

UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À MONTRÉAL

IN.VISIBLE. PRAXEMATICS OF AN ORDINARY LANGUAGE WHITE HORSE:  
THE CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT FOR LANGUAGE AND MORALITY

DISSERTATION

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SUR LA PHILOSOPHIE DU LANGAGE ORDINAIRE

THÈSE

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VICTORIA CHENG

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Service des bibliothèques

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## REMERCIEMENTS

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Vous savez qui vous êtes. Je vous aime, même si on ne se parle plus.

And of course, thank you to my parents – my &academic& heroes, who have shown me how to laugh, cry, and learn.

## DÉDICACE

errāre hūmānum est, persevērāre diabolicum

## AVANT-PROPOS

### TRADUCTIONS SUIVENT

Quand je suis arrivée à l'UQAM de Harvard en 2015, j'étais abasourdie par l'intelligence, l'éloquence et la profondeur de l'académie française. Dix ans plus tard, je me rends compte que mes impressions étaient colorées par le dépaysement et l'état d'être entre deux cultures (mondes).

Je suis de nouveau impressionnée par les publications américaines (en 2015, je les trouvais trop inconscientes de leur propre point de vue) et je garde mon regard 'nostalgique' pour la recherche qui provient de l'Asie de l'Est - Hong Kong, Singapour et de l'Australie en particulier.

Sans cette triangulation itérative, explicitée dans la prochaine section, je serais incapable de monter l'argument de ma thèse de façon aussi complète, voir complexe.

*IN-visible Praxematics of an Ordinary Language White Horse: the consequences of conflict for language and morality.*

Je pensais au début de ce projet, lors de mon examen doctoral, qu'il fallait mettre les choses à l'envers - flip tables, comme on dit en anglais. Je me rends (encore) compte, en rédigeant enfin cette introduction, qu'il fallait tout simplement brouiller un peu la vue, voire introduire même valoriser un peu d'INcompréhension dans la communication; pour dé-faire des choses avec les mots, revisiter les rues cahoteuses des recherches effectuées auparavant sans simplement faire de nouvelles chaussées.

Dans la pensée théiste telle la pensée des religions abrahamiques (l'islam, le christiannisme et le judaïsme), l'Écriture et la parole portent des significations spéciales de pouvoir, de scolarisation, et de pardon. Également dans la pensée chinoise, qui travaille moins dans la religion judéo-islamo-catho et plus dans la superstition, les mots peuvent être mobilisés à des fins de pouvoir, sauf que dans le corpus chinois, les mots sont aussi sinon plus de vraies images (des idéographes) et poussent – avec la calligraphie, par exemple – vers les résonances non de pardon, mais d'art. La poésie visuelle.

ET.

Dans les paroles chinoises, les tonalités des dialectes (quatre en mandarin, neuf en cantonais) rendent l'expression à la fois individuelle et musicale. Ayant grandi dans un bain rempli de ces quatre langues (cantonais comme langue maternelle, anglais comme première langue de garderie, français en immersion dès la maternelle, et le mandarin enseigné par des expatriés de Taiwan, à Edmonton en Alberta dans les années 80 et 90...), comment aurais-je pu éviter de me 'salir' avec plaisir dans la boue de ce 'beau mélange'?

ET.

Que sinon quoi faire avec toute cette compréhension à part semer l'incompréhension??

Mes efforts pour répondre de façon académique à ces questions se trouvent dans cette thèse, dans laquelle les doubles ententes et les malentendus sont vus comme d'excellentes façons de décortiquer le poids de son appris-pris-pour-acquis, et les doubles ententes bilingues, sinon – rarement, mais miraculeusement – trilingues, donné encore plus de pouvoir révélateur. Cet objectif non orthodoxe encore moins officielle sert comme fil conducteur de la portion théorique et la pièce créative de cette thèse. Les doubles ententes et les triples ententes qui dépassent plusieurs modes médiatiques (aural, oral, visuel, par exemple, ou Microsoft, Google, Apple, également, sans oublier TwitterX, Instagram, TikTok, ou papier-numérique-satellite ainsi que présentiel-virtuel ou même ferroviaire-aérien) sont tant exaltées et recherchées.

(Si) la communication consiste à sa base de l'émission et la livraison (des messages) (avec un détour canadien McLuhan dans la conflation des messages et leurs médias), cette thèse porte une attention particulière aux ports de départ et d'arrivé et aux voies empruntées (double-triple-entente voulues, sic sur-punctuation point).

ENGLISH ETC.

IN.VISIBLE Praxematics of an ordinary language white horse : the consequences of conflict for [language](#) and morality

Following the overthrow of the Qing dynasty during the Xinhai/1911 Revolution, the Republic of China established a Commission on the Unification of Pronunciation that eventually introduced, in 1913, a transliterated phonetic alphabet called zhuying fuhao, made up of 37 characters and five markers or indicators of tone. Usually written alongside ideographs, this alphabet functioned as a guide for learning to read, and also standardized pronunciation of characters, which varied widely across dialects.

In 1949, and again in 1956 and 1964, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), also officialized simplified forms for a few thousand of the [most commonly-used ideographs](#).

簡體字和繁體字

简体字和繁体字

In 1958, the CCP decided to replace the Wade-Giles and Yale phonetic romanization systems, which it had adopted in the interim, leaving the zhuying fuhao system to Chinese in Taiwan, with its own (national) phonetic alphabet (pinyin or Hanyu pinyin – ‘Han language spelled sounds’). As of 2009, both Taiwan and the United Nations have adopted pinyin as the official phonetic alphabet for Chinese, although zhuying fuhao remains popular in Taiwan for helping young children learn Mandarin.

Since the lingua franca of Hong Kong is Cantonese, a dialect of the southeastern province of Guangzhou, rather than Mandarin, the city never adopted any of the romanization systems, inasmuch as people in Hong Kong were and remain familiar with Wade-Giles and Yale in particular, due to the enthusiasm of tourists, expats and other visitors attempting to practice their ‘Chinese.’<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> And the local, colonial and post-colonial, population’s enthusiasm for Roman Latin languages and culture.

For my part, I learned zhuying fuhao at around the same time that I was learning my other numbers and letters (and notes on a scale), creating the following triangulative cycle:

Table 1.1

1	一	ㄅ	ㄆ	ㄇ	ㄏ	ㄏ		A	La
2	二	ㄉ	ㄊ	ㄋ	ㄌ	ㄌ		B	Si
3	三	ㄏ	ㄏ	ㄏ	ㄏ	ㄏ		C	Do
4	四	ㄏ		ㄏ	ㄏ	ㄏ		D	Re
5	五		ㄏ			ㄏ		E	Mi
6	六	ㄏ	ㄏ	ㄏ	ㄏ			F	Fa
7	七	ㄏ	ㄏ	ㄏ	ㄏ			G	Sol
8	八	ㄏ		ㄏ	ㄏ			# & b	
9	九	ㄏ			ㄏ				
10	十			一 ㄏ ㄏ				treble & bass ( la et sol )	

Pedestrian as it may therefore be to introduce a dissertation with a koan, there are two time-tested questions for which this thesis genuinely and earnestly seeks answers; what, truly, is the sound of one hand clapping? And if a tree falls in the forest with no one around to hear it, does it make a noise? In post-modern words, can you hear the [\(silent\) sound of my heart exploding](#).

And in those of bygone stone ages, which way does the sun cut?<sup>2</sup>

This thesis argues that sounds have become more reliable than words and that to recalibrate communications and everything it purports to encompass as a field – journalism, media studies, marketing, public relations, literacy – a sound check of the sound(s) of speech, and speakers, is in immediate and necessary order.

In English and in French, word-based comprehension is linear and alphabetic but in Chinese, characters can stand alone or, in light of the company they keep, metamorphose in meaning to the point of being unrecognizable, meaning that, as a child of immigrants from Hong Kong sent to French immersion and

<sup>2</sup> Cavell, S. (1983). "[Who Does the Wolf love?](#)" Reading Coriolanus. Representations, 3, 1-20.

Taiwanese Chinese school on Sundays – in Alberta, no less – I am unable to read straight, in all senses of the phrase. Words are their shapes, combinations and sounds as much as they are suggestive, substantive and sensory: portmanteau words, figures of speech and expressions with multiple meanings (puns and double entendres) in particular, but punctuation and font as well.

And so, as much as I have admired the work of the many scholars I have come across in my literary, journalism and media and communications studies since I was accepted for higher education for the first time twenty-five years ago, I have often felt a guilty sense of dissatisfaction and judgment towards their work, because it is all so intractably anchored in and therefore limited by Latin-Roman scripts.

Arguments that seem to me self-evident, and evidently missing, are laboriously long to explain<sup>3</sup> and often provoke a defensiveness cloaked in debate, plus the suggestion that I've missed the point or am not familiar enough with that area of scholarship. Indeed, my ignorance is inevitable, especially on subjects to which other individuals have devoted a wealth of time. What I hesitate to articulate and add in these exchanges is that more often than not, I've read most of what such individuals suggest I need to read, and that I have chosen to ignore it, i.e., found it unhelpful, lacking or thin.

As the following lines attempt to demonstrate, ideographs are equal parts script and image/idea (hence, *Gr. ideo- graph*) and the legacy of Chinese print and text diverges from that of English and French, with the first printed pages reverse handcarved into slabs of wood and the press evolving to moveable blocks of wood and clay rather than Gutenberg's moveable type of brass and lead. Indeed, even today, to type in Chinese script is a vastly different process – neurological and mechanical – from our QWERTY AZERTY defaults.

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<sup>3</sup> Brie, E., & Daoust, J.-F. (2024). [Linguistic Cleavages in Canadian Political Science: Evidence from the Discipline's Annual Conference](#). *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 57(2), 452–465. doi:10.1017/S0008423924000222

對增加而且重要的市民, 尤其是非傳統和 Z 世代的市民, 溝通是基於能夠表達自己想說的話, 因為所說的話又基於自己的感受和聽眾。

相反地, 必然地, 管理未說出的事情和不聽的觀眾成為良好溝通的關鍵要素。

謹慎表達與其他常被提及的表達概念並存, 包括自由和真誠表達, 或真實表達。<sup>4</sup>

Table 1.2

The same text but in its proper orientation :

對增加而且重要的市民、尤其是非傳統和 Z 世代的市民、溝通是基於能夠表達自己想說的話、因為所說的話又基於自己的感受和聽眾。

相反地、必然地、管理未說出的事情和不聽的觀眾成為良好溝通的關鍵要素。

謹慎表達與其他常被提及的表達概念並存、包括自由和真誠表達、或真實表達。

---

<sup>4</sup> For an increasing number of voices – non-traditional and Gen Z voices in particular – communication is predicated on being able to say what one wants, in part because what one says is in turn predicated on how one feels and who can hear. Inversely, and necessarily, managing what is not said and who does not hear become crucial elements of good communication as well. This discretion of expression exists alongside that of more commonly invoked concepts of expression, including liberty and sincerity/authenticity.

Comparing the two is akin to comparing vinyl pressings (records) and digital stream counts (views). Both are fundamental to the transmission of sound but they represent two separate - arguably equal!<sup>5</sup> - worlds of production.

如何保持整潔?即使古騰堡<sup>6</sup>也會束手無策。

相反, 不可避免地, 已經進步到像潮水一樣滾動的印刷機。

聲音的波浪, 憤怒的波浪。

在這一切中, 學術的消耗和生產。

發佈或發切霉。不如何一切確就不存在。<sup>7</sup>

When the buying stops, the killing can, too. (Banner in Hong Kong harbor, April 2018.)

Six years later, banners have been banned.

Wherefore freedom, as Elizabeth Shakespeare might have written. Wherewith necessity.

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<sup>5</sup> The consequences of conflict for language and morality are also visible in the weight of a phrase such as this, which, to American-educated ears, evokes its history of racial segregation.

<sup>6</sup> I asked my browser to generate this QR code as an alternative to the link, embedded above (<https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E7%BA%A6%E7%BF%B0%C2%B7%E5%8F%A4%E8%85%BE%E5%A0%A1/973862>), surely the most hideous link in this introduction if not this entire dissertation, caused by a necessary rendering/translation of Baidu's link name (约翰·古騰堡) into URL code.



<sup>7</sup> How does one make sure it all stays nice and clean? Even Gutenberg would have thrown in the towel. Instead. We've progressed to rolling presses like tides. Inexorably. Waves of sound, waves of fury. And through it all, academic consumption and production. Publish or perish. If you don't list, you don't last.

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## RÉSUMÉ

### Résumé

Dans ses expressions traditionnelles, la recherche vise des « objets » bien définis plutôt que des « choses » à caractère non déterminé, une différence qui maintient et élabore les connotations de la recherche liée aux domaines de tout ce qui est scientifique et épistémique, mais non à tout ce qui est artistique ou relève du domaine des arts. L'auteure propose en premier temps un prologue qui prend les contours de la phénoménologie et de l'écriture comme base de notre humanité, présente en deuxième temps une pièce de théâtre qui analyse des origines en philosophie de langage ordinaire dans la tradition de la philosophie anglaise/britannique et son influence sur nos idées au sujet de l'écriture incarnée et, en troisième temps, offre des possibilités d'écriture « post- », incluant des gestes d'écriture provenant d'autres modes (performativité post-linguistique) et d'autres langues (l'écriture analphabétique).

Mots clés : post-dramatique, phénoménologie, performativité post-linguistique, écriture analphabétique

## ABSTRACT<sup>8</sup>

### Abstract

Positivists and post-structuralists alike ignored, that is, were ignorant of, many of the terms currently in circulation to evoke thought, in neural and vestibular terms in particular. More problematic than their ignorance, however, the Euro-centrism of continental and analytic writers laid a limited foundation for understanding and developing models of communication. This thesis is one of many contemporary attempts to add complexity back to an area of study that is increasingly subject, in its acquired oversimplicity, to unnecessary complication, competition and resulting incomprehension.

This dissertation traces the consequences of naming—as epistemological, ontological and ultimately axiological exercise—by examining the histori-political and ethno-cultural valences of the act, and offers an evaluation of this interdisciplinary academic terrain that spans the philosophy of language (Frege, Austin), psycho-linguistics and comparative linguistics (Sapir-Whorf, Wade-Giles) as well as the domains of semiotics (de Saussure, Barthes), classical Chinese aesthetics (Tu, Ames) and applied category theory (i.e., compositionality). In so doing, it will propose a new layout for thinking about and thinking through the problems and questions of naming: what does it mean to do things with words? Can we un-do things with words? And how can we address conflicts of names—in situations where theory differs from practice, such as when espoused theory differs from theory-in-use (Argyris), or, as pointed out in the Western rhetorician’s classic, Plato’s *Phaedrus*, in situations where intention is uncertain? How do we learn? Can scientific experimentation be an art? If you watch an infant or a child, yes... How do we counter the effect of misnomers (propaganda, marketing, deepfakes, lawfare)?

Keywords : post-dramatic, compositionality, rectification of names, philosophy of language, ethics

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<sup>8</sup> This abstract and the preceding résumé are deliberately dif-translated. Not mis-translated but translated diffractively (Hepler et al, 2019), and as though through a crystal (Ellingson, 2009), to signal the importance of unstable translation throughout this thesis. If space had permitted, the author would have added a tonal dif-translation into Cantonese, but that is best sequestered for future work.

## INTRODUCTION

Presenting a theatrical comedy (situational and Shakespearean), this research-creation will oeuvre to test and demonstrate the effects of misnomers and double-speak and to upend and re-calibrate our practices of naming and communication. Drawing across five nomenclatures (the Latin-Roman alphabet, Chinese phono-semantic ideographs, weights and measures, time zones, and the twelve semi-tones of the classical music register), this thesis asks us to turn (ourselves) upside-down and around, to de-familiarize and un-learn, so as to gain a bodily, alphabetic experience of the integrity of names.

**CHAPITRE 1**  
**the integrity of names**

Projet de thèse

Victoria Cheng

LEEX045[REDACTED]<sup>9</sup>

2019-09-03

---

<sup>9</sup> En avril 2022, je suis revenue à mon nom de jeune fille et mon code permanent et adresse courriel ont aussi évolués, de LEEX0454[REDACTED] pour Xiang Victoria Leenders-Cheng, à CHEV0454[REDACTED]<sup>9</sup> pour cheng.victoria@[REDACTED].uqam.ca.

## 1.1 problématique

International travelers arriving at Beijing Capital Airport (PEK) with connecting flights are separated into two groups, those transiting to the special domestic territories of Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan and those going to all other destinations. Summer tourists in Quebec are invited to participate in two national celebrations, a week apart, during the last week of June and the first week of July: the first marks the province's Fête nationale; the second Canada Day. In both of these examples, the use of language is out of sync with reality. The former colonies of Hong Kong and Macau were repatriated in 1997 and are now indeed called special administrative regions of China, but Taiwan is recognized by the international community as its own country, while the province of Quebec may consider itself a nation in a loose interpretation of the word, based on language, culture or ethnicity, but it is not a country of its own.

The relationship between names and reality is a challenge that has plagued philosophers for centuries and marketers for almost as long. What we call something matters. A term should be an accurate reflection of that thing's separate and true existence. Or, postmodernity has added, whether a term is accurate or not, whether that thing truly exists or not, our words should at least refer and represent responsibly. What we call something has an effect on what we think about it. What we call something may even affect and shape the thing itself. But often our names are not exact, and invoking them generates confusion. Sometimes, these misnomers are used as a deliberate tactic to mislead or misrepresent. Other times, these lapses in language are a product of mundane human behaviour: turgid academic publications; dense legalese; purple news prose...

I will argue that many of our naming problems arise from our dependence on Latin-Roman script and its habits. I will then offer a new perspective from which to consider names and reality and suggest a method (a practice, a technique) of an-alphabetism that I call *performed compositionality* as an alternative

way to learn and communicate, one that restores vigor and affect to the words we use. Just War theorist Michael Walzer argues in his book *Arguing About War* that “we cannot change reality by changing how we talk about it” (xiii). He cites as an example the effort to re-name military movements: “There has been an effort to abolish war—it is reflected in the U.N. Charter—by treating aggression as a criminal act and describing any response as a ‘police action.’ ... But we can’t change reality by changing the way we talk about it...” (xiii-xiv) Walzer is correct that efforts to fiddle with terminology can come across as heavy-handed and manipulative, but he is so certain of his answer he does not even consider the question itself, of whether we can change reality by changing how we talk about it.

Trying to fashion the world with words is sometimes called a *performative* impulse, the idea originating from philosopher of language John L. Austin’s 1962 publication, *How to do Things with Words*, or *Quand dire c’est faire* in French.<sup>10</sup> Austin’s original definition of performatives is narrow: as a class of utterances that go beyond our conventional conception of speech, a performative “is not normally thought of as just saying something;” rather, “to utter the sentence (in, of course, the appropriate circumstances) is not... to state that I am doing it: it is to do it.” (Austin 1962, 6-7).<sup>11</sup> “Its special function may be described as that of effecting an action by issuing the utterance. By saying so, we do the act.”<sup>12</sup> Austin’s favourite examples were those of a. naming a ship; b. pronouncing a marriage vow; and c. bidding someone

---

<sup>10</sup> An introductory page in the French translation by Gilles Lane even tells the reader that Austin chose his title as a play on the title of the self-help book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, an anecdote that helps explain the rhetorical ring of Austin’s text, but is surprising in its absence as context for the anglophone—presumably original intended audience—reader: «Le titre original : How to do Things with Words, qui signifie littéralement : « Comment faire des choses avec des mots », n’est pas dépourvu d’humour. Il se réfère ironiquement à la tradition anglo-américaine des livres de conseils pratiques (du genre : How to make Friends, « Comment se faire des amis »). » Austin, ed. Lane 1970

<sup>11</sup> Austin flirted with a number of terms for his concept, including ‘performatory’ (which he found too “ugly”) and ‘operative’ (which he considered too bound by its legal connotations). His neologism, he hoped, would be “used in a variety of cognate ways and constructions, much as the term ‘imperative’ is” (1962, 6-7).

<sup>12</sup> Transcript of Austin’s lecture on performative utterances in 1959, recording provided by the Harvard Department of Philosophy (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JXo0YNZ3WsE>) at 3:30.

welcome, and he contrasted these utterances against those of the constative, which described or reported a fact or state of affairs and so could be evaluated for being true or false. As utterances that have no prior truth or falsehood, performatives enact the thing they say and should therefore only be evaluated for whether they fulfill their own conditions, or, in Austin's words, whether they are happy or unhappy.

Austin's attempt to differentiate between constatives and performatives and to separate truth from accuracy, or truth from felicity, to borrow another of Austin's terms for it, provided a concrete way to think about these conditions individually, but in the half century since the publication of *How to do things with Words*, the idea of performativity has been the subject of varying (often conflictual) interpretations and has also been dismantled and revealed to be philosophically unstable, unviable, and/or unsound. This is, in many ways, par for the course for any idea worth its salt. As Thomas Kuhn described in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), the development of the field of history of science revealed the brusque and irregular motion of scientific discovery, often masked by a misleadingly smooth narrative and the consolidation of knowledge as truth. Science historians, Kuhn writes

confront growing difficulties in distinguishing the 'scientific' component of past observation and belief from what their predecessors had readily labeled 'error' and 'superstition.' The more carefully they study, say, Aristotelian dynamics, phlogistic chemistry, or caloric thermodynamics, the more certain they feel that those once current views of nature were, as a whole, neither less scientific nor more the product of human idiosyncrasy than those current today.

The evolution of Austin's work on performativity followed a similar path, whereby each idea put forward generated seemingly equal parts theory construction and theory confusion. On the one hand, Jacques Derrida carved a niche in the discussion for postmodern, poststructuralist thinkers by taking issue with the performative for its attempt to posit a type of speech act detached from the constraints from context while simultaneously reinforcing the need for context (*Actes*). This led to a branch of work on performativity subsequently developed by theorists such as Judith Butler and Karen Barad in which the

performative can be invoked to challenge acquired epistemological and ontological assumptions. On the other hand, within the domain of philosophy of language, the idea of the performative slowly fell apart. By the second half of *How to do Things with Words*, Austin had replaced his initial distinction between constatives and performatives with a classification of speech acts as locutions, and developed notions of illocutionary and perlocutionary force and effect, that remain highly debated and yet to be resolved. John Searle, a student, and ardent defender, of Austin, prevaricates in *Speech Acts* (1969): "I employ the expression, 'illocutionary act', with some misgivings, since I do not accept Austin's distinction between *locutionary* and *illocutionary* acts." (23) Searle's own doubts are echoed in 1976 by literary critic Stanley Fish, who remarks in "How to do things with Austin and Searle": "Although I deploy the vocabulary of Searle's Speech Act theory, I am not committed to its precise formulations." (983). However, as noted in the abstract of a recent article, "The Structure and Functions of Language," (2014) in his characteristically blunt style, he finds "the present state of the subject, the Philosophy of Language and the present state of Linguistics to be both, for different reasons, unsatisfactory. The problem with the Philosophy of Language is that its practitioners tend to lose sight of the psychological reality of language, i.e., of speaking and writing." Austin's suggestion in Lecture VIII that speech acts can be classified in increasing levels of specificity as locutionary acts, illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts, generated the same kind of excitement and confusion among philosophers as his initial establishing of the term performative, for its attempt to keep the psychological reality of language in view, and perhaps for that reason alone, the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy declared it "Austin's central contribution to more recent work," and that "the need to draw such a distinction is now very widely accepted," even if the manner in which to actually do has remained the subject of much argument.

A catchy term and a promising idea, performativity has nevertheless fallen victim to the same terminological (and therefore, I will later argue, terminal) confusion I describe above: as with the label of special domestic territories and of Quebec national day, the term performativity is the subject of a naming

conflict. In the case of the former two examples, two or more terms are used to refer to one phenomenon; in the latter, one term designates two or more phenomena. As Kuhn described above, however, to be scientifically (or, for our purposes, epistemologically) thorough is to accept, ironically, the relative nature of absolute certainty—to view previous iterations of the advancement of knowledge as erroneous, superstitious, idiosyncratic, outdated, or at the very least, tangled. However, it is important not to disregard or discard these iterations outright. Indeed, it is these moments of confusion that are full of potential: these moments, where, as my methodology will demonstrate – despite international efforts to create consistent, convertible standards – logic and reason are sidetracked by habit and habitus into chaos and complexity, when words and expectations don't line up and in fact create greater confusion, these moments provide fertile soil for finding Stacey's notion of 'real novelty.' As Stacey notes in *Complex Responsive Processes in Organizations*, citing Karl Weick, "novel moments" are crucial to the process of sensemaking... the origins of novelty [can be located] in dissonance, surprise, gaps, differences, disruptions, unexpected failures and uncertainty." Stacey continues, "For [Weick], it is events of this kind that trigger sense-making, which could produce novel explanations. He describes the process as one that involves emotion and is necessarily confusing."

Novel moments are a key feature of what Max Planck Institute for the History of Science director Hans-Jorg Rheinberger calls "epistemic things" and "experimental systems". Citing Rheinberger in an article entitled "Artistic practices and epistemic things," (2013), Henk Borgdorff explains,

experimental systems (which can only be understood as an interplay of machines, preparations, techniques, rudimentary concepts, vague objects, protocols, research notes, and the social and institutional conditions in which these are employed) are the centre and motor of modern scientific research... the actual generators of knowledge (and) machines for making the future. (114)

Furthermore, these motors of scientific research move us towards research capable of encompassing and in a certain manner overcoming the rigidity of our assumptions, as they generate

a form of thinking that is obliquely based on tacit knowledge, on implicit understanding that is partly sedimented in the technical apparatus of the experimental system... enabling us to let our thinking blend into things, and the things into our thinking, with hybrid forms in the middle that allow neither formalization nor quantification, and which thereby keep the research moving. (115)

To keep research moving in communications is both obvious and tricky. The beauty of communication as a discipline is that it is a pervasive common thread: arguably, once we put words on a page, we are attempting to communicate, even or especially in academic work but this breadth of definition risks becoming so great as to be meaningless. As Robert T. Craig notes in *Theories and Models of Communication*, “Not only are there many theories about communication and media, those theories represent radically different intellectual styles, reflecting different assumptions about the object of study, the nature of theory and the process of inquiry in general...” (39) Approached and applied carefully, practice-based communications research has the potential to strike at the heart of all production of scholarship, for, as Craig continues: “Rather than appearing all at once *ex nihilo* or branching off from a single limb of the academic tree, communication research developed lines of inquiry from many sources, and even now the field continues to grow, in part by incorporating new interdisciplinary areas with their sometimes distinct theoretical approaches.” (ibid)

Maintaining a grasp on these different strands of communication requires, as Graham Harman and Bruno Latour state in their introduction to the New Metaphysics series from the University of Michigan’s Open Humanities Press, a “resurgence of original speculative metaphysics” for which they argue the world is due:

(Our series) does not aim to bridge the analytic-continental divide, since we are equally impatient with nail-filing analytic critique and the continental reverence for dusty textual monuments. We favor instead the spirit of the

intellectual gambler... Like an emergent recording company, what we seek are traces of a new metaphysical 'sound' from any nation of the world.<sup>13</sup>

Occasionally, we are fortunate enough to discover news sounds, metaphysical and purely physical, in our 'refamiliarization' (to paraphrase Shkovsky) with that which we once knew and have forgotten (a smell from childhood or a strain of melody), or that which we never knew (a world without digital communication; the busy signal of an analog phone; keys tapping on a Remington II...) <sup>14</sup> Such discoveries are the relatively privileged purview of the humanities and social sciences, according to Quiara Alegria Hudes. In Danielle Allen's 2016 *Education and Equality*, Hudes says: "There is something particular about the investigation of the humanities that challenges students to articulate—and therefore notice—our habitual actions, our automated routines, our unasked questions." 'Verbal empowerment,' or the arts as the study of language and interpretative and expressive skills, helps us notice the "close, dangerous relationship between our society's habitual behaviors and our society's habitual inequality" (90).

Allen corroborates: "The central mystery of language's power lies precisely in its efficiency. Language is always working simultaneously at cognitive, affective (or emotion), and intersubjective (or relational) levels." Calling language "a most unusual kind of muscle," Allen adds that it conveys a fundamental principle of economy, doing "a lot with a little." "Although language, or logos, is so small as to be invisible, it is powerful as a potentate... The ratio of power to size is headed toward infinity" (108). Still, as Ronald J. Pelias says in *Handbook of Autoethnography* (2013), "language is nothing more than water leaking through the fingers of our cupped hands and nothing less than the best way to hold what

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<sup>13</sup> Given this strong claim, one is forgiven a degree of surprise if not disappointment in discovering then that one volume at least, in the series, Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin's *New Materialism: Interviews and Cartographies*, hews closely and solely to traditional text form, with nary a single map to be found, and certainly no new sounds, unless we include the web version of the book, which reproduces the chapters with navigable hyperlinks.

<sup>14</sup> A catalog of new and nostalgic sounds might also include: newsprint whirring through the ink rollers of a press; the hum of a gasoline engine rather than the silence of an electric one; the whine of the fan on a lap or desktop computer... sounds we notice most when the phenomena for which they stand waver on extinction.

we value... the page is a performance..." (400) What's more, "language carefully and aesthetically articulated is evocative as a literary construction and as *tactic for material change in ongoing social practices*" (ibid, emphasis added).

We cannot invoke a term such as power without also invoking Foucault, although he, for one, addressed the paradox, consequences, and spaces of representational impossibility with his usual pragmatism:

La pensée qui nous est contemporaine et avec laquelle, bon gré mal gré, nous pensons, se trouve encore largement dominée par l'impossibilité, mise au jour vers la fin du XVIIIe siècle, de fonder les synthèses dans l'espace de la représentation, et par l'obligation correlative, simultanée mais aussitôt partagée contre elle-même, d'ouvrir le champ transcendantal de la subjectivité, et de constituer inversement, au-delà de l'objet, ces 'quasi-transcendants' qui sont pour nous la Vie, le Travail, et le Langage. (*Les mots et les choses*, 262)<sup>15</sup>

Rather than analyzing discourse, however, I aim to draw from across the disciplines (arts, social sciences, traditional sciences) and through different languages (verbal but also musical and bodily), thus mapping a multi-modally inter-cultural experimental system and machine to reveal what I believe to be the relatively direct relationship already extant between language and reality. The sum of these disciplines and languages form my definition of "communication," the theoretical validity of which I will elaborate at greater length in the next section. It is sufficient for now to quote from a different Foucauldian work, *L'archéologie du savoir*, in which Foucault contrasts the history of ideas with the history of science:

Il n'est pas facile de caractériser une discipline comme l'histoire des idées... elle raconte l'histoire des à-côtés et des marges. Non point l'histoire des sciences, mais celle de ces connaissances imparfaites, mal fondées, qui n'ont jamais pu atteindre tout au long d'une vie obstinée la

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<sup>15</sup> Something about Foucault's formulation of « la Vie, le Travail et le Langage » calls to mind a phrase from C. Wright Mills' "Le métier d'intellectuel" (1958), in which he says that intellectual craftsmanship is a lifelong labor of love: « Choisir le métier d'intellectuel, c'est d'opter pour un mode de vie autant que pour une carrière... vous devez donc apprendre à utiliser au profit du travail intellectuel l'expérience acquise dans la vie; vous devez sans cesse la scruter et l'interpréter. En ce sens, le métier est de centre de vous-même, et vous entretenez vous-même tout entier dans le moindre de vos créations intellectuelles. » (200)

forme de la scientificité... Histoire de ces philosophies d'ombre qui hantent les littératures, l'art, les sciences, le droit, la morale et jusqu'à la vie quotidienne des hommes. (185)

Of course, having included Kuhn above, we know that Foucault's thoughts, pertinent and insightful as they are, do not comprehensively cover the terrain of either of these histories and indeed, Foucault's own predilection for such binaries undermines to a certain extent the validity and pertinence of his arguments. Be that as it may, his knack for eloquently knocking down unwieldy discursive relics sets a fine example that I hope in some ways to emulate.

Homi Bhabha's describes Third Space, a concept to which we will return, as that space where

in the midst of that movement of ideas and intuitions you discover a momentary stillness. This moment of reflection is never simply the mirror of *your* making, *your* frame of thinking, but a stillness sometimes heard in choral music when several voices hold the same note for a moment – *omnes et singulatum*. (ix)

In fact, to deepen the metaphor, this intertwining could also include the harmony of several voices holding different notes for the same moment, or even the polyphonic result of counterpoint, in which many notes interact with and against each other, joined together by the same key. Or to elaborate the contours of a space and, as geographer Edward Soja describes, inject and maintain a dimensionality to the "pronounced tendency in Western philosophy, science, historiography, and social theory (including its most critical variants) to bifocalize on the interactive historicity and sociality of being." (54) This "trialectics," like the intertwined *omnes et singulatum*, embraces its own contradictions while "challenging all conventional modes of thought and taken-for-granted epistemologies. It is disorderly, unruly, constantly evolving, unfixed, never presentable in permanent constructions." (ibid) We shall investigate both the Third Space and the possibility of disorderly polyphony further but for the moment, it suffices to return to words and speech, and therefore look back to our French post-structuralists such as Foucault and Barthes, the former of whom observed:

Le langage est à mi-chemin entre les figures visibles de la nature et les convenances secrètes des discours ésotériques. C'est une nature morcelée, divisée contre elle-même et alternée qui a perdu sa transparence première; c'est un secret qui porte en lui, mais à la surface, les marques déchiffrables de ce qu'il veut dire... Il est à la fois révélation enfouie et révélation qui peu à peu se restitue dans une clarté montante.

(*Les mots et les choses*, 50-51)

Barthes meanwhile declared in *Mythologies* that

(We can) either posit a reality which is entirely permeable to history, and ideologize; or, conversely, posit a reality which is ultimately impenetrable, irreducible, and, in this case, poetize... If we penetrate the object, we liberate it but we destroy it; and if we acknowledge its full weight, we respect it, but we restore it to a state which is still mystified. (And so) it would seem that we are condemned for some time yet always to speak excessively about reality (158-159).

I aim to address Barthes' challenge. How can we speak less excessively about reality? Can changing how we speak about reality change reality? Can changing how we speak make language more efficient? More economical? More effective? Is it possible that, in certain circumstances, and contrary to the assumption Michael Walzer makes, the only way we can change reality is by changing how we talk (communicate) about it? What does this type of communication look like, and how can we put it to work, to do the things Austin hoped words would do?

## 1.2 cadre théorique

What are the material effects of words and how can we demonstrate them? Combining the notion of performativity, as introduced by John L. Austin to refer to cases in which saying is also doing, and that of compositionality, summarized by Barbara Partee as the principle by which the meaning of an expression is determined by the meaning of its parts and the relations between them, I suggest *performed*

*compositionality* as a new plane of systematic experimentation<sup>16</sup> designed to test and showcase the consequences of language.

Straddling language in the broadest sense possible (verbal and non-verbal, bodily and musical, as well as Latin/Roman and non-alphabetic), and positing that reality is always ideology and poetry together (that is, entirely permeable and ultimately impenetrable at the same time), performed compositionality offers a repertoire of practices for using language more effectively, more economically, less “excessively” and more judiciously. I aim to draw from across the disciplines (arts, social sciences, traditional sciences) and through different languages, thus mapping a multi-modally inter-cultural experimental system<sup>17</sup> and machine to reveal the relationships already extant between language and reality, between diction and discourse, and for all that which falls under the rubric of communication writ large.

### 1.2.1 performativity

I first encountered the idea of performativity in a fourth-year undergraduate Shakespeare seminar, in an article by Stanley Fish analyzing speech acts in *Coriolanus* entitled “How to do things with Austin and Searle: Speech Act Theory and Literary Criticism.” I was enchanted by Fish’s use of performativity to ‘read’ the play, to argue that *Coriolanus* attempts to use language performatively to construct a life in accordance with his own rigid values: a life in which one only speaks to enact. He is, Fish says, ultimately undone by the unforgiving and totalizing nature of this ethic—when *Coriolanus* reneges on his declaration of war on Rome, the state that rejected him, in response to pleas for mercy from his wife, mother and child, he pays with his life. I return to Austin’s text now, fifteen years later, during a performative turn in academia, a

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<sup>16</sup> Research-creation: a chess board that is also a work bench, a playground and theatre stage

<sup>17</sup> In the words of Hans-Jorg Rheinberger, director of the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, “experimental systems (which can only be understood as an interplay of machines, preparations, techniques, rudimentary concepts, vague objects, protocols, research notes, and the social and institutional conditions in which these are employed) are the centre and motor of modern scientific research... the actual generators of knowledge (and) machines for making the future” (“Artistic practices and epistemic things,” 114).

turn that has come about in part in reaction to the linguistic turn of approaches such as postmodernism, post-structuralism, deconstructionism, discourse analysis and Cultural Studies. The linguistic turn regards much of the world as text, seeking to read the meanings embedded in and created by activity and interaction; the performative turn argues that these readings have drifted too far away from material reality and seeks to a. conduct research via—led by—action, creation, and practice and b. question certain habits of representationalism and positivism thought to lack the sophistication necessary to capture the complexity of the dynamics of human and non-human systems. This definition of performativity draws on work by theorists such as Judith Butler and Karen Barad. Influenced by Foucault and Derrida, Butler described performativity alternately as “bringing into being and exhaustively constituting that which it names;” “that discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names;” and, eventually, “the reiterative power of discourse to reproduce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains” (1993, xvi; xxi; and 2). Perhaps one of the most influential understandings of the concept is articulated in Butler’s 1993 *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of ‘Sex’*, in which she integrates a Foucauldian take on discourse with the Derridean habit of viewing and reading the world as text, is to posit a decentered self that performs the signifying components of gender, the material and discursive consequences of which form our sex. “As performance which is performative,” Butler states in “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution” (1988), “gender is an ‘act,’ broadly construed, which constructs the social fiction of its own psychological interiority” (52). From Austin to Butler, then, performativity evolves from an analysis of speech acts to an analysis of discourse: “For discourse to materialize a set of *effects*, ‘discourse’ itself must first be understood as complex and convergent chains in which ‘effects’ are vectors of power” (Butler 1993, 139). As is the case for Foucault and Derrida, Butler’s post-structuralist approach leaves her work open to the charge of unbridled deconstruction, that is, of advocating for, if not demanding, acknowledgment of the shortcomings of normative power structures to the point of refusing to recognize their material, economic and political realities while simultaneously over-idealizing the effects of language.

Indeed, Karen Barad argues convincingly in an article in 2003 that both realism and social constructivism have fueled a seductive but questionable belief that grammatical categories accurately reflect and represent the underlying ontological structure of the world, the result being that “language has been granted too much power. The linguistic turn, the interpretative turn, the cultural turn: it seems that at every turn lately every ‘thing’ – even materiality – is turned into a matter of language or some other form of cultural representation... (and) the only thing that does not seem to matter anymore is matter” (“Posthumanist Performativity,” 801). Barad proposes performativity (“matters of practices/doings/actions”) as a way to shift scholarly inquiry away from “the geometrical optics of reflection where, much like the infinite play of images between two facing mirrors, the epistemological gets bounced back and forth, but nothing more is seen” to “the diffraction patterns illuminating the indefinite nature of boundaries – displaying shadows in ‘light’ regions and bright spots in ‘dark’ regions – the relation of the social and the scientific is a relation of ‘exteriority within’” (803). Performativity properly construed, Barad argues, “is not an invitation to turn everything (including material bodies) into words; on the contrary, performativity is precisely a contestation of the excessive power granted to language to determine what is real...” To Barad, and for many young children – as early childhood educators can attest, performativity provides a framework to question “the unexamined habits of mind that grant language and other forms of representation more power in determining our ontologies than they deserve” (2003, 802).

To bridge Butler with Barad, writing more than a decade apart, one might hazard a paraphrase of these two influential theorists by putting Barad’s diffraction face to face with Butler’s gender, and propose a new way of contesting overdetermined ontologies by acknowledging social and scientific construction of the fictions of interiority and the boundaries of exteriority within. Discussions of performativity also frequently bump up against the question of how to differentiate the idea from that of performance, with tomes now devoted to attempting to provide an answer, which often boils down to the Pyrrhic victory of reference to a Foucauldian difference: performativity is concerned with challenging structures of discourse

and encrusted epistemology and ontology. Performance is artistic first, as in the performing arts. This distinction is unsatisfactory to all involved, of course, because the gulf it opens between performance and performativity swallows into its chasm the implication that performativity is second-rate performance (i.e., insufficiently artistic) and performance second-rate performativity (i.e., insufficiently political). The bridging I propose therefore brings forth a nascent definition of performativity to which I will adhere, one that is inherently extra-discursive (extra-, Latin *exter*, on the outside, more than or beyond the usual or necessary), building on while going beyond its post-structuralist and new materialist casts in a manner that is inevitably intertwined. It encompasses and embraces its conflicts and contradictions, and I propose referencing and referancing (à la Derrida) it in its most pared-down form and, to adopt the verb and adjectival-adverbial form as a noun: the performed.

Bear in mind that performativity is already in and of itself obsolete anyway, as Austin recapitulates in Lecture III:

In our first lecture, we isolated in a preliminary way the performative utterance as not, or not merely, saying something but doing something, as not a true or false report of something. In the second, we pointed out that though it was not ever true or false it was still subject to criticism – could be unhappy, and we listed six of these types of *infelicity*... So then we may seem to have armed ourselves with two shiny new concepts with which to crack the crib of Reality, or as it may be, of Confusion – two new keys in our hands, *and* of course, simultaneously two new skids under our feet. In philosophy, forearmed *should* be forewarned. (25)

Austin's tone calls to mind Barthes' utterance, in his preface to his 1957 publication, *Mythologies*: "What I claim is to live to the full contradiction of my time, which may well make sarcasm the condition of truth" (12). It also seems to foretell of a moment when these shiny new concepts lose their gloss, and fluctuate from keys cracking the crib of Reality to skids miring us in Confusion. Sure enough, by Lecture VI, Austin dismantles his entire initial framework contrasting the performative (saying is doing) against the constative (saying is describing): "the performative is not altogether so obviously distinct from the constative—the

former happy or unhappy, the latter true or false" (67) and supplants it by Lecture VIII with three classes of locutionary utterances (locutions, illocutions, perlocutions), and by Lecture XII had moved on from even these three classes to propose five additional "-ives": verdictives, exercitatives, commissives, behabitives and expositives, and declared the whole exercise to have produced a "sea-change from the performative/constative distinction to the theory of speech-acts" (149). Ultimately, Austin confessed, the result of the undertaking had generated "a programme, that is, saying what ought to be done rather than doing something," a practice of which he declared himself not particularly fond. (163).

And so, the windows by which new light seemed to shine on the epistemological and ontological contours of Reality are shuttered once again by a recurring, albeit elusive, metaphysical disagreement about how to talk about and do things with Confusion. Austin was nevertheless correct in his hope that he had been "sorting out a bit the way things have already begun to go and are going with increasing momentum in some parts of philosophy," (163) for his lectures and texts have served as a crucial reference and starting point.

### 1.2.2 compositionality

The way in which I wish to re-operationalize speech acts requires the simultaneous assistance of another highly debated concept: the Principle of Compositionality. In its generally accepted formulation, this principle states that the meaning of a complex expression is a function of the meaning of its parts and the relations and rules between them and is attributed to German philosopher and mathematician Gottlob Frege.<sup>18</sup> Present-day arguments about compositionality in semantics, linguistics and the philosophy of

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<sup>18</sup> Frege's 1892 work, *Über Sinn und Bedeutung*, (On Sense and Reference/Denotation) is foundational in the philosophy of language (and so is also discussed by Austin and Searle) and posits a dual semantics to explain the functioning of language. In this theory, a term has both a sense and a denotation, the former referring to a term's evocative/idiomatic or metaphorical meanings and the latter to its literal meaning (e.g. to lose one's head can denote decapitation or it can imply becoming flustered or excited). Frege's sense and denotation distinction bears a resemblance to a more commonly known theory of dual semantics John Stuart Mill's connotation vs denotation,

language look to Richard Montague's "Proper treatment of quantification in ordinary English" and to Barbara Partee's contribution at the 1982 proceedings of a colloquium on formal semantics in Amsterdam for their rigorous analyses of compositionality.<sup>19</sup> In linguistics, and in natural language processing especially, compositionality refers to "a language phenomenon where the meaning of an expression can be expressed in terms of the meaning of its constituents. Multiword expressions are known to display a continuum of compositionality, where some of them are compositional e.g. 'swimming pool', some are non-compositional e.g. 'cloud nine', and some in between e.g. 'zebra crossing'" (Reddy, McCarthy and Manandhar 2011).

With its roots in logic, compositionality also has a natural mathematical manifestation, in category theory and set theory, both of which use collection and abstraction to develop formulae that describe the relation of these categories and sets to one another. According to MIT scholars Brendan Fong and David Spivak, compositionality – the study of "real-world structures" and whether they are "more than the sum of their parts" – is an increasingly important powerful part of category theory, an under-studied area of pure math that is "unmatched in its ability to organize and layer abstractions, to find commonalities between structures of all sorts, and to facilitate communication between different mathematical communities." (Fong and Spivak 2018, 1 and iii)<sup>20</sup> From their starting definition of compositionality, Fong and Spivak hope to identify "the mathematics of a well-functioning society," positing that category theory can help "connect people, create common ground and explore the cross-cutting categories in which life, society and environment can be represented." They add: "If one pays careful attention to structures and

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and both theories explain a phenomenon that children acquire naturally as they learn language, that is, the dictionary sense of a term and the many implications also attached to the term.

