'm not listening deeply enough, that I'm not attending properly. If you want me to understand, with all your provisos about attending and criteria and arguments and reasons set aside for now, you need to provide reasons: the onus is on *you* to show *how* your claim could be the case.'

—— What is a world? It's our relation to the whole (not the totality). It's wherein there's the being-related-together of beings. It's an opening before consciousness or perception, for it's their condition of possibility; we must be openness before we can be conscious or perceptive, which are both intentional (i.e., consciousness of… or perception of…). The world's an opening for us as long as our body's maintained as an inter-permeable membrane or boundary with an environment (§2.43, §2.77): as long as we are a coalescence of forces.

These a stone has.

A stone's related to the whole of beings which it lets be as the beings they are. What does this mean? It means that a stone stands within the clearing of its relations, i.e., in relation to the whole; these relations make it what it is and others what they are. When it lets beings be the beings they are, this doesn't mean that it's open to beings consciously or perceptually; rather, it lets beings be such that they can encounter the stone — or, if we have problems with the word 'encounter,' such that they can impact or influence the stone and it them. The way the stone lets beings be isn't the same way that, for instance, we let beings be or an ostrich lets beings be. – 'But the stone's entirely and essentially *closed* to all encounters!' — The stone's impactable and influenceable, and, in general, resists such encounters: it seeks to maintain its integrity (which, we recall, is nestled; §2.44). The stone ongoingly stands-forth in the midst of beings.

'But why think it has a relation to beings as a whole?' – For Heidegger, *Dasein* encounters 'beings as a whole' through fundamental attunements (angst, profound boredom, etc.).[222] Are stones fundamentally attuned? What do we mean by attunement? – Attunement's how an entity's attuned to beings, which needn't be an attunement *for* the particular entity in question: one finds oneself in the midst of beings as a whole, which is distinct from

[222] Martin Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics?" in *Pathmarks*, trans. David Farrell Krell, p. 86–90; Heidegger, *FCM*, p. 59, 138–9, 162, 272, 282–4.

comprehending it: "*[H]ow should we who are essentially finite make the whole of beings totally accessible in itself and also for us? […] In the end an essential distinction prevails between comprehending the whole of beings in themselves and finding oneself […] in the midst of beings as a whole. […] [B]eing attuned, in which we 'are' one way or another and which determines us through and through, lets us find ourselves among beings as a whole.*"[223] Relating to 'beings as a whole' isn't about relating to each individual being, but about being open to any given being, open to all beings. 'Beings as a whole' isn't a mass of beings just sitting there; 'beings as a whole' is a relational structuration of beings.

Of course, the way a stone 'finds itself' is different from the way *Dasein* does; 'finding itself' doesn't necessitate reflexivity, but rather gestures to the 'perspective' of the stone. The stone finds itself (or is found in its own being) in the midst of beings as a whole, thrown there, with the possibility of encountering any being. For early Heidegger, the aforementioned attunements reveal that *Dasein* is always already metaphysical;[224] for the stone, the stone's open to 'beings as a whole' insofar as it's relationally open to involvement with other entities.

2.83 Let me put forward something I'll call the *Principle of Phenomenological Charity*. Like its cousin, the Principle of Charity—wherein we try to be as charitable as possible to a position by giving it the benefit of the doubt—the Principle of Phenomenological Charity is an attempt to see things in the way that they were proposed *phenomenologically*; it's to give a position the benefit of the doubt not just by giving the position the strongest reasons or interpretation you can conceive, but by rooting it in a phenomenological, experiential perspective: in other words, you see how things would look if things were the way it says they are/could be, and then, you see how—and *if*—things fit. This principle's needed because claims are rooted phenomenologically, in our lived experience of being in the truth (the clearing).

If we were to take Mill's principle out of context, which says that (most) every saying has some truth and some falsity,[225] and instead say that every response (by that which has life) has some truth and some falsity (i.e., it responds well in some ways and poorly in others), then we arrive at a motivation for the Principle of Phenomenological Charity, since every gesture, saying, and response come out of an adherence to things as they are.

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[223] Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics?," p. 86–7.
[224] ibid, p. 93–6.
[225] *"But there is a commoner case than either of these; when the conflicting doctrines, instead of being one true and the other false, share the truth between them; and the nonconforming opinion is needed to supply the remainder of the truth, of which the received doctrine embodies only a part. Popular opinions, on subjects not palpable to sense, are often true, but seldom or never the whole truth."* John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty: and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 52. And: *"though the silenced opinion be an error, it may, and very commonly does, contain a portion of truth; and since the general or prevailing opinion on any subject is rarely or never the whole truth, it is only by the collision of adverse opinions that the remainder of the truth has any chance of being supplied"* (p. 59).

Why specify "that which has life"? Well, *for us*, life's the barest precondition for the possibility of freedom of correction and asymptotic approaches to the true. *For us*, something like a stone, a pool of water, or a piece of wood aren't in the game of truth/falsity (and, for some of us, even plants and non-human animals aren't in it, or aren't fully in it — but I set this aside for now). Even if, as I've argued, these non-living entities have their own worlds and ways of gathering beings around them and hence their own way that truth as clearing manifests itself 'for' them, *for us* we don't understand how anything could be false (and maybe also true, in a derivative sense) for these entities. Freedom seems to be intertwined with life. Nonetheless, this doesn't mean that it isn't *possible* for these entities to be seen to possess freedom which we associate with life; but to get there requires further steps that I cannot take at this moment.

This principle isn't something to just think about but to embody. All views, in one way or another, (at least partly) respect phenomena. More: *there are many views that respect most of the phenomena*.

To begin to see this is, itself, to begin to *respect the phenomena as they are* (for views of phenomena are themselves phenomena); it's to *pay respect* to the myriad ways of being that *are*, including paying respect to those ways that pay respect to the way things are. This is a general structure of beings: paying-respect.

Paying respect is a way of acknowledging; acknowledging is a way of attending; attending is a way of giving and receiving; giving and receiving are ways of caring, being involved, and being at play; these are ways of being exposed; being exposed is a way of being open to love, involvement, and immersion as well as death, transience, and loss. This is openness to meaning/violence.

2.84 There's no position outside of the game: we're always in the fray, observing from particular places in particular contexts, and there's no way to step outside to some 'everyman's position' (a little more objective, a little more shorn of particularity, a little closer to the universal, average person).

It's not just that we're perspectival centres (necessarily positioned); it's that we're *a* way of *being-in-the-world*: i.e., a particular opening to disclosive being. This explosivity, by expanding us in a network of particular and ultimately unrepeatable relations, ruptures *any* positionality for us that we could call neutral—i.e., that which would put itself out of play, a position of no-position—as well as *any totalizing* coherence.[226] This is further ruptured when we consider how all beings are this explosivity (which is what I'm gesturing to when I propose stones have worlds). Thus, things *always* carry traces of aspects we haven't grasped (§2.82).

[226] There are other forms of coherence.

To posit something like a God that guarantees totalizability is to try to seal off this leak, this essential leakage, of how aspects escape us. Following Derrida, this God's the centre that's ultimately outside its structure, i.e., creation (§1.98); God's that which guarantees totalization but only by itself escaping this very totalizing. The dam of our finitude is plugged by the infinitude of God, but at the cost of positing God *as* the essential leakage, i.e., as that which escapes (§2.74).

This is, of course, no real solution. Foremost, because, while God's set to guarantee the totalization of any and every thing, we, of course, could never *experience* this totalization (§2.35): it doesn't resolve the issue.

This perspective that's not a perspective (because it's all possible perspective) would have to accomplish a *total* 'perceiving' of, relating to, 'knowing,' or grounding of *all* things: it'd have to be 'sensing'/relating to all things at all times such that all is always contained and conserved (omniscience, omnipresence) and given sense (omnisensical). But the problem's not just that we're wrong to think we could know, value, or manage *everything* (even in theory, even through the concept of an omniscient God, even in general terms). The problem's that we still think there's an *everything* at all. This doesn't match phenomenological experience.

A desire for this kind of view reveals a ghostal lineage to God as leakage, a denial of my thesis on worlds, and a desire for a position outside positionality; this lineage taints certain frameworks of objectivity (including those based on statistical probability).

But all entities are within the relationally differential network of world and so, too, is any entity that purports to extricate itself from this, be it a God-like totalizing force or a neutral positionality-outside-positionality, for these two are structurally analogous.

2.85 The concept of neutrality—the position of no-position—is always already tainted and can be deconstructed and revealed as originarily what's rejected in the 'not neutral.' To that end, neutrality's to take up a position and perspective, and to stake oneself on a claim. Therefore, neutrality doesn't escape the game, but is a move within it – like how skipping your turn makes sense if it's allowed within the rules of the game. Neutrality isn't what it pretends to be: taking anything out of play (the observer, the real; the 'subject,' the 'object') is part of the play.

Consider a situation where skipping your turn would be against the rules of a game. In this case, it may be a move that indicates a 'step back': I'm no longer interested in playing this game. But we don't thereby escape all play: this move requires stepping back in another game (e.g., the negotiation over whether or not to play). Furthermore, the game we were playing included the possibility of quitting or committing infractions, for games always involve, and create, implicitly, exceptions and infractions.

The 'view from nowhere'—a position of no-position—is an imaginative leap in which we shear our perspective. The resultant 'perspective' is none-too-human, and, for this reason, all-too-human. It seeks to do the impossible: negate our experience, the condition of its conception. It seeks what will remain and outlast our finitude, our demise; it's founded on our death or disappearance and attempts to set up a field we can reach outside of ourselves and our mortality.[227]

The 'objective' 'view from nowhere' is nowhere humans could dwell, and yet, it's precisely part of human dwelling: this is a sleight of hand in the withdrawal of the hand that made it; a move made within the context of play. It's a way of play intended to secure against future moves and plays; it attempts to arrest its own flux: "*The center is at the center of the totality, and yet, since the center does not belong to the totality (is not part of the totality), the totality* has its center elsewhere*. […] The concept of centered structure is in fact the concept of a freeplay based on a fundamental ground, a freeplay which is constituted upon a fundamental immobility and a reassuring certitude, which is itself beyond the reach of the freeplay.*"[228]

'But you've spoken at length about the possibilities of imagining that which you aren't. How's this different?'

With imagination, one's perspectivally oneself. From there, one can begin to 'see,' in a sense, what other perspectives are. — But let's not forget the point just made (§2.84): we're not just perspectival centres, but we're a way of being-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world opens to the possibility of other ways of being of particular beings. It cannot open to its own negation, to a negation of all particular perspectives that somehow amounts to the positing of an all-perspective. Being-in-the-world cannot open to a disclosure-that's-not-a-disclosure outside or beyond all disclosures. Any such 'disclosure' is merely a fantasy within a particular disclosure, a desire rooted in an onto-theological principle.

2.86 There's an analogous problem to that of neutrality in using practicality to ground a situation. 'Why do you draw maps this way?' 'Because they reflect our needs and wants.' While this isn't wrong *per se*, it glosses a bit too quickly. If we take ourselves as confronted by facts that we assemble or organize in line with our values, as though we're self-directing or self-starting, then we've taken our will or freedom as out of play (i.e., as directing the play from afar). However, it's also wrong to say we have no choice because the context completely *demands* how things are to be, as though the situation itself is what's out of play.

Rather, we, in and with and even as part of the context, make choices and decisions; we interact dialogically with the world. Practical aims are part of the world.

[227] Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, p. 160.
[228] Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," p. 915–6.

‘Why do you draw maps this way?’ – Any reason I provide is a description of what I already do. But remember! Descriptions aren’t *neutral*. They *explain* the situation; they explain why I do what I do. They’re tautological (in a broad sense). Good reasons make sense within a context.

2.87 “*This is simply what I do.*”[229]
‘Why do you drive on the right side?’
‘Why do you eat with utensils instead of your hands?’
‘Why do you investigate nature through scientific experiment?’

Eventually, we hit bedrock: ‘this is simply what *we* do.’ I may give reasons, but eventually they move in a circle.

‘But you jump from cultural contingencies to scientific investigation!’

Any practice we do—broadly construed—is a ‘cultural contingency’; but that term’s inaccurate, for what’s it in distinction from? We want to say scientific investigation constantly touches the world, whereas the side we drive on or how we eat is convention; while we have reasons for the latter, alternate ways work just as well.

To recapitulate: there are many ways to ‘touch’ the world, and we’re doing it all the time, including with something we call a ‘cultural contingency.’ To eat with utensils isn’t superfluous, an arbitrary exertion of our collective will; it’s intertwined with a whole metaphysics of food, relating to an array of things, such as our body, how we eat, how we divide the day, where and how we sit and with whom. The world speaks to us and we respond in particular ways.

‘This is simply what we do’ doesn’t mean what we do is right. We’re called, we’re put in question, such that we ourselves can question. Our questioning’s a response. An answer doesn’t annul a question: it questions the question. It asks, ‘is this sufficient?’ — There are other ways to answer. There are other ways to do things.

This insufficiency’s the condition of meaning. Meaning leaps across the gap, the rift, the schism between things (§2.23). Meaning’s when things fit together (§2.12, §2.43), commonality based in difference; meaning beckons across the divide (§2.20), without ever healing it. (Think of the fantasies here: full communication, full transparency, a dialectic.) Thus, meaning’s a way of relating to what’s lost and not part of you: what’s dissipating and vulnerable (§2.7).

There’s a frailty to things, so we project continuity: “*contraction also refers to the fusion of successive tick-tocks […]. Passive synthesis is of [this] latter kind: it constitutes our habit of*

[229] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §217, p. 91.

living, our expectation that 'it' will continue, that one of the two elements will appear after the other, thereby assuring the perpetuation of our case.*"*[230]

"*Hence the psycho-analytic school could venture the assertion that at bottom no one believes in his own death [sic], or, to put the same thing in another way, that in the unconscious every one of us is convinced of his own immortality.*"[231]
"'*What is the most wondrous thing in the world?' asks Yama, the Lord of Death. His son, Yudhiṣthira, answers, 'The most wondrous thing in the world is that all around us people can be dying and we don't believe it can happen to us.'*"[232]

We project a continuity beyond ourselves, too (and these quotes apply beyond ourselves): to those we love, the shape of the world with which we're familiar, certain ideals, and so on. This continuity lets us to get on with our day, but at a cost: we drive quickly by ignoring the frailty of things. If we were struck by this frailty, we'd get on with our day, but differently: you must change your life.[233]

Things have meaning because they're cracked, held to the fire. In projecting continuity, we long to secure ourselves from pain, loss, and death. But though this effort emerges from this sense, rooted in love and frailty, we isolate ourselves from the source: we cover the frailty which covers love and the sense of meaningfulness. To love's to lose (§2.7) — not in the future, for love's to already have lost what you love.

"When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you shall find it is only that which has given you sorrow that is giving you joy. / When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight."[234]

To open yourself to your openness is to open to the world. To respond to and pay attention to world-and-things is to be open to love-and-loss, to meaning. 'What we do' emerges from a responsive engagement with love and loss, and is itself always open to further response.

2.88 Attending to something means you're slighting something else. — We can't respond to everything that calls.

[230] Deleuze, *Difference & Repetition*, p. 74.
[231] Freud, "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death," cited in Derrida, *The Beast & the Sovereign, Volume II*, Sixth Session, p. 157.
[232] Quote from Evan Thompson, *Waking, Dreaming, Being: Self and Consciousness in Neuroscience, Meditation, and Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), p. 274. From the *Mahabharata*, Vana Parva, Yaksha Prashna, s. CCCXI; cited without reference in Joan Halifax, *Being with Dying: Cultivating Compassion and Fearlessness in the Presence of Death* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2008), p. 6; partially quoted in Thompson, *Waking, Dreaming, Being*.
[233] Rilke, "Archaic Torso of Apollo," in *Translations from the Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*, p. 181, cited in Zwicky, *Lyric Philosophy*, RH219.
[234] Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1998), p. 29.

