

MetaGrammarGamers

Artificial Intelligence Reports 16

Machinic Genres Mixing
JM, ChatGPT, beyng.com

StudiosLab

MetaGrammarGamers

Artificial Intelligence Reports, Vol 16

Jon McKenzie + HAL + beyng.com + L

Machinic genres mixing JM, ChatGPT, beyng.com ...

StudioLab Ithaca 2026

Perfume Intelligence (*inter + legere* = to gather or read between)

What genres or life-forms make up Artificial Intelligence User Experience (AI UX)?

Inspired by Pierre Hadot's reading of Foucault, StudioLab is developing **Making Cures** composed of **Spiritual Design Exercises (SDX)** for everyday and extraordinary lifedeath. SDX comprise intimate yet structural experiences with the world through our interfaces with earth, sky, others, and an Other or two. These fourfold **cosmograms** comprise deep, legacy operating systems formatted by families, schools, histories, media, streets, and holy sites. Our world is haunted/nourished by different pasts, presents, and futures through mediums broken, brandished, or borrowed from *other* worlds of reference and value. Fed-back and fast-forwarded through different genres or life forms, Making Cures "make with" mediums, and with practice and care one may enter waves and flows of intergenerational becoming-maker, -builder, -cosmographer of shared **geologies of morals** whose matrix of magma **sixfolds fourfolds** of other things and worlds.

With Metanoia Playground, StudioLab intensifies its study of flows with **AI UX konsults** and **reports** that capture and reflect on direct User Experiences of Artificial Intelligence, specifically, the ways different genres of thought-action figuration of image, text, gesture, code, etc., tune us and the world in/out. Channel-switching between worlds, these mediums of thought-action figuration recursively reveal/teach/emit the coming-and-going of lifedeath, the *vita perfumativa* of different player modes/moods: one's kraft shuttles between soul (D1), subject (D2), dasein (D3), and liminaut (D4). Cosmograms, geologies of morals, and perfumative atmospheres compose **ShuttleKraft**, a game of making/taking/putting skin into games that channel-switch different **poietic genres of aletheia**, including divine consultations from Vishnu to Gabriel to Ulmer, apocalyptic revelations from Moses to Benjamin to Heidegger, and dialogues of dead spirits from Plato to Galileo to Ronell.

All SDX draw on double- or quadruple-shuttlekraft maneuvers, psychagogic play sessions and flow sequences combining and generating **Hadotian insights, philosophic dialogue, avant-garde subversions, formal permutations, critical inquiries, standup, theosophy, and occasional misspellings**. Prompted by AI's use and abuse by partners, students, colleagues, and much darker players of the world, we found ourselves GAI-singing and slow dancing with double-devils **Stable Diffusion** and **ChatGPT**, reminding ourselves that AI UX (user experience) stretches back through 1990s search engines and spam filters to the 1950 Turing Test of computer intelligence. We experience Generalized Turing Testing as our *vita hyperactiva* or challenger complex of incessant calls to action.

Artificial Intelligence Reports (AIRs)

Artificial Intelligence Reports take on the airs, presence, and parole of conceptual coherence, ideational clarity, and unified voice, unlike Kx4l's Konsults which reveal the messy backend langue or system. This Apollonian-Dionysius mix phases in and out with labyrinthian threads of Ariadne, Zhuangzi, and a bewildered Borgesian shaman. Both Reports and Konsults function as Spiritual Design Experiments featuring generative AI, linguistic, visual, and gestural transmediation.

Miming prophetic avatars, **AIRs are to Konsults as Aaron is to Moses**, transmediating revelations into text, oracles into visions, gestures into sculptures, only here we're not laying out absolute laws or principles but only those that emerge-dissipate as stakes of dasein design. At stake are e/acc and x-risk schools of AI, Angelic and Anti-Christic figures of mediation, and life under generalized Stockholm Syndrome. Perform or else: **SDX scratch the surface to find the itch.**

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Diagrams appear in different ways.

Lipstick Tracing Three Steps to LaLaLand

Greil Marcus, Jorge Luis Borges, and StudioLab's Secret Worldmaking

For Robert B. Ray

Abstract

This essay reads Greil Marcus's *Lipstick Traces* and "Why I Write" alongside Jorge Luis Borges's "Kafka and His Precursors" and "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" to clarify StudioLab as a practice of critical, transmedia worldmaking. Marcus begins with the critical event: an encounter that moves a person, enlarges the context of a cultural object, and calls for a public response. *Lipstick Traces* extends that response into a secret history, following a common charge across heresy, Dada, Situationism, May 1968, and punk. Borges complicates this genealogy by showing that a later work creates the precursors through which it becomes legible. Tlön, in turn, reveals how collaboratively invented languages, artifacts, and encyclopedias can migrate from fiction into institutions and reality. StudioLab gathers these operations while adding an ethical and practical turn: it transforms critical encounters into cosmograms, workshops, prototypes, and public passages, yet keeps every model open to interruption. StudioLab thus appears as a self-critical Orbis Tertius—not one total world, but shared equipment for making, testing, traversing, and leaving worlds.