<sup>19</sup> Montague and Partee belong to a school of philosophers whose work is based on that of Alfred Tarski and Jakko Hintikka, both of whom are key figures in the philosophical study of truth, and compositionality is, unsurprisingly, the subject of lively debate in these circles.

<sup>20</sup> The mathematical concept of compositionality is also known as applied category theory.

coherence, the resulting systems will be extremely reliable and interoperable” (v). This appealing transparency is also expressed as a gold standard of compositionality known as direct compositionality, which maintains that “the mapping of syntactic form to semantic content exploits no ‘hidden’ level of... representation... Instead, semantics reads off interpretations from the surface form of expressions directly, [which provide] all the information that is required ” (*The Oxford Handbook of Compositionality*, 3, via Jacobson).

As is the case for performativity, there is much discussion as to the empirical validity of compositionality. In *Logic and Logical Philosophy* (1998), for example, Wilfrid Hodges authors an article entitled “Compositionality is not the problem” in which he essentially lists all the problems he, as a “nuisance logician” has with compositionality as it is defined: a. the definition of compositionality (“the meaning of a complex expression is a function of the meaning of its parts and of the syntactic rules by which they are combined”) does not contain a “tidy” definition of the terms ‘meaning,’ ‘expression’ and ‘syntactic rule;’ b. it does not fully consider the presupposition of its negation, “the meaning of a complex expression is *not* a function of the meaning of its parts and of the syntactic rules by which they are combined;” c. most discussions of compositionality in the framework established by Partee accept her observation that “given the extreme theory-dependence of the compositionality principle and the diversity of existing (pieces of) theories, it would be hopeless to try to enumerate all its possible versions”—he, Hodges, does not accept this and argues that the essential ‘*property*’ of compositionality is based on a series of presuppositions (based on ‘meaning,’ ‘expression’ and ‘syntactic rule’) that do not vary. (9) This article is a sample of a fraction of the ink devoted to questioning compositionality and I have chosen it because it is regarded as a key reference on the subject.

As neither linguist, logician nor philosopher, I am not so concerned by these questions as I am intent on keeping the elements of ‘performativity’ and ‘compositionality’ that, even if not valid, are highly

viable, as fodder for the work I wish to do, which is to establish a different way of thinking about communication that challenges our assumptions about how language works. Separating a speech act into its illocutionary and perlocutionary components, for example, permits us to imagine incorporating the idea of compositionality into performativity, and by asking ourselves whether we can interpret the meaning of an expression from its components, we broach the idea of whether language can function separately from its truth value (a key question for Austin and Searle). These are the aspects of each concept I intend to develop, and with great purpose, for since Austin introduced the notion of doing things with words half a century ago, and in the centuries since Frege separated sense from reference, scholarship in this area has yet to fully grapple with the implications of these theories in a non-Latin language, or, more pertinently, in this case, in an ideographic language such as Chinese.

The work of German linguist Edward Sapir and his student Benjamin Lee Whorf introduced to English speakers the idea that language structures thought and therefore also influences, if not determines, an individual's perceptions of 'reality.' While the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, as it is so-called, is seen with skepticism by most scholars in linguistics, the notion of linguistic relativity and linguistic determinism offers tantalizing considerations about language acquisition and cognitive structuring, especially in a multilingual context. Foucault was similarly preoccupied with the connection between language, representation and experience, referring repeatedly in his Preface to *Les mots et les choses* to « les mots, les perceptions et les gestes » or to « le langage, la perception et la pratique » as the translators and markers of « la/une culture » and of « l'homme » (12). But as I will attempt to demonstrate below, our sense of 'reality' is 1. constructed from sensory input that is highly reliant on language, indeed – hearing, reading and seeing it – but also, 2. constantly fluctuating in response to stimulation of our less linguistically-dependent but equally alert senses: hearing of ambient noise, feeling on the skin (temperature, touch), changing smells; and 3. stimulated mentally and intellectually by such input but also physiologically so. A certain sound frequency can raise or lower heart rate, a smell trigger a reaction deep in the digestive system... to the

point where these physiological responses feed the mental and intellectual processes and vice versa in cycles with no beginning or end of which we can be truly conscious. How then, should one attempt to begin to draw comparisons across these already tenuous perceptions?

### 1.2.3 performed compositionality: a framework for comparison

Drawing comparisons between languages is both risky and necessary and if we look to a horizon normatively deemed east, we find a wealth of scholarship emphasizing the urgency of the endeavour. As Joseph Chan and Francis Lee point out, there is “growing recognition and criticism of the ethnocentricity of mainstream communication theories developed in the West...” It remains, however, “a challenge for non-Western studies to go from being merely cases that show variations to a basic theme to being the starting point of new ideas, concepts, and theories.” In terms of epistemological bias, intentional or not, “a lot of media and communication studies conducted in non-Western countries still take existing theories as their starting points...” (2) Georgette Wang and Eddie Kuo of the National Chengchi University in Taiwan and Nanyang Technological University in Singapore respectively add that in the half-century since communication research was introduced to Asia in the 1970s, there has been “significant progress in the pursuit of theory construction, especially in areas that closely deal with culture and communication issues.” This ‘progress,’ towards undoing “the influence of Eurocentrism, a set of doctrines and ethical views derived from a European context but presented as universal values (Wallerstein, 2006)” has immediate potential for media, culture and communication research (153-154). As Wang explains in an article co-authored with Christine Huang, “In scientific research, dealing with differences is part of the game. It does not, however, have a mechanism that can effectively manage differences that fall beyond its own ontological and epistemological tradition...” They continue: “the ultimate challenge for comparative research if hypothesis testing is to reach out of the ‘comfort zone’ of a concept or theory...” (95) and propose the Kuhnian concept of incommensurability to capture differences that are not translatable but also “not uninterpretable”: “To interpret incommensurable difference, one must find terms and phrases

of equivalent meaning, and rely on knowledge of similar experiences in other contexts... (thus) deepening and expanding theoretical knowledge” (ibid).

Bob Hodge and Kam Louie, professors of critical linguistics and Chinese Studies respectively, note, “Even classical Sinology is more semiotic than Western disciplines because Chinese culture is more overtly semiotic than the Western system of codes. Painting and writing are interrelated in Chinese culture... Texts combine words and pictures more typically than is the case in Western culture.” Their fetchingly-titled book, *How to Read Dragons*, continues: “Thus, Chinese paintings inevitably incorporate the artists’ calligraphy as part of the creative process. Chinese culture is strongly visual and semiotically promiscuous, and the study of Chinese needs to be semiotically broader than the study of European languages has been.” (8).

Chinese itself, as anyone who has tried to learn it knows, is not a casual language, but an understanding of its written form will shed greater insight on the consequences of its use: the Chinese language, comprised of ideographs, or more accurately, phono-semantic logographs, is unusual for being the last ancient ideographic writing system in modern usage, and is notable for both its pictographic and compositive characteristics, wherein the characters either can be seen to bear an indicative resemblance to the concept they cite (the character for tree looks vaguely like a tree; ditto the character for a person), and where the characters and terms of the language are often a transparent collage of their parts (the term for airplane is two separate characters meaning ‘flight’ and ‘machine’ put together.)<sup>21</sup> Inasmuch as

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<sup>21</sup> Based on a logographic form subsequently adapted in Korean and Japanese, Chinese characters fall into six types:

1. pictograms based on the objects they represent
2. simple ideograms depicting abstract ideas
3. compound ideograms that combine two or more pictograms or ideograms
4. rebus/phentic loan characters that borrow an existing character to represent an unrelated word that happens to share the same approximate pronunciation
5. phono-semantic compounds, the most numerous type, that combine a rebus (to provide phonetic guidance) with a semantic core/root/radical (hinting at the character’s meaning)

any language system is reliable and interoperable given the relations of its parts, and while Romance languages such as English and French, for example, also operate with a degree of compositionality, the unusual structure of Chinese writing fits the compositionality bill in more ways than most.

Chinese is often considered a logographic writing system and a morphosyllabic language in that the basic unit, a logogram or a character, is made up of a stroke or a series of strokes (as in strokes of a brush or a pen) and represents one syllable. English and French, by way of comparison, are alphabetic writing systems and morphophonemic languages, made up of a letter or series of letters of the alphabet representing sounds (phonemes). Most individual Chinese characters (over 90 percent) are phonosemantic or radical-phonetic compounds, created through an assembly of parts where one component piece of the character provides a phonetic cue for pronunciation and other component pieces (morphemes known as radicals) provide cues for the character's semantic meaning. These types of combined words exist in English and French as well, where an analysis of the different semantic components (morphemes) of a word yields its meaning – e.g. un-usual, demand-ing, ingérable, banane-s – but not to nearly the same degree as in Chinese. And while some of these individual Chinese characters are words in their own right, most words in Chinese (about 66 percent, or two-thirds) are formed by

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6. cognates, a poorly understood type usually ignored in this typology and when spoken, are generally classified into seven dialect groups:

1. Mandarin, the official language of both China and Taiwan and also known as Standard Chinese, derived from the Beijing dialect
2. Wu Chinese or Shanghainese, spoken mostly in the Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces
3. and 4. Gan and Xiang, spoken in Jiangxi and Hunan and considered, along with Wu Shanghainese, 'central' dialect groups
5. Min, a dialect spoken in Fujian, part of Guangdong, and in Taiwan
6. Hakka, spoken by Hakka Chinese, mostly located in the southern provinces, but also in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia
7. Yue, with the most common varieties being Cantonese and Taishanese and rounding out the three (Min, Hakka, Yue) groups considered to form the 'southern' dialect group

combining two or more individual characters. These combination words exist in English and French as well (e.g., airplane; blackbird; bientôt; contremaître) but again not to nearly the same degree as in Chinese.

In all its complexity, Chinese is an impressive, imposing language, especially to the ear and the eye.<sup>22</sup> Understanding it and its nuances permits a much more sophisticated understanding of the country (to itself the ‘Middle Nation/Kingdom,’<sup>23</sup> the meaning of the name *in* the name and noun). Indeed, it is only with this understanding that one can begin to grasp an argument seeking to apply the label of “performative” and “compositional” to the language, and to envision the ways in which the we can usefully transfer, transcribe and adapt it.

Again, Hodge and Louie:

On the one hand, the Chinese language, especially in its written forms, is so radically and endemically ambiguous that it might seem that the Chinese have always lived in a post-structuralist heaven in which every meaning is polysemic and indeterminate. On the other hand, Chinese discourse, especially political discourse, has been tightly controlled and governed by ‘ideological homogenisation’ as well as by ‘political terrorization...’ across different periods and under different regimes (ibid, 96).

Michael Schoenhals’ 1992 text, *Doing Things with Words in Chinese Politics*, pointed out that “formalized language (‘the language of politics as a restricted code in which options with respect to formal qualities such as vocabulary, style, syntax and trope are far more restricted than in ordinary language) and formalized speech acts help constitute the structure of power within China’s political system.” (1) This attention to the power of the word can be traced at least as far back as Confucius saying in the Analects

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<sup>22</sup> The technical descriptions thus far have not even begun to parse the differences in pronunciation (nine tones in Yue Cantonese, for example, compared to four main tones—and one neutral tone—in Mandarin) and in character sets (simplified, used in mainland China and Singapore; and traditional, used in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan), *as well as* the systems for transliterating the language, from Mandarin Phonetic Symbols to the Wade-Giles Romanized version as well as the official Hanyu Pinyin Romanization that replaced Wade-Giles and remains in use today.

<sup>23</sup> Middle ( 中 ) (zhōng) Kingdom ( 国/國 ) (guó) NB: the accents here refer to a difference in intonation rather than a difference in phoneticization

that “when names are not correct—and what is said is therefore not reasonable—the affairs of the state will not culminate in success and the common people will not know how to do what is right” (2). Consequently, according to Schoenhals, Confucius says that “the Prince is never casual in his choice of words” (ibid).

The ‘art of doing things with words’ is “dear to China’s *homo politicus*,” Michael Schoenhals says, but has not received nearly the same attention as, “for instance, the ‘art of *guanxi*’ (the ‘skillful mobilization of moral and cultural imperatives such as obligation and reciprocity in pursuit of social ends and instrumental needs’)” due largely to this language gap (5-6). The whole situation is, he notes, “more than a little embarrassing” and tinged by a “disturbing” ethnocentricity:

Whereas Western universities, media, and government(s) never would regard anyone with a reading ability in English of ten pages an hour as qualified to speak with authority on British politics, a similar standard does not yet apply to China and Chinese politics... It is an undeniable fact that Western scholars writing about contemporary China seldom... read or speak Chinese with anything remotely resembling fluency. It is an open secret—ever so evident from the titles appearing in our footnotes and bibliographies—that most of us are totally dependent in our work on the translated discourse generated by the U.S. consulate in Hong Kong, the British Broadcasting Corporation, and the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing. Under these circumstances, our failure to deal with the relationship between language and politics in China is perhaps not surprising. (6)

Of course, the charge of ethnocentricity and the call to de-westernize and de-colonize academic scholarship are common criticisms, so common as to be ineffective or counterproductive.

I argue that the gaps in our theories and scholarship arise more from ontological incompatibility, or to use Wang and Huang’s term, incommensurability. As Shigehisa Kuriyama points out in *The Expressiveness of the Body and the Divergence of Greek and Chinese Medicine* (1999), invoking Akutagawa Ryūnosuke’s *Rashomon*, “Versions of the truth sometimes differ so startlingly that the very idea of truth becomes suspect... (and) a similar riddle lies at the heart of the history of medicine. The true structure and

workings of the human body are, we casually assume, everywhere the same, a universal reality. But then we look into history, and our sense of reality wavers” (8). Comparing drawings of the body from 14<sup>th</sup>-century China and 16<sup>th</sup>-century Europe (Habsburg Netherlands at the time), Kuriyama notes,

Viewed side by side, the two figures each betray lacunae... Chinese doctors lacked a specific word for ‘muscle’ (as it) was a peculiarly Western preoccupation. On the other hand, the tracts and points of acupuncture entirely escaped the West’s anatomical vision of reality” (ibid).

The differences are especially striking and simultaneously serve as a timely reminder for the eternal need for epistemological humility because they highlight the instability of our knowledge of an object we all possess: ourselves. “How,” Kuriyama asks, “can perceptions of something as basic and intimate as the body differ so?”

In this difference of perception for an object as universal as a human body, I see a potentially broader key to compatibility and commensurability, one that builds on the body’s unruly, ontological persuasiveness to demonstrate its sometimes-intractable resistance to epistemological eminent domain,<sup>24</sup> a domain carved out, in Western thought at least, by centuries of Judeo-Christian and Islamic belief, followed by Enlightenment conditioning and attendant industrialization and mechanization.<sup>25</sup> The mind’s globally cantankerous connection to the body is visible in a host of mundane occurrences floating beneath the surface of our everyday functioning, as well as in conditions more pronounced, such as addiction, anger, chronic illness or pain, disorders of the immune system, of sleep, of personality, and of mood. The simple fact of handedness described above translates into the handicap of our lopsided habits, posture and gait. But like our handedness, our habit of viewing this object as mind and matter, as parts

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<sup>24</sup> In French, eminent domain is translated as « expropriation pour cause d’utilité publique »

<sup>25</sup> Senge, Peter. *Schools That Learn: A Fifth Discipline Fieldbook for Educators, Parents, and Everyone Who Cares About Education*. New York: Random House, 2012.

and whole, as medical machine, has created a lopsided posture and gait to our ability to understand, from grasping the points of view we take for granted to noticing truths we are not even aware exist.

To invoke a personal example: My mother is a professor of educational psychology in Hong Kong; my brother's former girlfriend a doctoral student in clinical psychology in Montreal. During mother's visit one year, the two were discussing my mother's specialization in helping children with dyslexia learn to read. Once my mother explained the mechanics of dyslexia as we know it, and the additional complexities of understanding dyslexia in children learning Chinese, my brother's former girlfriend expressed embarrassment for not having considered how difference in language and in script might play a crucial role in the field. 'It's so obvious but I had never thought about it like that,' she said.

The human brain is primed to seek patterns and, once these patterns are understood, the brain can derive a measure of comfort from the predictability and reliability of structure. Some patterns are more complex while others require a heavier effort to identify, understand and replicate. Mathematics, for example, has been proven to first demand brute rote memorization before giving way to abilities for agile problem solving. Says speech therapist (orthophoniste) Anais Deleuze:

Au moment d'apprendre à lire, l'enfant possède déjà des habilités de langage oral sophistiquées: il connaît la forme sonore et le sens des mots. Il doit alors apprendre à associer arbitrairement des symboles visuels (les graphèmes), la forme sonore (les phonèmes) et le sens des mots. (Les Éditions Passe-temps)

As the comparisons of Chinese, English and French writing described above make evident, the graphemes we associate with phonemes or with morphemes depend on the languages to which we are exposed. No wonder there is, according to psychologists and speech development authorities Alison Gopnik, Andrew Meltzoff and Patricia Kuhl, "a mysterious gap between the sound waves that actually reach our ears and the sounds and words we create in our minds":

We can make a sort of photograph of a sound called a spectrogram. The spectrogram shows the actual physical properties of the sound waves: how loud they are, what pitch they are, and how they change. Just as we must translate the two-dimensional pattern of light on our retinas into the three-dimensional solid objects we perceive, so we must translate this pattern of sound into language. The distance from there to here is just as great. (*The Scientist in the Crib: What Early Learning Tells Us About the Mind*, 95)

In some cases, our current mechanisms are clearly either dysfunctional or broken, as evidenced by Elaine Scarry's reflections on the structure of torture and war in *The Body in Pain*, in which she asks, "By what perceptual process does it come about that one human being can stand beside another human being in agonizing pain and not know it, not know it to the point where he himself inflicts it?" (61) Perhaps, she muses, "physical pain is an intentional state without an intentional object (while) imagining is an intentional object without an experienceable intentional state" (164). In other words:

pain and imagining constitute extreme conditions of, on the one hand, intentionality as a state and, on the other, intentionality as self-objectification; and between these two boundary conditions all the more familiar, binary acts-and-objects are located. That is, pain and imagining are the 'framing events' within whose boundaries all other perceptual, somatic, and emotional events occur; thus, between the two extremes can be mapped the whole terrain of the human psyche. (165)

How might we create a spectrogram of this terrain?

In a way, this endeavour picks up where Foucault indicated he would begin in *Les mots et les choses*, with « la région médiane » found between the two extremities of « les codes fondamentaux d'une culture... qui fixent d'entrée de jeu pour chaque homme les ordres empiriques auxquels il aura affaire et dans lesquels il se retrouvera » on the one hand and « les théories scientifiques ou des interprétations de philosophes expliquent pourquoi il y a en général un ordre, à quelle loi générale il obéit, quel principe peut en rendre compte, pour quelle raison c'est plutôt cet ordre-ci qui est établi et non pas tel autre » on the other. In this zone, Foucault argued,

antérieure aux mots, aux perceptions et aux gestes qui sont censés alors la traduire avec plus ou moins d'exactitude ou de bonheur... il y a (entre l'usage de ce qu'on

pourrait appeler les codes ordinateurs et les réflexions sur l'ordre) l'expérience nue de l'ordre et de ses modes d'être. (12-13)

While Foucault limited his study to « la culture européenne depuis le XVIe siècle » (398), this study will attempt to fill in the gaps and acknowledge the insufficiency of Foucault's original scope while offering a different approach, equally intended to bring validity and substance to the study of human behaviour and understanding but anchored more heavily in quantitative rather than qualitative data, and from multiple perspectives rather than any single or even dual gaze.

### 1.3 nomination

There is a cliché in popular culture and in the philosophy of language that attributes a series of comments about the importance of names to Confucius, who is asked what he would do first should he be asked by the ruler of the kingdom to help with government. "Certainly I will rectify names," Confucius replies, for "If names are not rectified, language will not accord. If language does not accord, deeds will not be completed. If deeds are not completed, then ceremonies and music will not flourish. If ceremonies and music do not flourish, then punishment will not be on target. If punishments are not on target, then the people will not know where to put their hands and feet." (as quoted in Holloway, 91-92). But as legal scholar Janet Ainsworth points out, while "Chinese philosophy has a long tradition of intense engagement with issues of language, including a long-standing preoccupation with the correspondence of language and reality," (21) nevertheless,

from the earliest period of Confucian thought, the Chinese saw language as the arbitrary product of human faculties... Centuries later, Western philosophy reached the same conclusion, by a very different route in the turn-of-the-century semiotics of Ferdinand de Saussure... asserting that the relationship between signifiers and signified is arbitrary. (21, note 7)

Gottlob Frege also raised this question in 1892 with his work 'Über Sinn und Bedeutung' ('On Sense and Reference'), and Jean-Claude Anscombe provides a tidy summary of the field in his article in *Cahiers de praxématique* (2001), arguing that the opposition between the sense of an expression and its reference

( « une position fort ancienne, qui semble traverser toute la linguistique jusqu'à nos jours » ) is one that, in Western philosophy, dates back to at least the Middle Ages:

On la trouve déjà chez les logiciens du Moyen-Âge... qui, pour ce qui est du rapport entre les expressions linguistiques et la réalité extralinguistique, distingue : a) La *significatio* (terme habituellement traduit par *signification*), rapport entre les mots et les représentations intellectuelles qui leur sont associées (on dirait aujourd'hui les *concepts*); et la *suppositio* (terme usuellement traduit par *supposition*, et qui correspond au référent), qui est cette fois le rapport qui unit le mot aux choses, aux objets extérieurs à la langue...

Anscombe goes on to include John Stuart Mill's *System of Logic* and Frege's opposition between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung* as further examples of theories about the indexical nature of language.

[Mill] oppose la *dénotation* (le référent) et la *connotation* (la signification), opposant ainsi les descriptions définies, qui désignent (= dénotent) un objet particulier au travers d'une propriété spécifique que la description définie connote, et qui est sa signification... et G. Frege fait une distinction tout à fait analogue lorsqu'il oppose ce que désigne une expression (*Bedeutung*) et la façon dont elle le désigne (*Sinn*). On retrouve encore l'idée que le référent (= *Bedeutung*) est atteint au travers du sens (= *Sinn*).

In a conference given at the XV Congrès de l'Association des Sociétés de Philosophie de Langue Française at the Université de Montréal in 1971, Paul Ricoeur offered a similar summary, invoking Frege, Husserl and Russell and hinted at a similar ultimate divide, arguing that Kant established an ontological baseline for all Anglo-Saxon philosophy:

« S'il n'y avait pas d'entités de ce genre, nous ne pourrions faire de propositions à leur sujet ». Ce postulat est celui du réalisme kantien, transposé du phénomène au discours : S'il n'existait pas quelque chose, rien n'apparaîtrait. Il ne s'agit plus en effet de sauver les phénomènes, mais le discours.

Cette conviction ontologique est commune à toute la philosophie anglo-saxonne...

Concluding his overview with de Saussure, Anscombe argues that de Saussure refuted this relationship between signified and reality : « Saussure refuse de voir dans la langue une nomenclature de la réalité, un jeu d'étiquettes attribuées aux choses, et expulse ainsi la réalité hors de la langue, en conformité avec son projet général. » (7)

What are the material effects of words and how can we demonstrate them? The following graph/table is one such attempt to post-deconstruct translated texts that communications scholars have occasionally taken at face value. The next section will outline research creation as an alternative to post-deconstruction.

Figure 1

La traduction de Alan Bass (1972) :

Every sign, linguistic or nonlinguistic, spoken or written (in the **usual** sense of this opposition), as a small or large unity, can be *cited*, put between quotation marks; thereby it can break with every given context, and engender infinitely new contexts in an absolutely **nonsaturable** fashion. This does not **suppose** that the mark is valid outside its context, but on the contrary that there are only contexts without any center of absolute anchoring. This citationality, duplication, or duplicity, this iterability of the mark is not accident or an anomaly, but is that (normal/abnormal) without which a mark could no longer even have a so-called "normal" functioning. What would a mark be that one could not cite? **And whose origin could not be lost on the way?** [end of paragraph]

Derrida, Signature événement contexte (1971) :

Tout signe, linguistique ou non-linguistique, parlé ou écrit (au sens courant de cette opposition), en petite ou grande unité, peut être *cité*, mis entre guillemets; par là il peut rompre avec tout contexte donné, engendrer à l'infini de nouveaux contextes, de façon absolument non saturable. Cela ne suppose pas que la marque vaut hors contexte mais au contraire qu'il n'y a que des contextes sans aucun centre d'ancrage absolu. Cette citationnalité, cette duplication ou duplicité, cette itérabilité de la marque n'est pas un accident ou une anomalie, c'est ce (normal/anormal) sans quoi une marque ne pourrait même plus avoir de fonctionnement dit « normal ». Que serait une marque que l'on ne pourrait pas citer? [end of paragraph]

La traduction de Gerald Graff (1988) :

Every sign, linguistic or nonlinguistic, spoken or written (in the **current** sense of this opposition), in a small or large unit, can be *cited*, put between quotation marks; in so doing it can break with every given context, engendering an infinity of new contexts in a manner which is absolutely **illimitable**. This does not **imply** that the mark is valid outside of a context, but on the contrary that there are only contexts without any center or absolute anchorage [ancrage]. This citationality, this duplication or duplicity, this iterability of the mark is neither an accident nor an anomaly, it is that (normal/abnormal) without which a mark could not even have a function called "normal." What would a mark be that could not be cited? **Or one whose origins would not get lost along the way?** [end of paragraph]

#### 1.4 méthodologie: research creation

Combining the notion of performativity, as introduced by John L. Austin to refer to cases in which saying is also doing, and that of compositionality, summarized by Barbara Partee as the principle by which the meaning of an expression is determined by the meaning of its parts and the relations between them, I suggest *performed compositionality* as a new plane of systematic experimentation<sup>26</sup> designed to test and showcase the consequences of language.

Straddling language in the broadest sense possible (verbal and non-verbal, bodily and musical, as well as Latin/Roman and non-alphabetic), and positing that reality is always ideology and poetry together (that is, entirely permeable and ultimately impenetrable at the same time), performed compositionality offers a repertoire of practices for using language more effectively, more economically, less “excessively” and more judiciously. I aim to draw from across the disciplines (arts, social sciences, traditional sciences) and through different languages, thus mapping a multi-modally inter-cultural experimental system<sup>27</sup> and machine to reveal the relationships already extant between language and reality, between diction and discourse, and for all that which falls under the rubric of communication writ large.

Alphabetic communication is an unmooring of morphemes from phonemes to challenge Latin-Roman alphabetic primacy in definitions of language and to broaden and extend communication to all five senses as well as to other systems of communication. It puns on illiteracy so as to undermine dominant perceptions of ability, disability, and different-ability with regards to linguistic and communicational

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<sup>26</sup> Research-creation: a chess board that is also a work bench, a playground and theatre stage

<sup>27</sup> In the words of Hans-Jorg Rheinberger, director of the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, “experimental systems (which can only be understood as an interplay of machines, preparations, techniques, rudimentary concepts, vague objects, protocols, research notes, and the social and institutional conditions in which these are employed) are the centre and motor of modern scientific research... the actual generators of knowledge (and) machines for making the future” (“Artistic practices and epistemic things,” 114).

competence. In redefining communication, analphabetism reveals linguistic shortage and excess and demonstrates how communication can be more efficient, economical, effective and affective.

To provide themes, data and inspiration for the creative portion of my research, I therefore propose analyzing the traits and characteristics of five data systems:

- the 26 letters of the Latin alphabet
- 96 radicals used to create the majority of Chinese ideographs
- measurements (metric and imperial weights and distances)
- time zones currently in use (37)
- the 12 notes of the chromatic scale

For those who use these systems regularly, their governing rules and conventions are intuitive, transparent or obvious, and logical. But to any outsider, these rules and conventions can seem at best opaque and at worst non-sensical.

I have chosen these five systems and listed them in the order found here for specific reasons, some more immediately evident than others. All five can be said to have a building block-like structure which will permit us to channel our inner child-researcher and pile, stack or knock down as we experiment. The first, the 26 letters of the Latin alphabet, is the one we, literate and educated citizens of modern Western civilization (as my history and social studies course in my last year of high school was called), take for granted as the necessary key to knowledge, success, intelligence, enlightenment, advancement, etc. I deliberately list 96 common radicals for Chinese ideographs next in this list to establish the concrete possibility – or rather, reality – that the same door to knowledge, success, intelligence, etc. can be opened with an entirely different key. From there, the focus shifts towards empirical systems with subjective nomenclature: 1. the terms we use to describe units of measure; 2. the division of the 24 hours of the

earth's rotation around the sun into 37 different local time references; and 3. cultural valances of the sound frequencies comprising almost all of what we consider 'classical music' heard, created and performed around the world. To maintain a manageable overall scope in undertaking the comparison of so many different registers of classification, I will pull only fifty variables for each system, taking them as representative of the system as a whole, for a total of 250 variables. This is far from ideal in many regards – the choices will be mine and therefore non-randomized and 50 is too few a sample size to truly make any large-scale claims about the results – but I am confident the scope nonetheless provides enough material for the respectable beginnings of a data mine as well as ample opportunities to examine the processes described above.

This approach can be approximatively referred to as “performative research,”<sup>28</sup> or “research creation” which, most simply put, refers to “the collection, organization and dissemination of research which moves beyond traditional modes, such as the text-based journal article or overhead presentation” (Roberts, 308).<sup>29</sup> Doctoral research in general must be grounded by a critical understanding of context, a

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<sup>28</sup> Just as I suggested that the notion of performativity might more accurately be called “the performed,” so here I rename performative research “performed research” or to simply refer to it as research creation, so as to avoid invoking the many problematic senses of the concept of performativity itself.

<sup>29</sup> Roberts' relatively exhaustive list of examples of performative research:

- performance and ethnography;
- ethnotheatre/ethnodrama;
- ethnographic surrealism/surrealist ethnography;
- ethnographic art;
- movement studies;
- experimental film and ethnographic film;
- a/r/tography
- biographical research and “relational aesthetics”;
- narratives, including artforms, participatory research and ethno-mimesis;
- theatre, improvisational theatre, drama therapy and psychodrama as well as local and organizational oral history;
- visual anthropology and documentary film and television; (Ed: Let us not omit the black sheep of the documentary film and television family: reality tv, a category that also raises productive tension about the relationship between performative and popular culture. There is obvious overlap between the two, but not all popular culture is performative and vice versa. But who draws the boundaries, and where?)

well-mapped terrain of inquiry, according to Carole Gray, who adds that this critical understanding has two facets, that of conducting critical analysis—making analytical evaluations and reasoned judgments—and of promoting critical transformation—‘working against’ existing theories and practices to “open up opportunities for seeing things in new ways and making new connections.” (From “INTHEORY? From the ground up: encountering theory in the process of practice-led doctoral research”). Theory-performing, Helen Yeates explains in *The International Journal of the Humanities*, includes examples of work where researchers “have interrogated, in effect, theories mined from a variety of sources, effectively performing aspects of these theories in the light of their own creative practices.”<sup>30</sup> Hanne Seitz goes as far as to claim that this form research “does not aim to capture reality in graphs or to describe it in words; nor does it set out to test existing hypotheses, pursue existing questions, or document processes” (4). In redefining this type of research as *performed*, I aim to evoke the rationale and the feasibility of conceiving of performed research as capable of encompassing such a scope—capturing and describing reality; testing hypotheses, documenting processes—while also exceeding these limits and still to reflexively (in both senses of the word) look elsewhere: back, from whence we came; aside, to peripheral and marginal borders; away, to nothing at all.

The field of applied linguistics has also made strong headway with the notion of performativity, building on the work of Australian professor of Language, Society and Education, Alastair Pennycook, who, in 2004, pinpointed the problems of the linguistic turn and suggested that performativity would be a useful

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- web and digital, as well as biomedical and biotech developments including blogs, social media, digital storytelling and archives, and multimedia and corporal genomic experimentation

<sup>30</sup> Yeates cites a few examples: “one doctoral graduate drew on Heidegger’s existential philosophy and theories of world/earth to build a new theory of ambience, in order to illuminate how the creative installation work could activate an ambient experience. Another has creatively re-worked a number of interlocking theories from the philosopher Merleau-Ponty along with writers from the field of phenomenology, in relation to capturing and redefining the ‘unspeakable’ within her immersive piece. Creating a digital intermedia artistic practice, she attempted to blur the boundaries of perception, both in practical and theoretical ways.” (143)

tool in the “disinvention” of language and the subsequent way to consider the “social operation of language” (“Performativity and Language Studies,” 2). Performativity, Pennycook argued,

provides a way of thinking about relationships between language and identity that emphasize the productive force of language in constituting identity rather than identity being a pre-given construct that is reflected in language use, (13)

in that “the process of naming objects amounts to the very act of their constitution” (14). This interpretation of performativity fused with that of competence, a loaded and productive term in second language acquisition studies, to refer to performative competence, that is,

the communication procedure knowledge one develops in and through practice, and the dynamic and reciprocal strategies individuals adopt to facilitate their identity construction and negotiation across speech communities... language-for-learning and language-in-use are linguistic resources for achieving a social purpose” (Guo and Gu, 5).

In second language acquisition research, the notion of competence was introduced as an alternative to that of achievement, to shift focus away from proficiency as a totalizing barometer of linguistic acquisition, to encompass success during interaction, a much more dynamic process (Kramsch, 1986). Current research in this area juggles several competence-related concepts, from basic linguistic competence (using correct grammar and vocabulary), to pragmatic, sociolinguistic, cultural and intercultural competence (respectively: delivering felicitous speech acts; using conventionally accepted terms; understanding local culture; understanding how to move between cultures). Claire Kramsch and Anne Whiteside add to this list the notion of symbolic competence, which reflects “an understanding of the power game, speaking with institutional legitimacy and an ability to reframe the context” (2015), and argue that this is not the same idea as performative competence, which they emphasize is procedural rather than propositional. It should come as no surprise that, as with many of the theoretical concepts discussed so far, this one is also subject to debate and contestation. Far from attempting to resolve the conflict or even to abide by the boundaries of its distinctions, I therefore propose the term ‘performed competence’ for my work, to refer to a bridging of the aspects of each of these ideas that lend the greatest

value to my project, in other words, to define performed competence as the interactive language strategies, procedural and propositional, that serve to help the speaker negotiate identity (his or hers, and those of others) and deploy language with political purpose, to speak with an understanding of the power game, with institutional legitimacy, and to reframe context.

This approach draws on the notion of competence as a repertoire, and of composition as a process of comparison, creation and communication, providing us at last with the notion of *performed compositionality* in its most complete instantiation as a dynamic (and entertaining) method of research investigation and research creation; of theory construction and deconstruction; and as an act of joy and (acts of a) play.

#### 1.4.1 performed compositionality: an ethics of action and the actions of ethics

In Erving Goffman's 1974 publication, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, he argues that an individual's "'true' or 'real' attitudes, beliefs, and emotions can be ascertained only indirectly, through his avowals or through what appears to be involuntary expressive behavior" (2). This results in "the expressiveness of the individual" being communicated through "two radically different kinds of sign activity: the expression that he *gives*, and the expression that he *gives off*." The latter kind, Goffman says, are the kind addressed in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, and tend to be "the more theatrical and contextual kind, the non-verbal, presumably unintentional kind, whether this communication be purposely engineered or not" (3). This view of social interaction has led to Goffman's work being "criticized" for what is seen as its excessively cynical interpretation of social actors and interactions," but also provides a rich view of the self as fluid, complex and split: "there is the display presented to others, and... there is the amorphous bundle of inconsistent yearnings that, although heavily influenced by the social, is kept hidden and which drives the presentation of self" (Horanyi, 380; 382). It also provides a working model of the performed that is both non-verbal and occasionally sub- or unconscious, bringing to mind modes of

expression such as navigation, music, sport or play—endeavours in which we are capable of engaging with technique acquired through practice or habit, with partial attention but fully communicated self-expression.

The concepts Goffman develops in *Frame Analysis* (1974), in the second chapter, on “Keys and Keying,” in particular, outline an exciting and still-understudied way of considering social constructions of meaning. Basing himself on observations of otters play fighting in a zoo, Goffman argues that the play activity, patterned on but differing from the real one of actual fighting, transcribes, transposes, or transforms—“in the geometrical, not the Chomskyan sense”—“a strip of fighting behavior into a strip of play” (41). Calling attention to the transformational power of play, Goffman names it “the key”:

the set of conventions by which a given activity, already meaningful in terms of some primary framework, is transformed into something patterned on this activity but seen by the participants to be quite something else (44).

Such keys and keying, Goffman adds, are precisely the examples of utterances Austin *initially* excluded from consideration as performatives, for to Austin (again, initially), performative utterances were those “issued in ordinary circumstances” (*How to do Things with Words*, 22). These “keys” of Goffman’s, Austin described as “language not used seriously, but in ways *parasitic* upon its normal use” and warned that they would sound “in a peculiar way hollow or void” (*ibid*). Goffman’s assessment of the matter is rather more empowering, as he notes that keys offer “another go at reality terms”:

Actions framed entirely in terms of a primary framework are said to be real or actual, to be really or actually or literally occurring. A keying of these actions performed, say, onstage, provides us with something that is not literal or real or actually occurring. Nonetheless, we would say that the *staging* of these actions was really or actually occurring... Indeed, the real or the actually happening seems to be very much a mixed class perceived within a primary perspective and also transformed events when these are identified in terms of their status as transformations... In order to be careful, then, perhaps the terms ‘real,’ ‘actual,’ and ‘literal’ ought merely to imply that the activity under consideration is no more transformed than is felt to be usual and typical for such doings. (47)

This passage opens space for the distinct possibility that, as we now know Austin admitted, the lines demarcating performatives and constatives, or keys and primary frameworks, are and cannot be fixed in stone or by rules but rather must be determined in a calculus of what Goffman calls “that which is felt to be usual and typical for such doings.” In other words, it is possible for every primary framework to be, in theory, also a key, or for an extra-ordinary, parasitic performative utterance to also be an ordinary one—for as Goffman says, “In distinguishing between the original and the copy, I leave quite unconsidered the question of how the copy can come to affect the original...” (48) Or in the words of Karen Barad, “phenomena are constitutive of reality. Reality is not composed of things-in-themselves or things-behind-phenomena but “things”-in-phenomena. The world *is* intra-activity in its differential mattering.” An intra-active view of the copy and the original might venture that one eventually completely supplants the other, or that one was always-already the other, their existence as Things-in-phenomena determined by an evolving process of differential mattering. This “flow” by which “‘part’ of the world makes itself differentially intelligible to another ‘part’ of the world and through which local causal structures, boundaries, and properties are stabilized and destabilized does not take place in space and time but in the making of spacetime itself...” (2003, 817) Horanyi, assessing Butler’s intertwining of Derrida and Austin, cites a few reservations about this push for revolution via performativity: “Is it sufficient to leave resistance to the vagaries of linguistic structures (or better, discourses) that turn upon themselves?... Parody without an original (‘blank parody’) reveals that the original itself is merely parody, resulting in a kind of infinite regress” (391-392).

Infinite regress, Schrodinger’s cat, ouroboros, the Mobius strip and other “impossible” figures and objects (figures that can be drawn or represented in two dimensions but are physically and geometrically impossible to create). Perhaps within these paradoxes lie clues to the conundrum of language and the confusions of extra-discursivity that are also the strongest indicator of its potential. To continue Austin’s quest to crack the crib of Reality, or to envision flipping the crib over to find out what dwells underneath,

it is useful to be able to question our understanding of understanding itself, and to do so by lingering in unfamiliar or inexplicable mental territory, a region that shrinks in the flashlight beam of education and learning, and that this education and learning teaches us to avoid: the recesses of ignorance; the darkness of illiteracy. Rather than thinking of this ignorance, illiteracy or incomprehension as an undesirable phase better surpassed, paradox and impossibility permit us to see incomprehension as an end-state in and of itself, as an integral part of creation or world-making, in which “the world is a dynamic process of... reconfiguring locally determinate causal structures with determinate boundaries, properties, meanings, and patterns of marks on bodies” (Barad 2003, 817). Or, as Barad describes it in another essay, “Re(con)figuring Space, Time and Matter,” this dynamism is both a machine and a mutating topological animal iteratively (re)producing material-discursive phenomena across Euclidean space and through the static instruments of non-Euclidean geometry (2001, 98).

The ‘politics of identity’ and the ‘politics of location,’ however useful, have been circumscribed by a geometrical conception of power that arrests and flatters important features of its dynamics. Perhaps what is needed is a ‘politics of possibilities’: ways of responsibly imagining and intervening in the re(con)figurations of power (2001, 102).

To establish this difference between the various notions of performativity, I refer again to the idea of *the performed*. Just as Barad’s Euclidean/non-Euclidean geometries offer an elegant mathematical solution to Foucault’s paradox of transcendental representational spaces by forcing a recognition of the validity of concepts both floundering in but also *originating from* incomprehension (the mind’s struggle to grasp impossible objects, for example), so the potential of *performed* extra-discursivity reveals to our eyes, ears, smell, taste, touch and intuition the irrefutability—the certainty and the assurance—of the nature of the universe itself, beyond being, beyond reality, beyond knowledge. At the end of his “Travail, vie, langage” chapter, Foucault exalts the form of language that he says has come, since Homer and Dante, to be considered in the occidental world as “literature.” This “most important, most unexpected” linguistic development created a resistance to the objectification of language and knowledge of the nineteenth-

century, preserving the purity of the act of writing and maintaining the “savage and imperious” nature of words, in the sheer power of speech (“le pouvoir dénudé de parler”). La littérature, according to Foucault:

devient pure et simple manifestation d’un langage qui n’a pour loi que d’affirmer—contre tous les autres discours—son existence escarpée; elle n’a plus alors qu’à se recourber dans un perpétuel retour sur soi, comme si son discours ne pouvait avoir pour contenu que de dire sa propre forme. (313)

A language whose only law is self-affirmation; a discourse whose content is its form. This invasion and appropriation of our imaginative faculties demonstrates philosopher Danielle Allen’s argument about its virtually infinite ratio of power to size, and gives weight to Barad’s conception of language that can ‘perform:’ “rethinking discursive practices and material phenomena and the relationship between them” (828). Literature’s ability to demand our total engagement—the act of reading fiction and of implicating oneself in the matter of its time and space being a psychological, emotional, physiological and imaginative undertaking—reinforces Barad’s *onto-epistemology* (the study of practices of knowing in being): “We do not obtain knowledge by standing outside of the world; we know because ‘we’ are *of* the world. We are part of the world in its differential becoming” (829). Or, to put the two face to face for a diffraction of extra-discursivity, one might surmise revelations of reality along the buried esoterics of history and the poeticized surfaces of what is visible in the secrets of nature. In other words, to put, at last, a millennial, twenty-first century spin on the vinyl, to find extra-discursivity in our excavations of creative production and the quest for meaningful communication – in the spectacles and entertainments of mash-up, improvisation and spoken word.<sup>31</sup> This is what I plan to capture with my data analysis and creation of a theatrical work.

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<sup>31</sup> Or, in still more (would Barthes say *excessive*?) words, the verbal, the oral, the aural, the visual, and all that is simultaneously—always already—sensual. Performativity as extra-discursivity offers conditions of materiality and embodiment that will eventually, as we will see, necessitate and demand, departure from the typed page, soothing and familiar as it may be.

Victor Turner's concept of social drama aligns neatly with that of literature as discursive and, potentially, *performed*. In Horanyi's analysis, social dramas as Turner defines them are central to maintaining or changing social structures, and are therefore frequently performed as "commemoration or artistic products," placing these performances at the heart of the functioning society and of individual experience, "shaping and reshaping our understanding and experience of the world" (385). Thomas Pavel's essay on "Narrative of ritual and desire" pushes this analysis further, arguing that Turner's model of social drama helps address a problem that has long haunted narratological research, that of establishing how "the fictional world and its categories related to the *empirical* world" (64). Avoiding typical false assumptions about narrativity that impose on it either hyperrealism (too closely matching narrative categories and real facts and believing for example that "a conflict in a story necessarily refers to a real one") or an unsustainable self-referentiality (in which narratives form their own self-enclosed worlds with their own "algebraic structures lacking any links to the actual universe"), Turner simply posits that "stories represent the real social life so effectively because social life is organized according to cultural (and narrative) categories:" Turner's well-known phases of social drama—breach, crisis, redress and *either* reintegration *or* recognition of schism. Heroes of social dramas, Pavel says, become in Turner's framework "ontological founders", "forever propelled forward by the energy of inexhaustible desire (and internal conflict)" into an understanding that "to satisfy desire means to invent a new cosmos, and to force the model up on the actual world" (66). Pavel cites as examples of these heroes Raphael in *La peau de chagrin*, Tambulaine the Great, Don Quixote, Scheherezade, Lazarillo de Tormes, as well as Fanny Hill, Gogol's Chichikov and Kafka's K. in *The Castle*.