"How would you ever justify the fact that you sacrifice all the cats in the world to the cat that you feed at home every day for years, whereas other cats die of hunger at every instant?"[235]

Though we may tell ourselves stories to heal and harmonize existence, the gods war amongst each other: you cannot satisfy them all.

This doesn't mean you shouldn't attend to that to which you're attending, nor that you could even always know what (or that) you're slighting. But it does mean that being attentive and responsive means attending to attending.

> It's not that Oedipus should've had more information in his situation: his responsibility stems from what he'd done. 'He had no way of knowing what he did!' So what? He did it. We put credence in intentions, in what someone 'meant' to do; but Oedipus *did* something horrendous. He feels responsible, reprehensible, in a way that responsibility isn't beholden to what he could control.
>
> The Dene apologized on behalf of themselves, their people, their land.[236] The Dene are Indigenous peoples in the Great Bear Lake area in Canada's Northwest Territories. During World War II, they were employed to mine uranium on their land without knowing for what it was being used. Some time after the war, they learned that this uranium had gone into the atomic bombs dropped on Japan. In response, they sent a delegation on a boat trip to Japan to try to make amends to the Japanese *on behalf of their land*. Even though they never knew the purpose of the mining, they apologized for the use their land had been put to and their involvement in it.

In both cases, we sense a different sense of responsibility, one that doesn't adhere to what should be in one's control. We often do—nay, we always do—wrong without knowing — we always slight others. We apologize for situations out of our control, on behalf of our land, as though we're responsible for our relations; or, rather, our responsibility is only, and can only be, constituted by our relatedness: we precisely *are* our relations.

Responsibility involves responding to calls regarding how it is we should respond: i.e., responsibility involves being responsive to responsibility; we *are* a responsibility to responsibility. This means that we cannot know in advance what it means to respond, let alone to respond adequately.

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[235] Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death and Literature in Secret*, trans. David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), p. 71.

[236] Peter Blow, director, *Village of Widows: The Story of the Sahtu Dene and the Atomic Bomb*, Lindum Films, 1999, 52 min; Julie Salverson, *Lines of Flight: An Atomic Memoir* (Hamilton, ON: Wolsak and Wynn Publishers Ltd., 2016); Peter C. Van Wyck, *The Highway of the Atom* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), p. 38–49, 160, 180–8, 204; Canada-Déline Uranium Table, *Final Report: Concerning Health and Environmental Issues Related to the Port Radium Mine*, August 2005; Dene First Nation of Déline, *They Never Told Us These Things*, July 1998.

2.89 Another form of living may appear irresponsive to us, for it may appear as though it isn't responding to those aspects we see.

It's worth noting that, by aspects, I don't mean there's first a totality from which particular aspects dawn that are then grasped. Instead, Being displays aspects not derivative from a prior totality. There's no place inside or outside disclosures where all aspects coalesce, for there are different metaphysics at play without an underlying reality supporting them: the binary real/metaphysics is itself metaphysical (§2.16). — There are different worlds.

This difference doesn't preclude, but is the condition of communication.[237] Communication rides the wave of what is common.

Other forms of living may appear irresponsive or not responsible. Some practices may appear abhorrent, as some of ours will for them. There are different metaphysically-lived senses of things for different disclosures.

Metaphysics inform how other metaphysics are seen; a more responsive metaphysics is better. — My view isn't meta-metaphysical, it's just metaphysical; every metaphysics deals with other metaphysics.

'Other forms of living may appear irresponsive.' This means all of the following (to varying degrees): they *are* irresponsive; they *seem* irresponsive; they *are* responsive *for* that form of living; they *seem* responsive *for* that form of living. (— *Also,* they may *be* or *seem* irresponsive *for* them; *and be* or *seem partly* responsive for us). In what sense things appear irresponsive will inform what form our response takes.

2.90 Much of my text speaks to *variations on world*. Thingly, stone, plant, non-human animal, and human; colourizations, wisps, fragments, and non-totalizable wholes; a disclosure of beings as a whole and beings as beings; the fit of meaning; and resistance, maintenance, encounterability, orientability, and response. Worlds interlock, overlap, and diverge.

However, things *appear* to converge or to be delineable when we, for instance, take our view as an archetype. We posit an objectivity that transcends both our particular perspective and the particularity of any given thing, subordinating it to general categories. We reductively elaborate notions of objectivity through concepts of sameness. Finally, we dismiss other contending views as tribal, local, parochial, chaotic, and superstitious. This procedure reinforces the centre-outside-the-system (§1.98, §2.84): be it God, the view from nowhere, notions of objectivity, and so on. Once established, all sense experience *seems* to support such claims.

[237] See the discussion of meaning in §2.87.

But worlds bleed at the seams, and there's no drip tray to catch the blood — there's nothing there: they bleed one into the other.

2.91 Violence and rupture precede security or identity because worlds and things can never be hermetically sealed, despite that many of our predispositions lead us to think that they're sealed. There's a prior precariousness or vulnerability to things. Against their efforts to maintain themselves, they're already pulled out of themselves into uncontrollable relations. This is essential to any world or thing (otherwise the 'thing,' the X, would be closed in on itself, unplaceable in any other disclosure, and hence, because it would be unable to encounter others, it would lack even a disclosure it could call its own). A thing *is* its openness, and it *is because of* its openness.

This brokenness of things, which enables communicability and meaning, can only be patched over if the patching's already ruptured and rupturing more. – When we try to identify, maintain, or secure something, it's always already, in principle and in fact, decaying, exploding, and imploding. If the patching attempt becomes desperate, then the violence is projected outwards: the world gets distorted in trying to maintain a security outside impingements — which cannot be done.

This doesn't mean that we won't or shouldn't identify or secure things — I don't think we could stop if we wanted to; it's a question of how we think of identification and security. — To love something's to always already have lost it (§2.7, §2.87).

To secure something's to care for it; the tone's one of loss, love, tending-to, hope. There's a risk of adopting a tone of fear, anger, vengefulness, *ressentiment*. – We couldn't love something that's not broken and exposed. (A paradox of the Christian God.) We cannot love what we cannot lose. We cannot attend to something that isn't losable.

If we were to relinquish this kind of security, our way of living would change (§2.87). We wouldn't stop caring: we'd care differently.

2.92 We try to secure what's evident – treat it like a guarantee. What's evident—what 'everyone agrees' is evidence—seems like something we can rely on. Non-evident evidence can only emerge by imploding what's evident (i.e., evidence is a larger category than what's evident).

Once we have a picture, all evidence seems to fit the frame, up to a breaking point.

These are ruts of thought, for the evident's that track down which our thoughts run with little resistance. Without noticing the particularities of a situation, the evident's so persuasive that we find ourselves drawn to a conclusion. This is necessary and useful. Necessary, because as being-in-the-world, we're always already familiar with beings: we throw forward a projective horizon within which beings make sense. Useful, because the self-evident's necessary for predictability.

But appeal to the self-evident doesn't solve anything. First, phenomena can always show new aspects. Second, self-evidence grounds particular forms of living but it doesn't resonate in the same way across different contexts and different forms of living. There may be reasons for self-evidentness, why one's spade's turned, but the reasons and the turning of the spade are context-dependent, which is the context of the disclosure. One cannot induce a vision of a disclosure in another, but one can point to phenomena in ways such that commonalities may be seen across differences.

We can show others why things are a particular way for us: 'Look at things this way.' 'Yes, I can see how X is obvious, self-evident, for you.'

2.93 The gods war amongst each other: this phrase illuminates not only how we think—e.g., what we take as evident—it also focuses the other term, i.e., that the gods war amongst each other: the latter becomes enlivened as possibility. Metaphors refocus not only one term, but also the other (§2.2).

Relatedly, it's insufficient to close this book and say, 'I understand,' for you haven't understood understanding if you take it to mean simply 'intellectually' surmounting or passing through something; understanding isn't merely being able to recite something. To understand is to feel a resonance, to see how things could be and are this way — not descriptively, but transformatively, for understanding refocuses us. Understanding is being seized, feeling its fingers around you. — We're not tourists here.

That the gods war amongst each other reveals a rupture and violence before, as well as continuing long after, attempts to constitute security and identity. That the gods war amongst each other doesn't simply deny a unity to the onto-theological: it denies a unity to the selfsame, identical human. This is because that the gods war amongst each other isn't something external that sometimes impinges upon the human realm. Rather, the gods reveal fragments of overlapping and inconsistent worlds — worlds in tension with one another. A human's never an entity that's independent of the constitution of a world and only subsequently attached to one: humans are *being-in-the-world*: they're constituted in their openness to their world. When their world's at stake, humans too are in question and torn asunder. Humans become caught in the sway of the to and fro rocking of worlds. — Ethics responds from our primordial woundedness: our inability to be a singular or contained entity.

2.94 We grasp for security with our stories of social, technological, scientific, and even individual (developmental) progress: we tell ourselves these stories that subtend practical comportment (§2.87). But they're ruptured because the gods war amongst each other (§2.21, §2.49), for there's no unitary standard for measuring progress (§2.53).

In providing answers on what things are *for* and how we fit in, these stories answer questions about the meaning of being. This means, more primordially, these stories have

asked and addressed certain questions that have themselves addressed the mystery of being. These questions are bound with accounts of unitary progress.

When the stories lose traction, we're faced again with the mystery of being (which we've been trying to keep at bay). This is a unique opportunity. But this mystery isn't properly addressed when Heidegger speaks of the mystery of Being and beings.[238] Nor is it properly addressed when we ask stale, prefabricated questions: what's (our) existence *for*? what's the *point* of (my) existence? Even when some event occurs to tear a veil from our eyes, these questions too quickly band-aid or try to dress up the way we were before (teleology, use-value): in *Robinson Crusoe*, the protagonist sits on the beach and wonders: "*What is this earth and sea of which I have seen so much, whence is it produced, and what am I, and all the other creatures, wild and tame, human and brutal, whence are we?*"[239]

In the face of the one God, we're all called to a path of development: the same path for all (where variations are modulations of the universal). Every human has this possibility, which unfolds in a particular way, guaranteed by the Creator: the soul turns from deviance and creation towards its Creator and proper *telic* unfolding: guilt, sin, repentance, and rebirth. Now, the absence of the one God partially occludes this path, but leaves the feeling that it must be there.

To wedge open possibilities, to open us to the rupture of the gods, and to better address the mystery of being, we turn towards what Heidegger calls being-towards-death—for death has a way of *exposing* us to our situation, a situation of tenuousness for ourselves *and* others—and his notion of the clearing, which speaks to the temporary and temporal opening, lighting up, and exposing things around us in a 'space' of responsivity and mutual clearing. The mystery of being isn't just that things are, that they are the things they are, or that there's 'isness' at all, though it does involve these. The mysteriousness is our placedness in this vastness, where things are connecting-diverging, in their mutual exposures and exposing, decaying and transforming, shining and seducing from their placedness—i.e., in their meaningfulness, which our comportment can miss—in the midst of the warring of the gods; the mysteriousness is that Beings flash out (§2.51, §2.52) — that there 'are' 'isnesses.' The mysteriousness is the standing forth of things. It's that we come to think we *know* how to be here.

2.95 The gods war amongst each other: this means there's a possibility of other arrangements of world and things. We can turn to things themselves and ask them how would things be if the gods war amongst each other?

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[238] On the "*wonder of all wonders:* that *beings* are" see Heidegger, "Postscript to 'What is Metaphysics?'," in *Pathmarks*, trans. William McNeill, p. 234. On the enigmatic — "*What is more enigmatic: that beings are, or that Being 'is'? Or does even this reflection fail to bring us close to that enigma which has occurred with the Being of beings?*" — see Heidegger, "Introduction to 'What is Metaphysics?'," in *Pathmarks*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, p. 290. On the mystery of "*the concealing of what is concealed as a whole, of beings as such, i.e., the mystery*" see Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," p. 148–51 and also "Letter on 'Humanism'," p. 253, 255.

[239] Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (London: Arcturus Publishing Limited, 2013), p. 91, "June 28."

Going back to things themselves is *powerful*. – Power and authority are bound up with relations to and interpretations of phenomena. Nietzsche notices that naming things and expressing relations is central to power.[240] Baudrillard describes how the system of value and signs, of capital (i.e., a system of relations), holds power through unilateral giving, for relations of giving express relations of power.[241] Particular relations with things, informed by metaphysics, are then expressed when we relate to others.

Why were Indigenous language and culture in places like Canada seen by settlers as threats? Why was the heterodoxy that somehow or other crystallized around witches in the Middle Ages seen as a threat? Why was the Church concerned with heathens? —— In part, because these offered alternate loci of power, alternate ways of relating to things (of naming things, relating to the land, giving, receiving, and exchange, and relations of devoutness): they offered alternate interpretations, metaphysics, and ontologies.

While there's power in interpretation, through an authority, such as the state, it can be locked down through the threat of physical violence.[242] Through the system of value, capital, and signs, power and interpretations have been secured.

My text can be understood as a call to (re)claim power through relating to things themselves.

Different words, dispositions, practices, and relations can be enough to bring forth the wrath of authority, for these challenge it. Authority is often sensitive in a way not indicative of strength, but of weakness: "*As a community grows in power, it ceases to take the offence of the individual quite so seriously [….] 'What do I care about my parasites', it could say, 'let them live and flourish: I am strong enough for all that!'*"[243] — Faced with challenges, there's no choice but to respond (within the structure of gift-logic and the *challenge* (§2.58)) — the question's *how* they do so.

What's silenced in the consolidation of power is never just human voices, but also things themselves. This isn't just violence*: it's ontological violence, ontological devastation.*

2.96 That the gods war amongst each other means knowledge can have no universals and there's no grounds for absolute certainty — of prime importance for so long to philosophy: a 'point' to hold things together just so.

When our concern ceases to be laying all things out on a grid in line with non-contradiction (e.g., only one thing can be in one place at any given time), we open a new horizon for

[240] Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, p. 12.
[241] Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, p. 36–7, 40, 42–3.
[242] Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. and ed. H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 78–9.
[243] Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, p. 47, 48.

philosophy; not serving epistemology in service of technological mastery, but rather pondering divergent ontologies. Not seeking one principle, a principle of one, to unify disparity itself; even now we think of pluralities or pluralism within a singular principled frame (e.g., tolerance). That the gods war amongst each other means that there's no single rule, criterion, or argumentative form.

'The gods war amongst each other' is a depth charge. – If set right, it'll show how atheism too is beholden to the principle of God. Another way to put this is that an onto-theological principle doesn't need God *per se*. For the typical atheist, the world's still singular, unified, and held together such that universal knowledge is guaranteed, absolute certainty is coherent (even if unattainable), and all can be mapped on the non-contradictive grid.

Religious ontologies are *always* deeper than the godhead.

We err in thinking all things in our galaxy revolve around the sun. We forget that forces also implicate the sun, that the active/passive dichotomy is distributed throughout the galaxy, that the sun's not the metaphysical centre we once thought it was — this was a projection of our metaphysics, a way to ground our onto-theology, an insistence on the absolute centre and guarantor of meaning, which also grounds our onto-ethics and onto-politics.

We have a long history of longing for authoritarianism.

We have a long history of combating doubt, chaos, contradiction, superstition, and anarchy, calling these evil, and reconciling all voices into one (the recession of polyphony). We wanted a stake to secure the specimen. But I'm *not* calling for a reversal where we'd value doubt, chaos, contradiction, etc., for these are *created* by a particular orientation; they're shadows with which our onto-ethical authoritarianism *had* to wrestle, for they're caricatures of competing ways of being. If the sleep of reason produces monsters, it's not when sleep lets down its guard; it's reason *as* sleep — reason itself produces monsters. Not *ex nihilo*: for it gathers them together, monstrously, from various sources, hideously repainting them.