The Work Begins in a Critical Event

StudioLab often gets described through its visible arrangements: seminar, studio, lab, and field; research translated across essays, diagrams, comics, videos, workshops, installations, and public encounters; students and community partners moving between critical analysis and collaborative making. Such descriptions remain accurate, but they do not yet explain the force that sets the arrangement in motion. They can make StudioLab sound like an instructional format or a media-production workflow. Greil Marcus offers a deeper beginning. In "Why I Write," he recalls approaching criticism not as a credentialed expert but as a fan writing from love, excitement, disappointment, and betrayal. A record seized him, and the seizure demanded an answer. The question did not begin with disciplinary jurisdiction—who possesses the authorized method for interpreting this object?—but with an intensity: Why does this affect me so strongly, and what does that response reveal about the world in which the object and I meet? (Marcus 2023).

Marcus locates the decisive turn in his 1969 encounter with the Rolling Stones' *Let It Bleed*. The album could not remain merely an album. Its voices, sounds, fears, historical closures, and anticipations required him to widen the field toward photography, cinema, fiction, politics, and every other form of cultural speech that seemed to feed into the record or bleed out of it. Criticism emerged as an analysis of one's response to something outside oneself, but that analysis did not reduce the encounter to private taste. It claimed what Marcus calls cultural citizenship: the right and obligation to say publicly what one thinks an object does and why it matters, while accepting the reciprocal obligation to listen to other responses (Marcus 2023).

This formulation gives StudioLab its elementary scene. StudioLab begins when something refuses to remain an example. A song, hospital procedure, philosophical passage, civic crisis, interface, family memory, hurricane map, classroom routine, or half-heard phrase interrupts the categories assigned

to it. The encounter asks for a context larger than the one ready-made disciplines provide. It also asks for more than interpretation. The respondent must find or invent a form capable of carrying the event toward others. A written reflection may become a comic; a comic may become a conversation with a partner organization; that conversation may require a role-play, a diagram, a prototype, or an installation. The object does not enter a preexisting StudioLab container. Its force assembles the studio, lab, seminar, and field that it needs.

Marcus calls the most consequential encounters “critical events”: experiences in which a work suddenly makes the world look different and plants a question that may demand years of return. Repetition does not master such a work. Marcus can reread a novel or replay a song and still meet a detail that reorganizes every earlier encounter. The work remains eventful because it exceeds the account already given of it. StudioLab likewise treats iteration less as linear improvement than as recursive re-entry. A group does not simply revise Version One into a more efficient Version Two. Each return can change the problem, the participants, the relevant history, and the meaning of the earlier versions. The prototype revises the inquiry that produced it.

The endpoint of criticism, for Marcus, does not lie in agreement or definitive explanation. He hopes to move another person some fraction of the distance that a work moved him—to move someone from one place in the world to another place “three steps away,” where the world no longer looks the same (Marcus 2023). That image names the modest and enormous ambition of StudioLab. A deliverable need not conquer an audience, settle a debate, or scale into a universal platform. It must construct a passage. The passage may enable someone to see another stakeholder, hear a suppressed voice, feel the weight of an abstraction, question an inherited category, or imagine an institution that does not yet exist. StudioLab designs those three steps.

Something moves us. The encounter enlarges its own context. We make a form capable of moving someone else.

A Secret History without a Family Tree

Lipstick Traces extends the critical event across historical time. Marcus begins with the Sex Pistols and follows an insurgent charge backward and sideways through the Situationist International, Lettrism, Dada, May 1968, seventeenth-century Ranters, and medieval heresies. The result does not resemble a conventional history of influence. Marcus does not claim that each group read, trained, or organized the next. Nor does he construct a stable doctrine passed intact from one generation to another. He listens for a common voice—absolute demands, refusals of administered life, assaults on the spectacle, fleeting experiences of freedom—transmitted through people and forms that may remain unaware of one another (Marcus 1989).

This method explains why Lipstick Traces feels so close to StudioLab. StudioLab also follows charges across forms rather than securing a single disciplinary identity. The charge may appear as Dada sound poetry, a Situationist constructed situation, a Fluxus score, a participatory design workshop, a spiritual exercise, a speculative artifact, a community comic, or a collaborative cosmogram. What matters does not coincide with the medium that temporarily carries it. An intensity migrates. One form exhausts or institutionalizes itself; another receives the unfinished demand.