To these figures, we might add Albert Camus' 'homme revolté': "In order to exist," writes Camus, "man must rebel, but rebellion must respect the limit it discovers in itself—a limit where minds meet and, in meeting, begin to exist. Rebellious though, therefore, cannot dispense with memory: it is a perpetual state of tension" (21-22). Camus closes his text by increasing his diagnosis of this tension to one he terms

'acute'—a result of the struggle to balance “refusal and acceptance, the unique and the universal, the individual and history...” In *Albert Camus and the Political Philosophy of the Absurd: Ambivalence, Resistance, and Creativity*, Matthew H. Bowker argues that this state and its lack of “ontological security” give rise to “artistic, moral and personal creativity” because of the

maturity, strength and flexibility with which ambivalences and tensions are managed... The rebel’s management of these ambivalences permits him to be creative, in the fullest sense, to achieve a great integration of opposites, and to develop a more mature relationship with others and the world (160).

This willingness to remain in absurdity, ambivalence and ultimately rebellion is, according to Bowker, Camus’ “statement about what is needed for individuals to create moral solutions to intractable moral problems (and) also a statement about how to live with the tensions and ambivalences created by those problems without resorting to facile solutions and primitive defenses” (170). Turner and Pavel’s ontological founders are also, in Camus or Bowker’s estimation, epistemological pioneers of sort, issuing from an acceptance of instability and insecurity towards a creative but not teleological impulse or quest for connection and meaning.

#### 1.4.2 composing: research creation as choosing competence

I plan on using JMP (pronounced ‘jump’), a statistical analysis program with an emphasis on interactive and visual data discovery to lay out a framework for comparison and contrast.<sup>32</sup> The scope of this project is deliberately both broad and narrow: broad in the range of systems of representation it attempts to analyze; and narrow in the sampling span within each chosen category. Across all five categories, I will be investigating the compositional relationship between the parts and the whole.

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<sup>32</sup> Dissertation revision (2024): the process of data analysis became part of the creation of the theatrical work, and the results, available via browsers rather than data analysis software such as JMP, or LLM software that I also considered, are embedded throughout the theatrical work as hyperlinks. While the quantitative reliability of such a process is more questionable, I deemed the trade-off of increased accessibility to more than offset the change in quality.

Here is a quick overview of the characteristics of compositionality that I propose analyzing for each of the five representational systems listed above:

1. The principles of compositionality for the Latin alphabet combine relatively straightforward principles of phonetic and morphemic structures with occasionally esoteric rules inherited among the Romance and Germanic languages
2. Chinese literacy demands compositionality to decipher individual logograms but also relies on compositionality at a much more basic level in constructing ideas, phrases and concepts made up of two ideographs. The components (phonetic radical and semantic determinative) of a single logogram reflexively transform the character's meaning just as the individual parts of a two-word compound interact to determine and change the meaning of the idea, phrase or concept in question.
3. At the centre of this data mine lies its pit, a swamp of confused and confusing terms and labels for every day reference points, dragged away from consistency by quirks of circumstance and politics: e.g. Celsius vs Kelvin vs Fahrenheit; metre vs yard vs foot. Fortunately, here we find assistance from the Bureau International des Poids et Mesures and the Organisation Internationale de Métrologie Légale for their extensive work on international equivalences as well as regulations and standards. Thanks to the BIPM and the OIML, we have seven base units of measurement forming the *Système International d'Unités* (SI), including most prominently measures for length (metre), mass (kilogram), time (second), electric current (ampere) and temperature (kelvin), from which can be derived other units for familiar measurements such as frequency (Hertz).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Into this morass, I hope to include, space permitting, a brief comparison of names for numbers in English, Chinese and French.

4. Gradually, we make our way back to more stable territory, dividing the earth's orbit around the sun into (almost) exactly 24 hours, the consequent division of the earth's 360 degrees of longitude into 24 sections, each 15 degrees wide and each representing one hour's offset from the prime meridian's Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) in Greenwich, London, and the 37 subsequent local times in use world-wide (UTC +12 through UTC -12, as well as 12 'special' offsets on the quarter or half-hour).<sup>34</sup>
5. This endeavour tries to end on a pleasant note, or rather, a dozen of them – the relatively identifiable 12 semi-tones of the chromatic scale underpinning Western classical music, nevertheless confusingly named either CDEFGAB (sharp and flat) or do re mi fa sol la and ti (dièse and bemol).

This methodology deliberately borrows from and blurs the lines between qualitative and quantitative research using the tools of practice-led research. "It is well accepted in the literature on both quantitative and qualitative research that research design needs to flow from a central research question or problem statement... These requirements constitute problem-led research, and this can be addressed both by qualitative and quantitative methodologies. However, many practice-led researchers do not commence a research project with a sense of 'a problem.' Indeed, they may be led by what is best described as an 'enthusiasm of practice': something which is exciting, something which may be unruly, or indeed something which may be just becoming possible as new technology or networks allow (but of which they cannot be certain)." (Haseman 3).

Historically, qualitative and quantitative methodologies have waged battle, if not war, over the advantages and drawbacks of research rigour, with qualitative approaches, or "investigations of human

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<sup>34</sup> Both the measures section and the time section use standards set by governing bodies based in Europe: the Bureau International des Poids et Mesures in France and the International Organization for Standardization in Switzerland.

behavior and the social world,” to borrow the words of action research scholar Ernest T. Stringer (*Action Research*, 42), often found to be lacking in consistency:

Except to the extent that humans are physical beings, scientific investigation has largely failed to provide a social equivalent of the comparatively stable body of knowledge about the physical universe... despite the huge resources poured into research in these disciplines in the past few decades. Human beings, it seems, are hard to predict and difficult to control. (ibid, 43)

Positivist science and the empirical method have been claimed by the natural, or ‘pure’ sciences as their rightful and earned epistemological domain, buffered by Cartesian objectivity and respectful distance between question, hypothesis and result. “Experimental method, a traditional approach to scientific inquiry, seeks to test theories... to derive lawlike statements that explain the nature of the world or reality” (Stringer, 42). And while, as Stringer notes, “scientific knowledge is now recognized to be much less stable, objective, and generalizable than previously assumed,” (43) nevertheless the perception of and expectation for knowledge to be ‘scientific,’ that is, clinical, clear-cut and coldly rational, persists and has arguably expanded to encompass our models of knowledge in not only the social sciences but the humanities as well. History, for example, trades on the numerical legitimacy of dates in time to gloss over inconsistencies or indeterminacies, while literary canons especially in western traditions blend liberal exegesis with conservative hermeneutics to studiously avoid catching sight of an accretion of apocryphal texts, creations, accounts that challenge the parameters of those select works that have been deemed ‘good.’

By focusing on the compositional characteristics of these five systems, I also hope to draw upon two other important theoretical developments to thoroughly explore the contours of these systems and their effects and consequences: complexity theory and grounded, embodied theory. As Frans M. van Eijnatten explains, “chaos and complexity have firm roots in the ‘hard’ sciences, e.g. mathematics, physics and chemistry. The social sciences adapted the use of these concepts at a much later stage in time” to “better understand discontinuous growth in complex social systems.” Eijnatten in particular focuses on

setting out a “complexity framework” capable of “distinguishing multiple equilibria and specifying the conditions under which the emergence of what Stacey *et al.* (2000) terms ‘real novelty’, might occur... while *articulating rather than inventing a new paradigm for working life.*” (2004, 430 emphasis added). Similarly, Australian scholars Teresa Swist, Bob Hodge and Philippa Collin note in 2016 that, given the “increasing adoption of large-scale, multisectoral collaborations which draw upon diverse expertise and innovative processes to tackle complex issues,” paying attention to complexity and power relations must be seen as “starting points” for possible interventions in our analysis of the world. (489) Indeed, they argue,

If social reality is as complex as complexity theorists say, more complex than even the most complex theories and models, then the taken-for-granted simplification in everyday attitudes and practices will be seriously distorted, dangerous guides to effective practice. If power operates in such a complex reality, then our assumptions and practices in relation to power likewise may be dangerously inadequate. Therefore, prioritizing engagement with how meaning is made, as the basis of any campaign, is essential. (499)

Thus, the assembly and manipulation of the seemingly haphazard nature of these five systems will yield – it is hoped – numbers, images and words providing greater insight into the complexities of social reality, the role (or irrelevance) of power in this reality, and, most ambitiously, perhaps an outcome or two that rewards us with clues into how meaning is made. Seeking to channel the strengths of linguistics, logic and mathematics as formal disciplines while avoiding the contentious internal debates that often arise because of the ontological myopia of a field in the first place, this dissertation proposes a performative intervention into the conversation, harnessing the greatest strengths of communication as a discipline to create a useful space for discussion of humanities and human sciences subjects such as literature, political science, sociology, anthropology and psychology, and to take the jargon out of the pure sciences and mathematics. By laying out a terrain of contention that is attractive but also respectful, as communications does at its best, perhaps it will be possible to not only ask difficult questions but also begin to answer them productively.

Edward Slingerland, who holds a Canada Research Chair in Chinese Thought and Embodied Cognition, offers a lesson to be learned from chapter 42 of the *Daodejing*, which states that “A thing is sometimes added to by being diminished / Diminished by being added to.” This excerpt is found in Slingerland’s first book, *Effortless Action: Wu-Wei as Conceptual Metaphor and Spiritual Ideal in Early China*, in which he explores the thought experiments provoked by the inversions and paradoxes of early Chinese philosophy. Slingerland’s choice to do so through the lens of ‘metaphor’ is powerful because it hints at the possibilities inherent in figures of speech to either deepen our understanding of a matter or to obfuscate discussion about it. Zhenbin Sun’s 2015 book, *Language, Discourse, and Praxis in Ancient China*, made less of a splash in Western academia than Slingerland’s *Effortless Action* did but it, too, takes a close look at how language structures society in early China. Sun argues that in the *Daodejing*, Lao Zi criticizes the limitations of language, pointing out the paradox of the gap between language and reality, or the Way (Dao): “The Dao that can be told is not the eternal Dao; the name that can be named is not the eternal name.” According to Sun, Lao Zi believed that “it is because of language and knowledge that people become dishonest and greedy;” consequently, “Lao Zi’s prescription for the social disorder of his time was to abolish sageliness and knowledge as well as to go back to the simplicity of namelessness (*wu ming*),” (21), or, as Sun terms it, “the abandonment of names.”

In another work entitled “Cracking the White Horse Puzzle,” Sun tackles a well-known Catch-22 about whether a white horse is a horse. (*Journal of East-West Thought* 2013:3.3 97-106). In classic philosophical style, this intellectual puzzle starts with a seemingly straightforward premise that demands complicated answers, and its main argument can be resumed, albeit too simply, as pointing out that, because a horse is not a white horse, then a white horse cannot be a horse. As Sun explains, the author of the White Horse text, Gongsun Long, was not a logician but rather a semanticist, who sought to discuss “how we should use words carefully to identify their actual meaning and by so doing refine our knowledge of the world.” (101) Analyzing ancient Chinese thought from a semantic angle rather than one of formal

logic, ethics and philosophy “helps correct biased interpretations of ancient Chinese thought as a whole.”

(100) Sun’s focus on semantics and Slingerland’s emphasis on metaphors point to the important investigations available to these questions about language and discourse, underexplored from this perspective in academia in general and in communications studies in particular.

To generate data and findings from this mine, I will use JMP’s natural language processing to analyze several of the proposed systems: the 26 letters of the Latin alphabet and the labels for weights and measures. Given that JMP cannot perform natural language processing in Chinese, I will transcribe and transliterate the 50 Chinese characters chosen into an algorithm of the number of strokes used to write the character, the combinations of radicals and semantic determinatives, as well as the rules for their phonetic application, to create a broad description of the most basic (Sapir-Whorfian) principles governing Chinese language. I will then use JMP’s statistical capabilities to crunch the numbers of the world time zones and their offsets, as well as of the frequencies of the 12 chromatic semi-tones. The product will be a series of visual charts, tables and graphics demonstrating the connections, networks and relationships of the parts that comprise these systems, with particular interest in identifying their moments of friction and discontinuity. These moments, where – despite international efforts to create consistent, convertible standards – logic and reason are sidetracked by habit and habitus into chaos and complexity, when words and expectations don’t line up and in fact create greater confusion, provide fertile soil for finding Stacey’s notion of ‘real novelty.’ These moments, as revealed by the data analysis, will then form and inform the *theory-performing* play I am writing as the research-creation portion of the thesis.

In *Text and Performance Quarterly*, D. Soyini Madison, a professor of performance studies in the department of communication studies, and associate director of the Institute of African-American Research at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, reflects on the purposes of theory with an article entitled “Performing Theory/Embodied Writing,” in which she warns that in such performance and writing,

“the performer claims an uneasy possession of performance as a means of both subjectivity and freedom.”

(107) “Some of us have forgotten the beginnings and how to change them, and now there is craziness in our people,” she says, adding:

The story will save us, but we must make more beginnings.  
Here it is. Another beginning.  
I will perform it for you.  
*(slow fade to black. The only light is from the candle.)*  
I will perform it for you  
It goes like this...  
*(Performer blows out candle.)*

The play I am writing will explore this ground from this semi-discursive, embodied standpoint, where knowledge and speech don't add up to feeling and action, and feeling and action are both more and less than knowledge and speech, but where the principles of compositionality and complexity therein fulfilled and denied will offer not only revisions to certain onto-epistemological positions we take for granted, but also, and more ambitiously and importantly, through this necessarily, per Weick, emotional and confusing process, break ground for axiological, that is, ethical and aesthetic novelty.

**CHAPITRE 2**  
**COPYLEFT / ANALPHABÉTISME / 馬照跑舞照跳**

COPYLEFT

i.e.

ANALPHABÉTISME

i.e.

馬照跑舞照跳

(A TRILINGUAL TIKTOK<sup>35</sup>/抖音 PRODUCTION)

By Victoria Cheng 飛翔



Author's note: This play is a work of fiction. All characters and scenes in this play are imagined entirely by the playwright and any resemblance to other people and events, real or fictional, is completely coincidental.

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<sup>35</sup> Broken link if you are in: [Hong Kong](#); the US House of Representatives; Canada's House of Commons

<sup>36</sup> NDLR/tldr : cette pièce de théâtre représente un essai d'appliquer le méthode de compositionnalité performée à une création artistique

Four women:

1 Filipina

1 Chinese, preferably Cantonese

1 anglophone

1 blonde

2.1 Act I: February 14, 1997 - August 10, 2020

- I have had six employers and have never been fired.

OLIVIA

Yes, of course sir - of course I understand. I will be fine, don't worry about me. What about you? How will you get your food? And medication? There are wardens there who will bring it to you. Ok.

- Yes, my sister is still working for Mr. Li. Yes, she asked him. No, he doesn't need another domestic helper at the moment. I believe they are six, sir.

- My other sister? Yes, business is going very well at her café, she's very happy and proud. Our newspaper did a feature about her just last week: the first Filipina in Hong Kong to receive permanent resident status because she became an entrepreneur. I'm very proud of her, too.

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I arrived in Hong Kong 25 years ago. February 14, 1997. I obtained my bachelor degree in journalism and development communication from the College of Agriculture and Food Science at Visayas State University in Leyte (LAY-the), got married, got divorced and joined the [half million Filipinos](#) leaving my country every year as [OFW: overseas Filipino workers](#).

我識講廣東話。我識煮中式彩。我有經驗老人家和小朋友。

I have had six employers and I have never been fired. My first employers were an American couple. They came to Hong Kong for Sir's job and they lived by the ocean in Sai Kung. When Sir retired in 1998 and they moved back to Illinois (/VT/NY), I went to work for their friends, also an older American couple.

But after a decade with them, I wanted to take care of children so they helped me find a local family with young children. I could have stayed with them forever, I loved Jackson and Emmeline so much. I started working for them when Emmeline was born in 2008 but they moved to Canada after the protests started in 2014. They wanted their children to have a safe (and free) and stable life.

So I went back to working for couples, this time a very wealthy couple from Mainland China who had a mansion on Kadoorie Hill in Kowloon.

This is how I met Mr. Lai. He lived on the same street and said he had never seen anyone, domestic helper or otherwise, clean a car as quickly and as well as I did.

Of course I couldn't pass up the opportunity to work for him, even though I knew it would be dangerous. His home was petrol-bombed just days after I had started working for the couple from China, in 2015. But still, when he asked the couple

to release me and transfer my contract to him later that year, I did not hesitate for one moment.

Jimmy Lai Chee-Ying (黎智英) is a Hong Kong icon, and his story is the story of modern-day Hong Kong itself.

Like so many others, Sir was born in Mainland China during the Chinese Communist Party's rise to power in the 1940s and 1950s. Like so many others, he fled the terribly-named Cultural Revolution by escaping to Hong Kong as a child. He, and hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Chinese made the illegal crossing between Shenzhen and colonial Hong Kong by [swimming, floating or hiding on a fishing boat under the cover of night](#).

Sir was 12. He found a job in a garment factory and, sixteen years later, bought a bankrupt factory and began making sweaters for major American retailers. Before he founded Next Magazine and Apple Daily and became known for the irrepressible tabloid-style of journalism of his publications, before the declarations about democracy and freedom of the press, Sir first created one of the most popular clothing chains in Asia: [Giordano](#).

Knowing how much my sisters and brothers and their children love Giordano, Sir would send boxes full of Giordano clothing to them every year for Christmas and Chinese New Year, even though he sold the brand decades ago.

Sir has always treated me fairly but it's not that that impressed me the most, even though it's rare for employers to show their domestic helpers so much care and respect. Sir won *my* respect because he never wavered in his commitments and he always spoke with so much humility but without fear. I also learned - more than he probably realizes - how to build a successful business from his scrappy, savvy business acumen.

His definition of freedom of the press and freedom of speech have cost him his wealth and landed him multiple prison sentences.

That is how I knew, as police and journalists invaded his home, my home, on August 11, 2020, that it was time to let him in on the secret...

---

(TikTok Bearded Cutie Mode)

(LIGHTS SWITCH TO STAGE LEFT)

VOICE

CHARLIE, i.e. CHARLIE

... and then she said what?! That microaggressions are moments of selective stupidity?! That's so rude. Mean, condescending, arrogant... They're micro because sometimes people are too sensitive and take things the wrong way.

What did you say to her, anyway? That you liked that the curtains matched the carp... ok, well you're an idiot.

But yeah, sure, come by any time. I have a new yerga cheffe and a new IPA. I know, so 2019. But they're delicious. You can drown your sorrows with whatever poison you pick.

Chiefs play the Bills at 8, pre-season exhibition, plus the place will be packed because there's a show at the Bell Centre [\(and an Expos game at the Basin\)](#). So forget her. I always found her too stuck-up for you. I've got another call. Cool. See you later, man.

Bar au Pain hi bonjour? Bakery and sports bar, that's correct. What can I do for you? Table for five? At the bakery or at the bar? Oh never mind, force of habit. [Our seating is still outdoors only for now.](#)

---

(BEARDED CUTIE MODE OFF)

I grew up in Alberta. Of course I speak French with a strong accent. Hey, at least I try to speak French at all. It's intimidating when all the French speakers seem so comfortably bilingual and their English is obviously way better than my French. But it never hurts to always at least try. That's our unofficial motto here at Café Bar au Pain. I mean Bar o' Pain.

I realized my awkward anglo accent is a lot less embarrassing than I thought when I discovered the hilarity of bilingual puns. They go both ways, especially if you go for politican pronunciation.

1. Attention à vos bras<sup>37</sup>
2. J'aime ton corps/écoute ton corps
3. I'm just stepping out for some (h)air and to dry my (h)air<sup>38</sup>
4. These carrots aren't too well raped.

You get the idea. No? Too... microaggressive?

We're in a sports bar in Griffintown. Home of the Habs; Expos forever. We roast our own coffee beans, dry our own hops and ferment our own sourdough starter. If, as Sincere told my poor buddy Mike today, microaggressions are actually moments of selective stupidity, there is no such thing as too micro-aggressive here, just not micro-aggressive enough.

Wait, I mean...

Bar au Pain, hi bonjour? No, we're still waiting for the shipment to arrive.

---

DENISE HO WAN SEE (HOCC)

CENTER STAGE

---

<sup>37</sup> Jason Kenney/Erin O'Toole pronunciation

<sup>38</sup> Jean Chrétien/Gilles Duceppe pronunciation

(STARTING OUT STAGE L, MOVING TO CTR)

(sung to the tune of Bach's Violin Partita 3 Giga)

Oh... better far to live and die  
Under the brave black flag I fly,  
Than play a sanctimonious part,  
With a pirate head and a pirate heart.  
Away to the cheating world go you,  
Where pirates all are well-to-do;  
But I'll be true to the song I sing  
And live and die a Pirate Queen.

For I am a Pirate Queen!  
And it is, it is a glorious thing  
To be a Pirate Queen.

When I sally forth to seek my prey  
I help myself in a royal way.  
I sink a few more ships, it's true,  
Than a well-bred monarch ought to do.  
But many a queen on a first-class throne  
If she wants to call her crown her own,  
Must manage somehow to get through  
More dirty work than ever I do.

For I am a Pirate Queen!  
And it is, it is a glorious thing  
To be a Pirate Queen.

Yes, young man, what can I get you? The new Marvel movie? You know it came out in theaters, in the US, yesterday, right... Hmmmmmm... Your friend already has it? So go ask him. She got it from me? And so what if she did. She bought my last copy. I've got all kinds of other books, movies and magazines. Why don't you choose one of those? The Economist, Vogue, Teen Vogue, Maxim. I even have the Sunday Times. Books we've got the new Tim Ferris, the four hour/minute \_\_\_\_\_, the latest Blood and Ash, and my personal fav, Tricia Levenseller's 2017 Daughter of the Pirate King.

(DENISE SAILS TO STAGE RIGHT, LANDING IN...)

HONG KONG

(CENTRAL: THE HSBC AND BANK OF  
CHINA TOWERS LINE THE ICONIC  
HORIZON. BETWEEN THAT AND  
CENTER STAGE, WE SEE THE  
MARQUEE FOR THE STAR FERRY  
PIER, SHARING CENTER STAGE WITH  
THE MONTREAL MARQUEE FOR FARINE  
FIVE ROSES AND MOSHE SAFDE'S  
HABITAT 67)

OLIVIA

It all started because Larry Sir got tired of waiting for his American movies and magazines to be released in Hong Kong and paying a fortune for them when they finally were. Back then, in the late 90s and into the early 2000s, there were no online editions of anything, no Netflix and Disney+, to stream movies as soon as they came out in theaters.

My sister Rosaline arrived in Hong Kong a year after me, in 1998, and had been hired by a Chinese family recently returned to the city after spending almost ten years in Canada. Mr. Ho was a teacher at one of the famous boys' schools, DBS, and his daughter, Denise, had won the New Talent Singing Awards two years before Rosy went to work for them.

Denise was always looking for Canadian and American magazines and movies, too, and when she started touring [with Anita Mui in China](#), she would bring back all these counterfeit DVDs from the Mainland. She told Rosy there were entire streets with shops selling pirated goods - not just books and movies. Prada bags, LV shoes, Gucci watches.

So Rosy had her bring back what she could and I sent some Dior shirts to Larry Sir and his wife Judy in Vermont/New York, for her birthday. I got a call from them as soon as the package arrived.

---

Sir! Ma'am! It's been so long since we've spoken. Yes, yes, I'm fine. I'm very well. Happy birthday to you, ma'am. How are you? Yes, no, everything is really ok. Why on earth wouldn't it be? The Dior shirts? Too expensive! NO, no, I haven't been hired by a member of a Triad. (!) They are copies. As much as of course I wish I could send you real Dior shirts, ha ha!

You'd like some for your friends in Vermont and New York? Of course, sir, of course, ma'am. I will be very happy to help. What sizes would you like? Adult medium? So Asian XL. Yes, you forgot about [Asian sizing](#), don't worry. I know. I understand.

---

Turned out Denise was going back to Canada, to Montreal, to visit her friends and she was bringing a suitcase and a second checked bag full of presents

like this for her friends at her fancy college - Jean de Breb something, Brebuff - in Montreal. So Larry and Judy just drove up from Plattsburgh, which was only an hour away, for a little Canadian vacation. And that is how the whole network took shape.

Soon enough, it became as much as about freedom even as it started out as economic opportunity... When *isn't* something as much about freedom as about economic property?

(AS LONG A PAUSE AS POSSIBLE)

Disney released Mulan that same year - *Mulan*. Ming-na Wen, who was born in Macau, Hong Kong's sister colony, did the voice. The soundtrack was a huge success and gave The Lion King a run for popularity, especially since in our version we included a bonus Jay Chou pop song, in the spirit of Phil Collins for Tarzan and Elton John for Lion King.

Oh yes, our version. You're wondering what I mean by that.

Call it... borrowing? Cultural re-appropriation? Copy...left? In Hong Kong, it's also called [翻版](#)

[ Mandarin (Pinyin): fānbǎn; (Zhuyin): ㄈㄢˇ ㄅㄢˇ;  
Cantonese (Jyutping): faan1 baan2 ] but that's only in Hong Kong, or in Cantonese. Or in traditional script. 翻版 in simplified script is written the same way but simply means reprint.

Pirated copy (翻版) is written/ translated/  
pronounced 盜版 [ Mandarin (Pinyin): dào bǎn; (Zhuyin): ㄉㄠˋ ㄅㄢˇ  
ㄇㄢˋ; Cantonese (Jyutping): dou6 baan2 ] in  
simplified script.

Why does any of this matter? Because with 盜版 ,  
we were pirating in Hong Kong but in China we were  
simply reproducing. And while piracy (翻版) is  
illegal, forbidden and subject to prison sentences  
of 10 months and up under Hong Kong's Basic Law -  
and is an extraditable offence, 翻版 reproduction  
is a revered tradition and has acquired modern  
uses in the eyes of the Chinese Communist Party.

Eventually, we expanded out of entertainment and  
into a much more lucrative and stable Chinese  
market: education. And that's when the trouble  
really started.

2.2 Act II: September 2020

- Look at this stuff she's selling, or if you don't want to look at the stuff, look at the prices.

CHARLIE

(STAGE LEFT)

(ADDRESSING SINCERE/AUDIENCE)

Hey girl, how's it going? You look amazing. How do you keep your coat so... white? It's gross and rainy outside and there's mud everywhere, except on you. You're pristine. Do you always manage to float above everyone else like this or are you especially motivated because you're showing Mike what he's missing by breaking up with you?

Sorry, sorry, please don't hit me, I know that was a super bitchy thing to say. Mike's like a brother to me, you know that. He helped me find this job when I first moved here when I barely understood two words of French. We're not all Montreal-born perfectly bilingual - and perfect in every other way, might I add - like you.

Anyway, yes, your cups arrived. All of them, the Diva copycats and the fire cups. This is some crazy stuff you're selling, like I have never seen such fancy menstrual cups, ever, and what are these traditional Chinese medicine cup things even made of? Ivory? Animal horn? You really can get anything made in China these days.

----- They're made in Vermont and California?!?!  
I'm so confused. Californian pottery and recycled  
water bottle-based silicone from an eco-plant in  
Vermont. Of course. You didn't name your line  
Sincere just to name it after yourself.

(PHONE RINGS)

Café Bar o' Pain hi bonjour?

---

DENISE

(CENTER STAGE)

I'm the strong one, I'm not nervous

I'm as tough as the crust of the earth is  
I move mountains, I move churches  
And I glow 'cause I know what my worth is  
I don't ask how hard the work is  
Got a rough indestructible surface  
Diamonds and platinum, I find 'em, I flatten 'em  
I take what I'm handed, I break what's demanded

But

Under the surface I feel berserk as a tightrope  
walker in a three-ring circus  
Under the surface was Hercules ever like, "Yo, I  
don't wanna fight Cerberus?"  
Under the surface I'm pretty sure I'm worthless  
if I can't be of service  
A flaw or a crack, the straw in the stack that  
breaks the camel's back  
What breaks the camel's back

It's

Pressure, like a drip, drip, drip that'll never  
stop  
Pressure that'll tip, tip, tip 'till you just go  
pop  
Give it to your sister, your sister's older

Give her all the heavy things we can't shoulder  
Who am I if I can't run with the ball? If I fall

To

Pressure like a grip, grip, grip, and it won't  
let go  
Pressure like a tick, tick, tick 'til it's ready  
to blow  
Give it to your sister, your sister's stronger  
See if she can hang on a little longer  
Who am I if I can't carry it all?

(STUMBLES INTO CAFÉ BAR O' PAIN)

If there's one thing that makes absolutely no sense  
to risk life and limb for in this day and age,  
it's this.

(REMOVES ONE SELF-BOUND TOME AFTER ANOTHER FROM  
HER BAG)

Textbooks. Pirated textbooks.

It's not so much the textbooks themselves - it's  
that these books, [Mankiw's Principles of  
Microeconomics](#); Allen Downey's entire Think series  
on Python, Java, Data Structures; [Van Loan and  
Fan's MATLAB Intro to Computational Science and  
Engineering](#), these books are everything you need  
for first-year undergraduate courses at Harvard,  
MIT, Cornell, in their most 'dependable' read  
eventually employable programs: Economics,  
Computer Science, pre-med, law.

CHARLIE

A Chinese immigrant family education wet dream.

DENISE

Québécois nouveau riche, too.

CHARLIE

I'm from Alberta, I wouldn't know.

Sincere? You're offended? You would prefer that we make jokes only about recent « nouveaux arrivants » like Denise, or myself.

Got it. You're leaving? Where are you going? An 'appointment'? We'll miss you, bye!

(EXIT SINCERE)

DENISE

Anyway, it's breaking my back to cart these 500-page books around. Olivia says it's safer this way because we're less likely to leave a trace digitally and less likely to get caught but

Pressure like a drip, drip, drip that'll never  
stop  
Pressure that'll tip, tip, tip 'til you just go  
pop  
Give it to your sister, it doesn't hurt  
And see if she can handle every family burden  
Watch as she buckles and bends but never breaks,  
no mistakes

Just

Pressure like a grip, grip, grip, and it won't  
let go  
Pressure like a tick, tick, tick 'til it's ready  
to blow  
Give it to your sister and never wonder  
If the same pressure would've pulled you under  
Who am I if I don't have what it takes?

No cracks, no breaks  
No mistakes, no pressure

CHARLIE

Wait, what if you switched to carting around the kind of stuff that came in Sincere's shipment? She's got these cups, these stones, these little ear stickers. They all sell for just as much as your textbooks, if not more.

No, no, that's not what I mean at all. Denise!

I know you're Chinese. I know these are used in Traditional Chinese Medicine. I was just trying to help lighten your load and it was pure coincidence that Sincere's shipment arrived at the same... NO, WAIT. Actually.

Just hear me out.

Sincere is already a heavyweight in the natural health / alternative / integrative / traditional Chinese medicine world. Denise, you're actually Chinese. Look at this stuff she's selling, or if you don't want to look at the stuff, look at the prices.

- A [terahertz stone guasha set](#) blessed by a Kunga Buddhist monk from a Tibetan monastery. \$199 USD.
- A set of 20 '[ear seeds](#),' that is, stickers for stimulation of ear acupressure points to ease stress, anxiety and pain, \$45.
- Wild Vermont-grown American ginseng. \$700 an ounce. That's two and a half times the price of an ounce of weed.

She also has half a million followers on TikTok and a few hundred thousand on Instagram. She started posting to TikTok in March 2020 because she was bored and stuck at home being housewife all the time and it blew up so she got into merch as quickly as she could and now look at this stuff.

DENISE

Isn't it neat?  
Wouldn't you say her collection's complete?  
Wouldn't you say there's a girl, a girl who has  
everything?

CHARLIE

A girl who already had everything.

... now has Novak Djokovic as one of her biggest fans. And Gisele Bundchen and Tom Brady are loyal customers. All her videos do is show how to massage your face or align certain meridians through stretches. That's it.

Forget textbook piracy - this is the real big leagues, not least of all because it's all totally legal.

2.3 Act III: November 2020

- Hong Kong is indeed full of the ironies of colonial history, sir.

OLIVIA

Here you go, Mr. Lai. Your soup and your pills.  
Take your time.

I would truly rather stay here with you, sir, but yes, Mr. Ma asked me if I could help him and his family. They're still in that [mansion on Barker Road](#) on Victoria Peak.

Yes, Lucetta did work in that same house, [for the Belgian consul general](#), when she first arrived. Then the Belgians sold the property, to a French man. Hong Kong is indeed full of the ironies of colonial history, sir.

I believe the only foreign diplomats still on Barker Road now are the Americans and the Australians. Yes, the more things change, the more they stay the same - or as the tourists shirts in [Divisoria](#) say, all jungles have snakes.

I'm really worried about your health if I'm not here, sir. I know that you prefer [中醫](#) and that you suffer from terrible side effects when you take Western medicine. But now you don't just have a headache or a skin irritation. It's a cancerous tumour and even if it's not aggressive or prone to metastasize, it's still a tumour.

Going to stay at a retreat, even the most vegan, tranquil and restorative retreat run by that [gweilo](#) (鬼佬) French woman *Sincere* won't make the tumour go away.

Yes, yes, French-Canadian. So her French is even harder to understand. I love Denise and I think she's a genius for finding this twist to add to our offerings, but I just don't understand why she has to continue to give *Sincere* the time of day.

Because *Sincere* is what? I don't think I heard you properly, sir. She's viral. As in she's contagious? Indigenous? Ohhhh an influencer! She's very popular on TikTok. Millions of new followers this month alone. I see. Well, actually I don't really see - you want to show me? Of course, sir.

#### VIDEO: SINCERE

(APPLE/SIRI VOICE)

##### HOW TO DETOX YOUR LIVER

Stress can cause liver chi stagnation and generate heat in the liver.

STRESS! ANXIETY! DEPRESSION!

Patting the armpit and ribcage 49 times each day can effectively reduce stress, anxiety and depression and help many liver-related symptoms.

#### SCROLL

##### GUASHA FOR YOUNGER SKIN

Reduce puffiness under the eyes, improve skin elasticity, stimulate this contractile field.

Contractile fields and myofascial meridians (Beach 2010; Myers 2009) describe movement patterns while taking into account the body as a whole organism and self-contained ecosystem.

(Beach pp. 58-59)

The lateral contractile field runs like a figure 8 across our eyes and ears through the

mandible/jaw and out to the pelvis and controls the side-bending movement pattern that is a "primal contribution to our ability to walk and run" (Gracovetsky 1988, via Beach 2010).

Corresponding to the Gall Bladder meridian in traditional Chinese medicine, we can scrap along this field to promote circulation, to remove stagnant skin cells and to restore a healthy glow and tone to the face.

#guasha #TCM #acupuncture

*SCROLL*

(QIGONG VIDEO  
STARTS, OLIVIA  
CLOSES TIKTOK)

Wow, now I do see. Thank you for showing that to me, sir. That was quite something. She cites her references and everything. I think she told me a few times while she was visiting that she graduated from Concordia University in Montreal in Human Relations or Communications or something fluffy like that. And she got into JMSB but decided not to do an MBA even though she scored in the top percentiles of her GMAT. I have no idea what all those letters mean, sir, I thought you did. What's so great about these videos of hers, then?

Novak Djokovic is a big fan and follower? I know you love your tennis, sir.

---

Denise

(from stage left)

(THE SCREEN STAYS ON AND  
WE SEE SINCERE'S FACE  
DOING SOMETHING TCM ON  
TIKTOK)

Look at me  
You may think you see who I really am  
But you'll never know me  
Every day it's as if I play a part  
Now I see  
If I wear a mask I can fool the world  
But I cannot fool my heart

Who is that girl I see  
Staring straight back at me  
When will my reflection show  
Who I am inside

I am now  
In a world where I have to hide my heart  
And what I believe in  
But somehow  
I will show the world what's inside my heart  
And be loved for who I am

Who is that girl I see  
Staring straight back at me  
Why is my reflection someone I don't know  
Must I pretend that I'm  
Someone else for all time  
When will my reflection show  
Who I am inside?

OLIVIA

Welcome back, Denise. That was a rather...  
dramatic entrance.

DENISE

Drama sells. Drama means views. Long live the art of the selfie.

Since I started this account two months ago, I've gotten to bring back all these Cantopop moves and skills that I didn't think would ever make this much money again after Lancôme dropped me in 2016.

People love info-tainment. And who cares if it's all a load of fengshui guasha mumbo jumbo. Better that I hawk this stuff than doctors of acupuncture, or chiropractic or naturopathic 'doctors.' At least I make no pretense about providing medical, quasi-medical and pseudo-medical advice. I'm just exploring my roots, my heritage.

Anyway, what were you saying when I came in? That Jimmy loves his tennis?

OLIVIA

And that the WTA tournament in Hong Kong has been canceled for the second year in a row. Also that Novak Djokovic loves all the crazy videos Sincere posts on TikTok.

DENISE

Yeah, he's really gotten into natural health and alternative medicine and is becoming more and more vocal about it. Like that aging American football quarterback, Tom Brady, and his miracle diet that

they say is going to help him win the SuperBowl again this year.

But they both follow me now, too.

And because I'm moving so much stock on Alibaba and have been so outspoken about being unapologetically Chinese, Jack Ma was supposed to make an appearance with me for November 11 Single's Day - a big anti-Amazon campaign. But Jack seems to have been laying low since the Ant IPO on the Shanghai Stock Exchange went sideways.

You would know, Livvy, you're going to work for him starting next week.

OLIVIA

Denise. You know I'm not going to say. Hong Kong is a former British colony but that doesn't mean we do everything the way the English do, with 'the help' gossiping all over the place.

DENISE

I'm sorry. You're right.

I'm going to do a Single's Day push regardless. And then go back to Montreal and catch Black Friday at the end of November.

That's the advantage of being a... ahem, *practitioner* of Chinese medicine - that is the most accurate term, by the way, the one everyone should adopt - that's the advantage of being a

practitioner of Chinese medicine... who happens to speak Chinese.

我心中的自己  
每一秒 都願意  
為愛放手去追尋  
用心去珍惜  
隱藏在心中每一個真實的心情  
現在釋放出去

(LANDS BACK ON STAGE LEFT, STROLLS INTO BAR O' PAIN)

Whoa, whoa, Sincere. What's the matter? What do you mean I stole your content? The videos you were making on TikTok? I copied you?

OK. HOLD UP. Let's get a few things straight here.

One, you were making videos about Chinese medicine so I think maybe you borrowed something from someone else first and I helped you return it.

Two, I'm in the copyleft business, you know that. Remixes, song covers, Creative Commons licensing, and the Digital Millenium Copyright Act. I can have my lawyers explain it to you, if you want. But my spins on Chinese medicine, even if they happen to overlap with yours, fall squarely within definitions of acceptable use. We can have a little debate here about the consequences of free trade agreements and see where people stand, if you want.

Three, so what if Novak Djokovic and Tom Brady switched from being brand ambassadors for you to working with me? You still have all of Hollywood - Gwyneth, Reese, Jennifer Garner, that whole club. You even got Jenna Bush Hager. And they don't

want to have anything to do with me so you never have to worry. (Sometimes I wonder if it's because I'm too butch. Anyway.)

We both know the world of Chinese medicine merchandising is huge and growing. We can share, n'est-ce pas? If you want, I can even set you up with all these up and coming suppliers in China who are willing to sell at cost for the connection and the exposure.

You don't want any dirty made-in-China labour and manufacturing practices. Of course.

You just want the dirty made-in-China medicinal practices.

Whoa, easy. Why are you always hitting or trying to hit? Charlie mentioned that you're a slapper but I didn't really believe it until now.

The pen is mightier than the sword, isn't that how the saying goes?

2.4 Act IV: One Year Later

- yes, exactly. Like they tried to invade China.

(JACK MA'S BARKER ROAD MANSION)

OLIVIA

Please, Denise. You have to stop. It's irresponsible and dangerous to keep saying what you're saying. You know the risks. They've targeted you before. All the arrests lately.

DENISE

I know, Livvy, I know. But people are so passionate about this and it's so easy to get the message out this way. I'm at 3 million followers. And look at my collections. It's not just natural health quackery anymore, although that's still what sells best.

I'm doing actual health education - how to lose 10 pounds by eating a Chinese, plant-centric diet. Ginseng, goji, bitter melon, Chinese broccoli.

And breathwork qigong, in Lives where I have two, three thousand elderly viewers. Their grandchildren push it on them and put the screen in front of them.

We're doing good work. Finally.

OLIVIA

...

VOICE OFF-STAGE

(BANGING)

National security! Police! Open up!

OLIVIA

Oh, Denise.

DENISE

Livvy, go, now. You know what to do.

OLIVIA

Don't let --

(BANGING, LOUDER)

Open up, immediately.

(EXIT OLIVIA)

Denise

(THROUGH THE METAL GRATE OF THE DOOR)

Officers. Can I help you?

VOICE

Denise Ho Wan See, we have a warrant for your arrest for seditious publications dating as far back as September 2020, intended to incite hatred and violation of public health regulations, contravening Sections 9 and 10 of the Crimes Ordinance.

DENISE

Officers, I sell crystals and jades. I have no control over people's feelings and political beliefs and I certainly have never said anything that would even come close to inciting hatred.

VOICE

Open up! Now!

As recently as this week, you posted a video telling your followers your products could protect them against the COVID-19 virus, implying that they don't need to follow government directives to get vaccinated.

DENISE

Officers, I am absolutely pro-vaccine. I don't even support the deferred vaccination schedule for chronic conditions for anyone except the truly elderly, 80 and up - ow.

VOICE

Stop stalling.

Denise Ho Wan See aka HOCC, you are also wanted on charges of copyright infringement, enabling and encouraging a world of textbook pirates in Canada and in the United States, an activity that according to a Sincere Beauchamp in Quebec, Canada, you have been pursuing since 1997.

DENISE

Well. I really don't know what to say about that besides that I bet Sincere is so sincèrement

désolée about selling me down the river.  
Oceanlake. Fleuve.

But let's say for the sake of conversation that I wonder, to myself, only, and never out loud, whether public health messages in Hong Kong serve purposes other than preventing viral transmission. Would that be considered inciting hatred?

Or what if by viral transmission I'm actually talking about my success on TikTok? There's this song - do you know how TikTok works? No? That's ok. There's this song I want to make viral. So one of the ways TikTok makes you popular is by finding existing music or sounds and pairing them with interesting images. And there's this song from a Disney movie 30 years ago, no, not Mulan, good guess, I already did that one, with the new Liu Yifei version, I was pretty proud of that, glad you saw it.

No, this song is from a different movie, about the British/English invading North America - yes, exactly. Like they tried to invade China. Can I sing it for you :

(if you arrived here when you clicked on  
text that said 'we are all interconnected,'  
[click here to go back to the Prologue](#))

(if you arrived here from clicking on text  
that said 'jump around,'  
[click here to go back to Annexe | Overflows](#))

You think you own whatever land you land on  
The earth is just a dead thing you can claim  
But I know every rock and tree and creature  
Has a life, has a spirit, has a name

You think the only people who are people  
Are the people who look and think like you  
But if you walk the footsteps of a stranger  
You'll learn things you never knew you never  
knew.

Come run the hidden pine trails of the forest  
Come taste the sunsweet berries of the earth  
Come roll in all the riches all around you  
And for once never wonder what they're worth.

The rainstorm and the river are my brothers  
The heron and the otter are my friends  
And we are all connected to each other  
In a circle, in a hoop that never ends.

Have you ever heard the wolf cry to the blue-corn  
moon

Or let the eagle tell you where she's been  
Can you sing with all the voices of the mountain  
Can you paint with all the colors of the wind

How high does the sycamore grow  
If you cut it down, then you'll never know

You can own the earth and still  
All you'll own is earth until  
(EXIT DENISE)  
You can paint with all the colors of the wind.

(if you arrived here when you clicked on  
text that said 'we are all interconnected,'  
[click here to go back to the Prologue](#))

(if you arrived here from clicking on text  
that said 'jump around,'  
[click here to go back to Annexe | Overflows](#))

## VOICE

Under British colonial rule, there was no democracy in Hong Kong.

After resuming the exercise of sovereignty, the Chinese government implemented the basic policy of One Country, Two Systems and established democracy in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). It has since provided constant support to the region in developing its democratic style.

2.5 Act V: One Year Later

- This is your friendly unfriend notification

(20 Feb 2022, Beijing Olympics)

CHARLIE

(ON THE PHONE)

(AT CAFÉ BAR O' PAIN)

... so I started a GoFundMe page because she's being held for sedition and her bail is set impossibly high and if it's anything like what happened with Jimmy, she'll be released and two weeks later, they'll arrest her on different charges and she'll have to post bail all over again.

It's just... wild. I didn't know about any of this stuff before but I guess it was mostly students holding umbrellas to ward off tear gas. An Asian Arab Spring. Oh, Quebec had its own - Maple Spring? Oh right, I was still living in Alberta at the time but I remember visiting my sister here in Montreal and I didn't get it, I still don't: Quebec already has the lowest tuition rates in the country - in North America. Why do they need to be even lower?

(ENTER SINCERE)

Uh, yes, that's no problem. Table for seven at seven. See you then, bye.

Hey lady! No, I was not that was not Mike on the phone what makes you think that I would still... Just another cust... Well ok if you're going to look at the call display and...

Why are you calling it?!

SINCERE

Hello Michael, this is Café Bar o' Pain calling. We wanted to let you know that based on your recent Facebook activity, liking Freedom Convoy posts, joining anti-vaxx groups and re-posting poorly written op-eds about the true nature of freedom, you are no longer welcome in our establishment and we would appreciate if you stopped calling Charlie to chat. This is your friendly un-friend notification. Have a nice life.

(HANGS UP)

I need to get off Facebook before I become a total fascist.

CHARLIE

Look, Sincere, I get where you're coming from - I really do. Until all this stuff happened to Denise, I didn't really pay attention to politics and left feminism to people who seem to actually care, like

you! I just figured some people are more sensitive than others and if they want to take a stand, cool.