The war against disorder, against darkness, can never end. Lightness, as we think it, *is* precisely a war: lightness is inextricably implanted within the dark/light binary, linked to the evil/good binary. We strive to eradicate evil and produce it at the same time.

2.97 We have another image of orbits in the transition from the Erinyes to the Eumenides in Aeschylus:[244] the image of the *polis* as the centre around which individuals move. Feminine earth deities become bound to masculine Olympian ones, and the idea of retributive justice that's buried deep in land and blood is replaced by a social justice embodied in the courthouse.

[244] Aeschylus, "The Furies," in *The Oresteia Trilogy*.

This centralization resonates with the drive we have towards onto-ethical authoritarianism. There's a supplanting of one religious ontology by another — one onto-ethics by another, and an onto-ethics is always also an onto-politics, onto-theology, onto-epistemology, and so on. The subjugating, assimilating, or negotiating of one onto-theology with or by another is a relatively common occurrence: Titans and Olympians, many gods in the Old Testament, Hinduism and the Buddha.

— But who's this 'we' I'm talking about? Not everyone has longed for authoritarianism. There are other positions, often brutally repressed, oppressed, suppressed. Nonetheless, we see dominant, authoritarian positions stretching back into 'our' past, even where those who longed for it often knew not what they did.

The 'true way' has always required heretics; it must say 'no, not that.'

The transition from the Erinyes to the Eumenides is 'progress' for one in a particular lineage, following a thread through history.

2.98 Following a kind of thread, a story of consolidation, we leap to one of those key thinkers who also looked back to the Greeks: Freud. Freud helps plant the seeds for a revolution in rethinking humans: he opens the clear rational subject to the darkness of the unconscious.

The fascinating thing's that while he opens the way for an array of forces that constitute and pull the subject apart, he nonetheless maintains the subject as the centre around which these forces dance.[245] This awakens us to the pull of gods who war amongst each other, but at the cost of secularizing and binding them to the internal world of a subject. As internalized, they're distinguished from reality (fantasy/reality, internal/external); an imbalance of forces can also be treated (e.g., by bringing metaphoric, imagic displacements to words, thereby taming them[246]). Thus, when something's wrong, it's something wrong with *you*: a psychologist or therapist can help you return to your self as an ideal, quasi-stabilized or balanced subject. And while I don't doubt there are subtler or alternate readings to the account I've given, I'm painting broadly a certain way we pick this up.

Freud traces many ruptures back to childhood trauma, further encapsulating forces within an identical subject who develops a lifestory through organismic development. The Oedipal complex revolves the forces around the dramatic triangulation of mother-father-child. As Deleuze and Guattari point out: "*what a grotesque error to think that the unconscious-as-child is acquainted only with daddy-mommy, and that it doesn't know 'in its own way' that its father has a boss who is not a father's father, or moreover that its father himself is a boss*

[245] It's as though he subjugates Nietzschean insights to the selfsame subject.
[246] Sigmund Freud, "The Interpretation of Dreams," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, eds. Vincent B. Leitch, William E. Cain, Laurie Finke, and Barbara Johnson, trans. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2001), p. 923–6.

who is not a father."[247] *"A child never confines himself [sic] to playing house, to playing only at being daddy-and-mommy. He also plays at being a magician, a cowboy, a cop or a robber, a train, a little car."*[248] The child and parents are always open beyond the confines of any triangulation or internalization, for they're open dramatically to beings that call out and gods that war.

Deleuze and Guattari point out that the break between Freud and Jung is partly rooted in Jung's refusal to link all to the Oedipal Complex, for Jung's theory leads to archetypes: not just mother-father-child, but also magician, sorcerer, demon, and so on.[249] – And yet, the archetype theory, while expanding past Freud's constrictions, is still constricted: the collective unconscious speaks of a *universal* patterning and formation of our psyche.[250] (The same holds true for Joseph Campbell who, while opening us to the riches of myth, religion, and other traditions, puts all these voices around the centre of a psychoanalytic subject.[251])

That the gods war amongst each other doesn't mean that they do so psychologically, i.e., within our psyche; gods and world don't reside within the human subject. Instead, the gods tear this subject open and leave its entrails scattered among the branches and leaves. As being-in-the-world, we're always already *exposed*.

2.99 This problem of tethering—the galaxy to the sun, the gods to the *polis*, psychic forces to the subject—is the problem of reductionism: diverse phenomena are pulled back to a central principle or point.

— Are atoms and quarks the *best* way to explain the phenomena? For we need to ask: what *are* the phenomena in question? Let's take, as example, the claim that this coffee is a particular arrangement of chemicals and, thus, atoms. Well, no, that's *not* what this coffee *is*: this misses something fundamental about the coffee. Is the sun a series of gases and atomic particles? Well, those are aspects of it, but not what the sun *is*. We avoid reductive interpretations of the sun or the coffee, for they *are* in this way, but they also *are not*.

— What about the self? Is the self an *atomistic* subject? This, too, is reductive: it misses something fundamental about the relationality of the self, the way the self's always torn open *before* itself: temporally, historically, relationally. What these show is our need—i.e., our felt sense that we need—to ground entities in the smallest possible universal building

[247] Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 97.
[248] ibid, p. 46.
[249] See §1.98. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 46.
[250] Carl Jung, "The Concept of the Collective Unconscious," in *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Part I: Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, vol. 9, part 1, eds. Gerhard Adler, Michael Fordham, William McGuire, and Herbert Read, trans. R.F.C. Hull (New York: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 42–4.
[251] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (New York: Princeton University Press, 1973); *Primitive Mythology: The Masks of God* (New York: Penguin Books, 1976); *Oriental Mythology: The Masks of God* (New York: Penguin Books, 1976); *Occidental Mythology: The Masks of God* (New York: Penguin Books, 1976); *Creative Mythology: The Masks of God* (New York, Penguin Books, 1976).

blocks on top of which everything else (e.g., diversity) is based: i.e., difference emergent upon identity, change on stability, particularity from universality.

— But what about the idea that at the core of our being is pure awareness, and this is what we really are: this is our kernel, our core, our *atomic* self?

Well, could there be such a 'thing'? If consciousness is always consciousness *of* something (i.e., intentionality),[252] then so, too, awareness is always awareness *of* something.

Perhaps we could infer pure awareness from its effects or 'process': we could seek either the condition of possibility for intentionality, or what various instances of intentionality have in common. However, in doing so, we take what is common between instances or experiences and reduce it to some kind of basic 'stuff.'

Even if we grant that there might be pure awareness, we'd need to ask what it is: is it a thing, a set of relations, or something else? For if we're always aware of something, if we're always open in our being to other beings, and if we're always open to temporality, wouldn't it make more sense if it's a set of relations and not some thing? For it's always indebted to some other thing, aware of, open to, or related to something else. Awareness is always both conditioned (by others) and conditioning (others). Therefore, awareness is never pure (i.e., unconditioned), and even if we found a pure awareness (through abstraction), for it to be awareness it'd still be relational, and it wouldn't by itself encapsulate what it is to be aware or be a self, for as abstracted it'd miss too much of the phenomena. Awareness isn't a core, but, as embodied, it's something that's *throughout* our being.

Would we say that (pure) awareness is permanent/enduring or temporary? If it's a set of relations, it'd be temporary: relations, as essential to it, aren't static or settled. Nonetheless, it could be enduring, perhaps not in specificity (because of shifting relations), but in some other way: for example, if we posited something like 'energy' as underlying specific manifestations of itself. However, here again we'd be taking 'energy' as a reduction of 'what is common' between various contexts. In addition, this 'energetic' awareness would change so drastically with the loss and changing nature of its relations that it wouldn't mean much to insist on it enduring. Instead, awareness is temporary through and through: the self's a concrescence or cohesion of forces that exists so long as the forces are related in this way. Let's call this *opening-while-holding-back*.

2.100

2.101 Continuing our thread of reductionism, we sometimes think of five tastes (sweet, salty, sour, bitter, umami — or spicy). But is this how we taste? Or are we picking commonalities—e.g., between white, balsamic, and other vinegars, red wine, lemon,

[252] Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorion Cairns (Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), p. 33.

orange, pineapple—and ossifying them as basic things (e.g., sourness)? Yes, these things are sour, but is that the whole, *basic* story? – And it's not a matter of refining categories (e.g., vinegar-sour, citrus-sour), but of questioning this method or habit. Even if these are all sour, why think this is essential? Even if sourness is one vector upon which to think through connections, why insist on its fundamentalness or priority; why not *let* different entities reveal commonalities and differences?

Why think philosophy should seek regularity for anticipating experience[253] (i.e., for practical goals)? Why not think that what's empirical or experienced cannot always be shown universally or generally?

Certainty gives way to probability (its cousin), but we miss how such dispositions conceal as much as they reveal.

The anticipation of experience provides safety and security, and enables a redirection of attention and energy towards other projects, but at the risk of missing particularities. Missing phenomena undermines safety and security, for we're particular beings who interact with particular others. We even forget that the goal of amassing knowledge and predictability isn't a precursor to our aims and goals, but is an expression of them. We forget that beings can be approached in many ways other than from the orientation of our technological enframed way of being.

2.102 The charge of 'nihilist' to my writing would be odd. For clearly, the term would be an accusation: I'm defiling the tradition and advocating for everything it's tried to bolster against: chaos, superstition, evil, and so on. But this objection misses that its warnings are—as suggested above (§2.96)—shadows cast by our tradition's own hands. Our tradition throws 'nihilist' out in front in anticipatory, defensive strategy (we anticipate experience by creating and curtailing our own).

It should be clear that I reject simple binaries such as rational/irrational, progressive/nihilistic, and culture/nature. There are many ways of reasoning and kinds of responsivity, there are many understandings of progress, and there are many contexts. The facile claim of 'nihilist' claims to know what the cube is and that outside *that* cube is nothingness.

Our usual ways of thinking are rooted in disenchantment. This comes from a long historico-theo-philosophical process involving the gradual withdrawal and chasing of spirits from immanence to transcendence. Disenchantment is this draining from the world, leaving mechanical laws, causal explanations, dead matter, and a world rent into fact/value. The

[253] Bacon, *Novum Organum*, par. 117, p. 49; par. 124, p. 54. Bacon refers to his method as the interpretation of nature (in distinction from the anticipation of nature), but the interpretation of nature is just an anticipation by another name: par. 26, p. 8. A.J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1952), p. 49–50, 97–9, 101, 120, 151.

divine's pushed to the world's far reaches, limits, or beyond: to the start of the Big Bang, the infinitesimal, the macro, the end that's to come, and the interiority of heart and soul.

Because spirits had to be banished to set this up—and we could point to various historical nexuses, Luther and the early Enlightenment, for one—its discourse is established through drawing outlines of what it opposes: e.g., encoding spirits as ghosts eases their banishment. This constitutive nature of an opposing projection lets us speak of a 'ghost of a ghost': rational discourse is haunted by its own denials, negations, and projections. Like Rubin's vase, rational thought is internally related to and marked by superstitious thought — the other it draws in drawing itself. Therefore, nihilism's always close, which rational thought sees just 'beyond' itself.

Our ways of thinking can't be challenged by an embrace of chaos, superstition, nihilism, or overt authoritarianism such as fascism, for these are given their particular force and interpretation from within the starting point of disenchantment — they're projections by (i.e., chaos, superstition, nihilism) or responses within (i.e., fascism) it.

Onto-theological 'consolidation' (e.g., Titans into Olympians; Catholicism into Protestantism) carries battle scars. The caricatured projection of competing possibilities (as superstition, as ghosts) reveals a real friction, a real wound that's covered over and re-projected.

2.103 Seeing that the gods war amongst each other—even as *possibility*—is a metaphoric undertaking, for it involves a shift where, on the hinge of what is common ( ), we see that it fits just so.

Of course, saying an idea involves a metaphoric undertaking doesn't deny its reality or mean it's fictive. We have this impression because we translate metaphor as part of the metaphor/literal binary grounded in the imaginary/real binary. Zwicky shows that metaphoric phenomena are broader than this: metaphor isn't exclusively literary, for it points to ontological truths, including through its form (X is and is not Y).

And yet, metaphors do rely on a contrast with literalness, understood as calcified thought. This literalness isn't the binary opposite of metaphor: the literal's derivative insofar as it's the calcification of metaphoric relations. Metaphor and the literal are both real, and their distinction's one of degree: literality's metaphoricity can be revived through certain gestures — as in the following case, where, in drawing our attention to the loss of metaphor, the metaphor's partially revived: "*[A metaphor] dies when it enters a language-game [….] Nothing is rescued from familiarity by its gestures; we are not* struck *by a similarity of aspects. ('The eye's lid.')*"[254]

[254] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH22.

In a metaphor, there's both the revealing of commonality (X is Y) *as well as* the revealing of difference (X is not Y): and, so, the metaphysics implied by the statement 'the gods war amongst each other' are also *not* the case because we remain in our world. Our world is *not* that world. And *yet*, our world *is* open to transformation, and metaphors *can* be transformative (§2.2).

Our way of doing things isn't final, even if it may appear this way. — This insight can, if it comes with sufficient force, be transformative: *things needn't be this way.*

2.104 Good imagination, like good art, sees how it is for another. We don't simply 'imagine,' if we think of 'imagine,' like 'metaphor,' as merely fictitious. We *see* how it is (how it could be) for another. Seeing in this way's a response to the other. Good imagination tarries with wisps of worlds that trail possibilities after them.

How do we know when imagining or art is 'good'? It isn't when it accurately represents something. Rather, it opens or joins a world within which we can temporarily be.

"*'A reader lives a thousand lives before he [sic] dies,' said Jojen. 'The man who never reads lives only one.'*"[255] — This quote from the fantasy series *Game of Thrones* is interesting because it captures something about reading or experiencing art. In the novel, Bran is learning that he's able to enter other lifeforms (crows, trees, wolves) in other historical times, even though, when he does the latter, he cannot speak but only observe. The novel series itself puts us in different character perspectives, with chapters delineated by these shifts. In other words, Bran's ability to change perspectives is precisely what we're doing as we read the series or, more generally, when we experience art: we see how things are (how things could be) from various perspectives, through various transformations.

I've also been emphasizing the inevitability of failure, and the call, nonetheless, to undertake the attempt. – Near the beginning of his famous essay, Nagel asks about transposing himself into a bat.[256] He points to limitations: "*Our own experience provides the basic material for our imagination, whose range is therefore limited. It will not help to try to imagine that one has webbing on one's arms, which enables one to fly around at dusk and dawn catching insects in one's mouth […]. Insofar as I can imagine this (which is not very far), it tells me only what it would be like for* me *to behave as a bat behaves. But that is not the question. I want to know what it is like for a* bat *to be a bat.*"[257] Without going into Nagel's specific conclusions, what I wish to draw to our attention is his methodological concern: the limits of imagination.

Imagination sees things differently. Like any way of seeing, it can be wrong. And there are indeed methodological concerns. But notice that we cannot stop imagining. When Heidegger implicitly answers that we cannot transpose ourselves into non-human animals

[255] See §1.104. Martin, *A Dance with Dragons*, p. 490, chapter 34.
[256] Thomas Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?," *The Philosophical Review* 83.4 (1974): p. 435–50.
[257] ibid, p. 439.

because there's no 'there' for them (no *Da*), he's employing an imaginary — a poor one in my view. That is, he imagines that there's no access and he imagines a poorness in world (§2.11), for to think a limit is also to transgress it (§2.38).