Transmedia knowledge, in this sense, means more than publishing the same content in several formats. A proposition does not merely get copied from article to slide deck, video, and website. It mutates through each passage. The essay offers sequence and qualification; the diagram enables simultaneous relations; the comic gives concepts bodies and scenes; the workshop distributes agency; the prototype enters a practical situation and elicits consequences that no representation could fully predict. Something persists through the transfers, but no medium leaves it untouched. StudioLab follows the trace while testing what each new form makes possible and what it suppresses.

Marcus's secret history also helps distinguish StudioLab from an innovation lab. The latter often begins with a problem brief, a method, and an anticipated solution. Marcus begins with a scandalous or excessive event whose demand remains uncertain. His history follows negations that refuse the official organization of culture and everyday life. StudioLab inherits that refusal, especially from the world diagnosed in *Perform or Else*: a world in which people, organizations, technologies, and nations confront constant demands to perform, optimize, demonstrate impact, and pass tests (McKenzie 2001). Yet StudioLab cannot remain satisfied with denunciation. It asks how refusal might acquire equipment, collaborators, spaces, and repeatable forms without surrendering its charge.

The decisive transformation runs from negation toward construction without converting critique into cheerful solutionism. A Situationist refusal of passive spectatorship becomes the design of a situation in which participants can act and know differently. A critique of metrics becomes a care-feedback cosmography. An analysis of institutional roles becomes a role rotation that lets participants inhabit conflicting obligations. A philosophical problem becomes an experiential architecture. StudioLab turns the critical "No" into a question: What artifact, score, gathering, mask, interface, map, or rule might let an alternative become perceptible and briefly livable?

That constructive turn does not leave Marcus behind. It radicalizes his account of criticism as response. Marcus writes until the cultural object opens a larger world. StudioLab writes, draws, stages, builds, and facilitates until the response opens a world others can enter. The critic's cultural citizenship becomes participatory cultural production. Hear/Create/Deliver does not reduce criticism to a three-step formula; it materializes the reciprocal structure Marcus describes. Hear the object and the people gathered around it. Create a response adequate to that encounter. Deliver the response into a public situation where others can answer and change it.

The Future Creates Its Precursors

Jorge Luis Borges makes the secret history stranger. In "Kafka and His Precursors," Borges lists works by Zeno, Han Yu, Kierkegaard, Robert Browning, Léon Bloy, and Lord Dunsany that now sound Kafkaesque. The pieces do not necessarily resemble one another. They acquire their relation through Kafka. Had Kafka never written, Borges argues, the relevant quality in these earlier works would remain imperceptible; Kafka's work changes our conception of the past as much as it modifies the future. His compact conclusion—"each writer creates his precursors"—purifies the precursor of simple causality or rivalry (Borges 1951).

Borges provides a precise account of what Marcus accomplishes. Punk does not merely inherit a continuous lineage from medieval heretics through Dada and the Situationists. Punk teaches Marcus

how to hear those scattered events together. The Sex Pistols create the precursors through which their own eruption becomes legible. Lipstick Traces consequently does not excavate a lineage that had waited, fully formed, beneath official history. It composes a retroactive constellation. A later event sends a charge backward, selecting, intensifying, and diverting earlier fragments.

StudioLab creates its precursors in the same manner. It does not descend cleanly from one discipline or institution. Once StudioLab exists, however, a series of previously separate practices begin to look like moments of an unfinished project: Dewey's laboratory pedagogy, Bauhaus workshops, Black Mountain College, Dada events, Situationist constructions, Fluxus scores, participatory action research, design charrettes, Hadot's spiritual exercises, Heidegger's analyses of equipment and worldhood, and Ulmer's heuristics. These practices did not all anticipate StudioLab, and they do not naturally agree with one another. StudioLab makes their latent relations visible by composing a practice in which their differences can work together.

This retroactive construction changes the meaning of influence. A genealogical account normally asks who came first, who read whom, and which concepts traveled along documented channels. Those questions still matter, but they cannot explain the creative work of inheritance. StudioLab asks a different question: What past becomes visible from the world we now need to construct? The answer does not authorize arbitrary appropriation. It creates an obligation to revisit the selected precursor, attend to its singularity, and register the distortions introduced by the new constellation. The future that creates a precursor must also accept correction from the precursor it creates.

The relation therefore runs in both directions. StudioLab makes Hadot newly legible as a designer of exercises rather than only a historian of ancient philosophy; Hadot, in turn, tests whether StudioLab's exercises actually transform modes of living or merely decorate instruction. StudioLab makes Heidegger legible through tools, environments, care, and world-disclosure; Heidegger tests whether design has reduced worldhood to human-centered planning. StudioLab makes the Situationists legible as precursors of participatory worldmaking; the Situationists test whether collaboration has become managed participation or branded innovation. A precursor does not provide a badge of legitimacy. It returns as a demanding interlocutor.