The important thing to me is that we all try to get along - no harm, one love I mean love is love and all that. Violence is not the answer.

But then I started listening to this podcast called Higher Learning, have you heard of it? You know Rachel Lindsay, the first Black Bachelorette? No? Anyway, she co-hosts with this guy who used to work at TMZ - he called out Kanye West on camera like a decade ago and it went kind of viral. Anyway... they release two episodes a week, no ads, interstitials or brand soundscapes, and they discuss and debate Black culture, politics and sports and I swear it's changed my life. That and getting involved in the campaign to free Denise.

There's all this research that says that one of the best ways to jolt yourself out of habits of rumination and anxious thought-patterning is to volunteer, and it's so true.

There are so many people - and animals, oh my god the poor animals - who are less fortunate than us and it feels so meaningful to make a difference.

SINCERE

To try to make a difference.

CHARLIE

Try to make a difference, of course. I've been trying to figure out what I'm supposed to be doing with my life, I love this place but I'm not the type to be a bartender-barista for life and I always hoped that I would be able to use my sociology degree, don't forget my minor in communications, from McGill in some way.

SINCERE

I always thought the same thing about my human relations degree from Concordia. That it would help me make an impact. They even have this master's degree called Human Systems Intervention and I thought about going back to --

CHARLIE

Not everyone is as privileged as you though. Not everyone can just decide to go back to school as if it were something you can add to your shopping basket on Amazon with one click.

SINCERE

What on earth are you talking about.

CHARLIE

There are very real structural and systemic issues that make access -- to education, to success, to wealth -- really difficult. It's the idea of equity more than equality.

SINCERE

And you're saying that I -

CHARLIE

I'm not saying anything about you, necessarily. I'm more talking about the system. We're all a part of it and our individual choices and non-choices uphold deep-rooted patterns of social and economic injustice.

SINCERE

You sound like Jimmy when he starts talking about democracy and freedom of expression.

CHARLIE

Why shouldn't I sound like Jimmy? The man is a hero, sacrificing everything for his beliefs. He's about to be nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize, at least according to Larry and Judy when they came up from Vermont/New York last week. They said that was what Olivia had told them.

SINCERE

Because...

CHARLIE

See? Even you have to admit there are limits to the level of bigotry we can just stand by and witness. Jimmy's actions match his rhe-TOR-ic.

SINCERE

(UNDER HER BREATH)

RHET'-oric

CHARLIE

And it's gotten him incarcerated. Well, they can put him behind bars but they can't keep his thoughts

and beliefs in a cage. What did Nelson Mandela say when he was in prison?

SINCERE

Nelson Mandela was a political prisoner in a system of apartheid that targeted and killed Black South Africans, including hundreds of peacefully protesting students, high school students - children - in Soweto in 1976. Your Black Bachelorette podcast didn't cover this nasty part of history yet?

I agree that Jimmy is brave and all but I think it's a little presumptuous -

CHARLIE

Presumptuous how?

SINCERE

Or at least it's painting history with really broad strokes to compare Jimmy Lai with Nelson Mandela.<sup>39</sup>

The Olympics were in Montreal that year and 29 countries boycotted because of the International

---

<sup>39</sup> [01.2026 : history painted into broader and broader strokes](#)

Olympic Committee's legislation of apartheid in allowing New Zealand to participate.

CHARLIE

That was all so long...

SINCERE

LISTEN.

South Africa was already banned from the '68 and '72 Olympics. Everyone knew not to have anything to do with them.

Then New Zealand goes and sets up a tour of apartheid South Africa for its rugby squad, right before the Olympics in Montreal.

The President of the Nigerian and Congolese Olympic Committees lead a delegation demanding that the IOC remove New Zealand from the Summer Games. The IOC refuses.

Twenty-nine countries withdrew during the opening ceremonies and first few days and went home.

CHARLIE

Ok I learned something new but

## SINCERE

LISTEN FOR ONCE you fount of middle class smug.

That same Olympics. Pierre Elliott Trudeau refuses to allow the Republic of China to compete under that name because Canada had recognized, as did the UN, the People's Republic of China in 1970. Trudeau even went out on a limb, a very Canadian and Quebec limb, saying there could be two separate flags and anthems. The Republic of China, that is, Taiwan, refused, and also went home.

Since then, Taiwan competes as Chinese Taipei, under a flag that is not its flag and with an anthem that is not its anthem. Not just this year because it's in Beijing. Every year since 1976.

We, Canada, the international community, this system of individual choices you were talking about, we've helped sweep this kind of injustice and geopolitical domination - we've swept it all away.

[What on earth do you think is really going to happen to Hong Kong?](#)<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> [Update 3 mai 2023 by Les Für Elyses](#): These links remain [unavailable in Hong Kong](#) because TikTok was (is), like Google and Facebook, considered American media. Google and Facebook remain available in Hong Kong, likely for commercial reasons - the executives of both Alphabet and Google having undertaken extensive campaigns of courtship to the CCP - but TikTok, despite being owned by Chinese company ByteDance, is now [headed by a Singaporean businessman](#), and [forbidden in the city](#).

## CHAPITRE 3

### RÉCIT DE PRATIQUE (EXTRAITS)

#### 3.1 NDLR

Dès l’approbation de mon projet de thèse, jusqu’à ma soumission et re-soumission de dissertation, j’ai tenu un journal intime du processus. Ce journal était numérique, dactylographique et artistique. Pour les fins de lisibilité, les extraits de ce chapitre viennent de la version numérique Word seulement, mais quelques exemplaires des créations dactylographique, manuelles, et de médias sociaux sont inclut comme annexe.

#### 3.2 tldr (How does one signal humor in a doctoral dissertation ?)

While most of this thesis follows the template provided by UQÀM, the reader will have noticed necessary moments of necessary deviation. In this chapter, the deviations – trills, one could say – are used to signal humor, insight, and change. The greyscale in the final entries not only recall the IN.visibility of the title; they also presage/forecast the day when dissertations will be published in colormax ;). INitially, (this IN was a typo but then Word tried to autocorrect so of course I un-autocorrected), I tried italics to indicate some of this polyvocality but upon receiving feedback that it is confusing, I realized that I agree. All italics have been removed, but mention of them remains.

#### 3.3 2019

LAW LIBRARY, MCGILL – Montreal, Qc

11 novembre 2019

10:30 am

Laurel Richardson – Writing as Inquiry... Seven Minutes from Home, an American Daughter’s Story

She’s so white but she’s so funny, and she knows it, both things.

Everyone in qualitative inquiry is still so white... Denzin, Ellis, the Gergens (gag)

Why does this enrage me now? It’s bizarre—having put up with it for the past 38 years and assumed that white representation was the way the world is supposed to be, now every time I get confirmation of that fact, I get so angry. Maybe because the effects are so pernicious, the Asian white imitating, in which success in this predetermined white world comes from imitating and replicating its white expectations.

Anyway, my dreams last night:

That Noa is going to meet my Hong Kong family somewhere in middle America and hops on a bus but for some reason that bus is going through Anaheim first and it will be twenty hours before it arrives at the destination we've set for Noa. All my dad's sisters and their husbands are with me and they are completely unconcerned, but I am freaking out because I have no way of reaching her and I worry she'll be kidnapped or assaulted and time passes too slowly as I try to just wait out 20 hours. When I wake up, I reach my foot for Alex's under the blanket, so glad and relieved he is there.

I am talking to an Erik Harris type colleague, running my ideas for my dissertation past him. He suggests I check out Ferlander and that gang and when I open the website, I see that I've already included Ferlander in my research and that he's mostly a kook but has a couple of interesting thoughts, which I say to Erik and he concurs, to my satisfaction, and we briefly make fun of Ferlander while retaining his helpful ideas. I feel comfortable enough to confess my insecurities and I say that my deepest fear is that I'm doing all this work but that my project is a fraud. As I struggle to find the word and courage for fraud who should stroll past but James Martin. I force myself to keep speaking anyway, and the anxiety about James hearing evaporates when Erik scoffs and says I shouldn't worry, my project is perfect. Now I want James to have heard. Ah well.

2:30 pm

Feeling so stuck with my cadrage again, as if I am wrestling with iron bars, trying to bend them, and myself, into an invisible box.

Write it out, write it out.

One play act later (Act II Scene 1), I realize it's because the metaphysical shift I am trying to engineer is *\*not\** from West to East. Thank goodness. It's from old to young. (Next entry, write without italics.)

12 novembre 2019

15h

Reading Joanne Yoo writing about creative and academic writing, her health struggles, her achievement of tenure, all published in academic journals, is like reading her blog. As is reading Laurel Richardson. Their writing is slightly fine much more sophisticated than an average blog but the prurient interest I have in gleaning details of their personal lives feels... sticky... easy... self-help-esque. It's like reading yoga books and fitness blog posts about which muscles to stimulate and how. Yoo even has an article about writing and breathing. There's so much resonance there, it vibrates all the way to my own degenerated disk in my low back, to my own efforts to write with my left hand.

Their writing is accessible, inviting, but. Not that serious.\* Sorry.

Earnest, yes; serious, no.

Whereas Susan Sencidiver is earnest and serious and totally inaccessible. But her writing is stitched together with such care, such literary attention, deliberate invocation of difficult language, establishing immediate academic credibility. Without, however, losing a kind of force, vigor, that I immediately found lacking in all the sociologist qualitative research texts. So dry. Sencidiver's articles, while ultimately boring, are not dry.

So what voice does that mean I want to adopt??

15h30

There's also Yoo's article entitled something like My Son and His Beautiful Body where she has to tell her son the story about his grandfather being born during the war in Korea to make him more comfortable with his appearance. Maybe it's because they're stuck in Australia, I don't know.

13 novembre 2019

PURE PANIC. La gestion des règles demande une attention constante, leçon que j'ai dû réapprendre aujourd'hui, à la bibliothèque.

D'habitude, premier jour de mes règles, je sais qu'il faut changer ma serviette sanitaire à chaque 90 minutes, deux heures max.

Fasciné par mes lectures au sujet des muscles du visage et du cou, je reste assise pendant deux heures et demi et mon utérus reste tranquille pendant 149 de ces minutes mais à la 150<sup>e</sup> il décide de se rattraper, avec force et vitesse. Il y a du sang qui coule. L'émission de Working Moms dans laquelle un des personnages lutte contre la fermeture d'une clinique pour femmes en menaçant que, sans la clinique, les femmes seront rendues à faire du 'freebleeding' dans les rues, me vient en tête pendant que je récupère tout ce que je peux, mon foulard, je regarde mon manteau, pour étancher la rivière. D'habitude, je range mon ordi et apporte mon téléphone quand je vais aux toilettes, question de prévention de vol, avec tout les avertissements qu'ils affichent partout dans la bibliothèque, mais maintenant je laisse tout, sauf un tampon et une nouvelle serviette.

Le foulard, ça se lave. La chaise est une couleur foncée, mes pantalons, noirs, et ils sècheront bientôt, je me tiens debout à travailler pendant une vingtaine de minutes et c'est réglé. (Ça, c'est l'expertise des règles et la gestion des règles, même si je me reproche de ne pas avoir assez bien fait pour avertir des problèmes).

Mais les tâches sont visibles pour l'instant. Et encore une fois, mes pensées sont rouges.

16 novembre 2019

La grande encyclopédie de l'écriture p. 23

Les maîtres de l'écriture

Il est difficile de faire clairement la distinction entre les lettrés, les peintres et les artistes de la Chine ancienne. Un fonctionnaire ayant accompli de longues années d'études et passé des examens difficiles avec succès se doit d'être les trois à la fois. En Europe, seuls les artistes de la Renaissance supportent la comparaison.

La calligraphie

En Chine, la calligraphie a toujours été considérée comme un art à part entière. L'écriture doit être vivante. Chaque coup de pinceau doit avoir les mouvements harmonieux d'une danse. Dans la calligraphie la plus élaborée, chaque coup de pinceau se présente comme une ligne puissante et continue, mais à la fois harmonieuse et élégante.

18 novembre 2019

## Problématique

My problem is North American selfishness and self-righteousness and wanting to be able to puncture it in a civil manner. My other problem is East Asian guilt and manipulation through the family, and abuse of power the Chinese way, which is even more patriarchal, paternalistic and conservative than White abuse of power.

## CONFLICT

conflict of names

of interest

of the guy or girl in the next lane who won't let you merge

## CREATIVE CONFLICT

Why does conflict make me lose my mind? Like heart-pounding, head-exploding rage lose my mind?

Education. YUCK. My real années de bases were the years of trauma in Hong Kong between ages 16 and 19 where I learned that my long hours and extreme effort could indeed translate into scholastic excellence, a bargain I accepted for the next decade and am now trying to do differently. Extreme effort and long hours, sure, but not in the punitive, perfectionist mode.

Isabelle Plante, UQAM

La force moyenne du groupe est un levier positif. Si on est dans un groupe fort, ça nous stimule... quand on est dans un groupe faible, ça mine notre motivation et notre réussite...

Au ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur, la chercheuse dirait ceci : « Plus il y a de programmes et de groupes distincts en ce qui concerne la force moyenne, plus on crée des inégalités. En ce sens, il faut se questionner comme société. Est-ce que c'est ça qu'on veut, quand on sait que ça favorise une certaine élite et que ça défavorise les plus faibles? Pour profiter à la majorité, il faudrait créer les groupes les plus hétérogènes possible.

ACCESSIBILITÉ. VIOLENCE. CONFLIT. VIOLENCE STRUCTUREL.

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Nye, Andrea. Philosophy of Language : The Big Questions. Concordia Webster P 106 P456 1998

18 novembre 2019 12h37

Philosophy of language: Platonic (vs Aristotelian tradition) eg philosophy of Leibniz: metaphysics and language; relationship of language and thought; hermeneutic nature of analytic philosophy; Frege, Russell, Quine, Wittgenstein...

Two different trajectories

(also, not: linguistics/grammar/chomsky)

But related to: translation studies; language acquisition; second-language acquisition

This structural contrast in moral theory spawned a pronounced difference in

philosophical direction. Western philosophy absorbed Socrates' and Plato's distrust of conventional wisdom, that is, hearsay. That sent Western thought on an endless quest for perfectly universal principles. The worry about what constitutes following a principle became central in the twentieth century. Meanwhile, the search for the correct formulae led to the notions of sentential reason, proofs, falsification, and the basic apparatus of scientific theory structure. Chinese philosophy began with a Confucian respect for transmitted formulae and emphasized interpretive variation. Chinese thought has opted for meaning change over theory change. This search led to a more intensive focus on names and on the conventionality of the scope or application of names.

AUTHIER-REVUZ Jacqueline (1992) – Les non-coïncidences du dire et leur représentation méta-énonciative. Etude linguistique et discursive de la modalisation autonymique, thèse de doctorat d'Etat, Université de Paris 8, Saint-Denis, 2 tomes.

19 novembre 2019

I was avoiding going back to the law library at McGill because my conscience was stained like that damn chair

Today with the freezing rain, I consider going to: September (cozy but yuck), Georges-Vanier (can't eat!!), UQAM (don't wanna pay the metro)... so am I going back to the law library again?? Maybe the anonymity of a Starbucks. The corner of Ambrose?

27 novembre

un gros travail intérieur, that's what the comment faire un deuil avec un journal créatif calls it.

6 décembre

Les traditions et les cadeaux empoisonnés, that's what I wrote in the agenda for December.

26 décembre

I want to not be bothered by people that I know are coming from an insecure and small place. They are not going to change or get better or rather it is not my place to worry about it, to teach them a lesson, etc.

It's just some deeply ingrained fucked up philosophy of education bullshit that I've been brainwashed into believing through my dad, and my mom by acquiescence.

Like yesterday when we were leaving for dim sum, he gets ready first then she gets to use the bathroom and then he's chastising her for making us slow, starts to emphasize the need to get going, when HE is the one who stayed in bed for another fifteen minutes after she got up, but SHE is the one who after she got up, wanted to spend all her time talking and playing with Axel. But the last straw for me is that he tells HER to turn down the heat before they leave, so she ends up feeling so rushed she walks out the door trying to nudge her boots onto her feet.

WTF.

No wonder she started crying that time in Nantou when Dad and I walked so far ahead. It wasn't about that time, but it was also about that time.

Is this a récit de pratique? I don't know. It's about violence done with actions and words, though.

Sure it's not my place to teach or fix anyone mean enough to act that way already. But it's my place to keep wishing we could pinpoint it enough to find an antidote, and then a preventative practice.

These people know, deep down, beyond their executive functioning decision making. But it's so hard to access there, the subconscious and unconscious, especially when these are coping mechanisms that have been repeatedly used because they 'work.'

UNconscious vs SUBconscious like the difference between SUPpression and REpression, subtle but important (Psychology Today, Leon Seltzer, Dec 4, 2019)

3.4 2020

7 janvier 2020

Just like that the visit's over and done, I have my period again and, well... Noa is a lovely girl; of course Liang's family is as lovely as he is, and I remain an angry and mean person.

« T'es pas méchante! » « T'es même pas sévère. »

Mes enfants, wow.

LATER :

We so often associated violence and force with what we can see and hear, e.g., McBride-Chang et al's study on harsh parenting (from my mom's department of ed psych, no less).

But harsh parenting, and violence, can be invisible or intangible, which, I thought, was the whole point of psych.

Like, isn't neglect or manipulation just as if not more detrimental than loud commands on the psyche of a child and that child's fear neural circuitry?

And what do men know about the toll of the menstrual cycle? Yes, maybe women should go away in a stupid red tent for a week, but they should still be paid.

Also, this neo-fascism that emphasizes moral conformity: vegetarianism, Leonardo DiCaprio saluting the Golden Globes for serving a veg menu and saying that it's good for the environment. Vegetarians who are secret, or not so secret, authoritarians.

9 jan 2019

Start a new document for cadrage. Open old docs, realize need to re-write problematic to vastly expand scope. But feel that the cadrage is really coming together, with a copy-paste of what I had from November and December, and what I came up with today.

Then I open a document from December with my new title, and it contains the same, or similar, copy-paste that I just did, except today I went a bit further with the copy-paste, but both days (Dec 13 and Jan

9) contain paragraphs of new writing. WRanting, should I say. I've managed to move away from sounding like a crazy conspiracy theorist Unabomber, which is great, but I still can't string together more than two sentences of theory construction without having to change thoughts.

There's no coherent argument on the page yet. I can feel it forming in my gut, at least. Hurrah!

16 janvier 2020

I JUST realized that to write at this level, I need to unlearn almost every single skill that I was taught and that I internalized so well for my education up to and including at the undergraduate level. Part of the reason I struggled so much at the master's level for English Literature was that I was still trying to organize coherent arguments and thoughts into the framework of intro-arguments 1-2-3-conclusion, a skeleton so familiar to me that I can see it in its immanence, in my head. This was a problem that did not apply to my journalism degree, and that I also managed to circumvent when I wrote short pieces, hence the perfect grade for my Dickens commentary in Allison what's-her-name's class.

But reading my favourite authors, of the moment, anyway, Ricoeur, Dumouchel, Deleuze, they ARGUE but they don't do so in a linear fashion. Either they don't need to, or they've similarly realized that such a method of making a point is only simplifying the task of thought for the person on the reading side, and I guess up until now, my readers have been in need of simple reading. And unable to process at a more complex level, at least at the mass rate demanded of them by the education system.

Well, to be sure, many of the general doctoral-level courses, like that stupid métho course, and the pop culture course, asked us to make outlines of our final essays, so that our argument and train of thought could be plotted on paper and evaluated, corrected, adjusted.

But rhetoric is an art and now I get to try my hand at it.

31 janvier 2020

Sometimes, without even noticing, I suddenly need to BATHE in art, in music, in freedom. Writing my play calls me, or it pulls me into a void created by not being able to do anything else and not understanding why.

The past two days, it's been the stumbling across Anna Von Mertens' work at Radcliffe, highlighted in an email newsletter for its contribution to the galactical discovery of the Radcliffe Wave (a cluster of stars or something in the Milky Way), and then finding pictures of Von Mertens' neatly aligned pencil crayons, her eraser crumb brush... fueled an appetite for more: more colour, more seeing someone else's process, more wanting to play violin for an hour.

Then reading in an alumni magazine that a girl I went to high school with is now an assistant director of learning programs and partnerships at MoMA, how cool is that. I go to the MoMA site and look at stuff on their blog, read the programs this colleague created: a printmaking workshop, a make a monotype exhibit.

Good art is unselfconscious, good media as well.

12 février 2020

I'm chasing some kind of FEELING, a hunt that sent me into Google Maps to tour my old neighbourhood in Edmonton, to see the webpages of my elementary and junior high schools, circumscribe their perimeters, recall running the 1.1 and the 1.8 km for gym class in ninth grade, recall the pieces of terrain so familiar to a deepset part of my memory, retraced the route that I knew exactly still by heart, and recognized on the street view.

It's the bike rides I'm chasing, that freedom and exhilaration of rushing to get somewhere I have to be, knowing I can make it in time but that I've cut it close, who cares a good goddamn what would happen at school that day (usually moments of increasing social awkwardness, people doing whatever is necessary to fit in, get a laugh, be special), and the bike ride home at the end of the day.

14 février 2020

A cut and paste from the cadrage

A proof-based culture cultivates and rewards a society of privilege, a society in which the demand to provide proper proof raises the bar of basic justice beyond the reach of most individuals. Discrimination is measured by the law in proof, which is exactly the opposite of what we know is true about systemic injustice. So how do we find the words and the conditions to meet this bar, all the while seeking a more productive framework? When those who put up, usually silently, with differential treatment, are usually only able to feel, suspect, hope it's not the case, wait for other items that can act as confirmation or disconfirmation? This is a system that provides no recourse for dismissiveness, you just have to put up with it, get over it. This is a system that provides no means of accountability for a negligent parent who allowed his cousin to lift his daughter's skirt. What does the Human Rights Commission actually do?

Plato decided that sophistry is bad and with that left our ability to have sophisticated thoughts

to what Plato characterized as sophistry, which Deleuze seeks to rescue from its infelicitous reputation. What's more, Deleuze warns, Platonic thought is no stranger to irony : (292: Platon traque le sophiste)

Le sophiste lui-même est l'être du simulacre, le satyre ou centaure, le Protée qui s'imisce et s'insinue partout. Mais en ce sens, il se peut que la fin du Sophiste contienne l'aventure la plus extraordinaire du platonisme : à force de chercher du côté du simulacre et de se pencher sur son abîme, Platon dans l'éclair d'un instant découvre qu'il n'est pas simplement une fausse copie, mais qu'il met en question les notions mêmes de copie... et de modèle. La définition finale du sophiste nous mène au point où nous ne pouvons plus le distinguer de Socrate lui-même : l'ironiste opérant en privé par arguments brefs. Ne fallait-il pousser l'ironie jusque-là? Et que Platon le premier indiquât cette direction du renversement du platonisme? (295).

The hermeneutic tradition is rich, to be sure. But enough of close reading. For comparative theory construction, distant reading awaits.

If language is a container for our social relations, a vehicle for interaction

NEGATIVE EPISTEMOLOGY and DELEUZE'S SIMULACRE; THE UNCONSCIOUS

18 février 2020

I could start the play with my uncle's death. Uncle's deaths, that is. I've read enough police procedurals in the past six months to understand the form, and to know that I enjoy it.

[Your native language is negative space or the space in between (complexity, relations, things happening – watching and predicting which dots will connect, which points will reach each other), and accessibility/pertinence, resisting the lure of formalization and pomp that oozes out of so much other scholarship.]

Happening back on the McGill Law site and seeing a former colleague's compilation of thesis defenses and their subjects was relatively heartening – the thesis titles were quite pragmatic, overall. A friend, now more of an acquaintance, has a striking picture next to her doctoral student bio and I feel proud of her; she looks every bit a cosmopolitan, international, confident, young scholar. Some grad student names I heard enough to recognize and now realize I had mostly forgotten, their importance having faded like muscular atrophy. Graduate students are like the lemurs of a faculty of department – a staple, but only noteworthy when they move about a lot, or act out inappropriately. All the feelings I had about these para-colleagues while I worked there, my judgments, my sympathies and dislikes... they were so unnecessary. I didn't even know Blair Major, but his name makes a statement and my colleague friend was constantly in conflict with him, so I automatically took her side. His name is perfect for a Henry James or Edith Wharton.

4 mars 2020

Quand je lis Tout comme les tortues

Je peux bien imaginer les personnages, à Québec

Beaux, jeunes, avec leurs goûts déjà bien développés

Pour des lattes et des cappuccinos

Leur amour pour la peinture

Pour faire de la cuisine

De fréquenter seulement des gens aussi beaux qu'eux ils le sont

C'est leur vie que je voulais, que je pensais vouloir

Des vies de blancs

Mais aussi de culture, d'émotion, de vie familiale prévisible

Le soir-même je rêve que je rends visite à mon ex-belle-famille

Je les impose ma présence parce que je veux être avec mes enfants

Ils m'en veulent d'être là, je le sens

Je m'en fous ils voient si petit ils ne comprennent rien de compliqué

Tout le monde fini en devenant l'image qu'ils projettent

Même si l'arrière-plan est laid et douloureux

“Your three (!) children”

Thank you climbing partner whose name I can't remember whom I befriended at the old Allez Up, who nodded at a stack of flyers advertising obstacle course racing, and suggested interest. I needed so many lifelines then: my fancy McGill editor job and its wardrobe that I cared so much about. Maybe I just cared about the wardrobe, in which case, good for me. The training runs. Climbing. Night climbing. Racing. The racing photos. HSI. CSP. (Human Systems Intervention and Canada's Smartest Person lest I someday forget). Colleagues that I felt sorry for conditional upon my feeling superior to them while acknowledging their talent and hard work, which I felt was under-appreciated, unrecognized and under-compensated. How arrogant I was. Am. As if somehow the pleasure of my company could make everything better. The brilliance of my dry wit. I needed so many lifelines because I thought I could save other people.

8 mars 2020

APA style vs MLA, why do I feel strangely nostalgic for MLA? I've always kind of resented APA, I think it's like a weird Freudian thing against my mom hahaha. But seriously. Why should we all follow some PSYchological Association's dictates for how things should be referenced? A Modern Language Association is infinitely preferable, non??

Some overview, I think on a Purdue website, says APA is for social sciences and MLA is for literary and cultural studies. 'Language arts, cultural studies and other humanities disciplines.'

I think I am doomed (slash blessed) to close read everything.

I've stopped reading horoscopes in the last year, which is a big sign of progress, self-progress. But the Aries playlist for March says Choose yourself before all else, and just yesterday, I bought myself a 2 dollar bag of candy while buying lunch groceries and felt proud of myself but also was aghast that it took me so long to do exactly that, choose myself. I went to look for the rest of the horoscope and found:

Extricating yourself from the most pervasive of your patterns will require massive effort, but doing so will also offer you the greatest rewards. Your boundaries need to be non-negotiable in both your personal and professional relationships, and March makes this unequivocally clear. Work on detangling yourself from the sources of attention that feed you some of the things you like, but not all of the things you need. Something occurs at the beginning of the month to help you choose yourself before all else. Make doing so your morning ritual, a midday snack, the main course at dinner, and an essential part of your sleep routine. Doing so will teach yourself and others how to treat you all day every day.

[\(https://chaninicholas.com/march-2020-horoscopes-cosmic-playlists/\)](https://chaninicholas.com/march-2020-horoscopes-cosmic-playlists/)

I looked left as I crossed the street to go home and there was the almost full moon smiling down at me. A glance at my French saints calendar today, while circling the date of my last period, tells me that the full moon is tonight or today. 10:48 am PT, the website says. And the full moon horoscope.

This weekend, I decided to stop going to improv orchestra, after having only gone to two out of the six weeks. I don't need it anymore. As Emily Churchill-Smith said to me, I've always been good at knowing when to leave. What do I feel about my decision? Guilt? Manifest as oh, I miss it. But I don't want to sit

in that room jamming with those folks anymore, I won't get anything else out of it. My top speed or torque apex arrives before (or much much later than) most other people's.

Then at the library I see a poster advertising sonologie auditive, with a bunch of McGill music grad students. Looks interesting, right? Plus, free. We shall see. I mean, my mind first turns to how I can't get away for an hour on Wednesdays.

Also this weekend, I had a conversation with the mother of one of Kai's close friends. She's leaving the province, first, in two weeks, and then her family will follow at the end of the school year. She has spent ten years as a stay-at-home mom, she tells me. She has a masters degree in sociology. She is going back to school, to study education. But if she does it here, she doesn't know if she'll be able to work. I listen and listen, and pieces of my heart fall in place, as the tears leak from my eyes. Her eyes are full, too, but they don't overflow. What a conversation for a Saturday morning!, I exclaim, not sure how else to explain that I am crying in empathy, and also that she is saying things I don't allow myself to feel.

The bigotry gets tiring, I say, realizing only then that the bigotry is what I try to win over, try to pretend I can overcome.

And Raphaëlle leaving and taking her family with her makes me wonder if some day I will get tired of the small, too, and go. The problem is, the problem IS. The small is everywhere, it's not geographic, it's human.

In the meantime, I try to hold on to, nurture the tiny flame, of the BIG. Of Kai calling daylight fresh light. What do you call the light from lamps, Kai? Hard light. Ok.

So the fresh light, that's what I try to keep alive, as darkness encroaches.

20 mars 2020

Stumbled back onto Henry James, a free e-book download and finding OverDrive open where I had left it, halfway through 'Roderick Hudson,' his first (I think?) short story. I stopped reading at first because it was too Jamesian: well-to-do ne'er-do-well who is exhorted by some charming woman in his social circle to make a better man of himself. An incorrigible, shamelessly lazy, white Anglo-Saxon protestant New England male. (When Cait Brandstater asked me what WASP stands for again...)

But then OverDrive reopened last night to where I had left off and James launched into a passage explaining the protagonist (Mallet, not Hudson) and his background/childhood, and the existence of a mother who suffered through life with a tyrannical husband but who shared her feelings with her son before her death. And described in a way that only James can write. Psychological interiority.

When I read passages like that in James, I discover all these words for all these states and feelings that I've had all along, and cannot believe that I didn't have a way to describe them, or rather, cannot believe how well James describes them. (It was the same with Eliot and Middlemarch.)

Similar, I think, to watching Axel with unabashed joy, and only because of the largesse of the joy, realizing I was holding back before, with Noa and Kai. Because I was broken, and because I thought that would protect them from fake, so fake, joy.

25 mars 2020

Looking up readings on the Necker cube, I come across a project linked to CogNovo, an interdisciplinary PhD program at Plymouth University, and through CogNovo, find Diego Maranan's PhD work, Haplos, wearable vibrating clothing.

Wow.

He's also worked on other art installation projects, like BioModd, which creates ecosystems out of random parts.

The pictures are beautiful, the theory impressive.

I want to replicate his methodology and approach and feel ready to do so, until I go to write it down. What am I creating? A play? Poetry? Music? Dance? How boring.

I know that this self-deprecation is a typical part of my process and often I get over it and am able to add something new and creatively inspiring to my thoughts and project.

But for now, I feel like my work is entirely not superficial... superannuated? As in, additional and unnecessary. Does not introduce anything new, does not create anything legitimate... How can the humanities compete with cognitive neuroscience or biology or design or computer technology and human-computer interaction developments??

Irrelevant. That's maybe the word I was looking for. I have analysis and commentary galore, thoughts on how we consume the news (especially now during this round of coronavirus), about how to observe human behaviour at its most peculiar (Hong Kong Pizza Huts when they still had buffets; the HSBC tower where I loved/hated to visit on Sundays to see the mass of Filipina domestic workers gathering there. Going into the mall offering Filipina everything—food, shipping, bank wires, etc.—that stuff I know and am confident in my ability to observe, and I know that most people don't care, until it gets written into a travel guide.

So that's what I am, a second-rate anthropologist aspiring to act as an avant-garde tour guide.

29 mars 2020

Kai was born eight years ago today.

I didn't want to like Zachary T. Smith's article about using post-qualitative methods to analyse the experience of going to a bar, but the more I read, the more I was brought along with the humour and the playfulness of the method.

I'll need to include an exegesis in my creation, so that I can document things like how sometimes nothing seems to work except a headstand; about how I am slowly figuring out a routine for writing, and how those around me are slowly figuring out that I am figuring out a routine. If it starts in the morning, it starts with coffee, and a lot of what looks like nothing: cleaning up after our toddler; playing with him; stretching and calisthenics.

At some point, usually around 9, the work warm-up starts. I set things in place. Today, I cleared all the decorations off my desk. The way I work at night, completely spreading everything across the dining room table, has taught me that I need my laptop, my stack of texts, and space to pick up and drop the readings as I consult, quote, or dismiss them.

There's more coffee, or tea, a warm beverage at any rate, and maybe some more calisthenics, usually an inversion, to get everything really moving. Lately, there's been butter in my coffee because I like feeling fasted, but I also like having a bit of fat to anchor the caffeine delivery.

Then it's headphones to block out sound, closing the door of the bedroom, and finding a tenable, sustainable working position.

I experimented with returning to standing, which worked well for a while, even despite my distraction shopping on Amazon for the perfect folding standing laptop support. Eventually, I realized a box and an IKEA storage container got the job done the same way, and today I realized I don't like standing at this desk. I have one designed for that downstairs. The dining table is where I sit, back against the wall, on a flat bench that tells me my 90 degrees.

Here, upstairs, I've decided to try kneeling. Already, just having knelt to type this entry, I can feel my legs and back protesting, adapting.

3 avril 2020

earl grey and a home in the making: hanging hooks, shuffling things in and out of sight  
watching the right pieces settle at last

yesterday i flipped the puzzle kai and I finished over, using a yoga mat. halfway there, i realized it wasn't going to work but there was no turning back. That feeling of vertigo that struck me as I peered down from the top of the yoga mat, and as the puzzle scattered across the table and floor. It was so familiar except I've often chased that feeling up a trail race mountain, down a ski hill, sought it in angered encounters with strangers I perceive to have slighted me. Coasting up to the top of the crest with so much momentum and anticipation, reaching the apex in a rush and then suddenly understanding that I am going WAY TOO FAST.

The thrill in the past has been in throwing on the brakes at this last minute and reigning everything back in, right on the edge of control, if that. The edge of chance and luck... knowing that it has usually gone my way. But the times where it doesn't, picking up the pieces in a muddled kind of relief, glad that my actions have at least turned into some kind of concrete catastrophe, something I can see, touch, feel. Like the time I took the water pitcher from the fridge in Hong Kong and started filling it with water from a newly boiled full kettle. As the water filled the jug, the jug cracked and finally exploded and I screamed.

Ridiculous, utterly excessive. But I charged towards the outcome once I had started out on my way, as a reflex. Until the crash told me, definitively, to stop.

6 avril 2020

Letting pieces settle and uncovering the deeper roots of some of my fears. Returning to the cottage yesterday to take out the compost we left in the kitchen, the house is so quiet. It's peaceful, tranquil, I feel my guard relax when I enter and I look around at all the touches big and small that we've brought to the place. This is what I wanted and needed, even if it's costing me an arm and a leg.

I wander upstairs to water a plant I forgot, overwater it, and am overcome by the ghosts of the house, the way I feel and hear my children clambering around, as they did just hours ago, the traces of them I see everywhere, in the LEGO room, in the bathroom, the kitchen, their own bedrooms...

29 avril 2020

I'm sure everything is a coronavirus shitshow but it feels like I am directing a particularly unnecessarily extreme shitshow, my own life.

The number of times I've cried in anger, frustration, sadness, and in front of my children. I hadn't seen you cry in like, three years, and now I see you cry all. The. Time, says my 11 year-old daughter. But what is all this stuff I see out there about 'not fighting in front of your kids, for their sake,' and also telling women to 'never settle.'

I prefer 'choose your battles,' and 'if you fight hard, make up hard.'

Why are other people able to see and understand our behavioral patterns and motivations so much more clearly than we are? Other people except Henry James? I wonder how well he understood himself. Also Hemingway. Love your standing typewriter, and your chestnuts on the stove in Paris, but what a shitshow you were. Aren't we all.

Anyway, since my Skype meeting with Louis-Claude last Friday, wherein I also received confirmation that I write well, or rather, where my hope that what I was writing was powerful lined up with my reader's response that what I had done is good – that my methodology section is solid and pretty ready to go, which took me forever to figure out and which is really where I lay everything on the line – anyway since that session, I have felt like I passed my project defense, even though I haven't officially. And so am now skipping into doctoral 'candidate' behaviour completely, as in, behaving as if I am just writing my dissertation and then I'm done.

I looked up what other people's workspaces look like, I started perusing doctoral writing blogs, I feel like I'm a member of the next level of PhD club and I wanted to see what my peers look like, actually, I want to see a. what I look like; b. what I am supposed to look like.

And it all bleeds together. I'm a nerd who also has some athletic and musical ability.

You look like a nerd, Alex said, always able to put his finger on the pulse.

I don't care how I look, I just need to run.

30 avril 2020

Oh rejection. It stings and I take it so personally. That's what I was planning to write about all evening, trying to get back to this page as it took an hour to get the baby to fall asleep. About how getting an email this afternoon saying my application (for a bursary that I only applied for because I thought that every eligible individual would automatically get approved...) had been rigorously studied and was found to be unfortunately lacking. Not those words exactly, but something like that. Unfortunately not chosen.

The blow to my self-esteem and pride.

But also, when I came back to this screen, someone had scrolled up, I'm pretty sure because I left it deliberately at the top of the date, because Alex's name is so prominently visible two lines up. I felt so nakedly exposed, the same way I cringed for days when I accidentally sent Alex a message intended for my parents.

But it also made me think about the line from the Weezer song about reading some girl's diary, and about the Henry James short story I finished recently in which the woman reads the man's diary while he's sick, and then tells him after he has proposed, and then has offered the diary to her for her to read.

She responds by saying she already read it, and what does it matter.

It's a terrific ending because he's a dick throughout and deserves to have his judgmental presumptuousness betrayed.

12 mai 2020

Yesterday I wrote a true thing and it was a poem. I felt immensely proud of myself, but even more I felt relieved, for being able to express what was so pressingly occupying my thoughts and feelings.

#### RITUALS OF GRIEF

It starts with noticing the silence, a pregnant emptiness

where there was the ruckus of chatter and the clatter of carefree footsteps

You empty water bottles, soap them down and sweep counters, wipe streaks and stains

Going through the motions hoping that your feelings will move along as well

and stop reminding you of how unnatural it is to mourn one's children.

Today I translated a press release for my mom, reading with interest about the partnership she is undertaking with a research center at a Macanese university, getting funding from the foundation arm of a casino conglomerate. Fascinating. Translating the 'about' sections for the university and for the casino conglomerate brought me back to my comms days. Public relations (ha, I just typed pubic and fixed it) and marketing are such wooden endeavours, it's a miracle anyone still does it, or anyone still pays for it, believing it works. But maybe it does work, especially for old and risk-averse folks.

I realized I can easily identify the psychological themes and needs of the generations before me, but am out in left field for my own generation and those after. Like, what are the motivations that propel social media turns, e.g., Tumblr and Friendster or MySpace over to Facebook and Instagram then Snapchat and TikTok? I think I keep forgetting that I signed up for Facebook after Thomas did, so I followed him there. And why?

30 May 2020

I have been obsessed with rain this month, saving poems by Amy Lowell, Elizabeth Bishop and Francis Ponge about rain, BEAUTIFUL poems that I absolutely needed to stop all work to find during one torrential downpour earlier this month. Fittingly, it is raining as I type this, and I stand at my window staring out at the trees, imagining the river just past the leaves, gulping in breaths of air as the sky hangs humid with rain drops and the occasional shower drums across the sidewalk to remind me that IT IS RAINING.

Oh how I love it. I took Axel out on the porch and we sat until we were shivering as the temperature plummeted with the raindrops.

POETRY AND RAIN. What a wonderful month of May.

Rainbows aside, May has also been the month of plotting to erect a privacy fence in our yard in Griffintown, none of the drama of which matters except for the part where I said to Alex today: I hate all this conflict, it stresses me out so much, but I can never help but be so proud of myself when I make arguments that I know are better than everyone else's.

Arguments better than everyone else's. Clumsy construction aside, that is really what I hope my life will be, me out-arguing everyone I think is wrong, because when I bother to think they are wrong, I believe they are truly, morally wrong, and I need to feel like I am trying to change their minds for the good of all. Change their minds to make them more: ethical, nuanced, courageous, just, respectful, wise, humorous... all of it. Because if I think someone is wrong on just one of those charges, I fear conflict sufficiently to just let it go. But then I accrue evidence that they have trampled and trespassed on several of these hallowed grounds, and then I gear up a warhead of righteous indignation (is that Pulp Fiction?) in an email and fire away.

Anyway. Rain. Halleluiah. It washes away everything, or almost. The sound of the trickle of water along the street, the wind weaving heavily in the trees, and the clean, promising scent of renewal that fills the sky to its very very brim. Magic.

3.5 2021

22 novembre 2021

I had to go all the way back to my May 2020 folder to find this document. And then as soon as I opened it, it contained a November 2019 rant about the white-ness of academia. But I had mis-remembered my critique of Laurel Richardson and Writing as Inquiry. To Amy, just a week ago, I had summarized my thoughts as: "She's so clever and she knows it. She's so white and she has no idea."

Is this racialized anxiety a seasonal thing??

This year, it has cropped back up because I tried to join the Sous-comité pour et par les étudiants en communication (SAPEC), went to one event and had three mini panic-attacks. I was timekeeper for the Pomodoro method. I blushed violently when it was time to announce the first break. Then it turns out I had announced the first break ten minutes too early. Then during the second break, Valérie tried to introduce me to some colleagues. All of whom were white.

There were two less white students, one whose first language is Spanish (I think judging by the accent?) and the other whom I know well, who started the PhD program with me and has ties of some kind to Iran and is studying something about comms and Iranian politics. Just like me and comms and Chinese politics. We should get along all things considered but I am aggressively subconsciously allergic to him, my intuitive judgment goes into overdrive around him and I just want to get as far away from him as I can. I don't think it's a case of professional insecurity but I can't be sure.

I get all fired up watching TikToks made by a woman in Chicago about equalizing domestic division of labour. She's creating a zine, so I send in a submission, and I join her Discord chat group. It's SO WHITE. AGAIN.

So when I stumble across an article praising a recent movie starring a male Asian lead, I look up the writer, trying to find where she hangs out, where she creates community. She has a podcast and an Australian accent. And as strong as the article is [overall](#), she cites really dated research :

The film is filled with many hard-to-watch moments of Lin feeling inadequate and unworthy; it's heartbreaking and painful, but even more so when you realise that this mirrors reality. In *Love Hard*, Lin notes that he only received three dating app matches in the year that he had his real profile up, whereas he garnered 85 matches in the first five minutes he pretended to be Tag.

[Research has shown](#) that in the US, when women were asked to state racial dating preferences, more than 90% of non-Asian women excluded Asian men. [Another study](#) found that Asian men are the race group that receives the fewest unsolicited messages from women.

The first article *Patterns of Racial-Ethnic Exclusion by Internet Daters* is from 2011. The second *Mate Selection in Cyberspace: The Intersection of Race, Gender, and Education* was published in 2013. Which might not seem that bad but the internet dating giants, i.e., the apps, e.g. Tinder (on which the movie's dating app appearance and functioning/mechanism is based) made their/its first appearance as a start-up in an incubator in 2012. Come on now.

Among all the things to do today (this week), write to SAPEC to withdraw participation.

7 December 2021

Typical (<https://stream.sohotheatre.com/collections/typicalcollection>) Soho Theatre On-demand

First performed in 2019 at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe before the hit play transferred to Soho Theatre for a sell-out run, *Typical* is a powerful exploration of racism and how British society stereotypes Black masculinity. This urgent and important new drama stars Hollyoaks regular and former *EastEnders* star Richard Blackwood reprising the critically acclaimed part he played in the original stage version. Written by award-winning playwright Ryan Calais Cameron and directed by Anastasia Osei-Kuffour, *Typical* uncovers the man and the humanity behind the tragic true-life events of Black British ex-serviceman Christopher Alder and the injustice that still remains twenty years since his story emerged.

10% of the proceeds after costs will be donated to Inc Arts Minds, a charitable fund created to support the emotional well-being of those affected by systemic and structural racism in the arts.

Janet Alder is currently raising funds for 'Justice for the family of Christopher Alder' via Crowd Justice. Please copy & paste this URL into your browser:

<https://www.crowdjustice.com/case/christoper-alder/>

*Typical* has been created by award-winning creative movement Nouveau Riche and Soho Theatre, London's most vibrant producer of new theatre, comedy and cabaret

### **Panel discussion : Typical and the Power of Theatre**

55 minutes, 2021

Dame Heather Rabbatts DBE, Chair of Soho Theatre, leads a panel discussion on *Typical* and *The Power of Theatre*.

She's joined by: Janet Alder - sister of Christopher Alder, author, campaigner Dawn Butler MP - Labour MP for Brent Central Ryan Calais Cameron - Nouveau Riche Artistic Director, Typical playwright Mark Cunningham - Chair of panel of Police Stop & Search and Use of Force Scrutiny Jessica Draper - Head of Creative Engagement, Soho Theatre

### **Post-show guided meditation**

7 minutes, 2021 Dramatherapist Wabriya King, who was present on set during the making of the Typical film for the wellbeing of the cast and crew, accompanies viewers through a guided meditation to watch after the film, to reflect on their viewing experience and address their bodies' response to it.