But when we allow ourselves to encounter the alterity of a particular non-human animal (which includes its commonalities with us), we cannot but be struck by it. Here's another form of living, wrapped in its own mysteries. To either pretend to renounce any imagination or to imagine too effortlessly is to harm the phenomenon. Thus, while Nagel raises some good points warning against the latter, one shouldn't subsequently be driven to the former.[258]

Any imagination involves a risk, but so too does any communication or relation. We cannot avoid relating or communicating, just as we cannot avoid imagining. How we pick up this fact shows something about who we are.

2.105 When we experience good imagination and good art, we do so with one foot in our world. This doesn't mean we're the centre around which different ideas revolve. Nor is our world some *thing* or medium within which we're stuck; the world's a kind of relationality prior and subsequent to any particular relation. The world's always torn open, essentially exposed to other worlds. The tatters of various worlds interlace for a brief interval before releasing each to each. This is decentring.

When an utterance or gesture is made—and before then, when a way of being is being—it's always already outside its own context and inside multiple others: every gesture's instantly sited and cited within various contexts within which it occurs; this isn't incidental because gestures are intentionally made for others in different (even if ever so slight) contexts, which can never be controlled, and gestures are perceivable from others in other contexts. Communication is never certain nor guaranteed. And this isn't because gestures must leave their source and enter a space of uncertainty; rather, the uncertainty's constitutive of them, and the 'source' is never the absolute origin nor transparent/certain: the gesture pre-emptively leaps across the gap between things, necessarily, and is already responding to them. There's no private language.[259]

The sense of a gesture is how it means within a given context; it cannot mean (nor be) without one. Gestures traverse two contexts. And since gestures always have the other built into them, so to speak, the context for a gesture's always also a context *in-between* entities: its 'source' is the ever-changing *in-between*. Yet, this means that one cannot fully control or anticipate one's own gestures, for they always enter innumerable in-betweens,

[258] Nagel speculatively proposes that we move beyond imagination (p. 449): "*This should be regarded as a challenge to form new concepts and devise a new method—an objective phenomenology not dependent on empathy or the imagination*." He thereby falls into the former mistake (i.e., pretending to renounce imagination), for an 'objective phenomenology' would still require imagination.
[259] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §243–315, p. 95–111, but, in particular, see §243, p. 95; §256, p. 98; §269, p. 101.

and are never fully predictable even within the intended in-between. – When a gesture is made, it has this structure of loss built into it. – Every gesture's a promise.

It's therefore entirely necessary that we fail insofar as we dream of purity, of absolute (i.e., onto-theological) acceptance or forgiveness.

2.106 Technological enframing (§1.106) is a way that beings call and draw us into reductionism. Technology is a broader phenomenon that isn't essentially reductive;[260] it becomes reductive when we take its way of engaging and responding to the world as the only or best way, when the world appears solely as technological problem. Technological enframing provides us with a prior way of knowing how to respond. But Heidegger argues that the way things call to us in technological enframing occludes our role in the presencing of things.[261] It also occludes the role of things in their and our appearing. Technology, and its mode of response, isn't just a way of approaching things, but is a way that things are taken up ontologically.

We bracket off so many aspects of our being: death, dreams, non-human animals, plants, the worlds of things, the worlds of others, our temporality and projection, poetic thinking, *this*ness, and experiences that leak around the edges of a managerial-capitalist-technological society, bolstered by various rigid binaries, overseen by a *cosmic reduction*: a reduction of the many gods to a unitary, onto-theological principle.[262] And, then, we're surprised when phenomena double-back on themselves, catch us off guard, reveal a rupture, a suppression, a repression. These surprising episodes, however, merely appear to us as 'problems,' frustrations, further obstacles to be overcome and assimilated and technologically addressed, further experiences to be anticipated better. It rarely occurs to us that problems run deeper: to our denial of phenomena.

We turn away from things, the importance of which is difficult to emphasize, for the world's precisely a series of turning-towards. Of course, even our turning-away's a way of turning-towards insofar as we always let things be as the things they are. But things are called into question — they ask to be refocused.

There's no technological solution to the 'problem' of respect, where respect is a letting-shine-forth of a particularity gathering all things, for technology occludes all the latter. — We enter the world as we enter a house into which we've been invited. One in which things wrap us in their clearing. Respect is to acknowledge this situation.

This doesn't mean we should simply respect situations as we find them. We're thrown into a stage of technology, capitalism, colonializations, and other violences. We also aren't trying to return to some ideal, violent-free state prior to ourselves. Rather, we're trying to respect things on their own terms, acknowledging that violences aren't simply or primarily

[260] Zwicky, *Lyric Philosophy*, LH121, LH123, LH147.
[261] Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," p. 27.
[262] How we understand 'simplicity' (§2.79) is onto-theological.

historical events, but are ongoing ways we're entangled within relations; there's a need to attend to and mitigate such violences (without being violent towards violence).

We don't respect things as though we are not, were not, will not, or could not be here (i.e., from the point of view of our disappearance, our death); we respect them as the entangled, thrown, relational beings we are (i.e., from the point of view of our appearance, our way of being), for we too are here, welcoming things into this home.

There is no prior way of knowing how to respond.

2.107 Things open to each other *metaphorically*. This means that things open to each other across a distance that's 'bridged' metaphorically. Distance is essential. Communication's only ever temporary, contextual, relational, fleeting, and like a miracle. Not because it surmounts all odds or requires supernatural intervention, for it's common, but because two things, differently enworlded, turn to face each other. In the pile of leaves blowing in the winds, a connection's made for a while.

Uexküll was close to many of these thoughts, but he held that there must be something that holds the various divergences together: there must be Nature that guarantees and ensures commensurability.[263] So, the world of the owl, interlocked with the world of the mouse, interlocked with the world of the insect — are all held together in a big picture view of Nature, which is, of course, a stone's throw from God. God is the *deus ex machina* that guarantees commensurability (and hence full visibility, communicability, meaning and transference: full confessionality — fully stripped, fully naked, fully seen). *Meta pherein*, then, is subordinated to and contained by this.

Without, and despite, this centre and guarantee, *meta pherein* carries beyond, across, over towards the other and back, without reducing itself or the other in the transference.

Things can't actually be reduced because they shine from themselves. Like suns without fixed orbits, they shine and affect others around them. Unlike individual atoms, they shine as constellations, tracing throughout their relations. They call one another, seductively. This shining is a way of crossing gaps and gathering things temporarily: all things are related to all other things, in part because all things are gathered for each thing.[264] All things are placed in arrays, reverberating out from each thing in a nonlinear, non-reducible, and ultimately unknowable way (there's no full transparency from an onto-theological whole).

We're going to spend the next layer thinking through the onto-theological dimension of our existence because of the importance, which I've been tracing out in these last few sections,

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[263] "*And yet, all these different environments are fostered and borne along by the One that is inaccessible to all environments forever. Forever unknowable behind all of the worlds it produces, the subject—Nature—conceals itself*." Uexküll, *A Foray into the Worlds and Animals and Humans*, p. 135.
[264] Which *doesn't* mean there's a consistency of *things* between gatherings, for a thing in one world may not be 'a thing' in another.

of the onto-theological—how it structures, grounds, or enables particular (metaphysical) possibilities or endeavours to unfold—for, otherwise, it acts as a blockage or rut because our conception of a unitary principle (onto-theologically based) prevents us from fully grasping metaphoric ontology, where there's a divergence of principles.

Loss is stitched into the nature of things. Things shine only because they're burning off themselves, diminishing, exhausting themselves. They lose themselves in others. Things shine, never foreseeing their meteorite, their supernova.

2.108 If there was a onto which the fit, if there was a non-metaphoric cube under the metaphoric cube, or a stable, secure, identical, and absolute cube under the variable, particular, differing, and perspectival cube, then there would have to be an outside to all disclosures. There'd have to be this outside for a cube to be put overtop of the other cube like clothing. But, as I've already emphasized, 'things' aren't there, waiting to be stripped to their core to display their essence. Interpretation's never to clothe the naked truth nor to strip clothing off to get at this truth: as though science were a process of seizing and tearing clothes.[265] As though the most important thing's nudity and not seductions of clothing. As though nudity were fully nude itself and not another seduction.[266] As though science thought it could reveal full desire (or its lack) through the arsenal with which it assaults beings. As though what's key to our interactions is unabashed staring at the stripped and stretched — "*When the evening is spread out against the sky / Like a patient etherised upon a table*":[267] the non-seductive, flat, just-thereness of any given thing.

The spreading board onto which butterflies are pinned isn't just an instance: it's symptomatic. There's a violence, a fastening to (fascination with) the linear grid, a revealing, non-concealing, disrobing, forced bareness to the 'thing' (the butterfly) — that is, a certain 'derived' visibility, a certain gendering at play (within the play of interlocking binaries, themselves spread out on their own kind of spreading board). The patriarchal, onto-ethical orientation to beings: they *must* be shown bare, the active engage the passive, form engage content, masculinity engage femininity, and so on. Truth's that which can and should be revealed, unconcealed, dis-covered, un-veiled, stripped for pointed sight; bound with exposed passivity — but, paradoxically, concealing "*the alternating rhythm of erection and detumescence that the male is* unable to dissimulate *in the face-to-face of copulation […].*"[268]

Things seduce one another. This seduction isn't a corollary of a more fundamental point: for example, some Darwinian interpretations, nor is it restricted to organisms. When a bird dances for a potential mate, it's not using this seduction as a tool to clothe naked ambition;

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[265] See Derrida on Descartes and his discussion of the intelligible qualities of wax. Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, p. 73.
[266] Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction*, trans. Brian Singer (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1990), p. 33.
[267] T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," in *The Waste Land and Other Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), p. 9, lines 2-3.
[268] Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, p. 61, emphasis added.

this seduction *is* its 'naked' ambition. That is, seduction's not a kind of clothing or dissimulation. Seduction isn't an accidental feature covering the essence of mating, breeding, copulating, joining, binding, bonding. Seduction's a nod to the discrepancy between things; it's an acknowledgement and a responding to the similarity *and* difference of things.

Things speak in seduction. The cube's a seduction. Things seduce not only other things, but spaces between them. Seduction's another word for shining. Shining's not only a reaching out, but also a receding back.

'I get it: this is just a metaphoric way of speaking.'

— But what does that mean, '*just* a metaphoric way of speaking'? – It *is* a metaphoric way of speaking, but *not* 'just.'

Listen. If I have known beauty
let's say I came to it
asking[269]

[269] Phyllis Webb, from "Some Final Questions," in *Selected Poems: The Vision Tree*, ed. Sharon Thesen (Burnaby, BC: Talonbooks, 1998), p. 107.

III

Lyric thought is a kind of ontological seismic exploration
and metaphors are charges set by the seismic crew.
A good metaphor lets us see more deeply
than a weak one.[270]

A metaphor is like a depth charge[271]

3.1 ("*Nature loves to hide.*"[272] — Gods, spirits, and ghosts, in a many-folded pocket. —)

IN THE BEGINNING, was a continuation.

Deities and spirits — they all hid. All things were blanketed and, as though magnetically, were pointed to the centre.

Gods have always tried to push through at the peripheries, at the margins; they've been caught sight of in the corner of an eye. This isn't to say that we're discussing the same gods in every case throughout time — undoubtedly, they've changed: they're supplanted, cast out, forgotten.

Gods don't die, and even if they do, they remain immortal.

Nonetheless, some of us are starting to notice at the edges, or are starting to be able to notice, a new arrangement of gods.

3.2 Worlds often have a *prismatic god*. This god reflects light in a particular way (but not just light, not just the visual) so that our world shows itself as it is. The relational, referential context of 'world' is harboured by the god.

There are competing, battling prismatics. This array of prismatic gods, each in their world, say, 'Look at things this way,' and one or the other may temporarily gain the upper hand. And yet, ultimately, our prismatic god wins the day for us, and resecures our world — for the god's always re-securing in the background (we never leave our world).

The competing prismatics is enabled by what I've elsewhere called a metaphoric structure (X is and is not like Y). We see things through *this* prism or *that* one: things are refocused, and we notice similarities and differences against an ultimate irreducibility.

3.3 The battling gods create holes in the world.

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[270] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH44.
[271] Jan Zwicky, "Mathematical Analogy and Metaphorical Insight," in *Alkibiades' Love: Essays in Philosophy* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), p. 130.
[272] Heraclitus, *A Presocratics Reader*, frag. 39, p. 34.

We focus on the world, which patches itself over, or we focus in general on the wholes. In this way, we pay tribute to our prismatic god or we pay tribute to all other prismatics.

This is one way to metaphorically envision a transformation of the world. (Depending on how we pay tribute, the Necker cube shows a different face.)

Every day, constantly, our prismatic god once again plugs the holes. This can make the world *appear* as a sphere, a globe. The gathering, in a sense, is orbital.

3.4 IN THE BEGINNING, prismatic gods emerged.

They came forth like shoots in spring.

They're loyal: to human groups, animal groups, plant groups. In each case, they open a world that *appears* spherical. Each group has its own prismatic god.

It's a veritable polytheistic array.

3.5 To be in the midst of such groups, for example in a forest, is to be in the midst of a community—perhaps a cacophony—of gods. Being in a forest can precipitate a transformation because it's a place where the holes in the world are pronounced (§3.3).

Yet, while I've spoken of possibilities within and of our world—to pay tribute to our or all other prismatic gods—I haven't yet spoken of paying tribute to other *particular* prismatic gods. We may call them *spiritualities*.

(I don't say 'beings' because we aren't really discussing beings here. I'll return to this point.[273] In a way, we're discussing the pluralization of Being: the Beings of beings.)

In addition to prismatic gods, there are what are called *intensities*. Forests can be the site of many intensities.

3.6 The transformation of the world occurs along lines I've been discussing (our/all other prismatic gods, i.e., as holes in our world) or along other axes. As just mentioned, we pay tribute to our prismatic god, or we seek favour from another *particular* prismatic god.

But however adept we become at seeing how things are under its auspices (where, by this expression, I don't mean we see the *same* things), we can never see both ways at once: that is, we always slight all other gods.

[273] See §3.9.

We may leap between two gods to whom we pay tribute—perhaps we even set up communication between them—but we can never unify them: there's always a prior enmity, even if never acted upon.

3.7 Intensities, *intensity spirits*, dwell in particular things. These spirits are how one's drawn into a *this*. They're *attendants* of prismatic gods.

Each particularity radiates in its own way and opens to differing degrees of exposure. This radiance is a call to a broader community, a deepening relationality. Intensities radiate more brightly when they have more of themselves to give: they spread themselves out across worlds.

— Why call them intensities? This concept's how we envision a step back from the character of a particular *this*. We see the power in a particular thing, and sometimes we can show this across a divide: it's as though animating or inhabiting the thing is an intensity spirit who goes beyond the way the thing shows itself to us.

(But there's no stepping back outside disclosure.)

3.8 Not every tree calls to us or seems to have an attendant spirit. *This* tree calls to me, differently from how others call. We mutually beckon, almost akin to romance or amicability.

It beckons, draws a sentence out, calls it forth.
In its context, a word calls.

— Spirits dance everywhere in our midst.

3.9 An entity's intensity is how it's powerfully in the world and how it exceeds its boundaries.

An intensity spirit, which draws us into *this*, has its own character (which isn't necessarily, but could be, a personality).

When I speak of spirits, I *don't* mean spirit opposed to matter. There isn't a substance animated by a living, supernatural force. Nor are spirits an otherworldly, immaterial substance. A spirit (which can offer a glimpse onto another prismatic god) isn't simply a being (§3.5): the spirit shows, suggests, how things would be, how Being would be, if we would or could "*Look at things like this*."[274]

— How could spirits be personalities if they're not beings? Spirits lend themselves to this: they can appear as a being, only to dissolve into a way of Being when approached; there's a

[274] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH38.

gestalt shift in which they can be seen as a being or as a way of Being. Spirits, which can be encountered as phenomena, are more originarily ways phenomena appear.