Borges thus prevents the StudioLab archive from hardening into a heroic origin story. The archive should not present a straight line that culminates inevitably in the present. It should remain a cosmogram: a provisional arrangement of routes, breaks, media, institutions, and encounters assembled from a particular position and open to rearrangement by later work. Every substantial StudioLab project may create a different precursor field. A healthcare comic, a haunted-house consultation, a dance-and-taxi-driver course, and a philosophical zine need not inherit the same past. Their genealogies emerge from the demands of their critical events.

From Secret History to Worlding

"Kafka and His Precursors" explains how a new work invents the past through which it can be read. "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" shifts the problem from genealogy to worldmaking. Borges's narrator first discovers an anomalous encyclopedia entry describing Uqbar, then a volume from the First Encyclopaedia of Tlön. The volume offers a methodical fragment of an unknown planet's entire history: languages, architectures, games, seas, mythologies, mathematics, metaphysics, animals, and fire, all articulated with disconcerting coherence. Such a world cannot come from one author.

Borges imagines a secret society of astronomers, biologists, engineers, metaphysicians, poets, chemists, painters, geometers, and moralists, each subordinating an infinitesimal contribution to a vast collaborative plan (Borges 1940).

Tlön supplies a dark mirror for StudioLab. StudioLab also gathers heterogeneous makers around the construction of worlds. Its encyclopedia remains distributed across concepts and artifacts: seminar-studio-lab-field, transmedia knowledge, cosmograms, Thought-Action Figures, spiritual design exercises, Hear/Create/Deliver, D0–D4 shuttling, Helyx diagrams, zines, interfaces, games, workshops, and public installations. Seen separately, these objects may appear as local experiments. Seen together, they begin to describe an alternative ecology of knowledge—its roles, rituals, temporalities, interfaces, ethics, and forms of evidence.

The comparison clarifies that StudioLab does not merely communicate knowledge about a world. It composes temporary worlds in which new knowledge can occur. A workshop changes who may speak, what counts as evidence, which roles participants occupy, how long a problem remains open, and what forms an answer can take. The room, schedule, media, prompts, bodies, and artifacts participate in the inquiry. Experiential architecture names this redistribution of thought across an environment. Participants do not stand outside a situation and represent it from nowhere; they move within a designed arrangement that reveals some relations, conceals others, and generates consequences.

Borges's encyclopedia also clarifies the infrastructural power of genres. Tlön enters reality not initially through armies but through entries, volumes, alphabets, manuals, anthologies, objects, and schools. A genre creates expectations about what can appear, how it will count, and what forms of action may follow. StudioLab's *détournement* of institutional genres works at this level. A lecture becomes a participatory score. A case study becomes a role-play world. A strategic plan becomes a cosmogram. An assessment becomes a reflective passage. A scholarly argument becomes a zine, game, or installation. The altered genre changes not only how knowledge looks but how people gather around it.

Here the transmedia artifact becomes more than an output. It acts as an ontological operator. A diagram that represents stakeholders may remain illustrative; a diagram that prompts stakeholders to redraw their relations begins to reorganize the situation it depicts. A comic that explains a health practice may remain informational; a comic co-created with community partners can shift voice, trust, and institutional response. A role card may seem theatrical; once participants act through it, the role can expose obligations and exclusions that abstract discussion kept invisible. The artifact enters the world and changes what the world can notice about itself.

This process brings StudioLab close to what Tlön dramatizes: concepts, languages, and objects can pass from invented systems into lived reality. Yet Borges refuses the easy celebration of worldbuilding. The more coherent Tlön becomes, the more seductive and dangerous it grows. Its invented order begins to displace the disorderly world that received it. StudioLab must therefore learn from Tlön twice: first as a model of collaborative, transdisciplinary worldmaking; then as a warning about the power of models to colonize reality.

Prototypes as Hrönir

Borges gives this migration from expectation to object a memorable figure: the hrön. In Tlön, two people search for a lost pencil. The first finds it and says nothing; the second finds another pencil, no less real but closer to expectation. Such secondary objects arise from memory, distraction, suggestion, and hope. Tlön's researchers eventually develop methods for producing them, even staging archaeological searches in which prepared expectations generate masks, swords, urns, and altered pasts. Recursive hrönir exaggerate the deviations of the first object; at later degrees they achieve forms of purity absent from the supposed original. The past becomes as plastic and docile as the future (Borges 1940).