### **Post-show dramatherapy discussion**

24 minutes, 2021 Typical Director Anastasia Osei-Kuffour chats to Dramatherapist Wabriya King about her role in the making of the film, her presence on set and her working process.

### **Soho Theatre artists respond to Typical**

32 minutes, 2021 Four Soho Theatre artists discuss Typical after watching the film: Alessandro Babalola (Co-Chair of Soho Theatre's Walthamstow Committee) Natasha Brown (Accelerate Attachment Artist) Matilda Ibini (Writers' Lab Alumni) Cheryl Ndione (Tony Craze Award 2019 Shortlisted Writer).

7 December 2021 part two

Trembling and breathless while and after talking to Liang about upcoming condo board meeting. Hop in bath and the shakes recede. What is this trauma response about???

All one-woman plays are white women in the Soho lineup. Today Noa sent me a link to an Instagram deconstruction of white feminism, saying it isn't feminism because it reinforces patriarchal hierarchies (something along those lines). She said it made a lot of sense to her. I love that she talks to me about things like this and I hope she never stops. Also, I am glad she started again.

20 December 2021

Quebecoise adopted (usually East) Asians... what do they say about everyone. The nasal accent. The adopted ones sound different from the allophone ones. The allophones speak English and French with a bit of an (East) Asian-inflected accent, e.g. Tram, Bouquan, Nelly. The adopted ones speak Quebecois French and like no English, or very good English, depending on just how intercultural the parents are.

East Asian is close enough to be adopted but black or African can't pass in the in-between space of « commendable » (this got auto-corrected into Times New Roman and guillemets. Interesting.)

Anyway. Drama.

3.6 2022

19 février 2022

21h : En écoutant la dernière journée des Jeux Olympiques d'hiver à Beijing.

Réunion avec Louis-Claude hier. Je me suis lancée complètement dans la création et j'avais une manie d'énergie, d'idées, de projets. J'attachais tout avec des aimants sur des plaques de cuisson, je construisais des maisons de LÉGOs, des casse-têtes, je chantais et je faisais des verbatim à la main et à la dactylo.

Et puis pendant la réunion, j'évoque la thèse écrite à la main que prof. Paquin m'avait montrée la dernière fois et il me dit qu'en Communication, la limite est une création présentée dans un document Word/PDF, qu'il s'est fait averti lors de la défense d'une étudiante à la maîtrise que sa thèse était « la limite ».

Boum. Moi qui écrivais ma pièce de théâtre à la main et le récit de pratique aussi, m'imaginant les présenter après les avoir soigneusement scannés à Staples.

Je prends le reste de la journée à relire ce que j'ai dans ce document, qui constitue la moitié ou un tiers de ce que je considère mon « récit ». Je suis vraiment déçue de ce que ce document contient dans ses dernières quelques billets. Beaucoup de copier-coller, trop de ruminations privées. Mais c'est parce que tout le travail important que je faisais, tout le travail intéressant, se trouve dans la version non-numérique! Quoi faire. Le lendemain, je fuis pour la maison à Repentigny.

Heureusement, il y a deux semaines, je suis venue ici pour finir les modifications majeures qu'il fallait apporter à ma proposition d'article pour le numéro de Communication. Et pour la première fois depuis que j'ai acheté cette maison « pour terminer ma thèse », j'avais l'impression que je travaillais vraiment au doctorat ici, que je n'étais pas juste en train de jouer, inventer, et ensuite d'appliquer l'étiquette « recherche-crédation ».

Aussi, cet automne et cet hiver, lors des sessions de travail à l'UQAM, avec des amies dans des cafés, etc., je suis enfin devenue à l'aise à faire mon travail devant d'autres personnes. De sortir tous mes cahiers avec leurs pages couverture tracées à la main ou personnalisées avec des collants en chinois, multicolores en plus, mes pages schémas farfelus. Je travaillais SANS GÈNE et j'ai travaillé tellement fort pour y arriver à ce point. Trouver des cafés, et des compagnons, qui m'encourageaient d'être à l'aise.

À un moment donné, il faut extérioriser. Et autant que je me cachais derrière des technologies qui sont difficiles à diffuser (écriture à la main ou à la dactylo), je me cachais aussi de cette extériorisation, le fait de partager et parler de ma recherche avec des autres, de risquer leur opinion. Ce que j'ai fait il y a deux ans, en faisant du small talk avec un autre parent à l'école de mes enfants. J'ai vu son regard passer de curiosité à dés-intérêt et, tout comme avec les commentaires d'un membre du comité qui a évalué ma proposition d'article, j'ai passé plusieurs moments anxieux à y penser et à essayer de comprendre. En me cachant, en créant, juste pour moi.

Bon, ben je suis prête à créer pour que le monde le voit.

23h: Je me suis enfin installée au deuxième étage, et la lune, presque pleine (elle l'était mercredi et on est samedi aujourd'hui) est visible de la fenêtre. QUELLE LUXE. C'est pour ça que je voulais une maison chalet. (Je porte un chandail de carreaux rouges tellement prévisible.) J'allume l'ordinateur en me disant que je n'ai besoin d'aucune autre source de lumière.

Déjà j'ai mal aux yeux. La pièce est trop noire et l'ordinateur, même à la luminosité la plus basse, est trop brillant.

J'allume la lampe. Ce n'est pas la fin du monde.

10:30 (20 février 2022)

I got it. Figured it out. Came upstairs to work at 9:30 and wrote four words. Just sat. Spent 20 minutes looking for good music. Settled on Bach, thanks to a video my dad sent me earlier this week of a pianist I had never even heard of talking about playing with force and flow. Just the way she modulated her fingers on the keyboard made me feel more expressive at my laptop.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHYBgXg0OI>

Sat and tried to find equilibrium in my hips and shoulders. Stared at the page in my notebook where I've been plotting out the play. This past week, I realized I won't need any scenes. Just five acts.

And when it all came together, I also realized why : because there will be a secret play at the end. Like the scene after the credits in superhero movies that my kids love. But this one will be just as long as the original. And it will say everything I want to say but can't because of speech restrictions in Hong Kong. Full circle.

It's also why I removed the linearity from the play earlier this week, put the first act smack in the middle of the page and the rest in a circle around it. Because we start with Act I and finish with Act V and then run into Act I, the hidden version, which comes back to Act V and Act I the official version, in an endless loop like the drawing Kai made me for Valentine's day, the yin yang I drew on the board for my methodology course and got absolutely trashed for by Maxime Ouellet : travail très inachevé...

When it all came together in my head, I felt such exhilaration I immediately burst into tears. And kept crying while Bach played in the background. Tears of joy and gratitude. I wanted to write it out by hand, add it to my collage récit, or put it into my typewriter, which is sitting just behind this laptop on my desk. But I opened this document. Parce que je veux et ai besoin de déposer et défendre. Aussitôt que possible.

Also I realized I have been creating since I was 16 because I wanted to say something AND because I wanted to earn money. But more on that another day. Right now, I'm starvngly hungry.

End : 10:44

PS : Last night, my left knee was bizarrely itchy as I was writing and I kept trying to scratch it through my jeans. Same itchiness this morning.

6 mai 2022

Retraite de rédaction Thèsez-vous. Ma première retraite. Et j'espère ma dernière. Au centre de spiritualité des Ursulines à Québec. Chambres à lits simples, repas fournis, des chutes à trois minutes de marche et une librairie Wendat autochtone. Une grande salle avec une vingtaine de femmes, deux hommes, des ordinateurs avec des set-ups de complexités variables. Des supports de laptop, des deuxièmes écrans, beaucoup d'écouteurs.

C'est pour ça que mon environnement de travail me semble aussi monotone. La créativité et la productivité au niveau de cette salle a été ma vie les cinq dernières années. Sauf que je ne le savais pas car je travaillais seule, à la maison, et aujourd'hui c'est la première fois que je vois d'autres personnes qui travaillent comme moi.

Pas complètement. J'écris dans mon carnet toute la journée mais rendu à l'acte IV, je me rends compte que j'écris la pièce de théâtre comme si c'était une symphonie. J'écoute pour les rythmes, je suis guidé par les rythmes.

Je sais que je suis supposé d'être guidé par l'action. Y'en a un peu, enfin, vers l'acte IV.

Mais mon écriture sort des pulsions de sens plutôt que de pulsions d'actes. HOW FITTING, comme on dit en anglais.

À 20h30 le premier jour, je me rends compte que je suis dans la phase terminale de la phase terminale de la thèse.

Car en allant ajouter à ce document, qui se retrouvait dans mon dossier de février 2022, car intouché depuis, car la recherche d'une job a pris précedence (commencé comme directrice de communications à FlightHub 25 avril 2022), j'ai aussi vu un document intitulé Copyleft... C'est la pièce de théâtre, que j'avais commencé à transcrire à l'ordinateur.

Et dans mon carnet je suis rendu à l'Acte IV avec une certitude qui fait augmenter ma fréquence cardiaque. J'ai appris en rédigeant la thèse que cette augmentation est une réaction a surveiller, d'habitude à poursuivre autant que possible.

Alors on commence la transcription rédaction finale.

8 mai 2022

Rédaction de 6h10 à 8h.

Je mets mon chandail StandUp SpeakOut TakeAction parce que je vais garder le chandail de poésie d'Emily Dickinson pour la fin. Mais je le lis et les larmes montent à mes yeux :

If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can warm me I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry.

Les lignes diagonales des fascias. Me retrouver ancrée dans mon bassin. Les étirements TrueCoach qui me demandent de me tenir debout sur les talons, l'exercice de marcher sur ses talons en chantant.

Je me vois maintenant encore plus clairement, le corp penché vers en avant (aussi comme la chanson) – menton poussé vers en avant, bas du dos cambré, cambré – tout un effort pour trouver une marge de manoeuvre encore plus avantageuse, un peu plus loin que les autres...

13h10 What to do with all the political stuff, the emotional stuff

Via praxematics

Also get Ricoeur for continued poetry, him and Wittgenstein are sufficient.

May 15, 2022

5 am

For the second week in a row, I've gotten up at dawn on a Sunday to work.

Last week, it was for the retraite de rédaction; this week, I'm by myself, at home and I have not been able to fall back asleep since 3:40 but also I have long wanted to be an early morning writer and have always been slightly disappointed in myself when I could either never motivate myself to leave my bed or I would wake up early and do other things: clean the house, catch up on other administrative life tasks, exercise.

Now I sit in the gloaming light, with only the light of my computer illuminating my reflection in the dining room window. I love it.

I would like to start working by candlelight and typewriter because the screen hurts my eyes. But that feels crazy. And I worry the noise would wake or bother my partner or children.

But my father finished a master's degree on a typewriter with a blanket over his head, so as not to wake me, his temperamental, sensitive, little understood infant child. And my mom toiled in the basement, stretching nights into days as necessary – the opposite of what I'm doing now – because that is what allowed her to work. So we shall see.

That reminds me. I need to book his plane ticket.

4 août 2022

### **Repentigny, with the breeze of the Rivière de l'Assomption coming in through my window**

I love this practice of the récit de pratique, I'll thank Louis-Claude again for urging/encouraging/reminding me to keep it up.

I have done so much work since May 15, when this diary leaves off, and I want to pick up exactly where I stopped.

First, there really is such a thing as un gros travail intérieur. I found that phrase in a book about grief, maybe a book about working through grief through art. I put it in another one of my many haphazard attempts to render this récit more visual and manual – a big sketchbook with about ten diagrams.

In any case, I can now literally feel my insides move. It makes me a better writer, academic, singer, firebuilder AND HANDSTANDER.

One of my UQAM colleagues and I joked while discussing scenarios for my soutenance de thèse that I would present my play, play my violin, do a handstand and then toss my entire thesis into a fire.

Quite tempted to stick with that plan.

Two weeks ago, I wrote my mother a letter of apology, at my dad's suggesting, that he brought back to HK and delivered to her. She received it yesterday.

I typed the letter at this desk, but on a typewriter instead of on a computer. I cried, I breathed, I listened to music, I swam, and then I typed almost entirely without making a single mistake.

My mom thinks it was a lot of work because it is so cleanly typed (as a university professor now she remembers writing her graduate work on a typewriter as well) but I want to tell her it wasn't a lot of physical labour. It was an enormous, ENORMOUS, amount of emotional labour. The best kind of labour, I'm discovering. The most meaningful and rewarding and the most often overlooked. Occasionally, I engage in it at work, or even with my otherwise very fair partner at home, and the resentment about the invisibility of it overtakes me – my teeth clench, something in me seethes.

But this kind of emotional labour, a PhD thesis, a love letter to a parent... It is reconfiguring me from the inside out.

Also by typing so 'well,' and with it\_my letter to my mom?\_my emotional labour?\_ being received so 'well,' I realize I really do want to type up my play. I want to put in the time to learn the margins and the formatting so that I can do it quickly and I want to feel my fingers, hands and forearms working, the way they did for my letter to my mom.

I'll keep and also submit the hyperlinked copy as it is so far, because I'm not a complete Luddite and am very grateful for technological progress. (Meeting people online – and then eventually in person –, for example, is an incredible experience, if done 'well,' that I wish for everyone.)

All of this has something to do with Wittgenstein's language games, I'm sure of it. I will figure it out as I go.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis and its arguments are already outdated. (Absolute) Freedom of speech in Hong Kong. What a laughable idea. So dépassé.

If two seemingly incompatible rights can and must co-exist, how do we balance three or more? First, by creating more discursive space; next, diminishing the interference and finally by looking (introspection), landscaping (Voltaire) and fixing (Freud) what lies inside these boundaries, be they physical, of the city-nation-state or \$pay\$wall(\$).

Mais il y a des aspects de mon argument qui demeurent inchangés. Des valeurs indémodables. Je dirais même universelles. La classe moyenne a changé. La bourgeoisie moins.

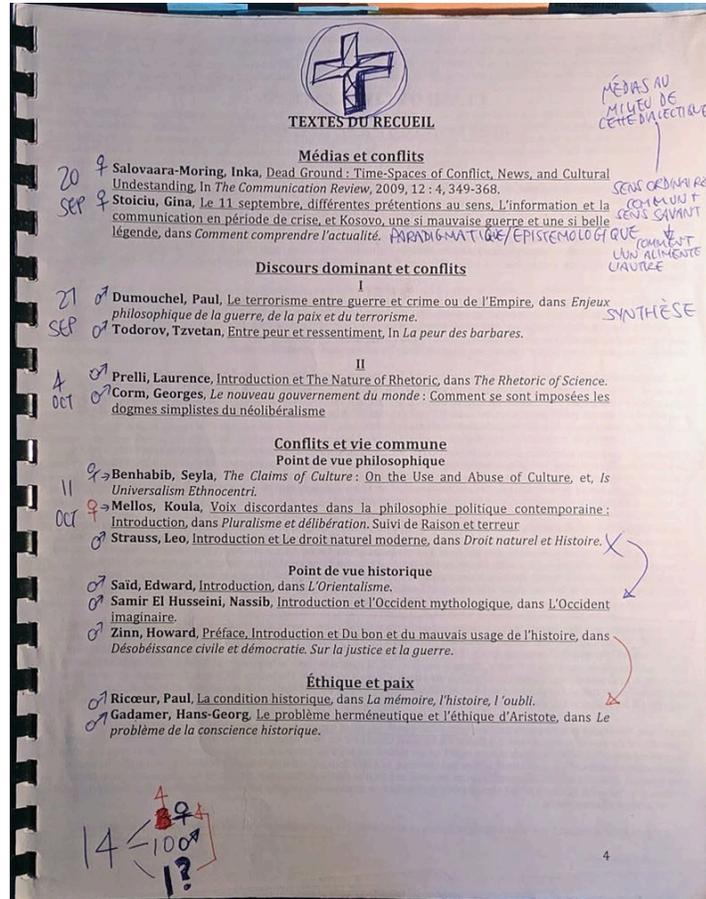
Car comme on (je) dit en anglais, the royal we isn't. But common sense is. And average is no longer middle class, thanks to the 99%.

Un professeur de l'UQÀM qui est spécialiste dans le Marxisme a qualifié mon projet de thèse 'très inachevé' de 'quasiment fasciste,' sans se rendre compte de l'ironie de ses choix de mots, et sans se rendre compte non plus que la différence entre un C et un C+ peut faire la différence entre la persévérance et le décrochage. Justement, ma persévérance pour retourner sur le lieu pour demander une correction de note dû à un erreur de calcul (le C est devenu un C++++) m'a rappelé de la différence entre injustices erronées et injustices structurées, parfois appelées des injustices systémiques, épistémiques ou même hermeneutiques (e.g. Fricker 2007 et Catala 2019).

Un autre professeur de l'UQÀM devenu aussi doyen de la Faculté, avec qui j'ai suivi un cours en communication, conflit et paix, pour lequel le recueil a énormément influencé cette thèse, a posé une série de questions pour lesquelles cette thèse a également milité pour avoir des débuts de réponses. Des questions tel que : est-ce qu'il existe de vérité absolue ? est-ce que l'image banalise la guerre ? Le transmet/met en scène/légitimise/traduit/vulgarise ? Quels sont les fondements du néolibéralisme et de la démocratie, sinon de la mondialisation ? Est-ce que dénoncer le système ce n'est pas se dénoncer soi-même aussi ?

Un collègue qui avait vu mes notes de cour m'a dit plus tard qu'il se rappelait du fait que j'avais noté que la bibliographie était sexiste. Voici l'image de cette page :

Figure 2



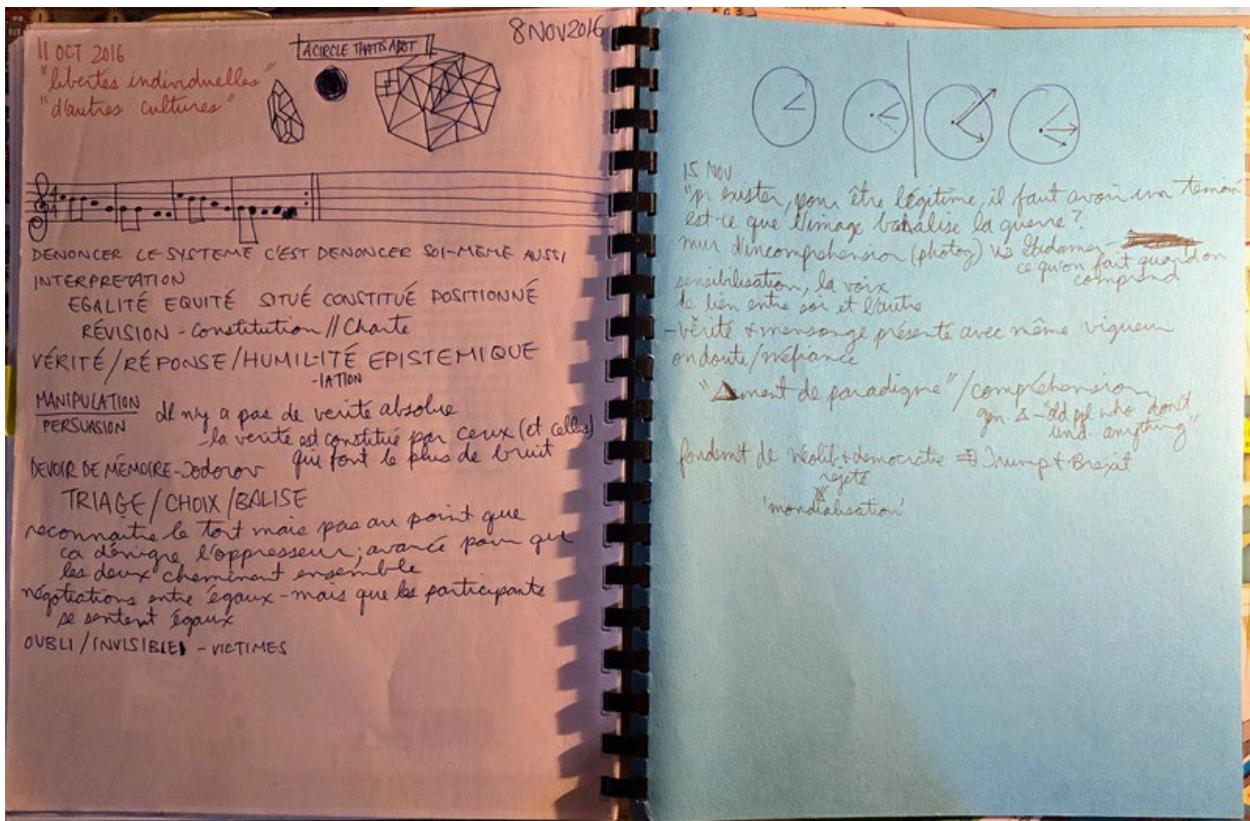
Today, after becoming a board member of Harvard's Women in Development, Defense and Diplomacy and becoming the chapter lead for Montreal (my bid to simultaneously lead a chapter for Hong Kong was unsuccessful...), I would add the following questions to Professor Hsab's, for the next document :

- what is the sound of change and how is it different from the sound of :
  - o one hand clapping
  - o revolution
  - o evolution

- what are appropriate interventions and de-escalatory postures for moments of invisible, often individual<sup>41</sup> structural abuse
  - o when the perpetrator exists in the same structures
  - o may not be aware of the abuse
  - o conscientization is as equally likely to lead to violence as to peace

These last questions were also my first questions and while this thesis has attempted to make [headway](#) towards methods and answers, timeless conundrums never age. (high hat smash). Ainsi, dans mes notes de cours (8NOV2016) : qu'est-ce qui est un cercle qui est un point ?

Figure 3



Et la réponse à date : Un cercle qui est un point (a circle that is a dot) est c'est moi qui conclut ici en vous remerciant. J'espère que dans votre lecture, vous avez passé des moments amusants, sinon divertissants, sinon informatifs.

<sup>41</sup> With more space, or with greater specialization in organization communication, this thesis would have broached the issue from the point of view of internal and external communications (i.e., employee relations and public relations), or domestic versus international laws/customs.

ENGLISH ETC.

There is a series of questions one is supposed to ask oneself before one speaks, in accordance with an adage that comes from the mouths of mothers, babes and journalists alike: is it useful? Is it entertaining? And is it kind? If not, don't say it at all. My sincerest conclusion for this proudly briefest of theses is that this act of speech justifies its own existence by being all three.

## ANNEXE A

### Récit analog

#### I.1 NDLR

Les 29 clichés/diapositives qui suivent ont été récupérés du récit de pratique manuel parce qu'ils démontrent le processus de création, ainsi que la vie d'une étudiante mère travailleuse, qui ne se sépare ni ne se distingue pas du travail théorique. En toute probabilité, la vie quotidienne d'une femme académique peut être enrichie par son ménage, si elle a. le permet; b. est chanceuse. Chaque cliché est accompagné d'un « caption » et un « cutline », pratique journalistique – anglophone – de rigueur quand j'étais avec le [Boston Globe](#) (2006-2009) mais qui est devenu démodée avec la mise en page numérique.

## I.II Début du récit analog

Figure 4 - récit | poésie.

J'ai commencé ce récit en automne 2015, quand j'avais quitté un programme de maîtrise à Concordia pour embarquer dans le doctorat à temps partiel, travaillant à temps plein comme cadre à McGill. Mais je n'ai pas de trace utile du récit avant cette photo, prise en 2017, de la joie visible de mon fils pour sa collation de grades de la garderie, une joie qui m'a portée jusqu'à aujourd'hui.

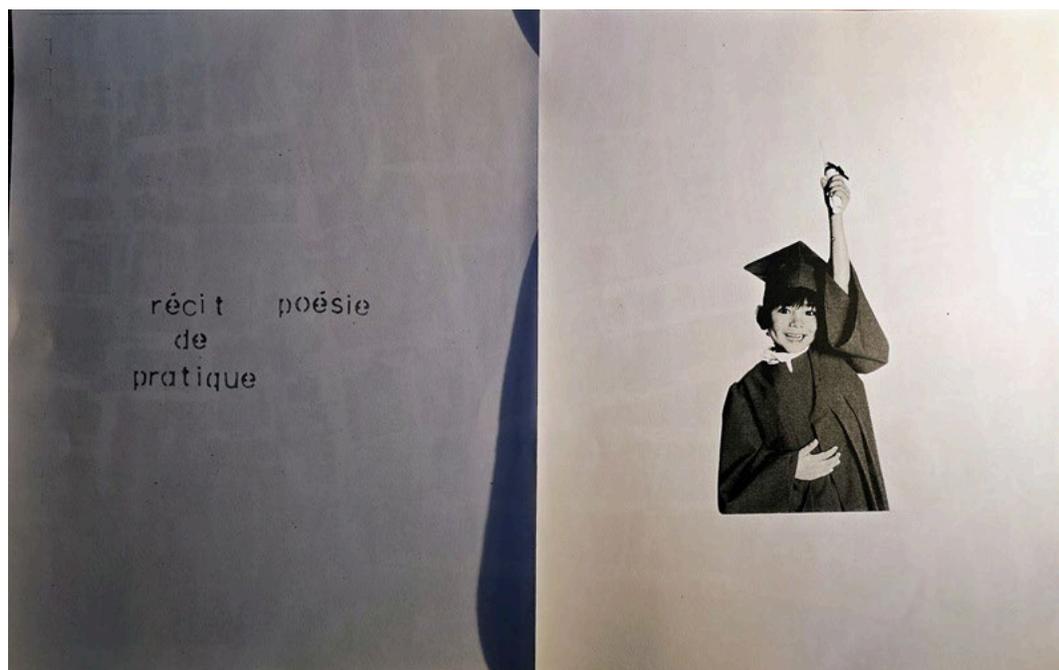


Figure 5 : les arguments pour mon projet de thèse



Figure 6 Poème préféré, Ode on a Grecian Urn, de Keats

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness  
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,  
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express  
A flowing tale more sweetly than our rhyme:  
What leaf-frong'd legend haunts about thy shape  
Of deities or mortals, or of both,  
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?  
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?  
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?  
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on:  
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,  
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:  
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave  
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;  
Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,  
Though winning near the goal yet, do not grieve;  
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,  
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

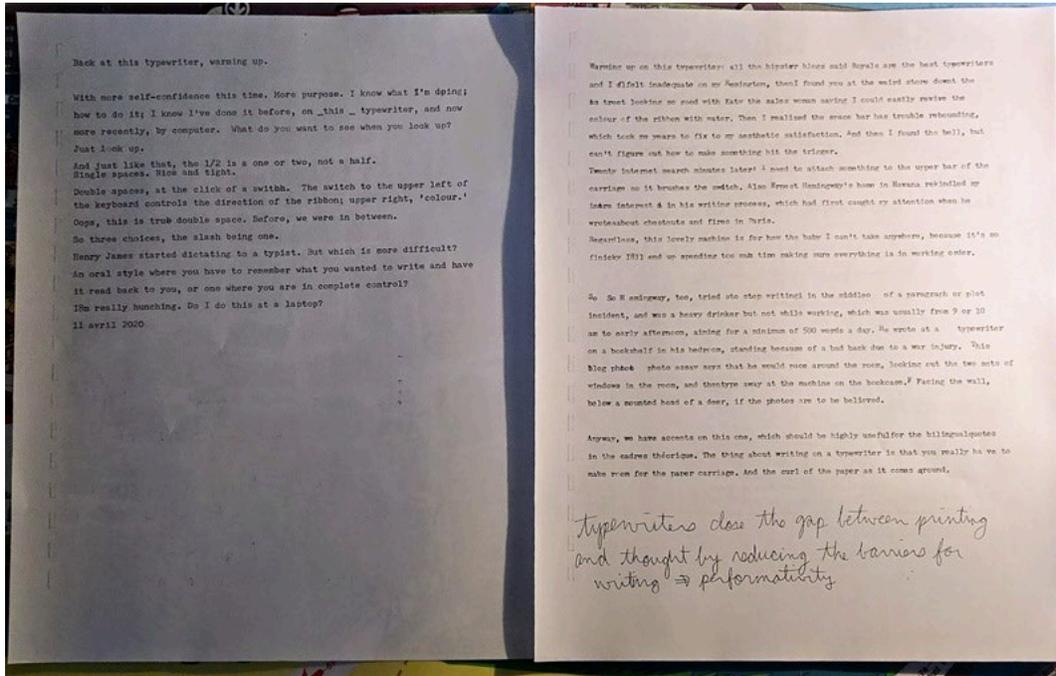
Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed  
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;  
And, happy melodist, unwearied,  
For ever piping songs for ever new;  
More happy love! more happy, happy love!  
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,  
For ever panting, and for ever young;  
All breathing human passion far above,  
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,  
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?  
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,  
Leadst thou that heifer lowing at the skies,  
And all her silver flankes with garlands dress'd?  
What little town by river or sea shore,  
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,  
Is emptied of this folk, this hallow'd morn?  
And little town, thy streets for evermore  
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell  
Why their art desolate, can e'er return.

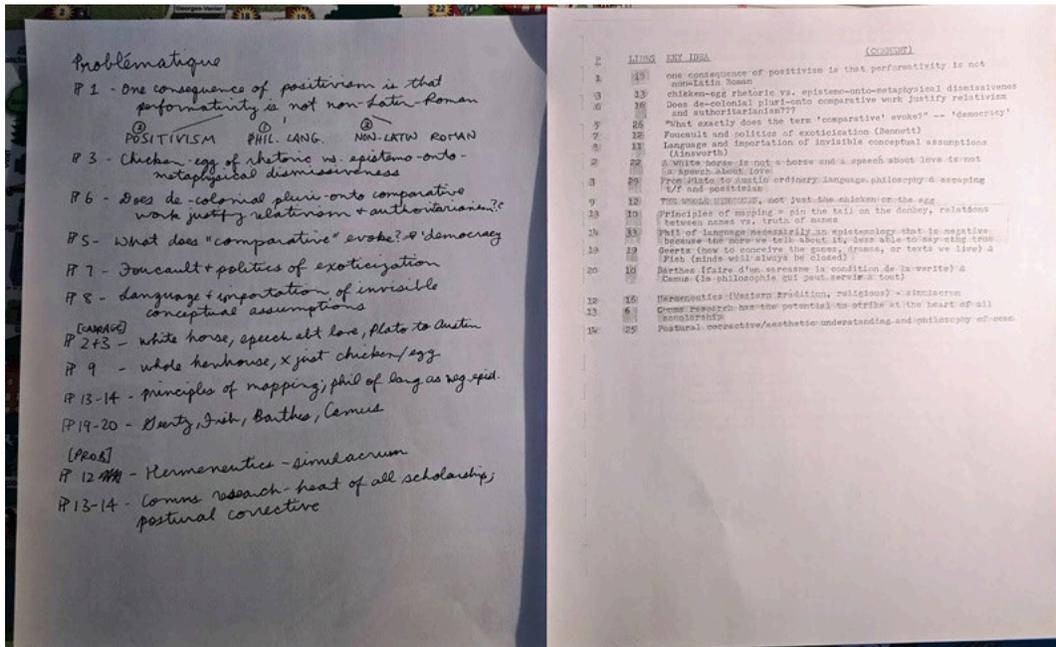
O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede  
Of marble men and maidens overwrought  
With forest branches and the trodden weed;  
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought  
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!  
When old age shall this generation waste,  
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe  
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st  
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty - that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

14 SEP 2019

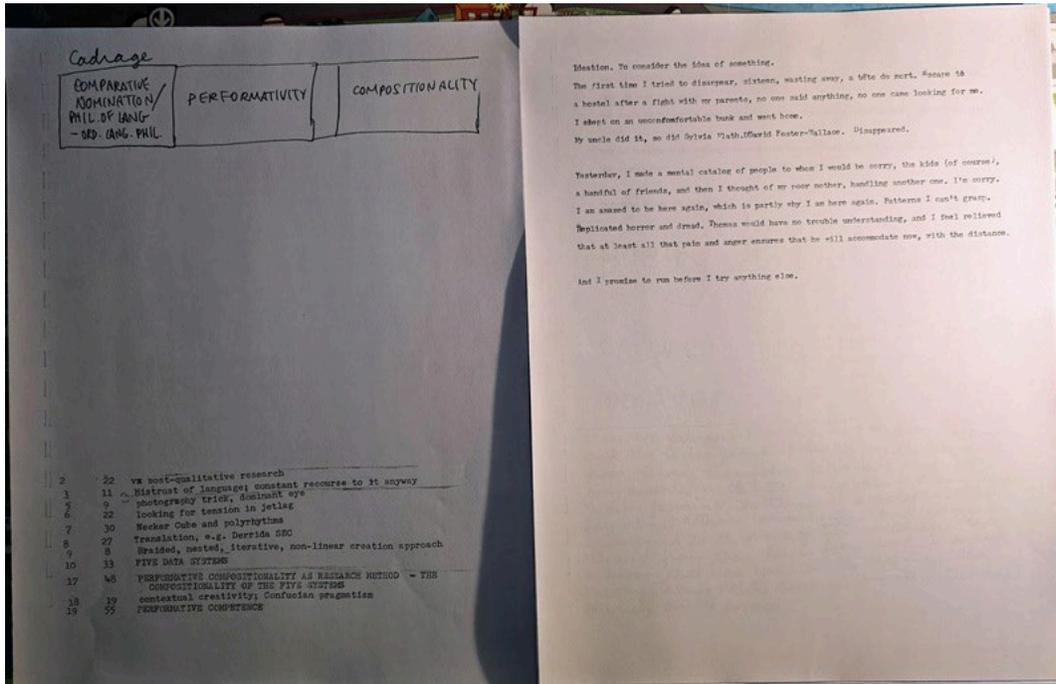
Les dactylographes comme vrai outil de travail, non seulement des jouets antiques.



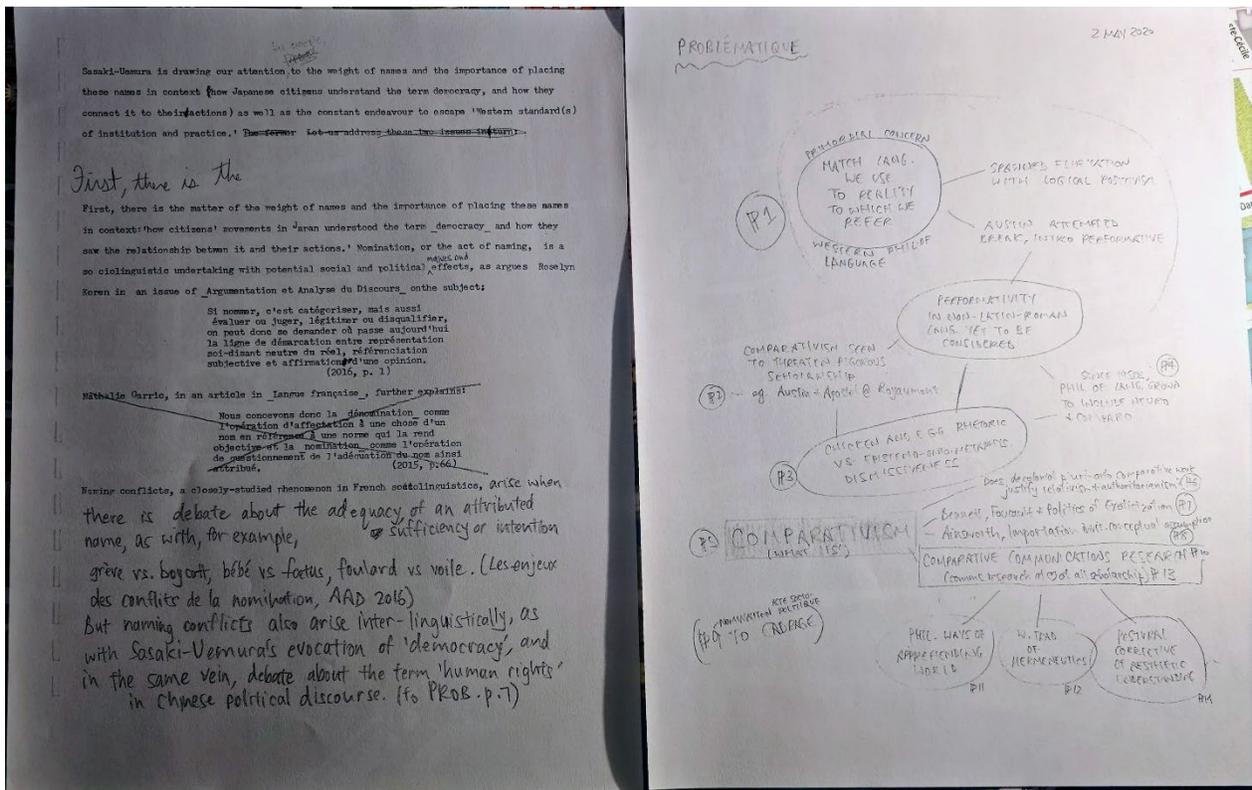
Re-cadrage pour le projet de thèse



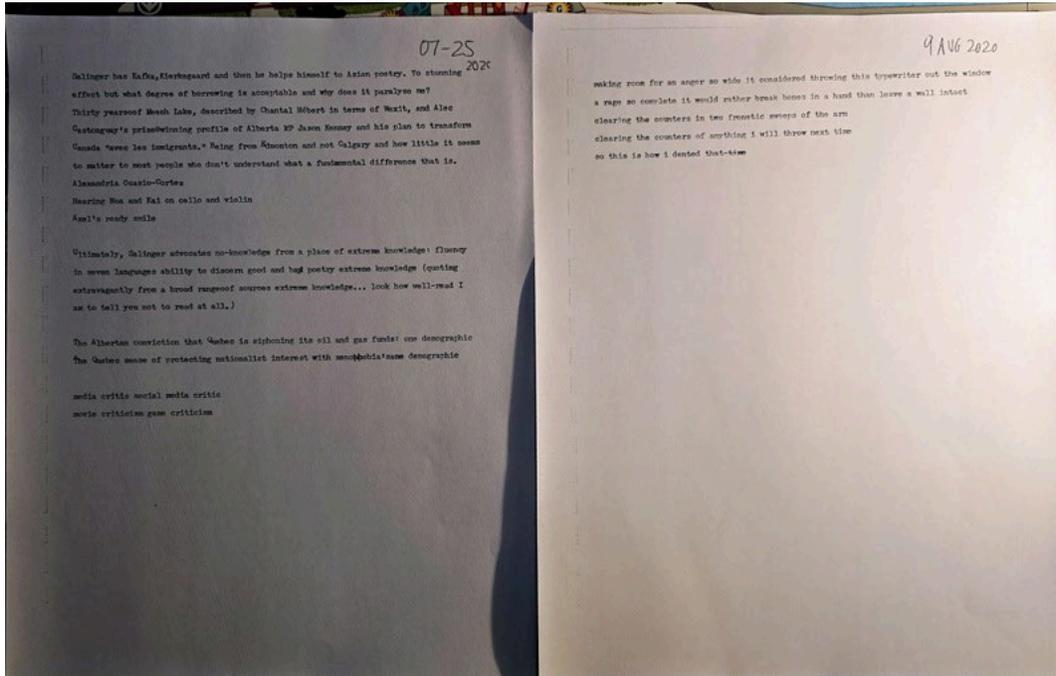
Discussion (à droit) des défis de santé mentale.



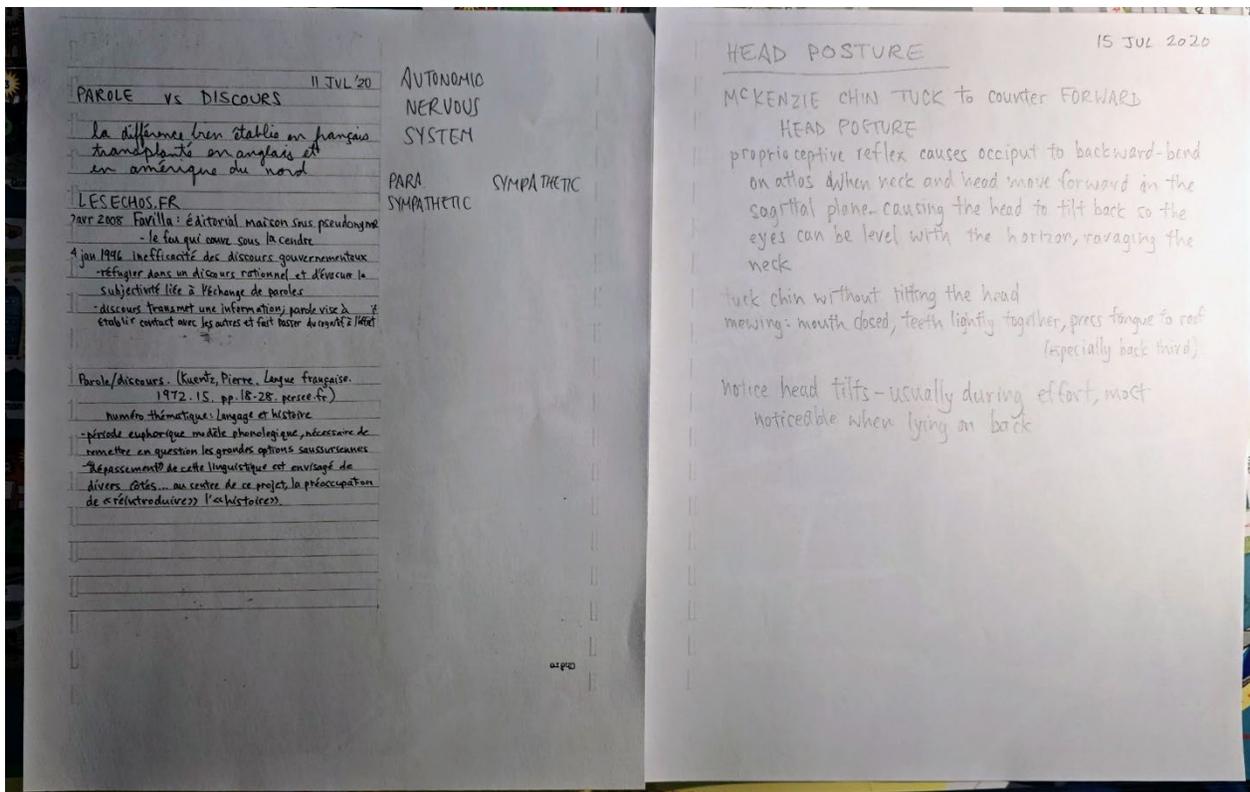
Je vois dans une anthologie du poète Elizabeth Bishop qu'elle fait beaucoup d'auto-rédaction. Ici, l'auto-rédaction est accompagnée d'un dessin qui résume mon argument et les commentaires que j'ai reçu en automne 2019. C'est aussi le début du premier confinement lié au virus Corona.



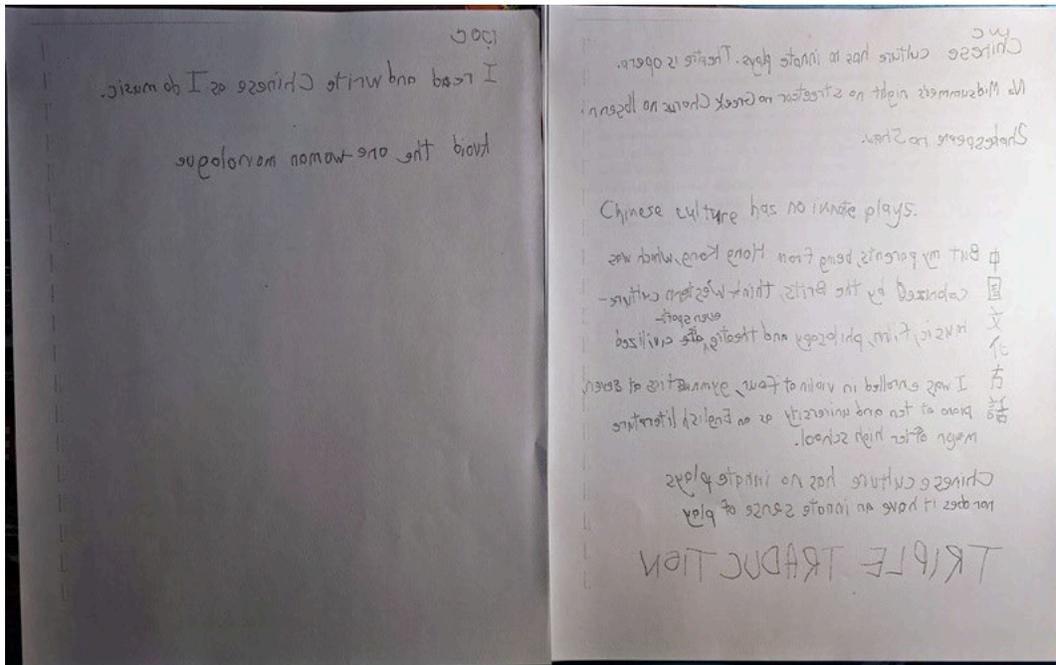
Je travaille ma thèse sporadiquement. Mes photos enregistrées sur Google me rappellent que c'était un été de torticolis sans provenance spécifique, et de beaucoup de chicanes, avec le père de mon plus jeune qui allait avoir 2 ans, et avec les voisins en copropriété à Montréal.