This tree's spirit expresses its character. It has its own traits: perhaps it's wily, reticent, gentle, or abrasive. It reaches out to us, just as we reach out to it.

3.10 Spirits dwell in places. They draw us in.

"*Look at things like* this":[275] a spirit opens a way of seeing. A wisp of world, a tear in our world.

When the tear increases in intensity, when it becomes global, then the spirit opens onto a prismatic god.

(Spirits open onto intensities, which can open onto prismatic gods.)

3.11 While a prismatic god shows a projection of the cube: , an intensity challenges the way we see the cube, suggesting other ways.

Other entities have prisms and intensities.

When a stone calls to us we might say that *this* stone, *this* being, is an *intensity*. – The flash of other prismatic gods can appear as spirits.

How things are for the stone involves how things gather for it within its group in a world and under the reign of a prismatic god.

3.12 The intensity of *this* tree, bound with its god, isn't just an intensity (as though an intensity's an intensity's an intensity); rather, it's a *particular* intensity (it doesn't *take on* a particular intensity: it *is* this particularity through and through). *This* tree *explodes* for us.

A tree, too, encounters intensities: pools of water, rich or barren soil, sunlight streaming or rain pouring down.

The gods are those who orient us, where 'us' is whatever entity's in question. Every entity opens to intensities, spirits, and divinities.

3.13 When I say *this* tree's an intensity, that, in becoming global, opens onto a prismatic god (§3.10), I don't mean *this* tree *is* a prismatic god. Selves are never gods. Rather, the tree (or a self) 'has' or is 'looked after' by a prismatic god.

[275] ibid. My emphasis.

This god's in the background, stitching the world, which includes one's self. It's part of the orbital gathering of the god.

While an individual entity can have its own attendant spirit, which draws others into an intensity, the prismatic god's not the god of or for an individual. The prismatic god's the god of *a group*. Although individuals can be intense, they're intense within a group. (We don't always notice this for beings we aren't used to seeing in a group.)

Intensities, spirits, gods cut across the way we usually think of an individual thing, leaping across boundaries, shifting our understanding. Deities aren't wed to one particular thing as this thing: they wander, blend, and shift. A tree may have a spirit, but so may a meadow, or some 'thing' we may not think of as a thing: this meadow and this tree taken together; or just the lower part of this tree.

3.14 Spirits make demands, call, and whisper among us. We open to them as a sign of respect. – But there are dangers. It can be like staring into an abyss, one into which we fall towards an other.

There's a danger in getting pulled over, becoming *fully* other — not that one world becomes another, but one's self becomes other. (One never leaves one's world; but one's world can be torn asunder.)

There's also a danger in slighting the gods (Creon). Answering a call feels good, like a rhythm awaits a beat or a rhyme is awaited in the fullness of air.

It's to feel the meaningfulness of things around us, to see how things fit within sets of relations.

3.15 New possibilities for thought and action open only in encounters with other particular things. Otherwise, we're lulled by our prismatic god — which doesn't mean we're resigned, lazy, or relaxed. Being lulled can manifest as intense activity, as frenetic decision-making rushing towards deadlines. Being lulled is to be wedded to our horizon, without heeding possible dalliances.

Creative possibilities open after encounters with particular things. Creativity, which includes philosophy, comes through such holes.

3.16 Gods are primordial: they, paradoxically, both grant *and* express the 'principle' of our understanding that permeates all things. They're within world and yet give world the way it hangs together: for example, whether the world's unified by one or many principles. Gods express and support a metaphysics. They show how things are *for* us, and how things are *with* us.

Gods never come only from ourselves. Our understanding of them always comes from and expresses a history of decisions.

They're equiprimordial with world. Even 'no gods' is a variation of gods. (In this respect, they're not beings: they're what is mystical.)

When we're drawn into things, we're drawn (knowingly or not) into an onto-theology. We may sense their spirit, and even bond or dance with it — that is, we let ourselves be enchanted. — A thing has a world to offer.

Things, too, cross into our world, for we, too, have a world to offer. Things always go beyond themselves: attendants can be *messengers*. — All things are promiscuous.

"*Look at things like this*."[276] —— Things, too, are mystical.

3.17 How well we pay tribute is shown in our openness to things as they jut forth.

Although we can pay tribute to our prismatic god and ignore other prismatic holes, this isn't as strictly devotional to our god as we may think. The world's created and maintained by the opening of such holes.

Paying tribute is to acknowledge not only the patching over but also the opening of holes.

It's not only that the god patches over holes, but also that holes drive the god to engage in patching over. (The god's the god it is by virtue of the holes.)

Speech is comprised of words and silences.
Awareness is comprised of waking and dreaming.

3.18 Gods, in part, take on the role of conditions of possibilities for how a world is. However, while the story I'm tracing in this layer does provide a kind of quasi-transcendental account (a historic-typologic-ontological account), there's also a disclosure onto disruption, fractures in the world whose line we're tracing. –Gods are equiprimordial with world and things.

Gods explode from the margins, like maggots breaching a corpse. — The margins are everywhere, not just at the limits of the universe: they subtend every thing, every appearance.

Gods come from the shadows, and yet seem to have always been already here.

[276] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH38.

3.19 The account I'm putting forth is *like* a world, a world that contains a polyverse, a world that is not one. Metaphoric ontology: the multitude of worlds, the springing forth of gods, the flash without source of Being. This worlding of worlds—this proliferation—is itself from fractures within our world, collisions between our world and others: our prismatic god reveals itself, the cube reveals itself, *within* our world. This transformative event, wherein phenomena themselves change, comes from *our* prismatic god, who reveals itself from out of itself — I want the snake to eat its tail.

Gods show you how to pay tribute.

They open up worlds and things, enticing spectra of response.

3.20 The event only comes about because of the holes. Things open to each other, gods swarm amongst each other and amongst all things — many or most of them, never detected nor detectable by us.

As things aren't constituted before their relations (§2.20), so too spirits and gods aren't full positivities. Intensities are a kind of differential, a charge, held between two or more things. Things themselves are charged, held between other things. An intensity, then, is a particularly charged charge.

Any positivity gods have is by virtue of their emergence from difference, like charges held within a network. – When you perceive a charge, it's always charged relative to you. Charges grant things and are an expression of their power.

3.21 Charges leap in various ways: as intensities; globally, as prismatic gods. They can also leap across the sky of our prismatic god's horizon. I've written of the Greek gods described by Otto (§2.21); let's fit these in my quasi-typology of gods.

Global, Homeric-style gods exist *within* the prismatic god's realm. If the prismatic god *seems* to create a sphere (§3.3), this type of god seems to fill it all the way. It can be filled and totally coloured by gods like Apollo, Artemis, or Aphrodite, all in different ways. As distinct from prismatic gods, I call these *spectrum gods*.

An intensity become global becomes or leads to a spectrum and not a prismatic god when the emphasis is more on how the god *fills up* the world, and not on how it offers a *different world*: it *colours* the world.

When the charge of an intensity offers a glimpse of how it can become global (i.e., as spectrum or prismatic), then we've encountered what I've called a *wisp of world*.

— A charge is itself like a metaphor, for it gathers and leaps across, clearing the air. — In what sense is this *whole layer like* a metaphor?

— It's like a depth charge. Differentials *can* be explosive.

3.22 Intensities rupture forth and force us under the sway of a prismatic god: metaphors *grab* us.

A metaphoric ontology's a polytheistic array. This array's polymondial – torn open to meaningfulness that exceeds human meaning.

Metaphors contain the possibility of violence: tears or holes in a world. In this sense, metaphors are the sign that no god is all-powerful: any world opens to other worlds; gods war and each suffers defeats.

3.23 The gods toss us on their seas, stormy from wars, conflict, and seductions.

Strength is facing this situation: it may leave us standing, it may bring us to our knees, but we face it. To face it is to honour (some of) the gods.

Honouring the gods grants us their favour. – Not a simple reward, not the promise of a material or spiritual gift, not the promise of an easy life, here or in the supposed hereafter. Instead, it's a glowing.

Though we can't honour all the gods, we can honour some.

3.24 The gods can be jealous.

Our prismatic god's amassed an army of devotees blind to calls of other gods. We think we're living well in restricting our love to one.

The *One* has placed a strong demand on us, and continues to do so. But we can become aware of what swarms around the margins, the outskirts.

To pay tribute only to one's prismatic god is to disregard the clamour, to disregard the holes. You don't gain a god's favour by disregarding other gods. For gods don't only war, they also cooperate.

The gods—*these* gods, these emergent gods—have *no* interest in being the One, in eradicating all others.

3.25 Gods show possibilities for transformation. The holes let us question our allegiance, our faith. They let us see the work of the prismatic god, who hides in its labour. In becoming aware of the holes, we become aware of the prismatics and the prismatic god — we become aware of its work.

(The way the prismatic god hides is how the One came to be; the self-effacing of the prismatic god carries the shadow of the One.)

– Where we'd thought we heard one song, now we hear many.

We hear the calls of what calls, rather than stop up our ears, tied to the mast of the ship.

3.26 And yet, gods often call quietly. Like a brook, they whisper, rustle, and murmur.

It's as though holes affect the pressure, the draw of the wind; we hear the sound as the wind flits around the opening.

Gods are shy, and we have wondrous ways of blocking the sound: thoughts, billboards, walls. We rewrite phenomena in the image of the One. – It takes a lot for us to see otherwise.

3.27 Seeing otherwise lets a thing stand forth in its intensity and prismatics. This is not to become a devotee of another god, but to pay tribute and respects to other gods.

Then, things shine crisper in our world, revealing their obscurity. Their power and beauty is the way they pull towards their world.

Out of the mist, attendant spirits emerge and ring you about. Your prismatic god keeps watch, but doesn't fully see. Full visibility isn't possible. The panopticon—as divine or physical manifestation, or principle—works on condition of the apparent eradication of other worlds. The condition of its visibility is extermination, assimilation, or suppression.)

To experience the shining of a thing is to share in its intensity.

3.28 Things are devotional: "*They are leaning out for love. And they will lean that way forever.*"[277] They lean also in angst and desolation. Beings are exposed to connection and failure.

Things are devotional in how they thrust forth under the auspices of prismatic gods and intensities, and open to things and worlds. They open, held exposed by their own god. Things are openings and opened-to. They're opening-while-holding-back (§2.99).

Things open to us, and also retreat: we see *wisps* of worlds, not worlds in full.

3.29 Gods and spirits are innumerable. There are always new ones for us to encounter based on our attitude and comportment.

[277] Leonard Cohen, "Suzanne," in *Stranger Music* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1994), p. 96.

How we approach them affects how they show up.

3.30 What do prismatic gods do? What do they contribute? Implied in what was discussed previously (§3.16), they contribute a sense of continuity and coherence. They make the world seem smooth.

Without the prismatic god, our world would collapse into a plethora of voices. We would dissolve into a pure whipping about of calls. Instead, our selves, our world, and things concresce and relate internally.

The god holds and binds us, as bodied, in our group, for we're always together in a group and all groups are groups of bodied being. Our world, and thus our togetherness, is always already bound with a god, for they're equiprimordial (§3.16).

The god patches ruptures from others. Not to the point of seamless unity, but to the point of allowing a being, in its group, to be in its world.

3.31 An engrouped thing has its own prismatics. Does this mean that the thing's gathered into itself and its group such that other disclosures capture only a partial view? No. Self-disclosure's never 'full,' nor is it even 'partial,' for this would require a fullness from which partiality can be derived.

It's not that the fuller, truer thing's over there, receding beyond or outside our grasp; a thing's how it's disclosed, but also how it's disclosed for others. A thing's itself in each and every other disclosure, and never contains all other disclosures of itself within its own.

When I say things show and recede (§2.108), this means for others, but always also for themselves.

3.32 Speaking well of a thing invokes several deities. For it involves not only attending to the spirits of a thing, but also attending to the spirits of language.

Words emerge from engagements with things. When we attend to a thing, if we're affected profoundly, words initially disperse. They re-gather at the edges, darting as they shift and forming new arrangements. Arrays of words may come forth, darting like buzzing attendant spirits, dazzling us, till they fall into place. 'Falling into place' means the attendant spirits of words and things give each other favour for this moment: language shimmers in its duet with things.

We can also be dazzled by the attendant spirits of language, absent any thing.

3.33 Though the prismatic god attempts to stitch the holes in its world, the world could never be a perfect globe. Holes emerge constantly, and in being 'smoothed out' (§3.30), kinks, loops, and folds are merely concealed.

The globe only takes its apparent shape because of the pushes and pulls of various tensions.

3.34 The prismatic gods don't just mend a world in three-dimensional space: the globe imagery's deficient. Instead, a world always extends in numerous overlapping dimensionalities, for it incorporates and is itself an incorporation of divergent spatial and temporal (including historical) dimensions: things fit together irreconcilably, which causes perturbations in each other's worlds.

Worlds aren't separate planets drifting either together or apart in space. Instead, to catch a wisp of world, to encounter an other world, is for our *supposed* globe to morph, almost as though to the shape of an infinity sign, with the intersection in the middle of the sign representing a hole in the world (∞). However, one's own globe appears larger, so the sign would have to be redone in a lopsided way, one side larger than the other.

Or, perhaps to catch a wisp of world is for our globe to protrude in one place, without the symmetry delineated by the ∞ sign — like a bubble linked to another: . Or, perhaps it's more like a protrusion inwards where one can sense that if the hole were to grow to full proportions — if one were to *fully* 'see things like this' (an impossibility) — the inward protrusion would cover to the walls of one's own globe and fully replace it. In this sense, getting too close to the holes, plunging into the other's world, risks losing one's own (§3.14).

But, more accurately, holes are already occurring on *multiple* fronts, at *multiple* points — — where each protrusion itself reiterates, uniquely, this interplay from different perspectives each time (i.e., irreconcilably, not in 3D space).

—— Yes, the globe's just an image, and probably a bad one at that. Being isn't round, as per Parmenides.[278] Let's dispense with this image, for a world's not a globe, not a sphere (§1.54).

3.35 Worlds are never reconciled. There's no prismatic god for all prismatic gods: no Zeus, no ultimate gathering.

This is why the image of 'prismatic god' isn't perfect: there's no pure white light broken into component parts (i.e., a prism); instead, Being pulses into and as different prisms, with unique light for each world. Being doesn't pulse from a centre or spot outside a world; it

[278] Parmenides, *A Presocratics Reader*, frag. 8, p. 48.

pulses immanently, everywhere at once. The idea of Being as pure white light is a trick played after the fact, for we infer and assume this existed, but Being only 'exists' prismatized; Being only 'exists' as pulsed prismatics.

There's no Olympus, the place where gods hang around and know each other; instead, there are deities who've never met, never heard of one another, and who'll never meet. There's no neutral meeting place in which they *could* meet; they must meet in one another's territory or in some new temporary place. (Though gods aren't the gods they once were once they drift into another world.)

While some gods are more powerful and intense than others, this isn't always known beforehand. There's no pre-delineated hierarchy of gods.

There's also no place like Olympus in another, more detrimental, sense: for there's no universal shared space at all. For there to be a universal shared space, either it'd need to be disclosed outside all disclosures (i.e., a disclosure-that's-not-a-disclosure, which is impossible; §2.43, §2.72, §2.85), it'd need to have its own disclosure (which it doesn't, for space and time are necessary for every disclosure to be a disclosure and are therefore part of each disclosure, and each disclosure has its own particular spatiotemporality through which it encounters beings; in addition, abstractions are derived from particular relations),[279] or we'd need to reduce particular instantiations of space to a universal one. The gods are inhabitants on irreconcilable planes, with their own spatiotemporality (§2.10); a universal shared space is a mere utopia, an impossibility, a dream of the One.