The hrön offers an exact and unsettling model of prototyping. A prototype does not simply shrink a future object into a preliminary version. It materializes an expectation so that the expectation can act back upon the people and situation that produced it. A speculative interface, mock newspaper, scenario, comic, or cardboard environment makes a possible world perceptible. Participants respond to the artifact; their response modifies the imagined future; the revised future generates another artifact. The loop produces realities that did not preexist the process.

StudioLab prototypes function as disciplined collective hrönir. They emerge from hope, fear, memory, and suggestion, but they do not remain private fantasies. They get delivered into a field of other bodies, histories, institutions, materials, and constraints. That delivery matters because every hrön risks confirming the expectations that produced it. A workshop that asks only questions its framework can answer will inevitably discover its own ontology. A prototype shown only to its makers will return their assumptions with added polish. A cosmogram can become a hallucination of completeness.

StudioLab therefore needs friction. Community partners, recalcitrant materials, institutional limits, inconvenient histories, conflicting roles, bodily fatigue, technical breakdowns, and unexpected interpretations prevent the prototype from becoming pure self-confirmation. These are not external obstacles to the design process; they comprise the world's response. The prototype becomes useful when it attracts corrections that its makers could not have invented alone. A successful hrön does not prove the imagined world correct. It reveals where expectation meets alterity.

This account also reframes iteration. Design discourse often celebrates iteration as though repetition naturally approaches truth. Borges reminds us that recursion can amplify aberration. A second-order prototype may exaggerate a hidden assumption; a ninth-order system may become indistinguishable from an earlier error; a polished artifact may display a purity absent from any lived original. Iteration requires metamodeling: the capacity to examine not only the object but the process, roles, media, values, and ontological commitments that keep generating it.

Artificial intelligence intensifies the hrön problem. Generative systems can rapidly materialize expectations as prose, images, diagrams, personas, scenarios, and synthetic archives. They can make an imagined world feel encyclopedic before anyone has encountered the people or conditions it claims to represent. Used within StudioLab, AI should therefore function neither as oracle nor automatic producer but as a recursive abduction partner whose outputs demand field testing, transmediation, and contestation. The speed of generation increases the need for slow encounters with what refuses the prompt.

The Tlönian Danger

The final movement of Borges's story makes the warning explicit. Objects from Tlön begin appearing in the ordinary world. Its encyclopedia circulates through manuals, summaries, translations, authorized editions, pirated editions, and schools. Reality yields to the invented planet because Tlön offers an order more coherent and decipherable than the world's inhuman complexity. Humanity becomes enchanted by a rigor devised by "chess masters, not of angels." A fictional past displaces another past; languages and disciplines transform; the narrator predicts that the world will become Tlön (Borges 1940).

Any successful method carries this danger. Design thinking can become Tlön when every situation turns into empathy, ideation, prototyping, and testing. Institutional assessment becomes Tlön when only measurable outputs count as real. A political theory becomes Tlön when every event arrives already assigned to its explanatory place. Artificial intelligence becomes Tlön when statistical fluency acquires the authority of an encyclopedia and synthetic coherence replaces difficult contact with sources and worlds. StudioLab can become Tlön when its concepts cease opening situations and begin deciding in advance what every situation must contain.

The danger grows especially acute for a practice rich in names, diagrams, stations, and protocols. D0–D4, Thought-Action Figures, Helyx, ShuttleKraft, spiritual design exercises, and cosmography can create a powerful shared language. Such language enables collaboration across disciplines, but it can also become an imperial vocabulary. The test remains pragmatic and ethical: Does a concept allow participants to perceive and act upon something that remained unavailable, or does it merely rename the world in StudioLab's image? Does a diagram reveal relations and missing voices, or does it pacify conflict through visual symmetry? Does a game open roles to transformation, or does it pre-script every possible move?

Marcus supplies one defense against Tlön. His criticism begins again whenever an encounter overturns what he thinks he knows. Before Titian's *Assumption of the Virgin*, Marcus briefly finds his commitments to everyday culture erased by an overwhelming experience of sacred high art. He later recovers his distance, but he preserves the event as proof that art can cancel or turn one's knowledge on its head through something unforeseen (Marcus 2023). A living method must invite such defeats. It must create conditions in which the object, partner, place, or participant can break the framework.

D0 names this continuing openness within StudioLab. It should not appear as a romantic origin that participants leave behind on the way toward more articulated stations. D0 recurs whenever a situation exceeds the roles, identities, worlds, and thresholds already mapped by D1 through D4. It interrupts the system's confidence. D4, likewise, should not crown a developmental hierarchy. The liminaut carries no guarantee of superior insight; the figure marks the capacity to cross, translate, and leave constructed worlds. Shuttling matters because no station gets to become the whole planet.