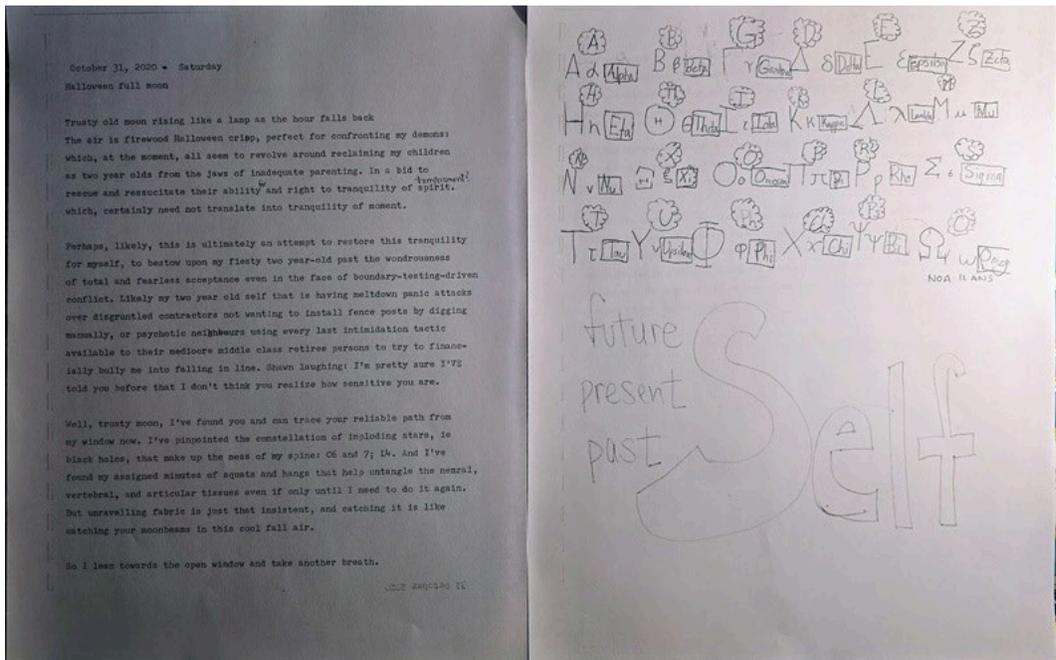
Je prends les notions *embodiment* très au sérieux et envisage retrouver mon équilibre de gymnaste pour la soutenance de thèse.



Débuts des expériences avec l'écriture miroir, en caractères chinois, et avec la main gauche.



Octobre 2020 – Petit virage vers les lettres grecques, tel que capturé par ma fille, qui vient d'avoir 12 ans.



I.V 2021

“There is no shame.” En février 2021, je reçois les nouvelles que ma proposition n’a pas été choisie. Le 15 mars 2021, les organisateurs annoncent que la conférence est annulée, ou sinon repoussée, à juin 2022. Encore la COVID qui secoue tout, et qui vient à la rescousse de ma confiance en moi...

There is no shame in preferring a superior product with a less popular name. This typewriter glides so effortlessly compared to the Royal. Granted, the Royal is all beat up. But this one also has a functioning bell. And I actually wrote school work, lengthy papers, on this one. One of which was decently done, the other from a time when I was just hanging in there.

I'll need a new ribbon here soon. Maybe one with three colors.

And maximal utilisation of the list function.

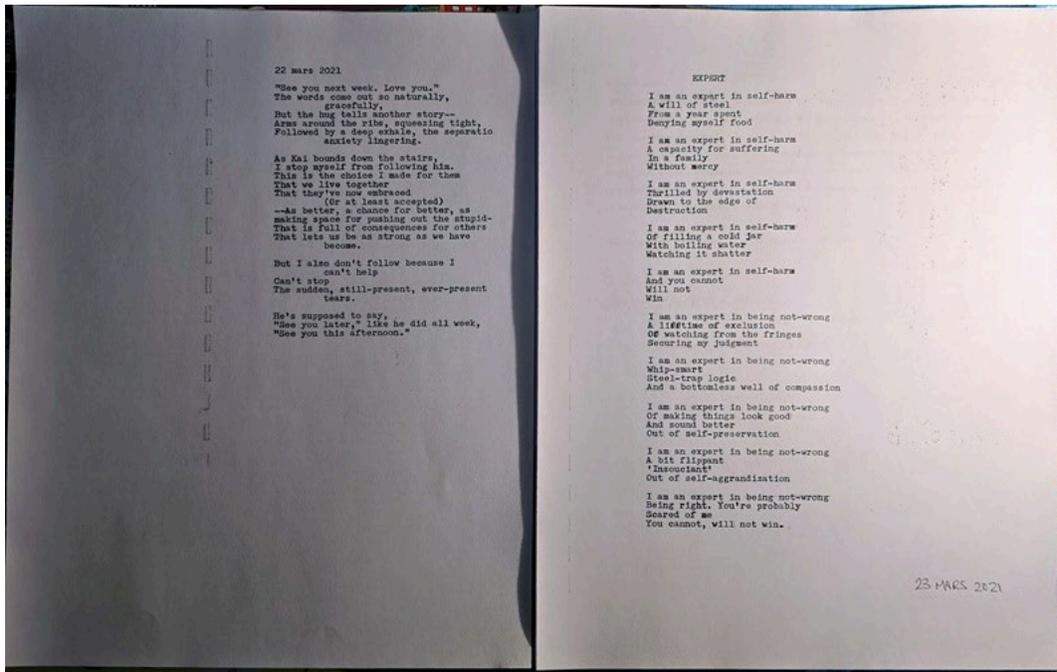
An email this morning from the Performance Philosophy Conference offering to let us know by January 31. Please let me be chosen, please let travel be permitted. And then I will haul both these typewriters with me to Helsinki, and maybe even get this one fixed.

Noa Leanders-Cheng is a big girl who gets nervous when we talk about her but who knows why? Does she? Maybe she pretends to get nervous to get attention. EVERYBODY LOOK AT ME, she's thinking all the time.

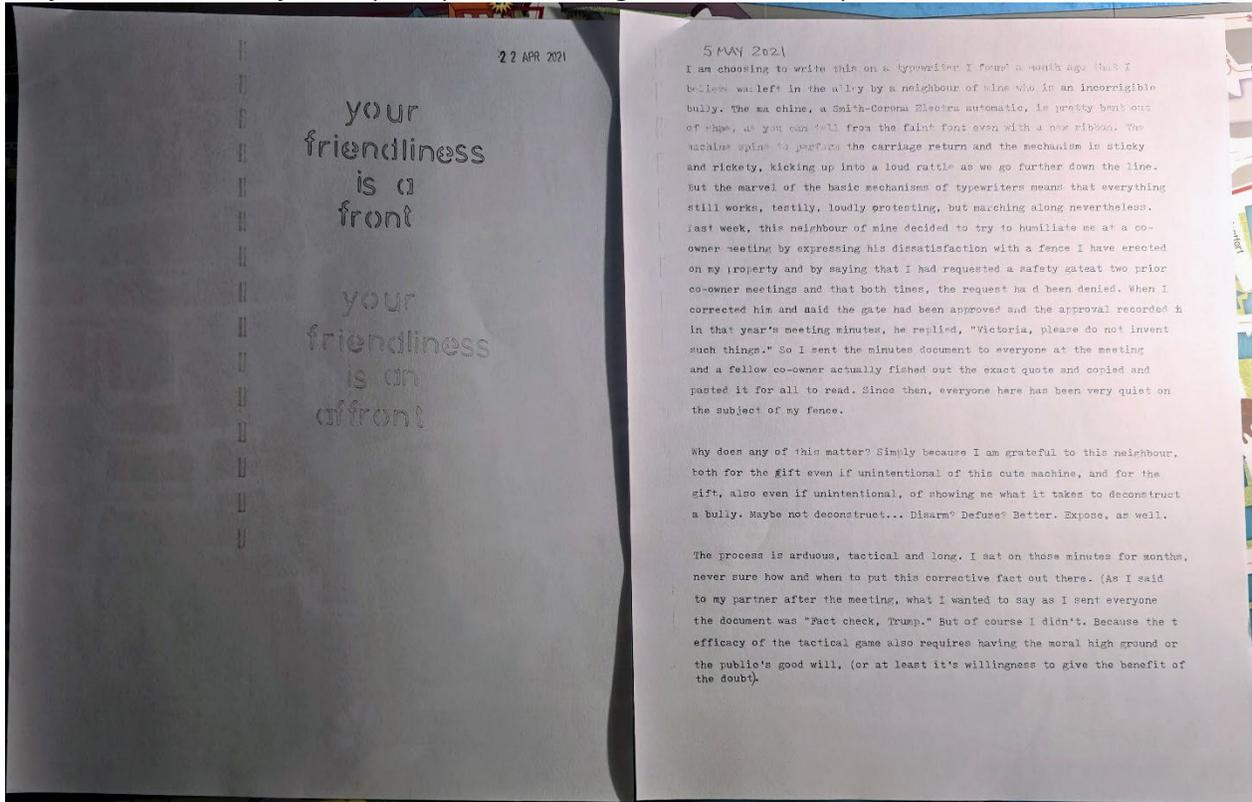
Victoria Cheng is a very productive ~~mother~~ who cares a lot

are you going to sleep over after your lesson on wednesday or should i pick you up. no, i'll come back with you. ok, ok.  
me telling thomas to get bloomz and get on the homework schedule. noa looking at me with mixed emotions, trying not to think i'm being too mean  
telling her the story of the death of the acura xl... arrrrrggggghhh  
does thomas remember that? how does he remember it??

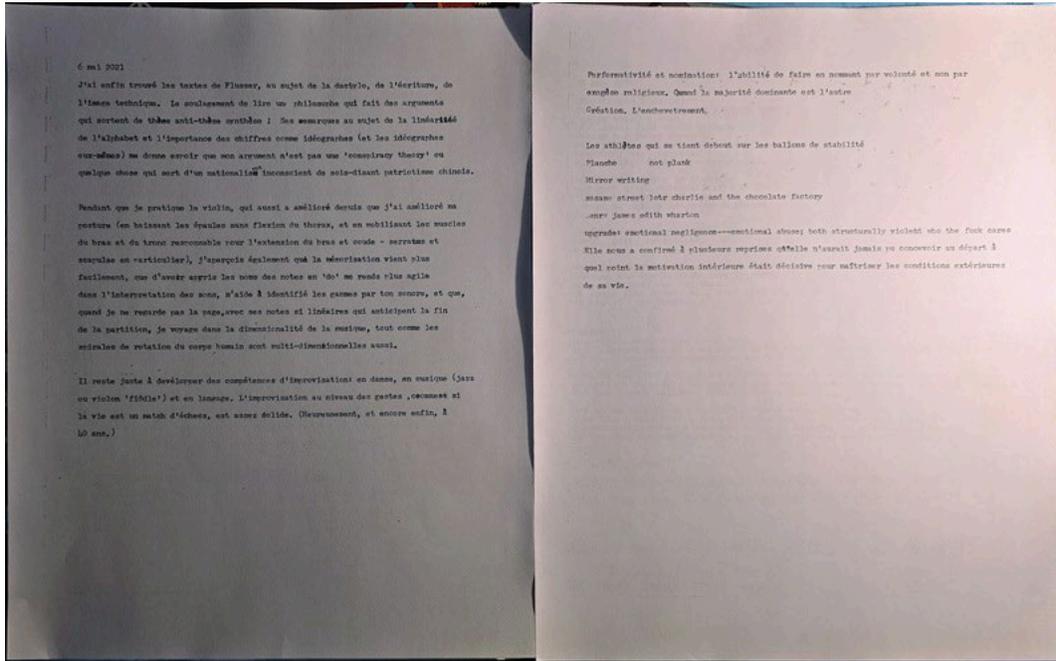
## Distillation d'émotions en poésie



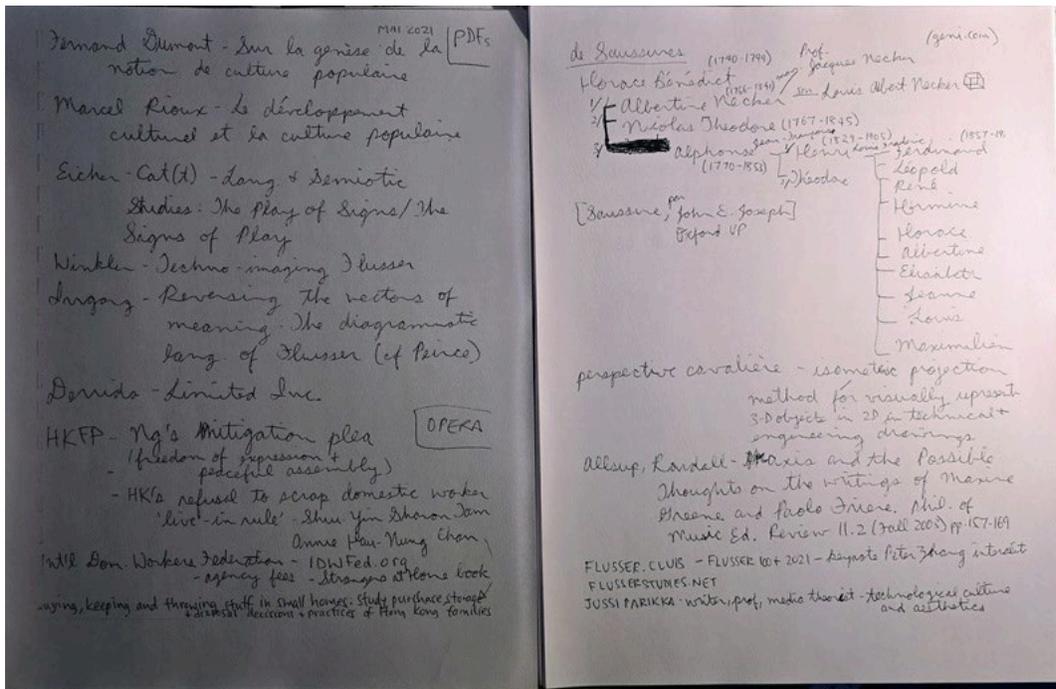
## Les jeux de mots et les jeux de politiques de voisinage dominant cette période de rédaction



Découverte, grâce au professeur Paquin, de Vilém Flusser et ses idées sur le dactylographisme. Je suis également fascinée par les écrivains qui travaillent dans une deuxième ou troisième langue. (Flusser, d'origine tchécoslovaque, émigre au Brésil et ensuite en France.)



Retour sur des lectures de cours. Ailleurs, je lamente Illouz pour son analyse d'Oprah, que je trouve complètement mal informé.

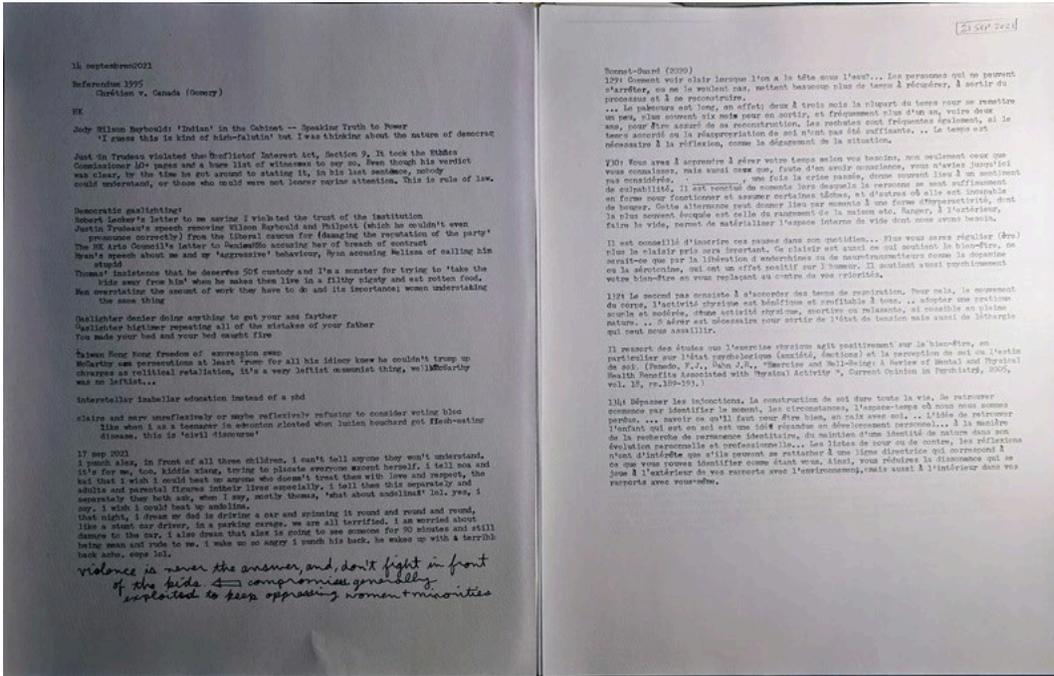


Visite à Stratford pour assister à du Shakespeare, comme j'avais fait au bac 17 ans auparavant. Et du Airbnb pour essayer de combler le manque de revenus.

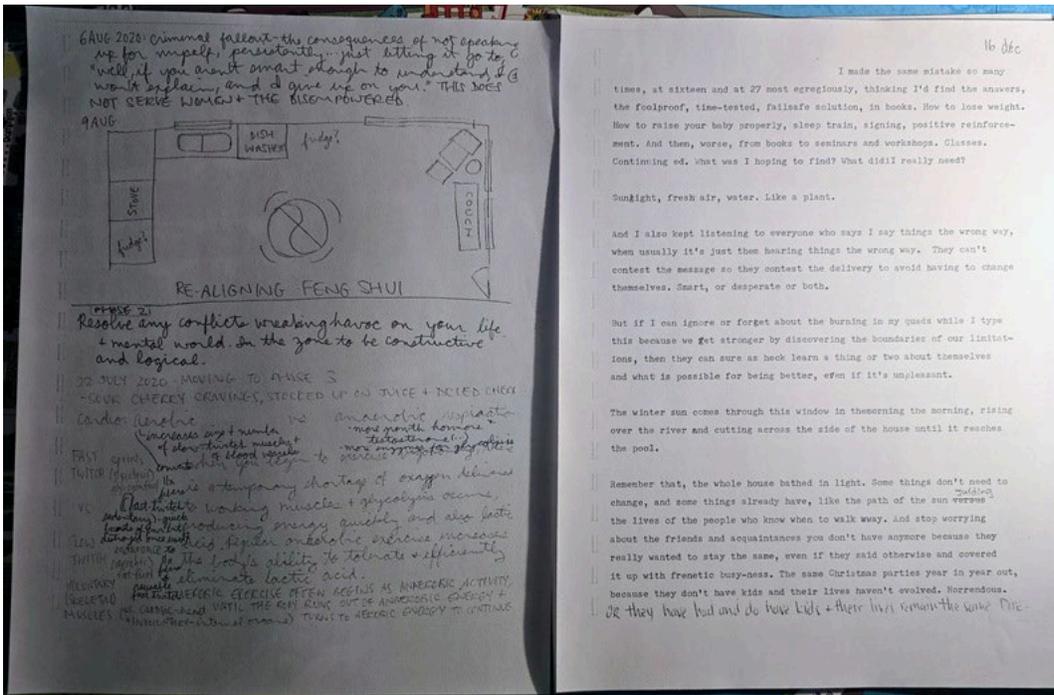
aug sept

	23	24	25	26	27	10h FEATURES BRUNNEN SHANNON 15h R.I.J 18h30 BEL JOURNAL 11h I AM... 72
			NDA RENTÉE	KAI RENTÉE	STRATFORD	
			KAI (FAXED) SLEEP SHOPPING		PIZZA 3H KUALA LUMPUR	18h BROCKVILLE
	30	31		HOME DEPOT (MONTREIL) (par HES)	Y. HANGOVER CUNNE MALK ALEX PIZZA @ 3.15	18h30 RESENTISSON JREITER 5 10h30 L'AVENUE CAGIE
			AIRBNB			
	6	7	8	9	10	11 RESENTISSON CUNNE 180 12 CCTOGETER
				19h KRISTINE STEFANSON		
	13	14	15	16	17	18
	WEX TEST	12h LANEUSE SCHLWJ	VICTORIA HANGOVER NAT	[SOUND STAPLES] NOR BENEVEGA KAI VICT	NDA PABAGO 12h30 NDA COTE LAZ ETA ALEX 19h NDA MAR RESENTISSON	11h ALEX PABLO 20h MARI
		18h MARI PATRICK ORNER		ALEX FIST KAI, NDA, I AM RESENTISSON		11h FOOTY 19
	20	21	22	23	24	25
	KAI SHERIDAN KAI, I AM KAI, NDA KAI, NDA	11h I AM SCHWJ	KAI PEDRO ICH, RESENTISSON	KAI PEDRO STRIKE	ALEX HANGOVER DELTA RESENTISSON LITTLE NDA	
	21h FOOTBALL (Pique go to WEX STAPLES SCHWJ) SCHWJ SCHWJ 7h NDA (T BOYES (MONTREIL))		13h30 KAI NDA, I AM	PARKLY ELLA		26 "NOUVEAUX FACE"
	27	28	29	30	1	2
	YOUNG BRET 20h I BULLZ				ALEX CAMERA FRIENDS WARRIOR	BARILDM NOUVEAUX CHANCE! MESSAGE

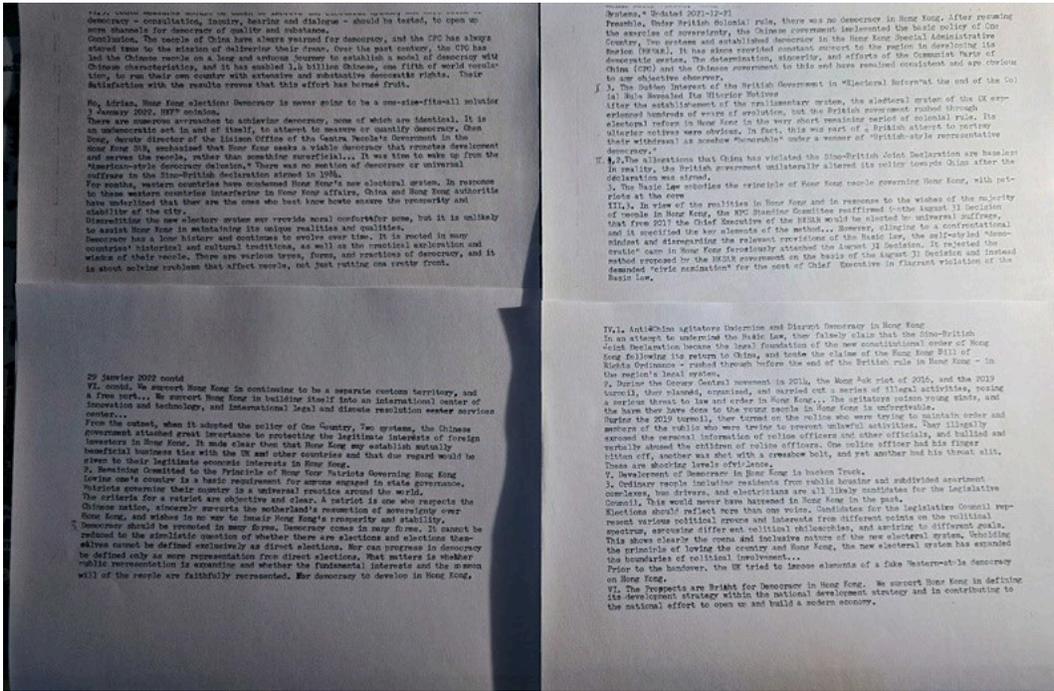
J'ai essayé d'éviter l'inclusion des nouvelles du jour dans mon argument, mon travail et mon esprit. (Habitude d'ex-journaliste.) Mais la situation avec Justin Trudeau et Jody Wilson-Raybould se prête parfaitement comme cas d'étude.



Perdu dans le temps : j'ai retrouvé la page à gauche (juillet 2020) avec la page à droite, que je sais n'a pas été écrit en décembre 2020. La voix est trop confiante. Je devine que la page à droite date de 2021 ou 2022.

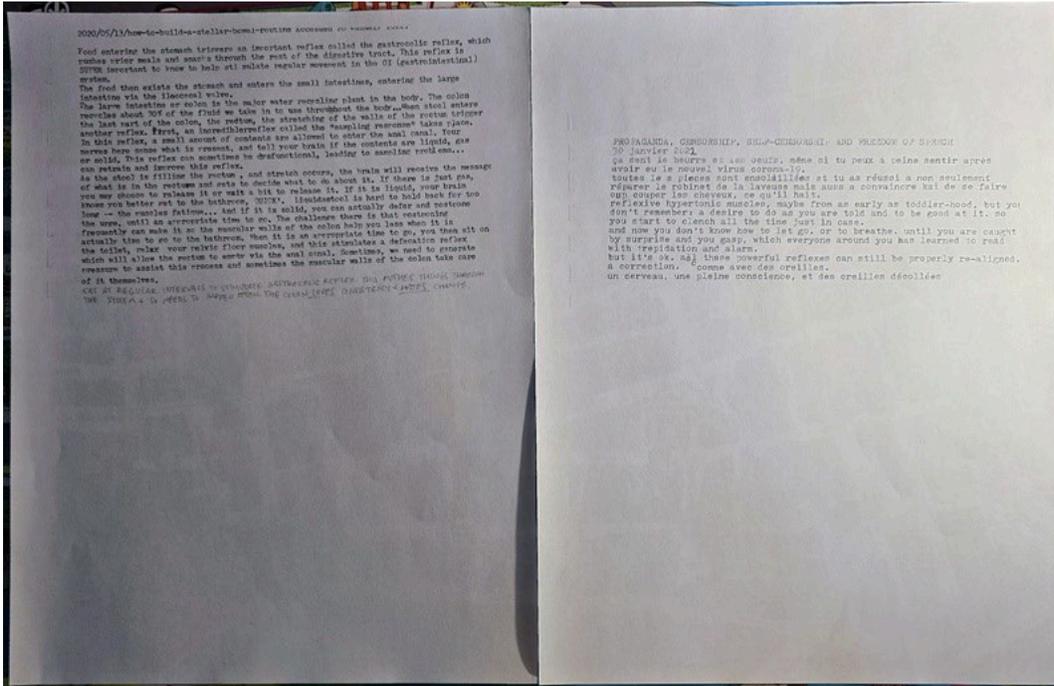


Extraits de texte publié par le Parti Communiste Chinois au sujet de Hong Kong

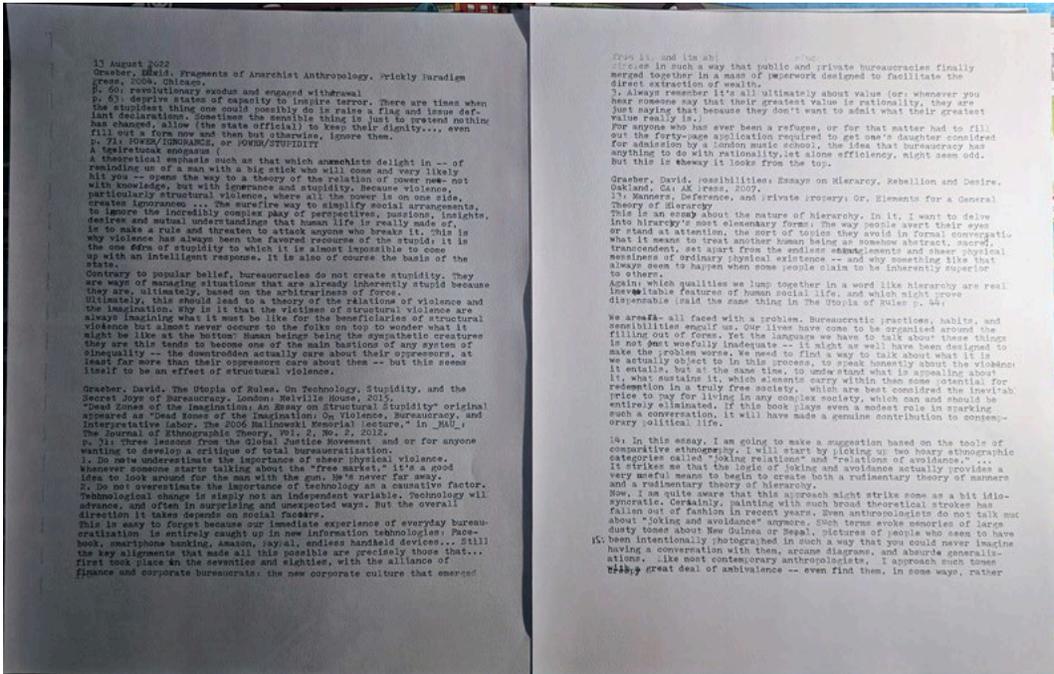


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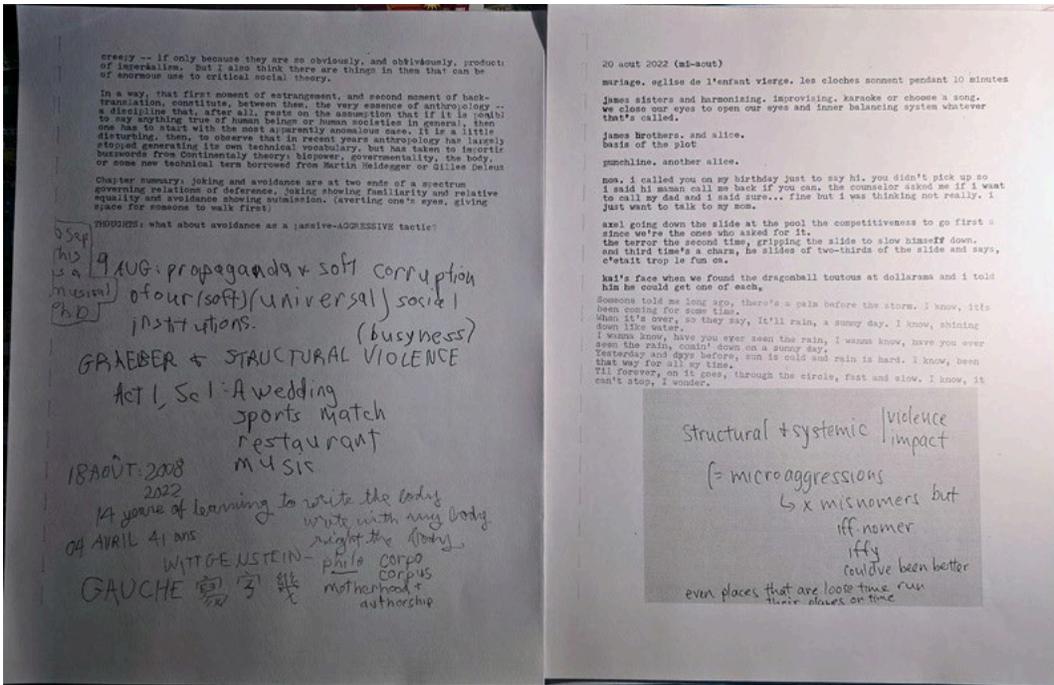
Virage vers le système nerveux et le vécu, et la rectification (à droite) de la date -2022, et non 2021. Comme le temps file!



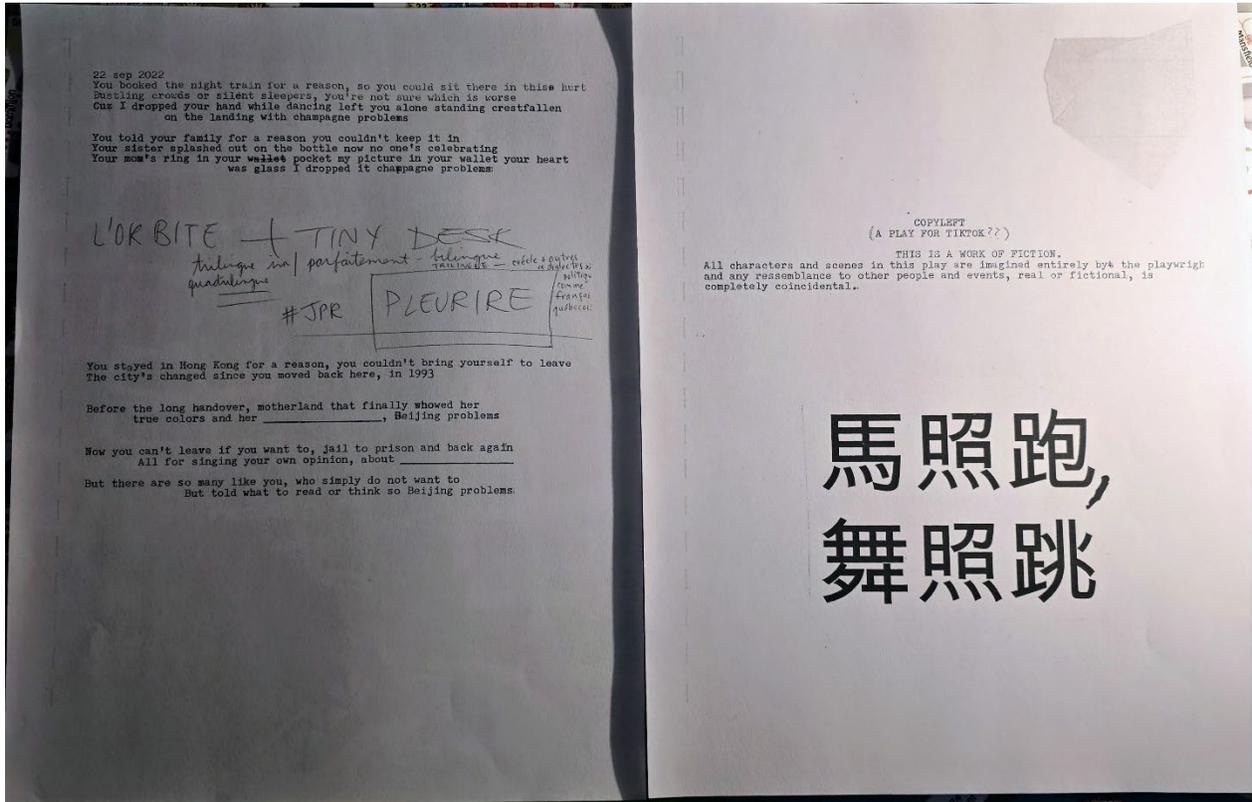
Travail et lecture détaillé sur l'anthropologue britannique, David Graeber



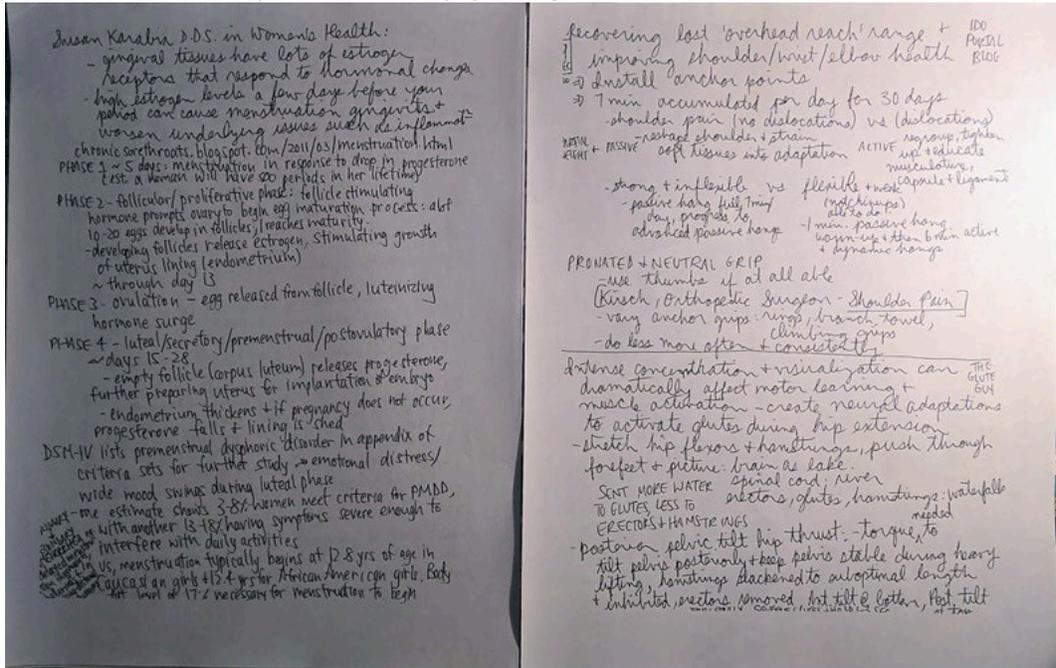
Les mots et la violence



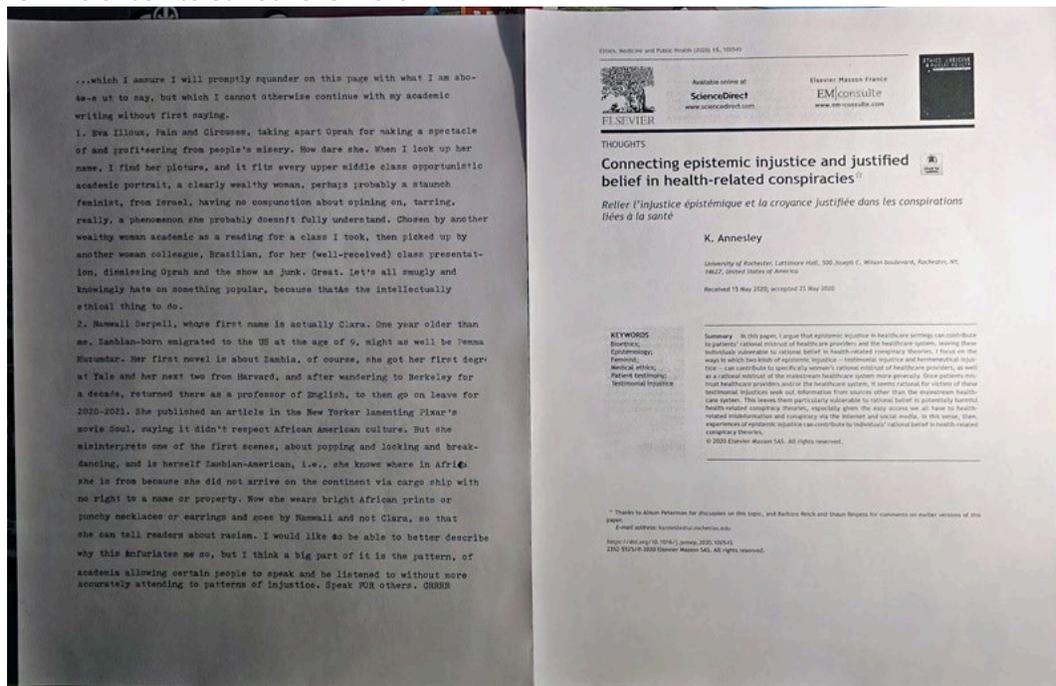
La pièce de théâtre commence à prendre sa forme finale



J'essaie d'apaiser mon corps, qui n'est pas assez malade pour voir un medecin, et ma tête, qui nécessite le suivi de mon ostéopathe et de ma psychologue.



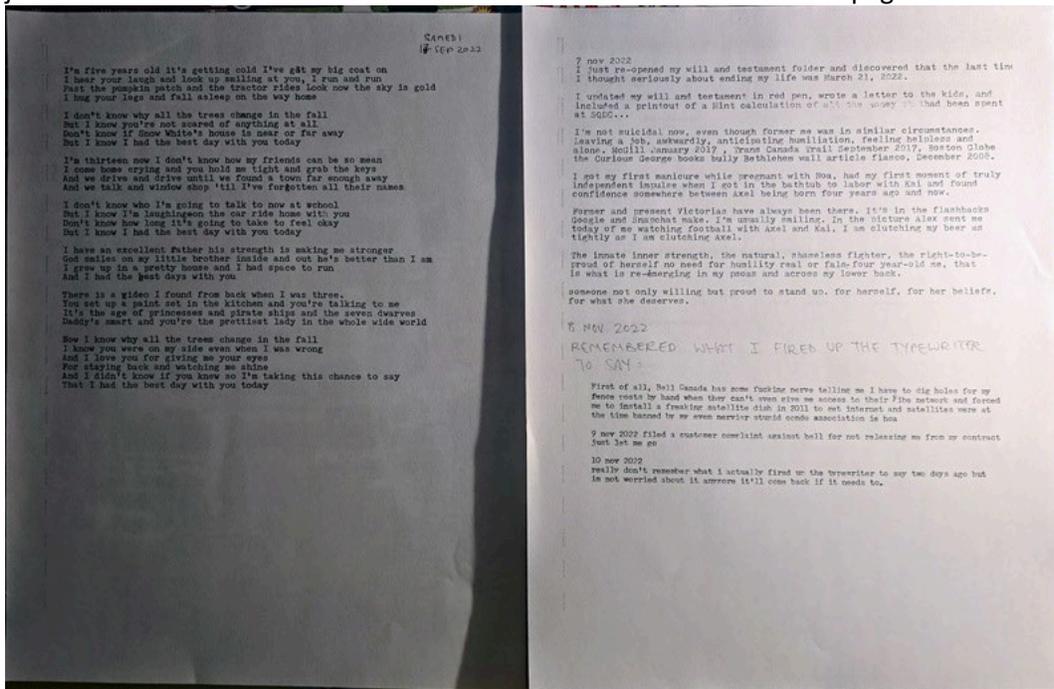
Mon analyse d'Illouz, et un article au sujet de la santé féministe qui a éclairci mon parcours comme femme enceinte et nouvelle mère.



J'ai été engagée comme directrice de communications à Flighthub en avril 2022. Je me sépare de mon conjoint en juillet et en octobre, je quitte mon poste avec six mois de dédommagement.



Le 10 novembre, j'ai quitté les lieux. Entre temps, le 20 septembre, une amie anciennement proche avec qui je travaillais dans le service de communications de McGill – et qui a un fils le même âge que mon plus jeune – se défenestre d'un édifice au centre-ville. Ce sont les dernières pages de ce récit.



## **ANNEXE B**

### **Projet de thèse, au dactylographe**

PERFORMING WORDS: EXTRA-DISCURSIVE  
APPROACHES TO COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

"Language," Karen Barad warns, "has been granted too much power." (2003, p.801) In a world and age of excess, it is easy to understand Barad's choice to frame the problem as she has, as one of surplus if not surfeit. "It seems that at every turn lately every 'thing'--even materiality--is turned into a matter of language or some other form of cultural representation... (and) the only thing that does not seem to matter anymore is matter." (ibid) Barad goes on to critique both realism and social constructivism for fueling a seductive but questionable belief that grammatical categories accurately reflect and represent the underlying ontological structure of the world, and proposes performativity ("matters of practices/doings/actions") as a way to shift scholarly inquiry away from "the geometrical optics of reflection where, much like the infinite play of images between two facing mirrors, the epistemological gets bounced back and forth, but nothing more is seen" to "the diffraction patterns illuminating the indefinite nature of boundaries--displaying shadows in 'light' regions and bright spots in 'dark' regions--the relation of the social and the scientific is a relation of 'exteriority within.'" (803)

Rather than try to reverse or inverse the degree of power afforded to language and representation, this proposal and subsequent doctoral project will reveal the many dimensions and possibilities of extra-discursivity, some already extant; others yet to be fully invoked and explored. Given the complex interchanges between language and discourse, it is pertinent to begin with a brief revision of history, namely, of words according to Austin followed by Foucault, Derrida and Barthes.

John Langshaw Austin's series of William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955 has come to be known in the Anglo-American world under the title "How To Do Things With Words," but Austin originally delivered the lectures between 1952 and 1954 at Oxford from a series of notes he labeled 'Words and Deeds,' while the book itself is known as "Quand dire, c'est faire" in French. Getting things done with words is evidently not as simple as it is made to sound. Regardless, Austin's texts and performances thereof serve as the foundation of the notion of performativity, or what Judith Butler describes as "the reiterative power of discourse to reproduce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains." (1993, 2) This power originates from a class of utterances in which "the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action--it is not normally thought of as just saying something." (Austin 1962, 6-7) <sup>1</sup>

The truth values of such utterances are brought up in Lecture II, in which Austin argues that expands on his Lecture I argument that the performative's "outward utterance is a description, true or false, of the occurrence of the inward performance." (9) Thus, when there is some kind of misalignment between the outward and the inward--when one says 'I do' in the absence of other motions of marriage, for example--the failure of the speech and act is "not indeed false but in general unhappy" or "infelicitous" (14). Or, as Austin recapitulates in Lecture III:

In our first lecture we isolated in a preliminary way the performative utterance as not, or not merely, saying something but doing something, as not a true or false report of something. In the second, we pointed out that though it was not ever true or false it was still subject to criticism--could be unhappy, and we listed six

of these types of infelicity. Of these, four were such as to make the utterance Misfire, and the act purported to be done null and void, so that it does not take effect; while two, on the contrary, only made the professed act an abuse of the procedure. So then we may seem to have armed ourselves with two shiny new concepts with which to crack the crib of Reality, or as it may be, of Confusion--two new keys in our hands, and of course, simultaneously two new skids under our feet. In philosophy, forearmed should be forewarned. (25)

Austin's tone calls to mind Barthes' utterance, in his preface to his 1957 publication, Mythologies: "What I claim is to live to the full contradiction of my time, which may well make sarcasm the condition of truth." (12) It also seems to foretell of a moment when these shiny new concepts lose their gloss, and fluctuate from keys cracking the crib of Reality to skids miring us in Confusion. As Rita Horanyi argues: in a 2014 analysis of performance and performativity, "Throughout How to Do Things with Words, Austin finds it increasingly difficult to maintain a clear distinction between constatives and performatives, particularly since the 'I State' implicit in constative utterances (or statements) is itself a performative, while many performative utterances describe as well as enact." (377) Horanyi Jacques Derrida's deconstruction of performatives in "Signature evenement contexte": "since Austin suggests that performatives do not reflect any prior reality--whether internal or external--the question of intention in his work remains fiercely contested (and) Derrida argues that Austin re-introduces the notion of intention by assuming self-present individuals... For Derrida, Austin's exclusion of writing is telling, as the focus on speech

as originary reveals Austin's continued belief that spoken utterances are fundamentally more authentic and closer to the speaker's intention than written language" (377-378).