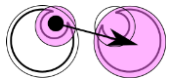
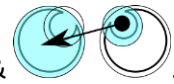
Gods are neither omniscient, omnipresent, nor omnipotent. These cannot exist because there's no pole around which all knowledge, presence, or power could ever turn.

3.36 And yet, the ultimate incommensurability of the gods doesn't mean they can't create a temporary space of appearance: i.e., an *appearance* of a *space of appearance*.

This space is a temporary and ultimately unfounded, unsupported 'place' or site 'between' two worlds, and yet, it's also 'within' *both* worlds. It doesn't exist apart from them, and yet it only exists apart from them. This 'space' isn't a place (though through ongoing appearing to one another, as though by flickering, it allows for place)—it's like a knife edge flashing two ways—and yet, it's like a 'place.'

This placeless 'place' (since it recedes like a spark) is *not* a utopia. Rather, it's like a swing bridge—a metaphoric hinge—swinging to what is common, crossing over difference, temporarily. In this 'place,' 'between' two worlds, respective gods meet.

[279] This parenthetical remark paradoxically remains true within a *particular* disclosure (§2.62).

Both worlds are torn, opened to this 'place.' If we picture glimpsing a wisp of world as an inwards protrusion (§3.34), we'd have to see this occurring in and for both worlds:  &  . While not mirrored (for there's no symmetry, no commensurability), there's a repetition that isn't a repetition — a repetition within difference, not within identity, not of the same.

3.37 The gods aren't in command or control. There are at least three ways this is the case. Firstly, gods don't render choices deterministic, even though they contribute to and maintain the horizon in which these take place.

Secondly, gods aren't omniscient, omnipresent, or omnipotent, nor could they be (§3.35). Because they can never seal off their worlds from invasion (seduction and warfare), they're pulled and collide into spaces of appearance. Gods are *incommensurably commensurable*.

Thirdly, gods are relational: they're the gods they are, differentially (§3.20). This means they're what they are due to tensions and relations to others. When prisms meet, prismatic gods change.

3.38 Why, in part, does this story of many gods seem odd to us? We're used to the story of the One (§3.24). But, also, we think there's an essential connection between existence and humans (or thinking and being — what Meillassoux calls correlationism[280]). This form of anthropocentrism binds all things to humans for the granting of their 'full' being (really, for their being at all), and thereby errs on the side of irreconcilable difference (only humans have onto-theology, and perhaps even ontology) over and above similarities between humans and all other beings.

It's true that gods are ultimately incommensurable. Yet, they're also incommensurably commensurable. This means that gods aren't pure difference without similarity; gods and worlds are originarily different, yet with similarities and points in common. Points in common are never 'the same,' which is why they resonate.

Resonance is a term that speaks to the way that harmonies and overtones are only produced from a situation in which there's first distance and difference and then similarities that aren't reduced to sameness.[281]

At certain points, gods resonate.

3.39 Gods don't give things a structure of endurance or persistence. They don't guarantee a thing's or world's durability.

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[280] Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, trans. Ray Brassier (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), p. 5.
[281] Zwicky, *Lyric Philosophy*, LH33–4; *W&M*, LH37, LH47.

Gods can disappear. They can be forgotten or their worlds can disappear, leaving them no place to be.

Even if gods are immortal, they aren't eternal.

3.40 Deep questions emerge in part from the inability of a prismatic god to perfectly patch up a world. Worlds never fully patch over the mysteries of others. Questions emerge from the space opened by others.

These questions can result from and encourage a collision of worlds; they open a space of appearances wherein your world's put in question.

3.41 A space of appearance is a bridge that does and undoes itself: the reaching out, crossing-over, and return to itself of a space of appearances carries appearances over and returns with these of the other.

Gods, once approached (§3.9), aren't beings, but are *ways* of being; they're *Beings of beings* (§3.5).

The god of a pack of dogs is irreconcilably different from ours. For these to meet, worlds collide, a space of appearance appears, and, based on *how* the worlds have collided, they appear.

Crossing-over like crossing the river Styx.[282]

3.42 The intensity, not to be confused with activity, of certain non-human animals can move us: it can pierce into, and send ripples throughout, our world.

Non-human animals puncture a hole in our world—a path in a forest, a plunge in the ocean—with which we aren't, and never could be, entirely familiar.

The mysteriousness of the other isn't simply their world that's never fully accessible to us, it's their opening within our world. We never lay bare their world, and yet they're an opening that opens otherwise and elsewhere.

3.43 A stone's an opening that opens otherwise and elsewhere.

There's a matter of scale: the stone's particles are openings; or the rocky path's an opening. But there are also different disclosures: the stone as intensity disclosed for this pack of dogs, for this tree through its roots—for other things around it—and how things are disclosed for it: the dogs, the roots, us.

[282] See §2.38 for a connection between metaphoric imagination, non-human animals, and death.

Things *are* and *are not* the things we encounter.

3.44 Scale's secondary to disclosure. For scale's already within a prismatic, and when scale entails a different disclosure (e.g., the stone's atoms), then we've looped back to the precedence of disclosure. The rock shows, through its being, its interconnection with atoms as well as the path it helps constitute. We must grapple with the question of scale with within our prismatics.

The question of disclosure is more radical. But we can only sense other possible prismatics from within our own: we tend to think that subtending the practices, words, behaviour of the other is the same world. – This is *how* effective our prismatic god is at patching up our world.

The space of appearances appears within both worlds (§3.36). Prismatic gods patch it over so it appears like a regular appearance, which, of course, it is.

3.45 When I imply that the prismatic god creates the world as an apparent 'bubble' that encompasses *all things* (§3.2, §3.16, §3.30, §3.33), I don't mean 'all things' cumulatively, as in all entities lumped together; rather, I mean 'all things' 'metaphysically': there's a receptivity to all things—to each and every thing, to any thing, to whatever may present itself, come what may—wherein each and every thing *can* enter a realm of sensibility (§2.82).

So many of the confusions that afflict my account come from thought that's oriented by the One: that which supposedly unifies all time, all space, as the wherein whereby all things, cumulatively, are always already counted, arrayed, and reconciled on a universal plane and constitute a totality. The One's the superglue that guarantees knowledge, truth, ethics, reason, and the self.

We used to call the One 'God': many still do. But now, the One's dissipated and been torn apart, and its spirit permeates our practices and perceptions everywhere.

The One's *our* ether.

3.46 IN THE BEGINNING, was *another* continuation.

The prismatic gods fell like seeds, they fell like rain. They fell from trees or clouds, from flowers, too.

Their lineage and history are somewhat subterranean. For all over, beings have encountered the One and its violent force, yet there's always been resistance: other deities, dreams, visions.

The first several meteors came. The One began to quiver, fragment and fracture, for it couldn't hold everything together: knowledge, time, power (omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence), truth, ethics, reason, selves.

3.47 *This account* of the prismatic gods *comes from within the lineage of the One*, from a tradition and an onto-theology. Though the account seems to provide a universalist account, an account of all other accounts, this is precisely what it's trying not to do!

In other words, my account of the prismatic gods carries its own meteorite: not just for some futural moment, but the Fates are always already spinning. Not from on high, or outside; the Fates are embedded in every moment of the story, winding and unwinding the threads.

Being 'is' prismatic; Being prismaticizes. It's not that Being—unitary, independent, originary—prismaticizes (§3.35); the two are simultaneous, so to speak.

3.48 Poetic thinking, which can include metaphoric thinking, seeks intensities by becoming intense.

This thinking summons intensities and deities to ride on for its expression, through which it impossibly tries to justly address other intensities.

The poetic's necessary, for nature loves to hide.[283] Our prismatic god appears supreme. The poetic *trains attentiveness*, not through rote exercise, but already in the heat of battle; already, practice is the real thing.

Poetic thinking attends to calcifications, and gazes beyond.

3.49 — *Once upon a time*, there were two farmers. While they were ploughing their fields, a stranger walked the path separating the two. She caught their eye with her magnificently coloured hat and twinkle in her eye.

Later, the farmers were chatting after a hard day. One said to the other: 'Do you recall the stranger who passed by? What a striking red hat she had…' The other replied: 'I do recall a stranger—there was only one—but she most certainly did not have a red hat on; the hat was black.'

The first furrowed his brow: 'I think perhaps you've had too much sun. As clear as day, her hat was red.' The second, dumbfounded: 'I think it's you who's had too much: her hat was definitely black!'

[283] Heraclitus, *A Presocratics Reader*, frag. 39, p. 34.

> And on it went, as they got increasingly agitated and were about to come to blows when, finally, a little spirit came to them upon a twilight breeze: 'Farmers, you are both right and both wrong: her hat was red, her hat was black. In the one way, it was red; in the other, it was black.
>
> 'And this is what she does: she walks along, between different beings, with a twinkle in her eye, and her hat of many colours.'[284]

3.50 The multicoloured-hatted *stranger god* is a trickster god.

She's a metaphor for Being; Being shows 'many colours': .

But there are several pitfalls here, as with any comparison.

First, Being isn't as simple as two colours: there are infinite colours. And colours, too, are metaphoric: there are infinite dispersals.

Second, there isn't one entity, one being, underlying all appearances. The trickster god's an image of an essential duplicity—or, rather, multiplicity, multiduplicity—at the core of occurrence. — This is ultimately the trickster's greatest trick: *she makes it appear as though all appearances are emanations from one central figure*. (This is the trick that the prismatic gods play in leading us to think of Being as a pure white light; §3.35.)

Third, it isn't that, at first, both farmers only got a portion of the story and then, at the end, got the whole account; rather, the farmers each had a whole story earlier, too. Imagine, for instance, that by the end they were still arguing and only we knew the story of the stranger god. — The stranger god's *our* explanation — she's a metaphor: the farmers each see things from their world — just as we see the red-black combination from ours. In other words, red-black is just another 'colour.'

We know *that* there are other worlds — without ever knowing *how* they are *fully*.

3.51 The stranger god's the deity of the .

So why, if there's no unitary entity underlying appearances, do both of these images—the stranger god and the —seem to have exactly this: a unity at their core?

[284] Inspired by Eshu: Allison Sellers and Joel E. Tishken, "The Place of Èṣù in the Yorùbá Pantheon," in *Èṣù: Yoruba God, Power, and the Imaginative Frontiers*, ed. Toyin Falola (Durham, North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press, 2013), p. 48–9; Donald Cosentino, "Who is that Fellow in the Many-Colored Cap? Transformations of Eshu in Old and New World Mythologies," *The Journal of American Folklore* 100.397 (Jul.–Sep. 1987): p. 262.

Well, what is it that the supposed unitary entity represents? The 'totality': beings as a whole. But more specifically, the fact that beings as a whole appear in vastly different ways. Yet, let's recall that there's no 'beings as a whole' as an entity or set of entities outside appearance. — This is the paradox, the metaphoric ontology, the giving and gathering, the Being of beings as a whole, to which this account gestures. "*So in the awareness of one is always the shadow of the loss of the other.*"[285]

The stranger's hat is a different colour for this bird, that raccoon, that stone.

The stranger god who walks between our fields gathers the fields together, gathers the hat in its many colours, gathers the farmers, this bird, that raccoon, that stone — gathers up their gods, the earth, the sky,[286] gathers it all up in the twinkle of an eye — releases it all with every blink, an image like a speck of crystalline dust. The stranger's a metaphor for 'It' which metaphorizes itself, which 'is' metaphorizing, itself (§2.51).

And the stranger, who comes from and is elsewhere, is nonetheless also *here*, welcomed (graciously, suspiciously, with hostility, indifference); a hole, balanced in the precipice between disclosures and disclosing.

And yet, the stranger god, who purports to point beyond the prismatic god, is *nonetheless* a reclaiming by the prismatic god of that which points beyond it.

3.52 From out of a bush emerges a spirit — *this* bush, far from the city.

This large tree in the neighbour's yard commands attention. It radiates out, reminds us of the reaches of sky. – It's absurd to think it's owned by the neighbour.

The deer stand silently, ears up, as they move in twilight through the streets: intensity behind their eyes.

— The stranger god walks many paths at once. We see the red hat.

3.53 The prismatic gods show an array of colours. We notice them, watch them, enjoy them, take them in.

The colours dance—the stranger god dazzles us—though they appear from an inescapable darkness. This darkness almost strikes us as a kind of colour, as though the precipice of colour.

[285] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH56, and see §1.6, §2.6, and §3.6.
[286] The *Geviert*: the fourfold (i.e., earth, sky, mortals, and divinities): Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," p. 147–51, 155–6; Heidegger, "The Thing," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 176–7; Heidegger, "Language," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 197.

The prismatic gods, each and every one, open realms that are transpierced by openness and hence by closedness: Heidegger calls this unconcealing.

Taking in the colours, drinking them in, is to take and drink in the darkness — to enjoy the darkness, the interplay.

3.54 Thinking of our death leads us, in some ways, to the brink of our world—*any* world—yet it's nestled into our world by our prismatic god. Death isn't a hole like other holes (§3.3); it's a darkness, metaphorically speaking (§3.53).

The god of death doesn't say, "*Look at things like this*."[287] It says Look!

(Look! bounces back like an echo.)

Death's the complete loss of opening of world.

We house others we lose in our world as *ghosts*. Ghosts are absences: they haunt from outskirts and bordercrossings — their presence is as essential as their presumed absence. For the deaths of others, the god does say, "*Look at things like this*."[288] Ghosts, too, say this: the *this*ness, a structure of emplaced loss; the void can resonate out to all things.

Ghosts are present absences, the unburied dead.

A being needn't be dead or gone for a ghost or haunting, for us to house their being.

— Ghosts are more numerous than we tend to notice.

3.55 We're *pulled* into attunements and dispositions (§2.77), into different colourations of being (e.g., in a group, on our own, taken by love, up in rage): things pull us this way and that.

Dispositions come over us. – The experience of spectrum gods (§3.21).

Just because the god of war calls us to anger doesn't mean we must succumb. – We must slight (at least some of) the gods.

Ghosts are like spectrum gods, for they open a vista *within* the prismatic god's sway; they're like spirits, in that they draw you in. They can 'colour' the whole.

[287] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH38.
[288] ibid.

3.56 Allow me to sketch a bit of a typology of onto-theological possibilities within a world:[289]

Onto-theological polytheism:

- A group can have both spectrum and prismatic gods (the ancient Greeks).
- If there's no prismatic god, the spectrum gods could share a family resemblance with each other—i.e., a kind of close, common lineage—which, from my account, we treat *as if* it were a prismatic god.
- A group can be without spectrum gods: for example, there are many intensity spirits, with or without a prismatic god (again, there may only be a family resemblance which we call a prismatic god).
- (Ancestors take on various forms, ranging from ghosts, to intensity spirits, to spectrum gods.)

Onto-theological monotheism:

- A group may fit this category when it's without spectrum gods and intensity spirits. Here, the group has its own, one god.

We can also consider onto-theological possibilities outside one's world.

- (Local-) globalized monotheism: A monotheistic group insists *other* groups don't have spectrum or prismatic gods or intensity spirits.
- (Local-) globalized polytheism: A polytheistic group insists *other* groups are devoid of spirits and gods.
- (Local-) monotheism or polytheism: A monotheistic or polytheistic group open to there being other gods for other groups.

3.57 When a tree explodes *for us* (§3.12)—when its particularity, its intensity, crosses-over the divide—its prismatic god calls to ours, and each shows tears in the other's world. What this means is that, to some degree and for a flash, we *become* the tree and it *becomes* us — it becomes me. Intensities are contagious.

Clearly, differences aren't overcome, yet we share in being.

Such an encounter, in its transience, reminds us of mortality and finitude. This is how the call of a raven can make you feel empty, for you turn into its resonance chamber, for its beauty limns and plumbs the precise shape of its disappearance — and of yours, too.