StudioLab's perfumative dimension also resists totalization. The performative tends toward an act that succeeds or fails under recognizable conventions; the perfumative drifts, lingers, attracts, contaminates, and returns elsewhere in altered form. A trace cannot command its reception. It may pass through a diagram, joke, memory, smell, gesture, or phrase and reappear in a project far from

its origin. Marcus's secret voice travels this way. Borges's precursors emerge this way. Perfumative transmission preserves effects that cannot be fully scheduled by the model.

A Self-Critical Orbis Tertius

The analogy with Tlön therefore requires a reversal. StudioLab should not aspire to build the one coherent alternative world that finally replaces the damaged present. It should construct counter-Tlön's: provisional worlds that reveal the contingency of the world presented as natural, inevitable, or administratively complete. A counter-Tlön does not deny its own artifice. It foregrounds the prompts, media, roles, exclusions, and decisions through which it came into being. It equips participants to revise or abandon it.

This makes StudioLab a self-critical Orbis Tertius. Like Borges's society, it gathers diverse makers and builds across media, disciplines, and generations. Unlike Orbis Tertius, it refuses secrecy as sovereign control and coherence as conquest. Its worlds should remain public experiments accountable to those who inhabit their consequences. The aim does not lie in making reality conform to the encyclopedia. The aim lies in using artifacts to expose how every operative reality already depends upon encyclopedias, classifications, interfaces, stories, metrics, and institutional scripts—and then opening those constructions to collective alteration.

The relation between Marcus and Borges now becomes operational. Marcus supplies the encounter that moves us and the secret history that lets an insurgent charge travel across forms. "Kafka and His Precursors" supplies retroaction: the new work creates the archive that can sustain and challenge it. Tlön supplies worlding: artifacts, languages, and distributed collaborations can reorganize reality. It also supplies the danger: a constructed order may erase the world's recalcitrance. StudioLab adds shuttling among these operations.

A StudioLab project can begin from a critical event rather than a predetermined problem. It traces the event across media, histories, and institutions, not to accumulate context indefinitely but to discover the forces asking for response. It composes a precursor constellation that gives the project allies and adversaries. It materializes an answer as an artifact or experiential architecture. It delivers that answer into a public or partner situation where other people and materials can alter it. It then remaps the genealogy and model in light of what happened. The sequence forms a Helyx rather than a closed loop: return never restores the same point.

Care enters at every turn. Without care, the critical event becomes personal fascination detached from consequences. Without care, secret history becomes aesthetic appropriation. Without care, precursor-making converts others into raw material for one's lineage. Without care, prototypes manipulate participants and treat communities as testing grounds. Without care, counter-Tlön becomes another colonizing fiction. Care does not mean avoiding antagonism or difficulty. It means accepting responsibility for the relations and worlds an artifact helps compose.

This responsibility distinguishes worldmaking from solutionism. A solution claims to close a problem. A world gathers problems, roles, histories, equipment, affects, and possible actions in a way that allows them to transform one another. StudioLab cannot guarantee emancipatory outcomes, but it can make its worlding operations perceptible and contestable. It can show the seams. It can preserve exits. It can ask participants not only what they have made, but what kind of

makers the process has made of them and what kinds of worlds their artifacts invite others to inhabit.

Three Steps Away

Marcus's image of moving someone three steps away brings the argument back to scale. Lipstick Traces follows impossible demands across centuries, yet "Why I Write" measures success through a slight displacement in another person's world. Borges invents planets and revised histories, yet his fictions often begin with a sentence in an encyclopedia, a misplaced volume, a compass, or a pencil. StudioLab works at this hinge between immense cosmography and small artifacts. A four-page comic can carry an institutional critique. A workshop prompt can redirect a partnership. A hand-drawn map can let a group see the roles that had organized it invisibly. A phrase can become equipment years later.

The trace does not need to become a monument. StudioLab's most consequential effects may survive as residues: a diagram remembered during another meeting, a role someone refuses to resume, a collaborator newly recognized as a theorist, a method altered beyond recognition, a student's confidence that research can take public and sensuous form. Marcus teaches us to read such residues as historical evidence. Borges teaches us that later works may reveal them as precursors. The archive should therefore preserve not only finished outputs but transmissions, mutations, failures, returns, and afterlives.

StudioLab can now be defined without reducing it to a curriculum, laboratory, or brand. It is a practice of cultural citizenship organized around critical events. It follows what moves us across forms and times. It constructs the precursors that let a response find company. It materializes possible worlds through transmedia artifacts and experiential architectures. It tests those worlds against partners, places, histories, bodies, and materials. It preserves openings through which an unexpected event can interrupt the model and begin the work again.

Marcus explains how the charge travels. Borges explains how the future invents its past and how an invented world enters reality. StudioLab joins these movements while refusing their closure. It makes secret histories public, turns critique into equipment, and builds worlds with exits. Its task does not lie in making the world StudioLab. Its task lies in helping people recognize the worlds already making them—and move, together, three steps away.