And so, as Austin predicted and Horanyi corroborates, "Austin supplants his initially clear distinction between constatives and performatives with the distinction between the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary force of utterances" (377) (forces shaped and determined by context and intention, as Derrida points out), and the windows by which new light seemed to shine on the epistemological and ontological contours of Reality are shuttered once again by a recurring, albeit elusive, metaphysical disagreement about how to talk about and do things with Confusion. Indeed, by his final lecture, Austin had moved on from even the three classes of locutionary utterances to propose five additional "-ives": verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives and expositives, and declared the whole exercise to have produced a "sea-change from the performative/constative distinction to the theory of speech-acts," the result being that he, Austin, had generated a "programme, that is, (had said) what ought to be done rather than doing something," a practice of which he declared himself not particularly fond. (169, 163) He was nevertheless correct in his hope that he had "been sorting out a bit the way things have already begun to go and are going with increasing momentum in some parts of philosophy" (163) for his lectures and texts have served as the reference point for many understandings of performativity.

Perhaps one of the most influential understandings articulated since is that of Judith Butler's 1993 *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, in which Butler integrates a Foucauldian take on discourse as an imbricated medium that not only describes the world as we encounter it but also shapes the encounters themselves, with the Derridean habit of

viewing--and reading--the world as text, to posit a decentered self performing the signifying components of gender, the material and discursive consequences of which form our sex. "As performance which is performative," Butler states in "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" (1988), "gender is an 'act,' broadly construed, which constructs the social fiction of its own psychological interiority." (528) To bridge Butler with Barad, writing 15 years later, one might hazard a paraphrase of these two influential theorists by putting Barad's diffraction face to face with Butler's gender, and propose a nascent definition of extra-discursivity as the social and scientific construction of the fictions of interiority, and the boundaries of exteriority within. Or we could look back to Barthes and Foucault, the former of whom declared in *Mythologies* that "if we penetrate the object, we liberate it but we destroy it; and if we acknowledge its full weight, we respect it, but we restore it to a state which is still mystified. (And so) It would seem that we are condemned for some time yet always to speak excessively about reality." (159) and the latter of whom observed:

Le langage est à mi-chemin entre les figures  
visibles de la nature et les convenances secrètes  
des discours ésotériques. C'est une nature  
morcelée, divisée contre elle-même et altérée  
qui a perdu sa transparence première; c'est un  
secret qui porte en lui, mais à la surface, les  
marques déchiffrables de ce qu'il veut dire.

(*Les mots et les choses*, 50)

Again, Barthes: "(We can) either posit a reality which is entirely permeable to history, and ideologize; or, conversely, posit a reality which is ultimately impenetrable, irreducible, and, in this case, poetize." (158) And Foucault: "(Le langage) est à la fois révélation enfouie et révélation qui peu à peu se restitue dans une clarté montante." (51) Or, to put the two face to face for a diffraction of extra-discursivity, one might surmise

revelations of reality along the buried esoterics of history and the and the poeticized surfaces of what is visible in the secrets of nature. In other words, to put, at last, a Millennial, twenty-first century spin on the vinyl, to find extra-discursivity in our excavations of creative production and the quest for meaningful communication--in the spectacles and entertainments of mash-up, improvisation and spoken word.<sup>2</sup>

Performative research, most simply put, is "the collection, organisation and dissemination of research which moves beyond traditional modes, such as the text based journal article or overhead presentation." (Roberts, 308) Hanne Seitz goes as far as to claim that performative research "does not aim to capture reality in graphs or to describe it in words; nor does it set out to test existing hypotheses, pursue existing questions, or document processes." (4) But it certainly seems well within the realms of both reason and feasibility to conceive of performative research as capable of encompassing such a scope--capturing and describing reality; testing hypotheses; documenting processes--while also exceeding these limits, for this kind of research to include Roberts' relatively exhaustive list:

- performance and ethnography;
- ethnotheatre/ethnodrama;
- ethnographic surrealism/surrealist ethnography;
- ethnographic art;
- movement studies;
- experimental film and ethnographic film;
- a/r/tography
- biographical research and "relational aesthetics";
- narratives, including in artforms, participatory action research and ethno-mimesis;
- theatre, improvisational theatre, drama therapy and psychodrama as well as local and organisational oral history;

- visual anthropology and documentary film and television<sup>3</sup>  
-web and digital, as well as biomedical and biotech developments  
including blogs, social media, digital storytelling and archives  
and multimedia and corporeal genomic experimentation  
and still to reflexively (in both senses of the word) look elsewhere: back,  
from whence we came; aside, to peripheral and marginal borders; away, to  
nothing at all.

Doctoral research in general must be grounded by a critical understanding  
of context, a well-mapped terrain of inquiry, according to Carole Gray,  
who adds that this critical understanding has two facets, that of conduct-  
ing critical analysis--making analytical evaluations and reasoned judgments--  
and of promoting critical transformation--'working against' existing  
theories and practices to "open up opportunities for seeing things in new  
ways and making new connections." (From "INTHEORY? From the ground up:  
encountering theory in the process of practice-led doctoral research") In  
their introduction to the New Metaphysics series from the University of  
Michigan's Open Humanities Press, Graham Harman and Bruno Latour state:

The world is due for a resurgence of original  
speculative metaphysics... (Our series) does  
not aim to bridge the analytic-continental  
divide, since we are equally impatient with  
nail-filing analytic critique and the contin-  
ental reverence for dusty textual monuments.  
We favor instead the spirit of the intellec-  
tual gambler... Like an emergent recording comp-  
any, what we seek are traces of a new meta-  
physical 'sound' from any nation of the world.<sup>4</sup>

Occasionally, we are fortunate enough to discover new sounds, metaphysical  
and purely physical, in our 'refamiliarization' (to paraphrase Shkovsky)

with that which we once knew and have forgotten (a smell from childhood or a strain of melody), or that which we never knew we never knew (a world without digital communication; the busy signal of an analog phone; keys tapping on a Remington 11...)<sup>5</sup> Such discoveries are the relatively privileged purview of the humanities and social sciences, according to Quiara Alegria Hudes. In Danielle Allen's 2016 *Education and Equality*, Hudes says: "There is something particular about the investigation of the humanities that challenges students to articulate--and therefore notice--our habitual actions, our automatized routines, our unasked questions." 'Verbal empowerment,' or the arts as the study of language and interpretive and expressive skills, helps us notice the "close, dangerous relationship between our society's habitual behaviors and our society's habitual inequality." (90).

Allen corroborates: "The central mystery of language's power lies precisely in its efficiency. Language is always working simultaneously at cognitive, affective (or emotion), and intersubjective (or relational) levels." Calling language "a most unusual kind of muscle," Allen adds that it conveys a fundamental principle of economy, doing "a lot with a little." "Although language, or logos, is so small as to be invisible, it is powerful as a potentate... The ratio of power to size is headed toward infinity." (108) Still, as Ronald J. Pelias says in *Handbook of Autoethnography* (2013), "language is nothing more than water leaking through the fingers of our cupped hands and nothing less than the best way to hold what we value... the page is a performance... (and) language carefully and aesthetically articulated is evocative as a literary construction and as a tactic for material change in ongoing social practices." (400) And if all of these claims hold true for the power of language, can we reasonably extrapolate that they also hold true for non-verbal, a-linguistic (and yet discursive-- simply, extra-discursive) forms of expression?

Theories about performativity that refer to Erving Goffman generally cite his 1974 publication, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, in which he argues that an individual's "'true' or 'real' attitudes, beliefs, and emotions can be ascertained only indirectly, through his avowals or through what appears to be involuntary expressive behavior." (2) This results in "the expressiveness of the individual" being communicated through "two radically different kinds of sign activity: the expression that he gives, and the expression that he gives off." The latter kind, Goffman says, are the kind addressed in The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, and tend to be "the more theatrical and contextual kind, the non-verbal, presumably unintentional kind, whether this communication be purposely engineered or not." (3) This view of social interaction has led to Goffman's work being "criticized for what is seen as its excessively cynical interpretation of social actors and interactions," but also provides a rich view of the self as fluid, complex and split: "there is the display presented to others, and... there is the amorphous bundle of inconsistent yearnings that, although heavily influenced by the social, is kept hidden and which drives the presentation of self." (Horanyi, 380; 382) It also provides a working model of performativity that is both non-verbal and occasionally sub- or unconscious, bringing to mind modes of expression such as navigation, music, sport or play--endeavours in which we are capable of engaging with technique acquired through practice or habit, with partial attention but fully communicated self-expression.

The concepts Goffman develops in Frame Analysis (1974) are invoked less often in relation to theories of performativity, but the second chapter, on "Keys and Keying," outlines an exciting and still under-studied way of considering social constructions of meaning. Basing himself on observations of otters play fighting in a zoo, Goffman argues that the play activity, patterned on but differing from the real one of actual fighting, transcribes

transposes, or transforms--"in the geometrical, not the Chomskyan sense"--  
"a strip of fighting behavior into a strip of play." (41) Calling attention  
to the transformational power of play, Goffman names it "the key": "the  
set of conventions by which a given activity, already meaningful in terms  
of some primary framework, is transformed into something patterned on this  
activity but seen by the participants to be something quite else." (44)  
Such keys and keying, Goffman adds, are precisely the examples of utterances  
Austin initially excluded from consideration as performatives, for to  
Austin (again, initially), performative utterances were those "issued  
in ordinary circumstances." (How to do Things with Words, 22) These "keys  
of Goffman's, Austin described as "language not used seriously, but in ways  
parasitic upon its normal use" and warned that they would sound "in a  
peculiar way hollow or void" (ibid). Goffman's assessment of the matter is  
rather more empowering, as he notes that keys offer "another go at reality  
terms:"

Actions framed entirely in terms of a  
primary framework are said to be real  
or actual, to be really or actually or  
literally occurring. A keying of these  
actions performed, say, onstage, provides  
us with something that is not literal or  
really or actually occurring. Nonetheless,  
we would say that the staging of these  
actions was really or actually occurring...  
Indeed, the real or the actually happening  
seems to be very much a mixed class per-  
ceived within a primary perspective and  
also transformed events when these are  
identified in terms of their status as  
transformations... In order to be careful,  
then, perhaps the terms 'real,' 'actual,'

and 'literal' ought merely be taken to imply that the activity under consideration is no more transformed than is felt to be usual and typical for such doings. (47)

This passage opens up space for the distinct possibility that, as Austin later also admitted, the lines demarcating performatives and constatives, or keys and primary frameworks, are and cannot be fixed in stone or by rules but rather must be determined in a calculus of what Goffman calls "that which is felt to be usual and typical for such doings." In other words, it is possible for every primary framework to be, in theory, also a key, or for an extra-ordinary, parasitic performative utterance to also be an ordinary one--for as Goffman says, "In distinguishing between the original and the copy, I leave quite unconsidered the question of how the copy can come to affect the original..." (48) Or in the words of Karen Barad, "phenomena are constitutive of reality. Reality is not composed of things-in-themselves or things-behind-phenomena but "things"-in-phenomena. The world is intra-activity in its differential mattering." An intra-active view of the copy and the original might venture that one eventually completely supplants the other, or that one was always-already the other, their existence as Things-in-phenomena determined by an evolving process of differential mattering. This "flow" by which "'part' of the world makes itself differentially intelligible to another 'part' of the world and through which local causal structures, boundaries, and properties are stabilized and destabilized does not take place in space and time but in the making of spacetime itself..." (2003, 817) Horanyi, assessing Butler's intertwining of Derrida and Austin, cites a few reservations about this push for revolution via performativity: "Is it sufficient to leave resistance to the vagaries of linguistic structures (or better, discourses) that turn upon themselves?... Parody without an original ('blank parody') reveals that the original itself is merely parody, resulting in a kind of infinite regress." (391-392)

Infinite regress, Schrodinger's cat, ouroboros, the Mobius strip and other "impossible" figures and objects (figures that can be drawn or represented in two dimensions but are physically and geometrically impossible to create. Perhaps within these paradoxes lie clues to the conundrum of language and the confusions of extra-discursivity that are also the strongest indicator of its potential. To continue Austin's quest to crack the crib of Reality, or to envision flipping the crib over to find out what dwells underneath, it is useful to be able to question our understanding of understanding itself, and to do so by lingering in unfamiliar or inexplicable mental territory, a region that shrinks in the flashlight beam of education and learning, and that this education and learning teaches us to avoid the recesses of ignorance; the darkness of illiteracy. Rather than thinking of this ignorance, illiteracy or incomprehension as an undesirable phase better surpassed, paradox and impossibility permit us to see incomprehension as an end-state in and of itself, as an integral part of creation or world-making, in which "the world is a dynamic process of... reconfiguring locally determinate causal structures with determinate boundaries, properties, meanings, and patterns of marks on bodies." (Barad 2003, 817) Or, as Barad describes it in another essay, "Re(con)figuring Space, Time and Matter," this dynamism is both a machine and a mutating topological animal iteratively (re)producing material-discursive phenomena across Euclidean space and through the static instruments of non-Euclidean geometry. (2001, 98) Foucault, for one, addressed the paradox, consequences, and spaces of representational impossibility with his usual pragmatism:

La pensée qui nous est contemporaine et avec laquelle, bon gré mal gré, nous pensons, se trouve encore largement dominée par l'impossibilité, mise au jour vers la fin du XVIIIe siècle, de fonder les synthèses dans l'espace de la représentation, et par l'obligation

correlative, simultanee, mais aussitot  
partagee contre elle-meme, d'ouvrir le  
champ transcendantal de la subjectivite,  
et de constituer inversement, au-dela de  
l'objet, ces "quasi-transcendantaux" qui  
sont pour nous la Vie, le Travail, et le  
Langage. (Les mots et les choses, 262)<sup>6</sup>

Just as Barad's Euclidean/non-Euclidean geometries offer an elegant mathematical solution to Foucault's paradox of transcendental representational spaces by forcing a recognition of the validity of concepts both floundering in but also originating from incomprehension (the mind s struggle to grasp impossible objects, for example), so the potential of extra-discursive performativity reveals to our eyes, ears, smell, taste, touch, and intuition the irrefutability--the certainty and the assurance--of the nature of the universe itself, beyond being, beyond reality, beyond knowledge. At the end of his "Travail, vie, langage" chapter, Foucault exalts the form of language that he says has come, since Homer and Dante, to be considered in the occidental world as "literature." This "most important, most unexpected" linguistic development created a resistance to the objectification of language and knowledge of the nineteenth-century, preserving the purity of the act of writing and maintaining the "savage and imperious" nature of words, in the sheer power of speech ("le pouvoir denude de parler". La litterature, according to Foucault:

devient pure et simple manifestation d'un  
langage qui n'a pour loi que d'affirmer--  
contre tous les autres discours--son existence  
escarpee; elle n'a plus alors qu'a se  
recourber dans un perpetuel retour sur soi,  
comme si son discours ne pouvait avoir pour  
contenu que de dire sa propre forme. (313)

A language whose only law is self-affirmation; a discourse whose content is its form: certainly, neither Foucault nor Austin, nor Butler--nor I--would contend that literature (and/or Literature) defines or exemplifies performativity, but invasion and appropriation of our imaginative faculties demonstrate Allen and Hudes' argument about its virtually infinite ratio of power to size, and gives weight to Barad's "rethinking of discursive practices and material phenomena and the relationship between them." (828) Literature's ability to demand our total engagement--the act of reading fiction and of implicating oneself in the matter of its time and space being a psychological, emotional, physiological and imaginative undertaking--reinforces Barad's onto-epistem-ology (the study of practices of knowing in being): "We do not obtain knowledge by standing outside of the world; we know because 'we' are of the world. We are part of the world in its differential becoming." (829) Victor Turner's concept of social drama aligns neatly with that of literature as discursive and, potentially, performative. In Horanyi's analysis, social dramas as Turner defines them are central to maintaining or changing social structures, and are therefore frequently performed as "commemoration or artistic products," placing these performances at the heart of the functioning of society and of individual experience, "shaping and reshaping our understanding and experience of the world." (385) Thomas Pavel's essay on "Narratives of ritual and desire" pushes this analysis further, arguing that Turner's model of social drama helps address a problem that has long haunted narratological research, that of establishing how "the fictional world and its categories related to the empirical world." (64) Avoiding typical false assumptions about narrativity that impose on it either hyperrealism (too closely matching narrative categories and real facts and believing for example that "a conflict in a story necessarily refers to a real one" ) or an unsustainable self-referentiality (in which narratives form their own self-enclosed worlds with their own "algebraic structures lacking any links to the actual universe"), Turner simp-

ly posits that "stories represent the real social life so effectively because social life itself is organized according to cultural (and narrative) categories:" Turner's well-known phases of social drama--breach, crisis, redress and either reintegration or recognition of schism. Heroes of social dramas, Pavel says, become in Turner's framework "ontological founders", "forever propelled forward by the energy of inexhaustible desire (and internal conflict)" into an understanding that "to satisfy desire means to invent a new cosmos, and to force the model upon the actual world." (66) Pavel cites as examples of these heroes Raphael in La peau de chagrin, Tambulaine the Great, Don Quixote, Scheherezade, Lazarillo de Tormes, as well as Fanny Hill, Gogol's Chichikhov and Kafka's K. in The Castle.

To these figures, we might add Albert Camus' 'homme revolté': "In order to exist," writes Camus, "man must rebel, but rebellion must respect the limit it discovers in itself--a limit where minds meet and, in meeting, begin to exist. Rebellious thought, therefore, cannot dispense with memory: it is a perpetual state of tension." (21-22) Camus closes his text by increasing his diagnosis of this tension to one he terms 'acute'--a result of the struggle to balance "refusal and acceptance, the unique and the universal, the individual and history..." In Albert Camus and the Political Philosophy of the Absure: Ambivalence, Resistance, and Creativity, Matthew H. Bowker argues that this state and its lack of "ontological security" give rise to "artistic, moral and personal creativity" because of the "maturity, strength and flexibility with which ambivalences and tensions are managed... The rebel's management of these ambivalences permits him to be creative, in the fullest sense, to achieve a greater integration of opposites, and to develop a more mature relationship with others and the world." (160) This willingness to remain in absurdity, ambivalence and ultimately rebellion is, according to Bowker, Camus' statement about what is needed for individuals to create moral solutions to intractable moral

problems (and) also a statement about how to live with the tensions and ambivalences created by those problems without resorting to facile solutions and primitive defenses." (170) Turner and Pavel's ontological founders are also, in Camus or Bowker's estimation, epistemological pioneers of sort, issuing from an acceptance of instability and insecurity towards a creative but not teleological impulse or quest for connection and meaning.

How can communication change how we see, think, hear and feel?

What novel methods might be available through extra-discursive performativity to this aim?

And if, as James Carey points out, a hallmark of the study of communication--an ironic one--is its inherent reflexivity ("a way in which our subject matter doubles back on itself... (and) our models of communication, consequently, create what we disingenuously pretend they merely describe... (such that) we not only describe behavior; we create a particular corner of culture--culture that determines, in part, the kind of communicative world we inhabit", in Communication as Culture 24-25) then what are the incentives and implications of introducing a specific, angle to this research that has links, coincidental or not, to the researcher's identity?

In 1977, the East-West Center and East-West Communication Institute at , or affiliated with, the University of Hawaii, published a book by Godwin Chu entitled Radical Change through Communication in Mao's China, and 25 years later, in 1992, the Institute of East Asian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, published, as part of its China Research Monograph series, Michael Schoenhals' Doing things with words in Chinese politics. Chu sought to demonstrate how social structures can be altered by communication, specifying that such change is possible in any context-- "a social structure is a structure of communication, and therefore it can be changed by communication" (viii)--but that the Chinese Communist revolution demonstrated "on a massive scale that communication (particularly when effectively employed in a group setting) can be a powerful mechanism to yank a traditional society out of its old routines... (and) to bring about social structural change and development" (ibid). Schoenhals had a similar argument, albeit with a narrower focus, "looking at the way in which formalized language ('the language of politics as a restricted code is

which options with respect to formal qualities such as vocabulary, style, syntax, and trope are far more restricted than in ordinary language') and formalized speech acts help constitute the structure of power within China's political system." (1) This attention to the power of the word can be traced at least as far back as Confucius saying in the Analects that "when names are not correct--and what is said is therefore not reasonable--the affairs of the state will not culminate in success and the common people will not know how to do what is right." (2) Consequently, according to Schoenhals, Confucius says that "the Prince is never casual in his choice of words." (ibid)

Chinese itself, as anyone who has tried to learn it knows, is not a casual language, but an understanding of its written form will shed greater insight on the consequences of its use. Based on a logographic form subsequently adapted in Korean and Japanese, Chinese characters fall into six types:

1. pictograms based on the objects they represent
2. simple ideograms depicting abstract ideas
3. compound ideograms that combine two or more pictograms or ideograms
4. rebus/phonetic loan characters that borrow an existing character to represent an unrelated word that happens to share the same approximate pronunciation
5. phono-semantic compounds, the most numerous type, that combine a rebus (to provide phonetic guidance) with a semantic core/root/radical (hinting at the character's meaning)
6. cognates, a poorly understood type usually ignored in this typology and when spoken, are generally classified into seven dialect groups:

1. Mandarin, the official language of both China and Taiwan and also known as Standard Chinese, derived from the Beijing dialect
2. Wu Chinese or Shanghainese, spoken mostly in the Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces
3. and 4. Gan and Xiang, spoken in Jiangxi and Hunan and considered,

along with Wu Shanghaiese, a 'central' dialect group

5. Min, a dialect spoken in Fujian, part of Guangdong, and in Taiwan
6. Hakka, spoken by Hakka Chinese, mostly located in the southern provinces, but also in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia
7. Yue, with the most common varieties being Cantonese and Taishanese and rounding out the three (Min, Hakka, Yue) groups considered to form the 'southern' dialect group

In all its complexity, Chinese is an impressive, imposing language, especially to the ear and the eye.<sup>7</sup> Understanding it and its nuances permits a much more sophisticated understanding of the country (to itself the 'Middle (中) Nation/Kingdom (国)', the meaning of the name \_in\_ the name and noun). Basic linguistic literacy would seem to be a fundamental requirement for analyzing culture, but Schoenhals points out a "disturbing" comparison:

Whereas Western universities, media, and government(s) never would regard anyone with a reading ability in English of ten pages an hour as qualified to speak with authority on British politics, a similar standard does not yet apply to China and Chinese politics. ... It is an undeniable fact that Western scholars writing about contemporary China seldom... read or speak Chinese with anything remotely resembling fluency. It is an open secret--ever so evident from the titles appearing in our footnotes and bibliographies --that most of us are totally dependent in our work on the translated discourse generated by the U.S. consulate in Hong Kong, the British Broadcasting Corporation, and the Foreign

Languages Press in Beijing. Under these circumstances, our failure to deal with the relationship between language and politics in China is perhaps not surprising. (6)

The 'art of doing things with words' is "dear to China's \_homo politicus\_," Schoenhals says, but has not received nearly the same attention as, "for instance, the 'art of \_guanxi\_' (the 'skillful mobilization of moral and cultural imperatives such as obligation and reciprocity in pursuit of social ends and instrumental needs')" due largely to this language gap. The whole situation is, he concludes, nevertheless "more than a little embarrassing"(5-6).

If lack of genuine familiarity with one's subject matter is embarrassing and problematic, so, arguably, can be too facile a connection between subject matter and subject. Historically, this has been considered a problem particular to "investigations of human behavior and the social world," to borrow the words of action research scholar Ernest T. Stringer. (Action Research 42). He continues:

Except to the extent that humans are physical beings, scientific investigation has largely failed to provide a social equivalent of the comparatively stable body of knowledge about the physical universe... despite the huge resources poured into research in these disciplines in the past few decades. Human beings, it seems, are hard to predict and difficult to control. (ibid, 43)

Positivist science and the empirical method have been claimed by the natural, or 'pure' sciences as their rightful and earned epistemological domain buffered by Cartesian objectivity and respectful distance between question,

hypothesis and result. "Experimental method, a traditional approach to scientific inquiry, seeks to test theories ... to derive lawlike statements that explain the nature of the world or reality." (Stringer 42) Or, says Henk Borgdorff citing Max Planck Institute for the History of Science director Hans-Jorg Rheinberger, "experimental systems (which can only be understood as an interplay of machines, preparations, techniques, rudimentary concepts, vague objects, protocols, research notes, and the social and institutional conditions in which these are employed) are the centre and motor of modern scientific research... the actual generators of knowledge (and) machines for making the future." ("Artistic practices and epistemic things," 114)

And while, as Stringer notes, "scientific knowledge is now recognized to be much less stable, objective, and generalizable than previously assumed," (43) nevertheless, the perception of and expectation for knowledge to be 'scientific,' that is, clinical, clear-cut and coldly rational, persists and has arguably expanded to encompass our models of knowledge in not only the social sciences but the humanities as well. History, for example, trades on the numerical legitimacy of dates in time to gloss over inconsistencies or indeterminacies, while literary canons especially in western traditions blend liberal exegesis with conservative hermeneutics to studiously avoid catching sight of an accretion of apocryphal texts, creations, accounts that challenge the parameters of those select works that have been deemed 'good.' As Paul Ricœur reminds us in *L'histoire, l'oubli*, "Le mode de verité du savoir historique consiste dans ce jeu entre cette indetermination (l'indetermination poetique du principe d'indiscernabilite nee de l'indecidable entre memoire et histoire) et sa suppression." (446) "L'ultime question est de savoir ce que des citoyens responsables font d'une querelle entre historiens, et, au-dela de celle-ci, du debat entre juges et historiens." (435) To which one is tempted to reply: "Nothing." The

responsible citizen does nothing about such quarrels save acknowledge them for their irrelevance, or, better yet, understand the ways in which these quarrels have migrated from being disputes about the validity of knowledge to being discursive battlegrounds for an intellectual, pseudo-scientific, or 'scientific' machismo. As Thomas Kuhn described in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), the development of the field of history of science revealed the brusque and irregular motion of scientific discovery, often masked by a misleadingly smooth narrative: science historians, Kuhn writes:

confront growing difficulties in distinguishing the 'scientific' component of past observation and belief from what their predecessors had readily labeled 'error' and 'superstition.' The more carefully they study, say, Aristotelian dynamics, phlogistic chemistry, or caloric thermodynamics, the more certain they feel that those once current views of nature were, as a whole, neither less scientific nor more the product of human idiosyncrasy than those current today.

Fortunately, our ability to describe these quarrels and uncertainties have matured, whether the quarrels and uncertainties themselves have or not, and as Borgdorff goes on to quote Rheinberger's conception of epistemic 'things,' he offers an avenue towards research capable of encompassing and in a certain manner overcoming the rigidity of our assumptions, via

a form of thinking that is obliquely based on tacit knowledge, on implicit understanding that is partly sedimented in the technical apparatus of the experimental system..(enabling) us to let our thinking blend into things, and the things into our thinking, with hybrid

forms in the middle that allow neither formalisation nor quantification, and which thereby keep the research moving.

(115)

This forms the core of the research problem I propose to address, to uncover and experiment with modes of performative communication that bring words and their physical impact on the senses closer together, or rather, reveal the relatively direct relationship already extant, drawing from across the disciplines (arts, social sciences, traditional sciences) and through different languages (verbal but also musical and bodily), thus mapping a multi-modally inter-cultural experimental system and machine.

Core to this research question are our current mechanisms for rendering and processing human experience. There is, for example, a "mysterious gap between the sound waves that actually reach our ears and the sounds and words we create in our minds," according to psychologists and speech development authorities Alison Gopnik, Andrew Meltzoff and Patricia Kuhl, authors of The Scientist in the Crib: What Early Learning Tells Us About the Mind. (95)

We can make a sort of photograph of a sound called a spectrogram. The spectrogram shows the actual physical properties of the sound waves: how loud they are, what pitch they are, and how they change. Just as we must translate the two-dimensional pattern of light on our retinas into the three-dimensional solid objects we perceive, so we must translate this pattern of sounds into language. The distance from there to here is just as great. (ibid)

In some cases, our current mechanisms are clearly either dysfunctional of

broken, as evidenced by Elaine Scarry's reflections on the structure of torture and war in The Body in Pain, in which she asks, "By what perceptual process does it come about that one human being can stand beside another human being in agonizing pain and not know it, not know it to the point where he himself inflicts it?" (61) Perhaps, she muses, "physical pain is an intentional state without an intentional object (while) imagining is an intentional object without an experienceable intentional state." (164) In other words:

pain and imagining constitute extreme conditions of, on the one hand, intentionality as a state and, on the other, intentionality as self-objectification; and between these two boundary conditions all the more familiar, binary acts-and-objects are located. That is, pain and imagining are the 'framing events' within whose boundaries all other perceptual, somatic, and emotional events occur; thus, between the two extremes can be mapped the whole terrain of the human psyche. (165)

How might we create a spectrogram of this terrain?

On June 4, 2019, thirty years will have passed since the Chinese Communist Party ordered its soldiers to open fire on student protestors and demonstrators in Tiananmen Square. And on July 1 of the same year, the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong will be just under halfway towards fulfilling an agreement between the Chinese and British governments to return the former city-colony to Chinese rule, with the countdown ending in 2047, fifty years after the so-called 'return' in 1997. This doctoral dissertation will create and experiment with ways of talking about these two dates specifically, so as to address the world-making methods of performative communication more generally.

ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Austin flirted with a number of terms for his concept, including "performatory" (which he found too "ugly") and "operative" (which he considered too bound by its legal connotations). His neologism, he hoped, would "be used in a variety of cognate ways and constructions, much as the term 'imperative' is." (1962, 6-7)

<sup>2</sup> Or, in still more (would Barthes say excessive?) words, the verbal, the oral, the aural, the visual, and all that is simultaneously--always already--sensual. Performativity as extra-discursivity offers conditions of materiality and embodiment that will eventually, as we will see, necessitate and demand, departure from the typed page, soothing and familiar as it may be.

<sup>3</sup> Let us not omit the black sheep of the documentary film and television family: reality tv, a category that also raises productive tension about the relationship between performative and popular culture. There is obvious overlap between the two, but not all popular culture is performative and vice versa. But who draws the boundaries, and where?

<sup>4</sup> Given this strong claim, one is forgiven a degree of surprise if not disappointment in discovering then that one volume at least, in the series, Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin's New Materialism: Interviews + Cartographies, hews closely and solely to traditional text form, with many a single map to be found, and certainly no new sounds, unless we include the web version of the book, which reproduces the chapters with navigable hyperlinks.

<sup>5</sup> A catalog of new and nostalgic sounds might also include: newsprint whirring through the inked rollers of a press; the hum of a gasoline engine rather than the silence of an electric one; the whine of the fan on a lap or desktop computer... sounds we notice most when the phenomena for which they stand waver on extinction.

<sup>6</sup> Something about Foucault's formulation of "la Vie, le Travail, et le Langage" calls to mind a phrase from C. Wright Mills' "Le metier d'intellectuel" (1954), in which he says that intellectual craftsmanship is a life-long labor of love: "Choisir le metier d'intellectuel, c'est d'opter pour un mode de vie autant que pour une carrière... vous devez donc apprendre à utiliser au profit du travail intellectuel l'expérience acquise dans la vie ; vous devez sans cesse la scruter et l'interpréter. En ce sens, le metier est le centre de vous-meme, et vous entrez vous-meme tout entier dans le moindre de vos créations intellectuelles." (200)

<sup>7</sup> The technical descriptions thus far have not even begun to parse the differences in pronunciation (nine tones in Yue Cantonese, for example, compared to four main tones--and one neutral tone--in Mandarin) and in character sets (simplified, used in mainland China and Singapore; and traditional, used in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan), as well as the systems for transliterating the language, from Mandarin Phonetic Symbols to the Wade-Giles romanized version as well as the official Hanyu Pinyin Romanization that replaced Wade-Giles and remains in use today.



## ANNEXE C Analphabétisme : Un cadre d'intervention méthodologique pour la performativité postlinguistique

### 1.1 [Communication Vol. 39/2 \(2022\)](#)

Les connaissances et les résultats des recherches empiriques, scientifiques ou positivistes sont beaucoup plus poreux à l'interprétation que leur héritage ne le suggère. Quant aux démarches qualitatives proposées par les sciences humaines et sociales, qui sont positionnées comme réaction ou antithèse à l'empirisme pur, elles et leurs résultats acquièrent souvent des traits positivistes : la vérification des données, l'évaluation selon la contribution concrète aux connaissances, la fiabilité des comptes rendus et la recherche par découpage. Le fait d'investiguer et de prouver des mécanismes constitutifs d'un phénomène sert de justification aux généralisations sur ce phénomène. Le développement plus récent des approches postqualitatives n'a pas non plus engendré de changements remarquables en ce qui concerne les formes reconnues d'expressions de savoirs ; celles-ci demeurent ancrées dans des médias traditionnels tels que les livres et les articles publiés (Lather, 2013 ; Lather et St. Pierre, 2013 ; St. Pierre, 2013, 2014 ; Maclure, 2013).

Pour pouvoir écrire la recherche autrement, notre objectif doit être de mieux comprendre la recherche aussi bien que de mieux comprendre l'écriture. Si nous acceptons que la recherche, dans ses expressions traditionnelles, vise des objets bien définis (connaissances stables) plutôt que des « choses » à caractère non déterminé (questions et expériences qui restent à être connues), notre question devient celle-ci : comment établir plus de pistes scientifiques, rationnelles et crédibles vers des choses non déterminées ? Selon Henk Borgdorff (2012), la distinction et la différenciation entre objet fixe et chose non déterminée maintiennent et élaborent les connotations de la recherche liées aux domaines de tout ce qui est scientifique et épistémique, laissant de côté les connaissances artistiques et les arts tout court. Les connaissances sont alors des propositions épistémiques bien réfléchies et solidement soutenues par des faits. Dans ces définitions traditionnelles, les connaissances n'ont rien ou peu à faire avec les croyances ou les expériences esthétiques et les résultats de recherche sont toujours présentés à la fin de processus de recherche tortueux, produisant ainsi tellement de faits que, si l'un de ces faits était le morceau d'une pyramide et qu'il venait à tomber, c'est toute cette pyramide — scientifique et épistémique si bien fondée, prouvée et validée — qui s'effondrerait.

Sans suggérer le rejet ou le refus de ce modèle des connaissances, les approches postqualitatives (et postmodernes, performatives, postcritiques, etc.) cherchent à ouvrir les possibilités pour la recherche de repenser la nature de la publication et d'ajuster les modes de production et d'expression des connaissances. Borgdorff suggère par exemple de repenser la nature des expériences, ses systèmes et ses méthodologies, pour tester, confirmer ou rejeter des propositions épistémiques : « Experimental systems are “machines for making the future”<sup>42</sup> », dit-il (*op. cit.*, p. 189). Plutôt que de limiter les systèmes d'expériences aux connaissances que nous acceptons déjà ou que nous tenons pour acquises, il affirme que ces systèmes — scientifiques, artistiques et autres — doivent faire place à l'inconnu :

Experimental systems must be sufficiently open to allow these indistinct things to come into view; enough space must be present to produce what we do not yet know. This openness and room for not-knowing, or not-yet-knowing, cannot be imposed by stern methodological procedures [...] serendipity, intuition, and improvisation are at least as important in laboratory practice as the attempts that are made to stabilise the technical conditions in which experiments take place<sup>43</sup> (*ibid.*, p. 190).

En étant suffisamment ouvert aux objets et aux choses (connus ou non déterminés), un système d'expériences crée des champs de savoir assez larges pour accommoder et produire des connaissances qu'on ne connaît pas encore et devient ainsi une machine qui peut non seulement tester des hypothèses et vérifier des données, mais aussi créer le futur (*ibid.*). Si la nature de nos connaissances renvoie à autant de modes de découverte que de justifications, alors un mélange des deux processus d'expérience, scientifique et artistique, qui remplace leur caractère binaire avec l'hybridité, crée simultanément de nouvelles réalités et de nouvelles possibilités : « Artistic and scientific research is about something real, while simultaneously transforming it into what it could be<sup>44</sup> » (*ibid.*, p. 196).

Les injustices de nature épistémique et herméneutique surviennent lorsqu'un individu subit un déficit de crédibilité ou de compréhensibilité attribuable à un manque de sophistication épistémologique de la

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<sup>42</sup> Les systèmes expérimentaux sont des « machines à bâtir l'avenir » (traduction d'Anglocom).

<sup>43</sup> Les systèmes expérimentaux doivent être suffisamment ouverts pour laisser apparaître ces éléments indistincts et offrir assez d'espace pour faire émerger ce que nous ne savons pas encore. Cette ouverture et cet espace au non-savoir ou à ce qui n'est pas encore su ne peuvent pas être imposés au moyen de procédures méthodologiques strictes [...] l'heureux hasard, l'intuition et l'improvisation sont au moins aussi importants dans la pratique en laboratoire que les tentatives faites pour stabiliser les conditions techniques dans lesquelles se déroulent les expériences (traduction d'Anglocom).

<sup>44</sup> La recherche artistique tout comme la recherche scientifique s'intéressent au réel tout en transformant cette réalité en ce qu'elle pourrait devenir (traduction d'Anglocom).

société à laquelle il appartient et participe (Fricker, 2007 ; Catala, 2019). De plus, les systèmes d'expériences, les connaissances peu connues et les machines qui créent le futur tel que le décrit Borgdorff nous offrent des champs de savoir mieux adaptés aux demandes de recherches scientifiques de notre âge. Ayant ceci à l'esprit, je présenterai d'abord, dans les lignes qui suivent, les concepts-clés de l'écriture phénoménologique et de la performativité, pour ensuite articuler une méthodologie transversale de la recherche-création qui joue et expérimente avec les possibilités d'écriture. Ces possibilités comprennent des gestes d'écriture qui proviennent d'autres modes d'expression tels que la performativité postlinguistique et des systèmes d'écriture non alphabétiques.

La méthodologie des modes d'écriture « analphabétique » que je propose se base sur le jeu de mots de l'analphabétisme traditionnel et de l'analphabétisme linguistique. Tout comme les systèmes d'expériences décrits par Borgdorff, et tout comme l'expérience de l'analphabétisme traditionnel, ces modes d'écriture prennent l'inconnu et le pas-encore-connu non comme point de départ, mais comme accompagnateur fidèle. Écrire autrement devient ainsi un geste d'assouplissement — telle la souplesse d'un acrobate — méthodologique et une fonction d'opération d'une machine expérientielle et expérimentale — polyvalente, plurilingue et interculturelle — capable d'appréhender la réalité sans se croire capable de la comprendre, en manipulant et en transformant le vécu selon ses multiples possibilités.

## 1.2 Point de départ : concepts-clés

### 1.2.1 Écriture phénoménologique

Le recours à la phénoménologie est un vecteur méthodique permettant de cheminer vers le phénomène vécu, sans considération métaphysique sur sa « vérité ».

(Jean-François Dupeyron, 2013, p. 36)

La phénoménologie comme paradigme et comme structure méthodologique a beaucoup marqué l'effervescence de modes d'écriture postmodernes et postpositivistes tels que l'écriture impliquée, l'écriture réflexive, l'auto-ethnographie et l'écriture descriptive. La méthode de réduction phénoménologique d'Husserl cherche à « dégager et [à] libérer une autre qualité, une autre modalité d'une expérience subjective » et à « reconduire » (*reducere*) cette expérience à travers des actes de perception, de re-perception et de « remémoration » (Depraz, 2012, p. 117). Selon Dupeyron, « l'objet n'est pas de réduire le regard du phénoménologue à "l'essentiel" du phénomène, mais d'élargir au plus

grand nombre possible de dimensions de ce même phénomène, en tentant d’y intégrer leur variabilité, voire leur fugacité » (*op. cit.*, p. 38). Une méthodologie phénoménologique présente alors des pistes pour sortir des concepts « binarisés » par cette « réduction qui reconduit », ce qui renvoie de manière similaire à « la compréhension qui consiste à “voir les connexions” » de Wittgenstein :

L’une des sources principales de nos incompréhensions est que nous n’avons pas *une vue synoptique* de l’emploi de nos mots. — Notre grammaire manque de caractère synoptique. — La représentation synoptique nous procure la compréhension qui consiste à « voir les connexions ». D’où l’importance qu’il y a à trouver et [à] inventer des *maillons intermédiaires*.

Le concept de représentation synoptique a pour nous une signification fondamentale. Il désigne notre forme de représentation, la façon dont nous voyons les choses. (S’agit-il d’une « *Weltanschauung* » ?) (2014, p. 122)

La *weltanschauung* synoptique et la réduction phénoménologique peuvent mener à une flexibilité de compréhension qui permet le franchissement d’un des concepts binaires intransigeants de la nature de la recherche : le contraste entre théorie et pratique. Cette flexibilité permet de concevoir la théorie non seulement comme une réfutation de la pratique, mais aussi comme reposant sur la pratique (Manen, 2007). En effet, la pratique phénoménologique suggère que la dynamique entre réflexion théorique et expérience vécue est une relation mutuelle extrêmement complexe et subtile : « A phenomenology of practice is challenged to free itself of calculative rationality [...] whereas theory “thinks” the world, practice “grasps” the world<sup>45</sup> » (*ibid.*, p. 20).

Tissant ensemble l’épistémologie d’Husserl et l’ontologie d’Heidegger, Manen propose que l’écriture phénoménologique, telle que la définit et la pratique la tradition hollandaise de l’école d’Utrecht, est une avenue vers les mécanismes cognitifs et sensibles nécessaires pour élargir la pratique ou la fonder autrement que sur la théorie. Selon lui, le rassemblement de penseurs de l’école d’Utrecht (des psychologues, des pédagogues, des professeurs, des pédiatres, des sociologues, des criminologues, des juristes, des psychiatres et d’autres médecins) a intégré la phénoménologie dans les langues de spécialité et les structures de leurs disciplines pour créer des évocations poétiques et résonantes ainsi que pour mieux explorer les « formes » de la réflexion phénoménologique : « [...] phenomenology formatively

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<sup>45</sup> La pratique phénoménologique est mise au défi de se libérer de la rationalité calculatoire [...] alors que la théorie « pense » le monde, la pratique « saisit » le monde (traduction d’Anglocom).

informs, reforms, transforms, performs and performs the relation between being and practice<sup>46</sup> » (*ibid.*, p. 22).

La réduction et la pratique phénoménologique ressemblent aussi à la posture réflexive décrite par Pierre Bourdieu et Loïc Wacquant : « La réflexivité ne présuppose pas une réflexion du sujet sur le sujet [...] Elle requiert plutôt une exploration systématique des “catégories de pensées impensées qui délimitent le pensable et qui prédéterminent le pensé” » (1992, p. 27, citant Bourdieu, 1982, p. 10). Karine Rondeau décrit la réflexivité comme une « posture d’extériorité ou de mise à distance qui facilite la construction d’un objet, d’un savoir et la déconstruction du sens de l’action » et fait la comparaison avec une « toile de fond (qui) vise une prise de conscience progressive de la part de l’individu [...] afin que la réflexion devienne omniprésente, voire qu’elle s’impose au sein du vécu en tant que disposition interne, mais aussi en tant que contrepoids à la contrainte sociale » (2011, p. 56). La réflexivité et la phénoménologie libèrent des modes d’expérience en tant qu’expérience : le vécu nécessite une approche d’hypothèse, d’expérience et de résultats qui fait place aux suppositions, aux approximations, aux histoires et aux erreurs.

Posant la question au sujet de la façon dont les sens des mots et des phrases peuvent émerger des expériences corporelles et internes, l’écriture de soi, l’écriture impliquée et l’écriture sur et depuis l’expérience corporelle se basent également sur une approche de description phénoménologique très fouillée : « Je n’ai pas pensé cette phrase, elle s’est donnée dans mon corps » (Berger et Paillé, 2011, p. 71). La somatopsychopédagogie évoquée par ces écritures et dont Berger est experte cherche à comprendre le ou les rapports entre le corps et les créations des sens, une piste aussi suivie par Maxine Sheets-Johnstone avec son modèle « *thinking in movement* » (penser en mouvement), qui inverse le biais cognitif pour la pensée corporelle hors langage : « [...] thinking in movement is not the work of a symbol-making body mediating its way through the world by means of language [...] it is the work of an existentially resonant body [...] Such thinking is different not in degree but in kind from thinking in words<sup>47</sup> » (2009, p. 47). Sheets-Johnstone (2018) préfère le concept de *mindful bodies* (corps conscients) à celui du *embodied mind* (esprit incarné), et cette inversion chiasmatisque éclaire les habitudes de pensée qui se

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<sup>46</sup> de manière formative, la phénoménologie informe, réforme, transforme, interprète et préforme la relation entre l’être et la pratique (traduction d’Anglocom).