3.58 Intensities 'remember' if you slight them. Things reach out and call for us, and these voices determine who and how we are, for we determine our character in our response;

[289] I set aside countless permutations to draw this outline out: for example, complications posed by trinitarian or pantheistic conceptions. I acknowledge there could also be countless unthought possibilities.

our response determines not only who and how we are, but also what and how other things are. We're composed of relations. — Slighting things slights sides of ourself.

Response happens at a primal level, and so it isn't the case that we're mostly faced with things that we, in the moment, then choose how to respond to; we respond and show who we are before we get to choose our next step, though reflection may allow us to change primal responses.

Self-cultivation goes deeper than we think.

3.59 Our world's a prismatics of relations, held together by our prismatic god, which doesn't mean the prismatic god's a centre from which all relations emanate. Rather, a world's gathered *everywhere*, not at a centre.

Thus, prismatic relations include relations to our prismatic god. How the prismatic god appears depends on the god and group. Metaphors have included friend, lover, mother, father, seigneur, and ancestor.

3.60 Gods bind and gather beings, letting beings be the beings they are (§3.30). They emerge with and work to clear the clearing for a group (§3.16). The onto-theological's an expression of how beings appear — as a whole and gathered together (§3.16). Thus, the onto-theological's an aspect of ontology, and is never itself *only* a being.

The onto-theological grants and expresses the way of being of a disclosure (§3.16). Over time, the worlds within which particular gods came to prominence change, and, if the world no longer supports them, they become a remnant of it.

Gods don't die: though immortal, they aren't eternal (§3.1, §3.39). It's not that they're forgotten (§3.1, §3.39); it's that the context—the world—within which they thrived and derived their power has changed: it no longer supports them (in part, because they no longer support it).

Because the world's changed, even if gods were recalled, they wouldn't be the same they were before. Gods, like everything, change. Thus, while not mortals, they suffer a death-like fate: abandoned by a world that can no longer support them, they slip into obscurity.

And yet, it's possible to learn something about gods, even if abandoned: the fact that we fail is no deterrent (§1.105).

3.61 "*Look at things like this*."[290] — We can emphasize many parts of this phrase (*things; this; like; look*); there are many ways to say and understand it. It says: look at things this

[290] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH38.

way. Or, look at things like you look at this. Look at things like *this* looks at them. Or, look at things that are like this.

3.62 We're prone to the illusion that the stranger god's one figure — that there's a single truth about the colour of the god's hat. Therefore, if the stranger god's noticed at all, we take the polytheism (the array of colours) as encapsulated by the monotheism of the one stranger god (the illusion of the prismatic god; §3.51). (This case would add to our typology in §3.56: we could call it a polytheistic monotheism.)

However, my writing doesn't ultimately suggest monotheism. Instead, it's as though there's polytheism within monotheism (the above), punctured through and through by another polytheism (holes gesturing beyond). However, ultimately, the first polytheism isn't fully within a monotheism (§3.50): each threatens to tear, overflow, and capsize the boat.

— Here and throughout, I'm implying that our old onto-theological principle—the One—has been punctured by things themselves and is losing its sway.

One way to read this layer is as a way out from the One, whereby the One's re-contextualized within a larger picture where monotheism doesn't hold the day, for the prismatic god's only one god. The One's only one god.

3.63 An intensity is the glimmer of a thing's particularity. But 'intensity,' as concept, is what is common between various contexts. It's reductionist to take it as a basic metaphysical thing. – Spirits are *particular* spirits.

Spirits only appear in your world if your world's ready to support them – not necessarily in a way that's *consistent* with the whole world—worlds are never wholly consistent—but in a way that's *receptive*.

3.64 A world can become receptive, in part, through our actions. Not that we can reshape an entire world, but we can, through, for example, ontological attention, foster the conditions whereby a spirit could feel welcome. – I'm not speaking primarily of ontic means to prepare for an arrival; I'm speaking of ontological means: the world itself accommodates, or could accommodate, a new arrival.

A *practice* of ontological attention—attunement, orientation, and sensitivity—can begin to be transformative. Ontological attention gives space for beings to appear. It *gives* space for a transformation between beings open to each other. — This is a first step.

3.65 On the other hand, adherence to a world of uniform—even if relativized—space, time, forces, and atoms is adherence to a world gathered for and by the One. This uniformity doesn't turn to things as openings to spirits and intensities.

The concept of the universe is indicative of the orbit of the One.

While things don't need to be reduced for the One, the reduction helps neutralize spirits.

3.66 This reduction goes hand in hand with a kind of conceptual atomism: the reduction of things to a handful of 'pure' concepts (e.g., Kant). The conceptual net acts in the service of the One: all the nodes are gathered towards one point that's used to tie the net as a whole.

This net stabilized things. Its holes were small enough to pass off intensities as variation.

3.67 The multicultural view connects with the One: one reality with many understandings.

— — But if *God's dead*, the One's that who carries around, around its neck, the ghost of its father, the ghost of God. God haunts all that we do, perceive, and think: thus, if God's dead, He still lives on.

– Death isn't final. We die before and live after. – And hauntings aren't always benign.

I don't think we ever noticed God's dead. A madman who announces this[291] can easily be denounced; evidence can easily be marshalled to show the opposite. And, through such fog, the One carries on.

3.68 The One's the great Leveller: all is made the same—all bows the same—before the One; the One ensures uniformity in non-human nature and, equally, in us through common and good sense.[292]

The One, however, isn't half of the binary one/many; it rules this through and through. The One is both the one *and* the many, for the many, the all, gain their sense in reference to the One.[293]

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[291] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Joyful Wisdom*, trans. Thomas Common (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1960), §125, p. 167–9. See also Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin Books, 1969), p. 41.

[292] Common and good sense ensure that identity and sameness penetrate into each person: "*Good sense determines the contribution of the faculties in each case, while common sense contributes the form of the Same*" (Deleuze, *Difference & Repetition*, p. 134). See p. 131–7.

[293] While there are some commonalities between how I and Plotinus use the term (Plotinus, *The Essential Plotinus*, ed. and trans. Elmer O'Brien, S.J. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1978), p. 68, 73–88, 92, 96–100, 102, 106–8, 170–4), my use of 'the One' isn't tied to an emanationist metaphysics. While the One's an *a priori for us*, i.e., for our particular disclosure, it isn't an *a priori* outside this. The One, as I use it, is a presupposition of *our* way of being: i.e., that all things must have a unitary principle. This principle is, in line with Plotinus, prior to things, Soul, Intellect, and even Being (i.e., in the sense that Being, for us, must be one (i.e., non-metaphoric)), and is the Good. The One explains and 'emanates' multiplicity (i.e., in the sense that, for us, the many or the multiple derives from the One). As with Plotinus, for us, weakness results and increases as we descend from the principle itself. My use, however, is different because for me 'the One' is always connected to particular disclosures.

The One rules over all such binaries. This is why a mere revaluation of values—if, say, we value matter equal to or more than form—is insufficient because the very suture of the binary's instituted by the One.

3.69 But, now, the One's being overthrown by the prismatic gods. It's *not* the case that the One was actually always a prismatic god; *even if* that's how it may begin to appear to us, now or in future, we must respect the phenomenon as it appears, which as historical, always also involves how it *appeared*. The One was the One; this isn't a trick.

On the other hand, the stranger god's a trickster god: the hat appears in many colours and we're tricked into holding on to one. And the stranger god's itself a trick of the prismatic god (§3.51). — But this is more recent.

Granted, the prismatic god has an effect *similar* to that of the One, yet, they're *not* the One. But they help us see that the One was always a particularized, localized god.

The One's still here; there are many who still align with it.

– But, *perhaps*, just maybe, *we only act as though* the One were here. — Perhaps, just maybe, we can dare to begin to declare the event that is *the death of the One*.

3.70 Uranus was castrated, Cronus was banished, and both were replaced as the central gods in Greek mythology. Zeus knew his time was limited, spun out by the Fates. — What we have now, with the One, is in some subtle ways similar to the Greeks; however, *our* onto-theological principle doesn't have any testes to cut off nor can it be sent to Tartarus or any other place for imprisonment.

Nietzsche declared the death of God. I now declare *the death of the One*, who grew so lonely in the death of its other (i.e., God), who subjugated and forced into hiding all others who were not one.

A tale not of amalgamation (§2.97). These others aren't children of the One; there's a different lineage. They're different luminosities that have been shaped, though not irreparably, by the One. They aren't the many opposed to the one; they're different loci, different ways of being.

3.71 The One's a son of God—of the whole complex of God including, for example, the Trinity—and it supplanted the latter, in the long mythological lineage of sons supplanting fathers. Like any child raised by a father, the One's its father (God) transformed.[294]

The Christian God was supplanted by the One: the god of science, atheists, agnostics, and, now, even the religious. (— The One holds sway over those who *have beliefs* in God.)

[294] And its absent mother.

If God's dead, as Nietzsche declared, we're trying to work through His corpse, explode through His corpse, to spring forth like maggots. It's as though God died and was supplanted by, and lives on as, a corpse (the One) — as though the son of God is His own death. As though the corpse is "*spread out against the sky*."[295] And yet, faced with this, all things gather around. But, unlike at a funeral, things are in disarray, people sitting and standing, facing every which way. The open casket's not in front: it's everywhere. — Even in death, the corpse gathers all to it.

3.72 Gods are immortal, but always passing away, passing by.

On the nihilism he predicted, Nietzsche wrote: "*What I relate is the history of the next two centuries*"[296] – that is, approximately to the year 2100. In some respects, his predictions have rung true. My writing here suggests an end to nihilism. – But the always unfinished and impossible work of mourning,[297] the funeral procession, the cries of 'but, now, life shall have no meaning!,' the letting be of acceptance, and a kind of moving on — these'll continue to play out.

(Meanwhile, people will be seen gathering pieces back to the centre as though to reassemble the One.)

Gods are immortal even if not eternal: the world's on its way to no longer supporting the One.

3.73 The centre isn't one; the centre isn't many. The centre cannot hold,[298] it never could: the centre *is* not. – There isn't even a void at the centre, for there's no place in which a void could be central.

The stranger god never stays. No one gets to know her: she's always a guest.

—— Once upon a time, a woman saw both sides of the stranger's hat: 'So! Your hat's both red and black!'

The god's head bows: 'Alas, you've seen my trick,' she says mournfully, turns and walks away.

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[295] Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," p. 9, lines 2-3. See §2.108.
[296] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p. 3. See also Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, p. 119: "*morality will be* destroyed *by the will to truth's becoming-conscious-of-itself: that great drama in a hundred acts reserved for Europe in the next two centuries, the most terrible, most questionable drama but perhaps also the one most rich in hope…*."
[297] Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, p. 143, 159, 218, 221, 238.
[298] Yeats, "The Second Coming," p. 40, line 3.

A man nearby, on the other side of the path, says: ‘Hey, did you see that stranger’s hat? It was two colours!’

‘Incredible, isn’t it?’

‘Yes! *Both* green *and* white!’

3.74 One can become intimate with other gods, but it’s usually one’s prismatic god (if there’s a prismatic god; §3.56) with whom one’s most intimate.

— The prismatic god may be hidden: other gods may come to prominence with never a mention of this god who’s closest.

3.75 The prismatic god, the stranger god, the hinge — these aren’t blueprints, a structuralism that instantiates itself everywhere equally for all worlds; they’re a way of understanding other disclosures always from *within* a *particular* disclosure. Inhabitants of our world may see a hidden or implicit prismatic god in some situations (§3.56): this doesn’t mean that there ‘really’ is such a figure. Instead, we uncover a particularism (their world in its consistency and coherence; §3.16, §3.30) by way of a universalism (prismatic god) emergent from our particularism (our world), which seeks to undo its own tendency to universalism (the snake eats its tail).

In other words, and paradoxically, *our* prismatic god spins the tale of prismatic gods as a way to patch up its holes, yet, patching up the holes is also part of its story, and so, too, is it itself: our prismatic god spins the tale, which gives birth to the thousand things, including itself. Intensities, prismatic gods, spirits: these are manifest as the ‘things’ they are by virtue, always, of our prismatic god. — But it isn’t that the thousand things come from us; for our prismatic god, in turn, is a tale spun by all other things. We’re not alone, we’re not hermetically sealed, and there’s no point of origin.

In the case of a hidden/implicit prismatic god—the ones projected by us—in a sense, there really is a prismatic god there; however, in another sense, there isn’t. The prismatic god’s there for us, hidden/implicit; the prismatic god isn’t there for the other.

3.76 Error’s relative to the world opened by one’s prismatic god, for it’s from that world that standards and criteria emerge. Yet, we also encounter someone’s actions always relative to *our* world, and so derive our standards and criteria from it.

There are clearly better and worse ways to respond to phenomena and there can, of course, be disagreements about this. It’s hard to say if a disagreement *across* worlds is strictly speaking an ‘error.’ For an error seems to need a shared disclosure or an isomorphic language-game (e.g., that of mathematics).

And yet, there's a kind of *fundamental error* or *fundamental mistake*. If responsibility's an attempt (and ultimately a failure) to respond adequately to phenomena, which includes responding to how someone else responds to phenomena, then to not make a sufficient attempt to understand how the other encounters phenomena is an error (i.e., it mistakes what's there) and a bad way of responding.

(If you revisit §2.76, you'll see that an error such as a fundamental error is grounded in phenomena; yet, as error, it's only partially grounded.)

3.77 A way of responding that isn't *surprised* by phenomena is a bad way. – This may seem to place a high demand on encounter: as though one must come to things with a large amount of energy; but it's actually the opposite — it removes a burden: one relaxes, abates tension, and lets phenomena jut forth as phenomena do.

What opens a stone to world is the same as what opens a stone to god.

A stone demonstrates its power in being open. This isn't something behind things, acting through them, but rather *is* them: it's always a gamble, jutting forth into uncertain reception.

3.78 Do stones, 'inanimate objects,' have spirit? – Well, not in the sense of *spiritus* (breath). Nor in the sense of spirit opposed to matter (§3.9). And yet, all beings are enworlded with a prismatic god, and so can be accompanied by attendant spirits and be intensities.

— Animation or animacy needn't be thought as motion as change in spatial location, nor as *animus* (breath); animacy can be thought as the dynamism of particular appearance reaching out and withdrawing. A form of communication: contexts encounter on the hinge of what is common (i.e., a temporary space of appearances) before releasing each to each.

The metaphorism of communication of particular dynamic intensities is animacy.

3.79 Prismatic gods lay out standards, for example, for simplicity.

We encounter others' standards and these can germinate with us.

This is a form of communication.

3.80 Sensitivity—being sensitive—drives and orients the activity of thinking that we're attempting through this text.

> "*Language is a skin: I rub my language against the other. It is as if I had words instead of fingers, or fingers at the tip of my words. My language trembles with*

desire."[299]

So, too, my behaviour's a skin; my gestures, my tone, my glance, pathways of communication (§3.78–§3.79) – my inhalation, the cup of my ear, other senses, thoughts that go out to meet phenomena — these are all skins, sensitive skins, rubbing against and with and by the other. Reaching out is sensitivity, for we at once sense, make-sense, and *respond* to our world.

"What are you sad about?

that all my desire goes
out to the impossibly
beautiful"[300]

3.81 'But I just *can't believe* in these gods.' — *Good*: they're *unbelievable*. – It's time we transitioned from *believing* in gods to *inhabiting* their realms.

But why *this* particular picture? Because it's both general and particular. General, because it leaves much open (it *tries* to lead to other pictures – historical, contemporary, futural). Particular: why didn't I keep it even more open, more general, perhaps even universal? — I cannot do that. Any stance is a stance; there's no neutral ground. I can't 'stand back far enough' to show a 'fuller' picture.