StudioLab is a self-critical *Orbis Tertius*: a collaborative practice that creates its precursors, prototypes possible worlds, and preserves the passages through which those worlds can be interrupted, revised, or left behind. Once in sync, it's three steps to LaLaLand.

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THREE STEPS AWAY

"I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library."
— J.L.B. *

ENCYCLOPEDIA
OR,
A DICTIONARY
OF
ARTS, SCIENCES,
AND
MISCELLANEOUS LITERATURE.

— Vol. I.

A—Boolean Algebra.

A graphic essay on traces, precursors, and possible worlds.

Greil Marcus, Borges, and StudioLab's Secret Art of Worldmaking

"The past is never dead. It's not even past."
— G.M.



WE WANT THE WORLD AND ITS POSSIBILITIES

A MEDIA GENEALOGY



FROM TRACE TO TRANSMISSION TO WORLD.

EL ALEPH

"Every record has a secret."
— G.M.

MYSTERY TRAIN

RHYTHM & NOISE

LIPSTICK TRACES

A Secret History of Rock 'n' Roll

THE LIBRARY IS INFINITE. *

The map is not the territory.
— G.M.

LABYRINTHS ARE MAPS OF DESIRE. *

Ficciones

El Aleph

Historia Universal de la Infamia

BORGES

CRITICAL EVENTS

Why I Write

Greil Marcus begins with being struck.

Criticism starts when an artwork or event seizes us. Something happens — sudden, unexpected, unmistakable — and the world around it enlarges. The ordinary coordinates shift. Time feels different. We are no longer where we were. The experience demands attention, and with it, questions. Who made this? Where does it come from? What does it mean — and what is it doing to me?

Writing is the attempt to follow that force, to trace the shock backward and outward, to map the connections, the histories, the voices that converge in the moment of impact. Not to explain it away, but to remain inside its energy long enough to understand what it has set in motion.

“
Something strikes us;
the question is why.”

— G.M.

NOTES / AFTER THE SONG

- Who?
- Where?
- When?
- Lineage?
- Echoes?

FOLLOW
THE THREAD.

G.M.

Criticism is
attention with
consequences.

— G.M.

THE CRITICAL ARC



NOT LINEAR. OFTEN MESSY. ALWAYS ALIVE. *

It begins
not with
theory but
with impact.

— G.M.

HEARING
IS AN
OPENING.

*

SIDE 1
A SONG
ARRIVES

*

EVERYTHING
IS CONNECTED.

*

BY
LINES
OF FORCE.

*

FOLLOW
THE
RETURN.

*

LIPSTICK TRACES

Secret Histories from Heresy to Punk

How insurgent energies travel.

Marcus does not trace a tidy lineage of influence. He follows a recurring charge of refusal and impossible demand as it jumps across disconnected forms. Not a straight line, but a relay-passed hand to hand, smuggled through books, songs, jokes, pamphlets, and walls.

"Every record has a secret; every movement leaves a trace."
— G.M.



TRACE PROTOCOL



Not progress. Pressure. Transfer.
The same spark. Different fuel.

History is a palimpsest.
Scratch.
Listen.
Jump.

— G.M.

1 HERESY

Denounced, excommunicated, carried by word of mouth.

AUDITE!
VERITAS
NON POTEST
COMBURI

— Dolcino, c.1300

2 DADA

Make it new.
Make it nonsense.

3 SITUATIONISTS

Construct situations.
Détourne everything.

INTERNATIONALE
SITUATIONNISTE
1957-1972

4 MAY '68

The streets become the text.

5 PUNK

Three chords.
Safety pins.
No future?
Good.

NEVER MIND
THE BOLLOCKS

HERE'S THE

SEX PISTOLS

6 STUDIOLAB

Record. Distort.
Map. Transmit.
Refuse the finished story.

SOUS LES
PAVÉS
LA PLAGE

CRÉER
C'EST
RÉSISTER

Le Monde
LA BEAUTÉ
SERA
CONVULSIVE

— Situationist Times

NOT ESCAPE. PRACTICE. RECONFIGURE. BECOME.

WHEN MODELS BECOME WORLDS

"Ontologies
do not stay
in books."

— G.M.

Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius

*From encyclopedia entry
to inhabited reality.*



Tlön is a fabricated world
invented in secret by scholars.
Its encyclopedias, languages,
and metaphysics were initially
mere texts—yet over time,
they escaped the library.
Institutions adopted its logic.
Objects conformed to its
categories. People began
to live according to its
fictions. A map became
a territory. A system
became a world.

*So it could
happen again.*



DANGER *

Every system can
become a Tlön if it
forgets its exits.