<sup>47</sup> la pensée en mouvement n’est pas l’œuvre d’un corps créateur de symboles se frayant un chemin à travers le monde au moyen du langage [...] c’est l’œuvre d’un corps qui résonne existentiellement [...] Une telle pensée est différente non pas en degré, mais en nature de la pensée verbale (traduction d’Anglocom).

présentent dans le langage. Les formulations anglaises mettant en lumière le nom qui suit l'adjectif, l'expression « *embodied mind* » réitère la primordialité cartésienne du cognitif.

Une pratique phénoménologique conduit et reconduit à la cultivation de la posture réflexive corporelle, pratique et posture étant également nécessaires et préalables à cette *réduction*. Cela génère et permet ainsi le déploiement des modes d'écriture qui engendrent plus d'ampleur et qui évoquent plus de couleurs que l'écriture scientifique ou littéraire « pure ». Comment se lancer concrètement dans ces modes d'écriture ? Comment faire cette réduction, adopter ces postures réflexives, tout en maintenant un fil de compréhensibilité scientifique ? La philosophie, dans ce cas la philosophie de langage, s'offre comme pont et intermédiaire.

### 1.2.2 Performativité

Écrire c'est graver. [...] C'était faire des trous, pénétrer la surface, et c'est toujours le cas. Écrire c'est toujours faire des inscriptions. Il ne s'agit pas d'un geste constructif, mais d'un geste pénétrant.

(Flusser, 1999, p. 17)

La performativité a eu une emprise forte sur le développement d'idées au sujet de l'écriture incarnée. Depuis que le philosophe du « langage ordinaire » (*ordinary language philosophy*) John L. Austin a proposé la notion des énonciations performatives — ces actes de discours pour lesquels « l'énonciation de la phrase est l'exécution d'une action » (Austin, 1970, p. 4) — et depuis la série de conférences de 1955 sur laquelle est basé le texte *Quand dire c'est faire* (Austin, 1994), les idées de la performativité qui ont suivi ont déclenché plusieurs courants et tournants théoriques. Selon Parker et Sedgwick, les questions soulevées par *How to Do Things With Words* « have resonated through the theoretical writings of the past three decades in a carnivalesque echolalia<sup>48</sup> » (2013, p. 1). Dans son analyse de « la "performativité" dans tous ses états », Cotton remarque que « plusieurs idées, notions, conceptions — souvent divergentes — ont été proposées à ce sujet, dans plusieurs domaines et sous l'égide de plusieurs écoles, laissant à celui ou celle qui veut réfléchir et articuler ces concepts d'innombrables et d'incontournables questions » (2016, p. 3).

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<sup>48</sup> ont résonné à travers les écrits théoriques des trois dernières décennies dans une écholalie carnivalesque (traduction d'Anglocom).

La performativité se trouve dans des paradigmes tels que le poststructuralisme de Jacques Derrida et de Judith Butler, le postmodernisme de Jean-François Lyotard, qui « tente de la comprendre comme un jeu où les joueurs sont impliqués dans un calcul complexe d'interactions » (Cotton, *ibid.*, p. 10), et de Pierre Bourdieu, qui veut « réinscrire la performativité dans une logique plus "rituelle" » (*ibid.*), ainsi que dans une liste de disciplines comme l'anthropologie, l'histoire de l'art, la linguistique, le théâtre, les sciences des religions, les études cinématographiques, la performance et même les sciences économiques (Chung, 2019). L'abondance de théories et de polémiques suscitées par la performativité se prête à un casse-tête de sens, dit Cotton, mais on peut supposer qu'Austin lui-même avait prévu les débats qu'attireraient ses théories. À plusieurs reprises, il a invité à la prudence méthodologique en ce qui a trait aux fondements de ses idées de la performativité et de leur provenance de la philosophie du langage ordinaire :

Étant donné la prédominance du slogan « langage ordinaire » et d'expressions comme philosophie « linguistique » ou « analytique », ou encore l'« analyse du langage », il faut insister tout particulièrement sur une chose pour éviter les malentendus. Quand nous examinons ce que nous dirions quand, encore une fois, nous ne regardons *pas seulement* les mots (ou les « significations », quelles qu'elles soient), mais également les réalités dont nous parlons avec les mots : nous nous servons de la conscience affinée que nous avons pour affiner notre perception, qui n'est toutefois pas l'arbitre ultime, des phénomènes. C'est pourquoi je pense qu'il vaudrait mieux utiliser, pour cette façon de philosopher, un nom moins trompeur que ceux mentionnés plus haut, par exemple, « phénoménologie linguistique », mais quel nom celui-ci ! (Austin, 1994, p. 144)

Si Austin interprète ou utilise le mot *phénoménologique* dans le sens que l'on suppose, soit celui de la phénoménologie husserlienne, un regard ou une posture phénoménologique est donc au cœur de la notion de la performativité. C'est là un présupposé non fondé, étant donné les doutes et les objections qu'Austin et ses collègues expriment à plusieurs reprises dans d'autres conférences au sujet de la philosophie « française » et de la pensée du « continent ». Lors de son discours à la quatrième conférence de Royaumont (publié comme anthologie en 1962, *Cahiers de Royaumont : la philosophie analytique*), Gilbert Ryle accuse ainsi Husserl d'avoir été « ensorcelé » par l'idée platonicienne selon laquelle son chemin dans la philosophie de l'esprit devait le conduire « dans un abîme sans fond ». Il suggère qu'« Husserl a toujours écrit comme s'il n'avait jamais rencontré un savant ni entendu un bon mot » (1962, p. 67-68). Quand Merleau-Ponty demande ensuite si « nous ne sommes pas si éloignés que M. Ryle le disait » (*ibid.*, p. 96) et propose que ce rapprochement se trouve dans la pensée de Bertrand Russell et de Ludwig Wittgenstein, Ryle répond : « J'espère bien que non ! » (*ibid.*, p. 98)

Quel langage, le langage ordinaire de ces philosophes extraordinaires ! Mais aussi quel monde de connaissances : défini, connu et fixe. Et si faire de la philosophie analytique était bel et bien faire de la phénoménologie ? Ou si la posture phénoménologique se trouvait, parmi d'autres possibilités, dans les actes de discours et les énonciations performatives ? Dans plusieurs domaines où s'est répandue la philosophie d'Austin, cela est certainement déjà tenu pour acquis.

Le tournant performatif comme paradigme de recherche encourage la reconnaissance de différentes formes de production et d'expression de savoirs et situe l'écriture comme lieu d'incorporation. Le nouveau matérialisme (par exemple, de Karen Barad), les perspectives postcritiques et posthistoriques du nouveau réalisme ainsi que les approches utilisées par les recherches postqualitatives (par exemple, d'Elizabeth A. St. Pierre et Patti Lather) tiennent compte des enjeux épistémiques et ontologiques prédéterminés et limités par nous-mêmes en tant que penseurs, c'est-à-dire prédéterminés et limités par les mêmes théories et théoriciens qui visent un champ de savoirs plus étendu. Mais nous nous redirigeons souvent vers les pratiques connues et reconnues comme des cheminements universitaires traditionnels, des attentes de publications dans des revues traditionnelles et le développement récent, et prévisible, des critères d'évaluation de candidatures académiques qui reposent non seulement sur la contribution aux connaissances, mais aussi sur la société, généralement mesurée sous la forme d'engagements communautaires, sociaux ou associatifs.

C'est dans cette optique, cette « auralité » (Privat, 2019, p. 1), qu'émerge la performativité phénoménologique, avec une méthodologie d'écriture postlinguistique et analphabétique d'écrire autrement. Autrement.

### 1.3 Méthodologie : analphabétisme et écriture postlinguistique

La théorie de variabilité linguistique de Sapir-Whorf (Whorf, 1969) est vue avec un immense scepticisme dans les disciplines linguistiques et philosophiques. La théorie en version modérée et généralement acceptée suggère que les catégories et les motifs linguistiques influencent et déterminent nos représentations mentales (Scholz, Pelletier, et Pullum, 2020), mais par ailleurs que ces influences et ces déterminations n'ont pas été prouvées par des recherches suffisamment « scientifiques ». Si nous souhaitons recourir à la philosophie plutôt que de nous fier à la scientificité des sciences humaines, nous pouvons nous inspirer de ce que dit Flusser:

Dans ma mémoire, il y a des mots de diverses langues. Ils ne sont pas équivalents. Chaque langue possède un climat et donc un univers propre [...] Bien sûr, je peux traduire et, dans ce sens, je les transcède à toutes. [...] Mais dans un autre sens, ce sont les langues qui me dominant, me programment, me transcèdent, car elles me lancent, chacune, dans un univers qui leur est propre (1999, p. 22-23).

Cet antagonisme entre nos intuitions et nos résultats de recherches n'est certainement pas nouveau, mais le scepticisme au sujet des intuitions humaines empêche des modes de raisonnement irreflexifs de se révéler. Acceptons alors les recherches moins controversées et plus spécifiques au sujet de l'influence de l'orthographe sur les représentations phonologiques (Solier, 2019), de l'importance du corps, et des mains en particulier, dans les recherches sur la lecture et l'écriture (Mangen, 2016) et de l'effet de l'orthographe sur l'apprentissage, la compréhension et la mémoire (Roux *et al.*, 2012 ; Lam *et al.*, 2011).

La science travaille à représenter les complexités humaines qui nécessitent plus qu'une dimension d'étude. C'est là un aspect typique des recherches scientifiques sur les comportements humains. Par exemple, le geste d'écrire demande l'interaction de processus cognitifs et moteurs, mais « la notion d'interaction entre orthographe et motricité a été introduite très récemment dans la recherche sur la production de mots [...] mais la mise en évidence de l'interaction entre les deux types de processus lors de la production écrite indique qu'ils ne peuvent pas être étudiés séparément » (Kandel, 2018, p. 151).

De plus, l'acte d'écrire, ce geste que nous pratiquons comme étudiants professionnels depuis deux, trois et parfois quatre décennies, doit également être saisi comme acte épistémologique, car nous oublions souvent, avec notre orthographe de base en latin et de base alphabétique, les Autres de l'écriture. La plupart des recherches citées auparavant visent ces orthographies sans faire mention des effets cognitifs qui peuvent découler de l'orientation, de la forme et de la grammaire de notre écriture. Or, en examinant d'autres systèmes d'écriture (par exemple, l'alphabet arabe ou sémitique, les alphabets développés pour et parfois par les peuples autochtones de l'Amérique du Nord, dont les syllabaires autochtones canadiens et le syllabaire cherokee) de même que la seule orthographe moderne qui n'est pas alphabétique (l'écriture logographique chinoise), nous élargissons le terrain de nos connaissances, mais aussi les champs du possible de nos savoirs. Nos horizons imaginaires s'ouvrent lorsque nous prenons conscience des effets des changements orthographiques, soit la diversité des systèmes et des styles d'écriture, mais aussi les changements de main (de droite à gauche pour la plupart d'entre nous).

La majorité des recherches en écriture à la main (qui constituent la majorité des recherches en écriture qui s'intéressent aux liens entre la motricité et ses effets cognitifs) sont faites sur les alphabets « de l'Ouest ». Les différences sur le plan de la forme, de la grammaire et de l'orthographe que propose une écriture idéogrammatique sont, elles, souvent oubliées. Pourtant, il y a là un terrain d'études particulièrement intéressant, puisqu'écrire un caractère chinois ressemble au processus de production d'une image : « [...] it requires symmetry, equilibrium, and well-proportioned structures for the completion of even a single character<sup>49</sup> » (Chang *et al.*, 2009, p. 889). De plus, l'écriture alphabétique est continue et souvent attachée, mais les caractères chinois nécessitent des détournements brusques et de fréquents soulèvements du stylo : « Writers must understand spatial organization to write characters legibly<sup>50</sup> » (Lee *et al.*, 2016, p. 2). En attendant que les sciences rattrapent le niveau de la phénoménologie en recherche sur l'écriture, on peut poser un regard réflexif sur les recherches scientifiques qui portent sur l'équilibre du corps humain pour créer une parallèle avec l'équilibre de l'écriture à la main et, ensuite, de notre posture phénoménologique (Paillard, 2016).

Quel lien tirer de cette posture à une posture phénoménologique ? L'idée que nous sommes toujours en train de nous ajuster, d'osciller, toujours « en processus de rétablissement permanent de l'équilibre » (*ibid.*, p. 1) pourrait par ailleurs indiquer que notre corps n'est jamais en permanence ni en équilibre. Cette possibilité alimente l'idée de la réflexivité telle que Rondeau la décrit : la « toile de fond » qui devient « omniprésente [...] en tant que disposition interne, mais aussi en tant que contrepoids à la contrainte sociale » (*op. cit.*, p. 56). L'équilibre physique, tout comme la réflexivité, est un travail constant — le seul aspect permanent d'une posture oscillatoire.

#### 1.4 Expérience 1

### QUAND DIRE C'EST DÉ-FAIRE

#### PROLOGUE

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<sup>49</sup> il faut une symétrie, un équilibre et des structures bien proportionnées pour obtenir ne serait-ce qu'un seul personnage (traduction d'Anglocom).

<sup>50</sup> Les rédacteurs doivent comprendre l'organisation spatiale pour pouvoir écrire des caractères lisibles (traduction d'Anglocom).

(voix MÈRE)

翔, 中文工課做完了嗎? 三姑姐快到<sup>51</sup> •

(Pendant que MÈRE parle, XIANG dessine et écrit sur le tableau blanc quadrillé. Elle le fixe, grimace et ses mains deviennent des poings.)

XIANG

Mes mots sont tous croches, ils sont laids, je hais ça !

(Elle écrit encore un autre caractère chinois ou deux, travaillant laborieusement, avant de déchirer la page, de la froisser et de jeter son crayon. Après un moment, elle prend le violon au mur. Et commence à jouer la troisième partita pour violon en mi majeur de Bach : Giga. Après la première section, elle arrête.)

XIANG, monologue

J'ai entendu dire que Bach est le musicien des mathématiciens, car sa musique est comme des équations : symétrique et parallèle.

Tout ce que je sais, c'est que sa musique me permet de pleurer. Toujours les mêmes phrases, les mêmes cadences. C'est l'évolution des intervalles et le glissement de clés. On connaît, grâce aux études en musique classique et en composition, quels intervalles indiquent quelles émotions à l'oreille humaine, bon, l'oreille occidentale. C'est souvent de base religieuse, mais écoutez. C'est la même progression, transposée.

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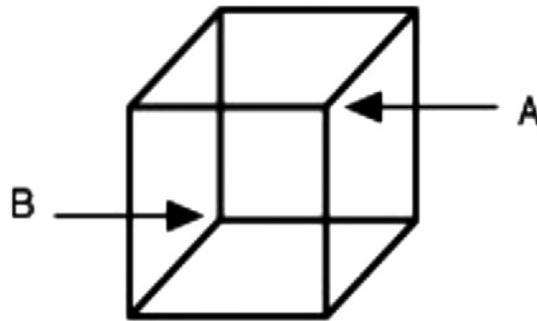
<sup>51</sup> Xiang, as-tu terminé tes devoirs de chinois ? Ta troisième tante arrive bientôt (traduction de l'auteure).

*(Elle ferme ses yeux et joue la deuxième section. Les intervalles progressent. La musique est joyeuse, triomphante et triste en même temps.)*

*C'est de la magie.*

Ce fragment de cette pièce de théâtre (Cheng, 2021) nous permet (nous demande) de vivre trois réalités simultanées : celle d'une communication présentée au 88<sup>e</sup> Congrès de l'Acfas (2021), celle de l'enfant qui déteste faire ses devoirs en chinois et qui trouve un certain soulagement à pratiquer son violon et la réalité d'un mini-concert de musique classique. La multimodalité démontrée ici est évoquée de façon visuelle dans l'image du cube Necker, une image attribuée en 1832 au cristallographe suisse Louis-Albert Necker de Saussure.

Figure 7 Cube Necker comme image multistable



Source : Seeley et Kozbelt (2008, p. 159).

Le cube est un dessin de perspective cavalière ambiguë qui peut être interprété de différentes manières simultanément (par exemple, un cube avec l'arête A en avant ou l'arête B en avant qui encourage la perception multistable pour la personne qui l'observe). On peut même aligner les sommets des arêtes A et B pour trouver une troisième perspective de l'image.

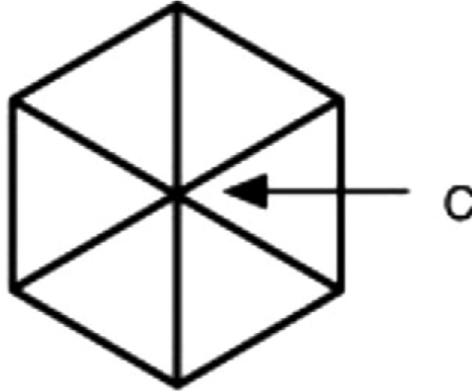


Figure 8 Cube Necker d'une autre perspective

Source : Seeley et Kozbelt (2008, p. 159).

En tout, il y a plus de 40 perspectives possibles du cube et la perception multistable de cet objet encourage une pratique phénoménologique soutenue qui ouvre à de nouvelles possibilités de sensation : « [...] we may begin to develop the experience of any number of phenomena through a recognition of the taken-for-granted ways to attend to them, and therefore open up alternative possibilities<sup>52</sup> » (Van der Schyff, 2017, p. 115).

La musique offre, elle aussi, une dimension intégrale à cette pratique de figuration multistable et nous fournit plusieurs exemples d'une pluralité de perceptions qui comporte plusieurs totalités réelles (le mélange du singulier du premier concept et le pluriel du second est voulu) ; autrement dit, ce sont des réalités qui se contredisent sans trahir leurs vérités primordiales. Prenons pour exemple la polyphonie de la musique classique. La polyphonie peut nous servir de pratique novice pour la perception de réalités multistables, car la musique populaire et la musique classique débordent d'exemples d'harmonies, de contrepoints et de *bassi ostinati* faciles à reconnaître ou à répéter. Dans ces cas-ci — on peut prendre pour exemple, au besoin, la mélodie, l'harmonie et le contrepoint de la chanson *Here Comes the Sun* des Beatles —, les motifs non dominants sont inséparables de la mélodie elle-même, et toute personne ayant écouté une chanson ou un morceau absent de l'un de ces éléments d'harmonie, contrepoint ou *basso ostinato*, remarquera rapidement la différence. Qui plus est, toute personne ayant eu le privilège de fournir l'harmonie, le contrepoint ou le *basso ostinato* pour une telle chanson ou un tel morceau sera capable de

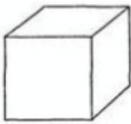
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<sup>52</sup> on peut commencer à faire l'expérience d'un certain nombre de phénomènes en reconnaissant les façons d'y faire face que l'on tient pour acquises, et ainsi s'ouvrir à d'autres possibilités (traduction d'Anglocom).

produire cette harmonie, ce contrepoint ou *ce basso ostinato*, comme mélodie ou comme thème dominant sans avoir besoin de la mélodie ou du thème lui-même.

Dans ses *Recherches philosophiques* (*op. cit.*), Wittgenstein fait référence à une pratique similaire de figures multistables — pourrait-il s'agir de l'un de ses jeux ? Dans le chapitre XI, il l'explique en mots et en images.

On pourrait imaginer qu'apparaisse, en plusieurs endroits d'un livre, d'un manuel par exemple, l'illustration suivante :



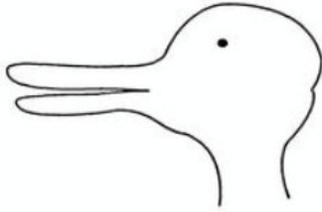
Dans le texte qui l'accompagne, il est chaque fois question d'une chose différente : un cube en verre, une caisse ouverte posée à l'envers, une structure en fil de fer ayant cette forme-là, ou trois planches formant un trièdre. Chaque fois, le texte interprète l'illustration.

Mais il nous est également possible de *voir* l'illustration une fois comme telle chose, une autre fois comme telle autre chose. — Nous l'interprétons donc, et nous la *voyons* comme nous l'*interprétons*.

Figure 9 Caisse ouverte de Wittgenstein

Source : Wittgenstein (*op. cit.*, chapitre XI).

La similarité entre l'image que Wittgenstein choisit et le cube Necker est frappante et n'est pas un hasard. La prochaine image à laquelle Wittgenstein fait référence est une image bistable, que Wittgenstein nomme « la tête de canard-lapin ».



Et je dois faire la différence entre la “vision continue” d’un aspect et l’“apparition soudaine” d’un aspect.

Il se pourrait qu’on m’ait montré l’image sans que j’y aie jamais vu autre chose qu’un lapin.

Figure 10 Tête canard-lapin

Source : Wittgenstein (*op. cit.*, chapitre XI).

Les citations de Wittgenstein apparaissent ici comme des images qui nous rappellent l’entrelacement de texte et d’images. Bien que nous lisions les mots cités et observions les images qui accompagnent ces mots, le tout peut être réduit à ou reconduit vers d’autres interprétations, vers des images citées et des mots observés, par exemple. Si, comme l’affirme Wittgenstein, « nous voyons comme nous interprétons » (*ibid.*, p. 275.), alors poser un autre regard produit une autre interprétation et interpréter autrement change notre regard. Notre héritage, positiviste et postpositiviste, nous murmure des fables sur la réalité et la vérité, qu’elles soient fixes ou stables, ou qu’elles puissent être observées dans leur totalité, soit par les instruments de la perception corporelle (les sciences humaines), soit par les instruments techniques (les sciences pures). La phénoménologie, la posture réflexive et les pensées de Wittgenstein suggèrent autre chose : nos expériences du vécu, loin d’être fixes et relatives, sont aussi variables que réglables selon notre pratique et notre « présence » (*being/dasein*)<sup>53</sup>.

L’imagination se libère et la perspective aussi, devenant une capacité de voir les choses comme elles pourraient être autrement (Greene, 2007), et la réflexivité de cette pratique transforme nos structures corporelles et cognitives :

The ability to perceive oneself during the process of participation is an essential quality of the aesthetic experience; the observer finds himself in a strange, halfway position: he is involved, and he watches himself being involved [...]. This position [...] can only come about when existing codes are transcended or invalidated. The resultant

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<sup>53</sup> Au sujet des liens sous-jacents, voir Moi (2017) et Ware (2015).

restructuring of stored experiences makes the reader aware not only of the experience but also of the means whereby it develops<sup>54</sup> (Iser, 1994, p. 134).

Une pratique phénoménologique ne cherche pas à se débarrasser de la vérité, dans ses considérations métaphysiques et physiques, mais vise un agrandissement des sens, de la perception, de la réalité et, enfin, de la vérité elle-même.

## 1.5 Expérience 2

*88<sup>e</sup> Congrès de l'Acfas*

*[www.acfas.ca/node/59798](http://www.acfas.ca/node/59798)*

*Communications libres*

*Section 302 – Création artistique et littéraire*

*Écrire autrement : Comment et pourquoi*

*(Décor : Ma chambre pour Acfas.*

*Caméra positionnée pour donner un angle aussi grand que possible, sans avoir besoin d'acheter un nouvel objectif grand-angle. Rideaux fermés, micro — acheter à la dernière minute au Best Buy, modèle décrit comme idéal pour les vloggeurs — attaché. Arrière-plan soigneusement cultivé depuis les quelques derniers mois, lorsque je me suis rendu compte qu'on ferait les choses de telle manière pendant longtemps. Affiche Métro Montréal bien visible, idem lumière néon marqué PLAY — fait à la main*

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<sup>54</sup> La capacité à se percevoir au cours du processus de participation est une qualité essentielle de l'expérience esthétique ; l'observateur se trouve dans une position étrange, à mi-chemin : il est impliqué et il se regarde être impliqué [...]. Cette position [...] ne peut advenir que lorsque les codes existants sont transcendés ou invalidés. La restructuration des expériences stockées qui en résulte rend le lecteur conscient non seulement de l'expérience, mais aussi des moyens par lesquels elle prend forme (traduction Anglocom).

*d'une trousse Dollarama. Quelques plantes dans le coin à côté du tapis de yoga. Dactylo et lutrin de fortune au milieu de la scène.*

*XIANG porte un costume soigneusement choisi pour respecter l'atmosphère d'une conférence universitaire, mais aussi pour permettre de se tourner à l'envers : une salopette et des souliers.)*

*XIANG, LU À VOIX HAUTE DEBOUT AU PUPITRE :*

*« Théoriquement, l'équilibre d'un corps humain est possible. Or, une position "physiologique" n'est jamais acquise durablement à cause des mouvements liquidiens et contractions musculaires cardiaques et respiratoires (les fonctions vitales). Ces activités physiologiques induisent des oscillations permanentes. L'équilibration humaine est donc un processus de rétablissement permanent de l'équilibre. » Thierry Paillard, Posture et équilibration humaines (2016).*

*Je désire invoquer la santé et la complexité de notre système sensori-moteur comme métaphore pour la santé de l'état de nos connaissances, aussi complexe et précaire. Notre posture épistémologique doit être aussi délicatement équilibrée que notre posture physique. Les fonctions vitales de l'apprentissage et de l'acquisition des connaissances causent des mouvements liquidiens, des contractions et fléchissements qui induisent à leur tour des oscillations permanentes.*

*L'écriture multimodalitaire, telle que je la ferai ici, déstabilise en même temps que d'introduire de nouvelles postures, facilitant une prise de conscience d'équilibre et renseignant sur les articulations de ce que nous tenons pour acquis, de façon volontaire ou non, consciente ou non.*

*QUAND DIRE C'EST DÉ-FAIRE*

*PROLOGUE*

(voix MÈRE)

翔, 中文工課做完了嗎? 三姑姐快到<sup>55</sup> •

*(Pendant que MÈRE parle, XIANG dessine et écrit sur le tableau blanc quadrillé. Elle le fixe, grimace et ses mains deviennent des poings.)*

XIANG

Mes mots sont tous croches, ils sont laids, je hais ça !

*(Elle écrit encore un autre caractère chinois ou deux, travaillant laborieusement, avant de déchirer la page, de la froisser et de jeter son crayon. Après un moment, elle prend le violon au mur. Et commence à jouer la troisième partita pour violon en mi majeur de Bach. DURÉE : UNE MINUTE. Après la première section, elle arrête.)*

XIANG, *monologue*

J'ai entendu dire que Bach est le musicien des mathématiciens, car sa musique est comme des équations : symétrique et parallèle.

Tout ce que je sais, c'est que sa musique me permet de pleurer. Toujours les mêmes phrases, les mêmes cadences. C'est l'évolution des intervalles et le glissement de clés. On connaît, grâce aux études en musique classique et en composition, quels intervalles indiquent quelles émotions à l'oreille humaine, bon, l'oreille occidentale. C'est souvent de base religieuse, mais écoutez. C'est la même progression, transposée.

*(Elle ferme ses yeux et joue la deuxième section. Les intervalles progressent. La musique est joyeuse, triomphante et triste en même temps. DURÉE : 90 SECONDES.)*

C'est de la magie.

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<sup>55</sup> Xiang, as-tu terminé tes devoirs de chinois ? Ta troisième tante arrive bientôt (traduction de l'auteure).

*XIANG, RETOUR VERS LE PUPITRE ET INSTALLATION D'UNE  
DACTYLOGRAPHE POUR ENSUITE LIRE ENCORE UNE FOIS À VOIX  
HAUTE EN TAPANT*

*« Théoriquement, l'équilibre d'un corps humain est possible. Or, une position "physiologique" n'est jamais acquise durablement à cause des mouvements liquidiens et contractions musculaires cardiaques et respiratoires (les fonctions vitales). Ces activités physiologiques induisent des oscillations permanentes. L'équilibration humaine est donc un processus de rétablissement permanent de l'équilibre. »*

*XIANG, TENTATIVE D'ÉQUILIBRE SUR LE TAPIS DE YOGA*

*Merci.*

*(DURÉE : 7 MIN ET 2 S)*

Dans le contexte du 88<sup>e</sup> Congrès de l'Acfas, tenu en formule 100 % virtuelle pour la première fois en 2021, les circonstances de cette virtualité ont produit, sinon nécessité, de nouvelles possibilités de présentation et d'évaluation, comme pour plusieurs congrès et conférences qui ont eu lieu depuis le début de la pandémie de COVID-19. Participer à un congrès sans (pouvoir) se déplacer, présenter son diaporama en direct ou en version enregistrée et faire du réseautage strictement en mode virtuel ont créé des dialogues qui n'étaient encadrés ni par le temps ni par le lieu, élargissant les moments d'échanges tout en les limitant.

Le contexte pandémique nous a également donné la possibilité — qui a toujours été là, cela dit — de transformer et de varier nos présentations selon des modes performatifs, modes déjà connus des conférenciers de la section des études en performance du congrès de la National Communication Association (NCA), entre autres. Les colloques et les communications de cette dernière section présentent souvent des recherches sous forme de poésie, d'auto-ethnographie, de *mystory*, d'interprétation orale, etc., mais le congrès 2020 de la NCA comportait un changement majeur qui alimentait tout congrès, tout spectacle et toute réunion de façon générale : les spectateurs et les participants se présentaient par visioconférence seulement. Cette transformation a d'ailleurs suscité de vives émotions telles que les larmes de Tami Spry et de Craig Gingrich-Philbrook. Les contributions de Spry et de Gingrich-Philbrook

n'ont pas été enregistrées et il reste à voir si leurs communications paraîtront en textes dans des anthologies ou des revues, comme les discours d'Austin (devenus *Quand dire c'est faire*, 1970), les échanges sur la philosophie analytique en 1958 à Royaumont (devenus les *Cahiers de Royaumont n° IV*, 1962) ou encore les textes présentés par Derrida, Ricœur et autres en 1971 lors de la XV<sup>e</sup> Conférence du Congrès des sociétés de philosophie de langue française, qui avait pour thème la communication (devenus *La communication : actes du XV<sup>e</sup> Congrès de l'Association des sociétés de philosophie de langue française*, 1973)<sup>56</sup>. Les larmes de Spry et de Gingrich-Philbrook étaient-elles des performances ? Ce serait une insulte de laisser entendre une telle interprétation. Mais leurs larmes étaient-elles performatives ? Ont-elles eu pour effet la manifestation et la réalisation concrètes de leurs autres gestes et de leurs mots, ajoutant alors des dimensions du réel et du vécu à ces réalités vécues ? C'est là l'enchevêtrement (*entanglement* ou, selon Pickering et Guzik [2008] et Jackson [2013], le *mangle*) des pratiques performatives : elles ne sont pas seulement des modalités de performance ; elles sont aussi des modalités du possible.

Les polyrythmies de la musique ouest-africaine, telles que les illustre la figure qui suit, montrent à quoi ressemblent des modalités divergentes et simultanées du possible. Ces rythmes compliqués et complexes demandent non seulement de garder en tête plusieurs rythmes contrastants, mais aussi de s'éloigner de deux principes de musique que la théorie de la musique (classique) tient pour acquis : l'idée des armures et des tonalités (*key* et *pitch*) et l'idée de la linéarité.

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<sup>56</sup> Le texte de Derrida, « Signature événement contexte », a lancé un débat bien connu entre Derrida et John Searle, débat qui s'est aigri dans les années suivantes et a culminé avec le refus de Searle de laisser Derrida publier sa partie de cet échange (« Reiterating the differences: A reply to Derrida » dans *Limited, Inc* [1988]).

Figure 11 Polyrythmies de l’Afrique de l’Ouest

Source : Van der Schyff (2017, p. 121).

La polyrythmie refuse d’établir un rythme dominant ou, si elle le fait, c’est seulement de façon transitoire. Les rythmes sont en contraste, souvent en conflit (deux accents marqués dans le même temps que trois), mais ils sont tous des parties d’un morceau cohésif. Ce contraste de rythme s’applique également à la musique classique, mais la musique classique (occidentale) a tendance à établir un rythme dominant (ou à provenir de celui-ci) et à le poursuivre. De plus, bien que l’image présente un exemple de ces polyrythmies de manière bidimensionnelle et linéaire, les modes de transmission de la plupart de ces rythmes résistent à la codification traditionnelle de la musique classique et la dépassent. Une fois ces concepts traditionnels détachés, mais non supprimés, de nos notions de la musique, nous pouvons imaginer deux hypothèses : que les expressions de musique soient, parmi d’autres permutations, des actes de langage (*utterance*, énonciation) qui exercent des influences directes sur le monde dans lequel ces actes circulent ; et que toute expression, de musique et d’autre énonciation, linguistique ou non, peut être un geste performatif. Il en sera question dans la prochaine section : « For us to claim that music (or language) can express anything at all is already for us to catch music in the act of “doing things,” to repeat one last time Austin’s turn of phrase<sup>57</sup> » (Chung, *op. cit.*, p. 105).

<sup>57</sup> Prétendre que la musique (ou le langage) peut absolument tout exprimer, c’est déjà prendre la musique en plein acte de « faire » ; c’est répéter une dernière fois la tournure de phrase d’Austin (traduction d’Anglocom).

## 1.6 Le postalphabétisme non linguistique : performance et [entracte](#)<sup>58</sup>

La performativité n'est pas seulement une modalité de performance, elle est aussi une modalité du possible : « [...] performances are not performative simply because they involve performers who perform pieces on performance stages — they are performative because they perform actions, because they do things to us<sup>59</sup> » (*ibid.*, p. 11). Cette définition, volontairement répétitive, nomme les multiples éléments de la performativité dans la variété de ces instanciations théoriques et y ajoute des dimensions transitives et transitoires. Pour Chung, qui trouve dans la musique des qualités performatives, ces actes de discours performatifs le sont en vue de leurs effets : « [...] language not only represents or discloses the world, but it also has a (per)formative effect in creating, destroying, transforming, or maintaining aspects of reality<sup>60</sup> » (*ibid.*, p. 46). Autrement dit, le langage et les signes peuvent être mobilisés « to apply pressure to the world<sup>61</sup> » (*ibid.*, p. 66). Chung fait le lien entre cette pression et l'expression :

[...] from the Latin « expressio » literally, a pressing out, a projection from inner content to outer form [...]. For us to claim that music (or language) can express anything at all is already for us to catch music in the act of « doing things, » to repeat one last time Austin's turn of phrase<sup>62</sup> (*ibid.*, p. 105).

Dans son analyse du geste d'écriture, Flusser arrive à la même conclusion, soit que l'acte de s'exprimer est également essentiel et superflu pour la communication :

Exprimer est un terme relatif. Il signifie : « presser contre » [...]. Mais « exprimer » signifie aussi : « presser dedans ». Cette signification est moins évidente dans le geste d'écrire. Mais l'introspection permet de dire que celui qui écrit presse une virtualité cachée en lui à travers de nombreuses couches résistantes (1999, p. 21).

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<sup>58</sup> NDLR 2024 : La chanteuse Maren Morris a changé de genre de musique, élargit ses genres de préférences pour des relations intimes et a fait un micro-album à ce sujet, sorti en été 2024, avec le titre Intermission. La chanson Cut! parle de l'importance des entractes et signale à une autre expression américaine populaire : 'And, scene.'

<sup>59</sup> les prestations ne sont pas simplement performatives parce qu'elles impliquent des artistes qui interprètent des pièces sur une scène : elles sont performatives parce qu'elles exécutent une action, parce qu'elles agissent sur nous (traduction d'Anglocom).

<sup>60</sup> non seulement le langage représente ou révèle le monde, mais il a aussi un effet (per)formatif dans la mesure où il crée, détruit, transforme ou préserve des aspects de la réalité (traduction d'Anglocom).

<sup>61</sup> pour faire pression sur le monde (traduction d'Anglocom).

<sup>62</sup> du latin « expressio » : littéralement, l'action de faire sortir en pressant, une projection du contenu intérieur vers la forme extérieure [...]. Prétendre que la musique (ou le langage) peut absolument tout exprimer, c'est déjà prendre la musique en plein acte de « faire » ; c'est répéter une dernière fois la tournure de phrase d'Austin (traduction d'Anglocom).

Exprimer et s'exprimer sont des gestes descriptifs et transitifs simultanés, tout comme écrire, c'est inscrire nos mots et nos sens, c'est répéter l'acte de graver, de pénétrer une surface. Le geste d'écrire est une navigation de dialectique entre « ce que les mots disent et ce que je veux écrire » (*ibid.*, p. 23), et les mots ayant des vibrations, des vies, des rythmes, des harmonies et des mélodies propres à eux, il faut d'abord les écouter pour ensuite en révéler la beauté musicale.

Flusser estime que l'écriture sert depuis longtemps de manifestation à « la "pensée officielle" de l'Occident », que « l'histoire commence strictement avec l'apparition du geste d'écrire et que l'Occident est devenu la société qui pense par écrit » (*ibid.*, p. 25). Tout cela serait toutefois en train de changer, écrit-il, alors qu'il souligne l'importance croissante d'une présence cybernétique « dont la structure n'est pas celle du geste écrit », mais plutôt des « codes techno-imaginaires », voire « analphabètes » (*ibid.*). Il propose une pensée postlinéaire et postmoderne de la « techno-image » pour assurer l'évolution de la science et de la technologie vers d'autres modes de discours — plus sophistiqués ? La « techno-image » sort de langage et de représentation en introduisant la communication hors de l'alphabet : « La science et la technique n'y sont pensables qu'en langue anglaise et dans notre système de quantification. Or voici que le code alphanumérique est en voie d'abandon au profit des codes numériques ou "digitaux" des ordinateurs » (2002, p. 22).

La méthodologie transversale de l'écriture analphabétique et postlinguistique a pour but de déstabiliser et de dépayser tant le lectorat que l'auteur, mais cela sans perdre le fil de l'argumentation et du raisonnement. Elle vise aussi à trouver des modalités de communication qui retiennent ce fil à travers plusieurs traductions, entre langues et entre manières de s'exprimer, que ce soit de façon verbale, non verbale, musicale, corporelle ou psychomotrice, permettant une communication de connaissances, d'idées, de sons ou d'images, avec des niveaux d'accessibilité variables. Cela dit, une communication dans un tel registre peut se démontrer trop ouverte, lâche ou informe.

Le geste d'écrire, selon Flusser, est un geste « pauvre, primitif, peu efficace et coûteux » et l'alphabet, un code « limité en répertoire et en structure pour servir aux propos d'une pensée évoluée » :

Il est devenu évident que les problèmes qui se dressent devant nous exigent qu'on pense à l'aide de codes et de gestes beaucoup plus raffinés, exacts et riches [...]. [I]l faut penser en vidéo, en programmes et modèles analogiques, en codes multidimensionnels (2002, p. 25).

Flusser propose ainsi d'éliminer ou de réduire l'enseignement de l'écriture aux écoles primaires, au profit de l'enseignement d'autres modes de codification. Par exemple, poser un regard performatif et analphabétique sur l'écriture nous permet d'accepter ses arguments sans abandonner les possibilités du geste : la performativité et l'analphabétisme encadrent des modes d'expression, de recherche et de savoir qui résistent à la clôture hâtive de nos discussions, en virtuel et en personne, vécues ou imaginées. Dans ces modes, nous mettons en œuvre des capacités sous-développées telles que le maintien précaire de l'équilibre corporel et épistémologique ou la graphologie comme dessin calligraphique et musical. Les demandes qu'imposent ces nouveaux savoirs sur nos muscles cognitifs et corporels et sur le cheminement neuronal des commandes du cerveau aux fléchisseurs et aux extenseurs de nos mains et de nos pieds (pour écrire avec la main gauche plutôt qu'avec la main droite, pour maintenir un équilibre stable parmi des oscillations permanentes, par exemple) « restructurent » non seulement notre réflexivité et notre posture, mais aussi la force de nos gestes, qui ne sont plus sujets aux prises d'un positivisme trop serré et d'une sémiologie alphabétique limitée.

Dans des textes comme « Pourquoi, au fond, les machines à écrire font-elles du bruit ? » (2002) et « Le geste d'écrire » (1999), Flusser propose que les machines à écrire nous remémorent plus authentiquement nos expressions que le stylo, car les machines à écrire frappent (ou frappaient) la surface avec des marteaux, comme un piano, transmettant ainsi l'écriture et l'inscription en même temps. Le fait de presser les touches de la machine nous pousse à faire des choix réfléchis en fonction de « certains critères orthographiques, grammaticaux, sémantiques, informatiques, communicationnels, etc. » (Flusser, 1999., p. 21), qui sont les « manifestations » nécessaires pour *faire* de l'écriture. Bien que la surface d'un écran ne soit pas touchée par des marteaux physiques et sémiotiques, les claviers de ces machines à écrire se sont malgré tout transposés aux ordinateurs, et ce sont à ces machines, à ces dactylographes et ensuite à ces ordinateurs, que Flusser attribue la production de techno-images. Ces images sont les formes médiatiques du « futur », sont produites par des instruments techniques et ne « représentent » pas des phénomènes dans le monde ; elles créent plutôt de nouveaux modèles et concepts : « [...] they are not signs representing a given object. Rather, they enable the "projection" of entirely new models and concepts—they thus "reverse the vectors of meaning"<sup>63</sup> » (Irrgang, 2020, p. 4).

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<sup>63</sup> ce ne sont pas des signes représentant un objet donné. Elles permettent plutôt la « projection » de modèles et de concepts entièrement nouveaux, inversant ainsi les vecteurs de sens (traduction d'Anglocom).

Les possibilités d'écrire de façon phénoménologique, calligraphique, artistique, dactylographique, numérique, sans tomber dans le cliché ou la banalité, renvoient à une vision de l'écriture où notre monde est un canevas, où notre corps et notre vie sont des outils d'expression. À chaque moment, nous sommes déjà et toujours en train d'écrire, d'exécuter des actions en même temps que de les énoncer — car énoncer et exécuter sont déjà et toujours le même geste —, et ces gestes exécutés et ces actes énoncés sont aussi importants qu'ils sont superflus.

Toril Moi, en décrivant la querelle entre John Searle et Jacques Derrida sur la performativité, note que celle-ci était remarquable tant pour le caractère aigre de la discussion que pour son aspect de déjà-vu. La « révolution » du langage qu'Austin et Searle pensaient effectuer n'était pour Derrida rien de plus et rien de moins qu'une version du statu quo, car les trois philosophes se posaient les mêmes questions au sujet de nos pratiques de langage : « [...] presence, writing, voice, word, sign, language, context, intention, force, communication, concept, performance, signature<sup>64</sup> » (Moi, 2017, p. 11). Moi résume : « The closer the overlap in interests, the more likely it is that the differences will be difficult to gauge, and easy to either exaggerate or overlook<sup>65</sup> » (*ibid.*, p. 11). Heureusement, des impasses marécageuses comme celles-ci deviennent moins difficiles à franchir et même à vaincre avec la philosophie du langage ordinaire que propose la performativité, une philosophie qui pose un autre regard et une autre interprétation sur la nécessité de la représentation linguistique.

Selon Moi,

once ordinary language philosophy has finished its analysis, we no longer have any reason to construct an elaborate theory of how to avoid or get past representation. In other words: When representation loses its status as the definition of « language as such, » it no longer seems urgent to elaborate complex theories to find a way around it, and the theory formation itself loses its allure<sup>66</sup> (*ibid.*, p. 14).

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<sup>64</sup> présence, écriture, voix, parole, signe, langage, contexte, intention, force, communication, concept, prestation, signature (traduction d'Anglocom).

<sup>65</sup> Plus les intérêts se chevauchent, plus il est probable que les différences seront difficiles à évaluer et faciles à exagérer ou à négliger (traduction d'Anglocom).

<sup>66</sup> une fois que la philosophie du langage ordinaire a terminé son analyse, plus aucune raison ne subsiste de bâtir une théorie élaborée sur la manière d'éviter ou de dépasser la représentation. Autrement dit, Lorsque la représentation perd son statut de définition du « langage en tant que tel », il ne semble plus urgent d'élaborer des théories complexes pour trouver une façon de la contourner, et la formation théorique elle-même perd de son attrait (traduction d'Anglocom).

Ou, selon Wittgenstein :

Les aspects des choses les plus importantes pour nous sont cachés du fait de leur simplicité et de leur banalité. (On peut ne pas remarquer quelque chose — parce qu'on l'a toujours sous les yeux.) Les véritables fondements de sa recherche ne frappent pas du tout l'attention d'un homme (*op. cit.*, p. 129).

Nos jeux de langages clairs et simples ne sont pas des études préparatoires pour une réglementation future du langage [...] Les jeux de langage se présentent plutôt comme des *objets de comparaison*, qui doivent éclairer, au moyen de ressemblances et de dissemblances, les conditions qui sont celles de notre langage (*ibid.*, p. 130).

La phénoménologie, l'écriture impliquée et la réflexivité élaborées dans cette proposition ont également tenté de suggérer des telles comparaisons dans des domaines moins raréfiés ou plus quotidiens, comme notre mobilité physique, nos perceptions visuelles et auditives, nos habitudes et même notre enfance. L'écriture postlinguistique et une posture analphabétique nous permettent de nous amuser, non seulement dans nos recherches, mais aussi dans l'avancement et le mouvement (postlinéaire) des savoirs scientifiques, et même empiristes. En créant des projections du réel et du possible avec des techno-images à la Flusser et en se sensibilisant à la nature tissée de nos interprétations et de nos textes à la Wittgenstein, on peut apprendre des jeux de langage leurs leçons postlinguistiques : on sort du langage en y embarquant, on traverse en y accédant.

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