I stand here, where I am, and see a way opening for us to move forward: a new faithful awe to worlds around us amidst an inherent multiplicity of 'principles,' gods, worlds, and things.

3.82 We're drawn so strongly into the intensity of a tree or stone that we *overflow* in response. In the past, this may have been called a religious or spiritual experience, an experience of the sacred — terms that don't quite capture it. It'd be wrong to say that we turn towards the intensity; instead, we turn towards or praise *this* particular tree. This tree *is* an intensity.

'Isn't that nature worship?' – This critique often relies on the nature/spirit binary. As I've emphasized, the prismatic panoply isn't exactly comprised of beings or kinds of substance, and isn't 'over and above' or 'behind' phenomena.

In a sense, spirits are *with* beings, *around* beings, *localized*: a being *has* a spirit. And yet, strictly speaking, gods, spirits, and ghosts aren't beings. They're ways of being: a resonating and communicating between beings.

[299] Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), p. 73.
[300] Webb, from "Some Final Questions," in *The Vision Tree*, p. 101.

3.83 A ghost resides in a local landscape, a particular grove or an object, even a star (e.g., as an ancestor; §3.56). The same's true of other spirits. In such cases, the prismatic god for a being has let the other god/spirit/ghost in: through loss in struggle, cooperation and friendship, indifference or being caught unaware.

These dalliances may not be suitable for the being in question: it may be unbecoming for this stone to house a ghost. And yet, the stone's let the ghost in. This may be a kind of error (§3.76), a weakness.

We feel uncanny in particular places. This doesn't mean that there's a ghost inhabiting it, but it may; maybe a ghost just passed. — I'm not speaking superstitiously, abdicating reason for unbridled passion or unreason: I'm speaking of a feeling we get, a goosebump wave, that's a way that things show themselves: a melancholy, a dis-ease, something of that ilk.

3.84 We're always in the midst of tug-o'-wars between gods, spirits, ghosts. We're always essentially metaphysical: extending into and beyond our prismatic god's world, shining into others.

We're seized by metaphysics, for we're seized by the metaphorism of Being. — The world trembles into place: metaphysics is a spasm of Being, of metaphoric Being.

3.85 Paradoxically, metaphoric Being is part of our metaphysics: it comes from how we're gripped, onto-theologically. – It's an attempt to speak quasi-universally while undermining this; in its trace of universality, it reveals a ghostal lineage with the One.

The view from nowhere, the 'position' of the One, is utopic and reveals specific desires. These desires manifest our understanding of self, world, and things, and social being: for example, the latter's taken as the masses or the people, entities formed by the shearing of particularity and the adoption of the perspectiveless perspective of the everyman and the average person.

A change in onto-theology implies changes to self, world, things, and social being.

3.86 A change in onto-theology entails a change in needs, wants, values: the practical. This means the practical's always devotional: it enacts devotion to the onto-theological, not in a way that the 'devout' would tend to call religious, but in a way that appeals to—shows deference to—the onto-theological as guiding principle. (Which doesn't rule out resistance to the principle.)

Of course, the onto-theological isn't *a* principle. Even with the One, the question of the onto-theological's never settled, nor reduced to one. There are always schisms, re-interpretations, struggles. Instead of calling it *a* principle, it may be best to call it 'the onto-theological' (where the singular isn't intended to denote a singular unified 'thing').

3.87 If the practical's devotional, it's such that we can never be sure if our devotion's good. We'll never say it's 'sufficient' or 'good enough,' and certainly not 'perfect' — because it's never any of these. In our activities, we try to navigate through tensions and forces, with no formal referee.

Think of how much sports are a model for onto-ethics: rule-based enforcement, pure visibility, arbiters aiming for pure objectivity through multiple angles made available by instant replay, carefully measured symmetrical lines over the playing field, and winners from a points-based system.

But ethics isn't a game or competition. Ethics is an encounter between you and things, with no pre-set rules, pure visibility, full arbiter, symmetry, winners, or points. And yet, there *are* rules (continuously established within an encounter), visibility (some visibility, some obfuscation from different points of view), evaluation (no pure arbiter), a bridge—i.e., a space of appearances between you and the other—setting up not symmetry but instead an encounter through what is common, and there are, finally, better and worse ways to be.

3.88 How you respond shows your character. Essentially, this includes how you respond to the inescapable fact of slighting the gods, i.e., that you *cannot* adequately respond: we *must* respond to the fact that our response is inadequate.

To throw up your hands and proclaim that since there's no perfect response, there's no point in bettering yourself is a poor way to respond. To deceive yourself into thinking you've responded adequately, or to think you can adequately placate all who were slighted, are poor ways to respond. – Not that we should live in fear, wishing we had eyes on the back of our head so to speak, but that we should live upright in the knowledge of inadequacy.

At stake is your character, your relations. Your character's *with* others, but it's always *yours*. It's always a question of how well *you* respond, including to your response's inadequacy.

3.89 Seeing how things make sense for another, how their actions emerge from a context (§3.76)—from a set of relations (tradition, history, world, and responsiveness)—is a form of wisdom.[301]

It's to see 'if I were this, I may also act like that.' – Which doesn't mean the action's right.

Every action's devotional, which doesn't mean one pays respects well.

Seeing how something makes sense for another is a form of paying respect. It's also the basis for any analysis or evaluation that has a hope of approaching phenomena.

[301] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH60, LH89, LH93–4, LH98, LH116.

3.90 The One made things appear to converge. Objectivity—its expressions, practices, institutions—are devotional. The One and God are catholic: *kata-holos*, about the whole — they founded the 'uni-verse.' They aim for one world (one space, one time, all things divisible into universal atoms: just as the world is reflected in universal subjects (the one in the many), and vice versa (the many in the one)).

People converted to the universe.

But the world of the universe couldn't be hermetically sealed; it constantly bolstered itself against an outside: chaos, superstitions, primitives. It mustered a series of devotional techniques to identify, detect, contain, ward off, and even multiply deviances both inside and out, for it knew there were competing forces, even competing worlds.

It closed an eye and wielded the cross. It still does, even if the cross is crossed-out.

3.91 The One was always a trick,[302] insofar as it was always not merely forgettable (§3.60) but losable (and hence always lovable; §2.91). Gods don't die, yet they become lost, irreparably (§3.60). – They're always becoming lost, even when most prominent.

The One was, and is, real; *tricks are real*. It was a trick, for it promised impossible things. It expressed, generated, and harnessed an incredible desire: to make the world and all things *one* and *the same*.

This is an extension of what Nietzsche called slave morality.

3.92 Under the One, much seems unimportant and inconsequential; experience becomes flattened and interchangeable. It seems the only way to get excited, make your mark, or demonstrate your supposed individuality and uniqueness is to seek out experiences others haven't had due to an investment not everyone can afford.

The One's an expression of slave morality: a race to the bottom, the common, the same, the secure, the stable, the guaranteed. The One's both the expression of a people's disposition as well as part of the explanation of this disposition. It's symptom and cause: these intertwine together.

Nietzsche's slave morality isn't merely an ethical proposition or an ethical proposition backed by an ontological claim (will-to-power); it's onto-ethical.[303]

3.93 Opposing this flattening, we heed beings in their particularity.

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[302] Compare §3.69.

[303] Deleuze, *Difference & Repetition*: Deleuze illustrates this through thermodynamics, common sense, and the basic sensibility in how we perceive any given thing.

Metaphoric structure respects particularities in different contexts. It's the shape of what we do when we use our imagination and see things differently.

The stranger god: a god of imagination, transformation and carrying-across. It's as though, in a flash, you see their hat as red, black, then red. The stranger god's a sneak, a thief, a trespasser (§2.23, §2.91, §2.93).

The gods war amongst each other, while the stranger god tiptoes on the side.

3.94 Imagination opens to a kind of haunting. Not ghosts that long to be buried (§3.54), but ghostal lines of afterimage (you 'see' how the cube looked before). A transformation's a haunting.

When you see the hat as red, black, then red – it's not quite the same red as before; it's as though it's seen through a different prism. And though it's easier to see black again, we never see them at the same time.

Afterimages carry traces.

3.95 Paying respects to various spirits, intensities, gods, and ghosts gains favours from them (§3.23). Not magically or in a capitalistic sense—'God looks out for those who are his servants'—but relationally: you improve your relations.

For adherents of the One, relations are reduced to human relations. As example, the 'potlatch'[304] is seen as threatening (or 'worrisome') because it expresses social relations and human power (structured through gift relations); other-than-human relations are explained away as human ones.

But more accurately, for adherents of the One, relations are reduced to subjective/objective relations between humans and creation (even if spontaneous and without creator). To take seriously something like spirits, intensities, gods, and ghosts is already a threat, insofar as one's disturbing the core of the One: humans, 'creation,' objectivity.

We give and receive *from things themselves* (§2.58) and, paying respects to things, we slight the One. (A meteorite crashes against the pretense of the One.)

3.96 The (pre-)history of the One can be documented in a line that's never straight, but that, through its meanderings, lets us detect an overall sense: from Uranus, Cronus, and Zeus, to Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle, to Yahweh, the Christian and Muslim God, and then to the decisions made through Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, and Hegel, into

[304] See Reddekop, "Thinking Across Worlds," p. 162–3 (fn 109) on the problems with using "potlatch" as a singular term to denote a range of different ceremonial practices. See also E. Richard Atleo (Umeek), *Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), p. 3.

liberalism, science, certain strands of analytic and continental thought, to contemporary scientisms, atheisms, politics, and religions.

The lineage reveals an aesthetic, dispositional stance — an onto-theological stance. Decisions made at each point opened further decisions. The 'trajectory' was never inevitable.

Decisions came out of a deep sense Being opens for beings. The way of least resistance is to follow a decision that's already been made, for one's caught in a river of relations. You must firmly plant in the middle of the river to try to change the decision-making that's always already being made.

— You pay respects to the rivers of your relations, but this doesn't mean you can't change its course.

3.97 Gods were buried, interned in the earth, but now others come forth like shoots in spring.

This is a compost pile, with worms and maggots, fungi and bacteria.

Spirits fill the forest like the fragrance from little unseen flowers, covered by leaves.

3.98 Gods were buried, interned in the mind, the brain, and subjected to the subject, but now others tear through like ravenous dogs.

The world is full of spirits that have nothing to do with us.

3.99 Little spirits whisk about so quickly you may be inclined to see them as the same: one origin of reductionism, hypostatization.

Even the same intensities wax, wane, and change in intensity.

3.100

3.101 A philosophical attitude's one that—to differing degrees—opens to the voices and spaces of others. It doesn't take for granted what it's doing.

Sensitivity's an openness that I've called questioning. It's a bodied openness to come what may.

Sensitivity and philosophy are devotional ways of being; and, in the way I'm talking about them, explicitly so.

3.102 The nihilist's one who follows the consequences of abandonment in a disenchanted world in a particular way: they bemoan (or celebrate) the loss of centre, guarantor, *the* moral compass, and the single source, origin, and final resting place.

Yet, they don't usually bemoan (or celebrate) the loss of the One, for if they acknowledged *this* loss, they'd be closer to my position. They say, 'now there is no meaning!' as though there's a void. But this black hole, around which all orients — this is the shadow of the One. The gravity or *gravitas* of the nihilist's longing plunges them into orbiting the One, for the One draws the nihilist in. They oscillate between meaninglessness, auto-production of meaning, and practically-oriented meaning.

But with the loss of the One, there's no central spot that would or could ever bestow meaning (objective or subjective — in either case, centring and privileging humans). Meaning emerges from particular things in their worlds in communication with other things in their worlds.

The nihilist emerges from a particular historical, onto-theological trajectory.

3.103 'Is *this* account—of spirits, intensities, gods, and ghosts—fictive? Is it true?'

It's true, for it's an attempt, asymptotically, to approach our actual experience of the world: a *sensitive* attempt.[305]

Our actual experience, as revealed by the possibility of transformations, is between worlds. There's a kind of miraculous opening, an opportunity, in our world that enables us to approach a specific other world — which isn't really other, but is inherent to ours.

This layer has worked towards an onto-theological transformation to get closer to this other, phenomenological transformation.

I'm trying to open the path of a decision.

3.104 Imagination, not as fiction but as way of seeing,[306] is required to open to other possibilities.

What I've imagined and sensed here, my account, isn't the end-all-and-be-all, even for now. It's too bare, too much in tatters, a lily pad from which we can jump.

Imaginings, like dreams, emerge from a particular horizon: the world of our prismatic god. They aren't locked into an individual subject, unoriented by prismatics — for every individual, every subject, is oriented and opened by prismatics.

[305] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH102.
[306] Zwicky, *W&M*, LH25, LH60, LH62–3, LH114.

3.105 The advent of a spirit, the appearance of an intensity — these are attempts at communication. They're ways that something other shows itself to and for us: but not 'for us' as though humans are the most important, but rather 'for us' just as we can show ourselves to and for them.

The world's always a crossing-over, a going-outside-itself, a going-over-outside-itself, insofar as temporary spaces of appearances are formed to 'house' encounters between gods and spirits (§3.36). And yet, these spaces always appear inside each respective world. This kind of space, more frequent than we notice, is both inside and outside the world; it both is and is not.

— The gods war amongst each other.

3.106 A cosmic reduction ('all things are susceptible to…') is a curse wrought by the One (§1.106).

All things are susceptible to singular principles, principles 'made' by us; all things are confined, refined, defined, and ultimately subjected to the One. This susceptibility's a subjection and subjugation of all things to our world. — The One's always been localized and particular, even, and especially, as it spreads.

The second Zarathustra entreated you to be a *creator* of values. A third Zarathustra, if there were to be one, would entice you to be a *responder* to value, to the static sparks between beings inside encounters.

3.107 I've spoken of different layers of prismatics:

- a tentative overarching prismatic god—implicit, hidden (§3.74–§3.75), projected as family resemblance (§3.56)—building bridges between warring factions, but always already losing;
- a world, held together, shown differently by each spectrum god;
- tears from intensity spirits and ghosts, each able to show how things could be globally (*THIS*), for each indicates other prismatics with the same kind of layering, never a layering in a space that could be called the same; and
- a stranger god, casting the trick of a unified centre, but who really lives in the flashes of being and beings.

Each of these gods foretell its own doom, downfall, and succession. For each god, as god, holds up a world and is held up by it; yet, when they no longer fit and are no longer held up, the god lives on, but not in the same way. Even the Fates, the *Moirai*, meet an end. – All gods, while immortal, aren't eternal (§3.39).

Of course, this is true of the whole vision I give here (§3.47). It, too, will be replaced, and (hopefully) rejuvenated, in time. – Yet, for now, it's young; it's barely emerged: it steps forth from the shadows.

3.108 The meteorites that pierce the One have come from the myriad things that dance their rhythms; holes shine like maggots of light. Funeral bells can be heard in the myriad calls of seduction that pierce the darkness.

I speak of an intermediary; I speak of a transition. If the One wore the ghost of God (§3.67), my vision wears the ghost of One.

Every incarnation's haunted by the graves it never leaves behind. But these ghosts are never excesses or additions — they're constitutive and essential.

This vision is not—I say again—a presentation of a true basis. Nor is it pragmatically fictive. It's a sensitive *attempt* to respond to *our* situation, to swim in the stream of our relations.

We should love seduction: for this is how we shine.

This is what I believe:
'That I am I.'
'That my soul is a dark forest.'
' That my known self will never be more than a little clearing in the forest.'

'That gods, strange gods, come forth from the forest
into the clearing of my known self, and then go back.'
'That I must have the courage to let them come and go.'[307]

[307] D.H. Lawrence, "Benjamin Franklin," in *Studies in Classic American Literature*, ed. Ezra Greenspan, Lindeth Vasey, and John Worthen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 26.

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