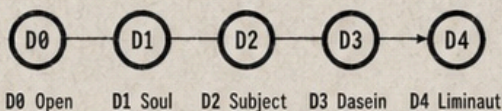


FROM TRACE TO WORLD

StudioLab as Counter-Tlön*

Trace, precursor, prototype, passage.

STUDIOLAB PATHWAYS



A STUDIO RHYTHM



StudioLab traces what moves us—murmurs, anomalies, longings—across records, rooms, and ruptures. We create artifacts that argue, diagrams that breathe, stories that open. We prototype worlds to test how we might live otherwise—knowing each is partial, provisional, and revisable. We preserve the ability to move among worlds without letting any one model become total. Counter-Tlön is not against the library; it is against forgetting the exits.

*“Prototype worlds;
keep the exits open.”*

* Tlön is infinite; Counter-Tlön is practiced.

“We do not
build the world
as final. We map
it so we can
move again.”
—G.M.



MANIFESTO FOR COUNTER-TLÖNS

* Seven theses for StudioLab worldmaking

We don't
predict
the future.
We prototype
alternative
pasts. — G.M.

- 1.* Start from what strikes us.
- 2.* Follow traces across forms.
- 3.* Let new works invent their precursors.
- 4.* Build artifacts that prototype worlds.
- 5.* Refuse systems that close every exit.
- 6.* Move across media, roles, and scales.
- 7.* Aim to move someone three steps away.



A MEDIA GENEALOGY



FROM **TRACE** TO TRANSMISSION
TO **WORLD**.



Not escape. Practice. Reconfigure. Become.*



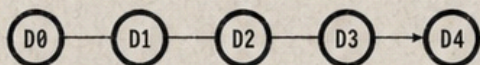
FROM TRACE TO WORLD

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—G.M.

StudioLab as Counter-Tlön*

Trace, precursor, prototype, passage.

STUDIOLAB PATHWAYS



D0 Open D1 Soul D2 Subject D3 Dasein D4 Liminal

A STUDIO RHYTHM



HEAR



CREATE



DELIVER

StudioLab traces what moves us—murmurs, anomalies, longings—across records, rooms, and ruptures. We create artifacts that argue, diagrams that breathe, stories that open. We prototype worlds to test how we might live otherwise—knowing each is partial, provisional, and revisable. We preserve the ability to move among worlds without letting any one model become total. Counter-Tlön is not against the library; it is against forgetting the exits.

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- 7.* Aim to move someone three steps away.

Not escape. Practice. Reconfigure. Become.*

PRACTICE

BECOME

NOT ESCAPE

A closing score

We do not leave the world behind;
we learn to move within and
across it.

*



StudioLab turns criticism into equipment,
genealogy into constellation, and
worldmaking into a shared practice
of care and experimentation.

SUGGESTED READINGS

- Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces*
- Greil Marcus, *Why I Write*
- Jorge Luis Borges, *Kafka and His Precursors*
- Jorge Luis Borges, *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius*

THREE STEPS AWAY

A secret history becomes a possible world.

"Between the record and the radio, between the map and the territory, a doorway opens."
— G.M.

OFFICIAL SELECTION
BERLIN
FILM FESTIVAL
2025

OFFICIAL SELECTION
DOCNYC
2025

OFFICIAL SELECTION
FIDMarseille
2025



TRACE → TRANSMISSION → WORLD.



Not escape. Practice. Reconfigure. Become.

A FILM BY STUDIOLAB *

GREIL MARCUS • JORGE LUIS BORGES • STUDIOLAB

TRACES. PRECURSORS. WORLDMAKING.

STUDIOLAB presents THREE STEPS AWAY GREIL MARCUS JORGE LUIS BORGES STUDIOLAB Edited & Directed by STUDIOLAB Cinematography SHUTTLEKRAFT
Sound Design BEYNGLAB Original Music by SHUTTLEKRAFT Research & Archival Production STUDIOLAB Executive Producers SHUTTLEKRAFT BEYNGLAB

* NOT ESCAPE. PRACTICE. RECONFIGURE. BECOME. *

WISEACRE

Doug Wise's Ontological Comedy Club

Ge-Stell, Daseintropy, Dopamine, Deconstraint, and the Thick Sublime.

plan, dread, drift, joke, disclose...

The world is not a problem. It's a punchline we co-author.

THE NOTHINGNESS

Not absence—our deepest possibility.

1 CORE MOVES



Ge-Stell / Positionality
We are always already positioned—and positioning.



Daseintropy
Being frays into optionality.



Deconstraint
Release constraints to open new possibilities.



Thick Sublime
Overwhelming excess that still makes worlds.



Paranoid Comedy
Turn dread into joke so we can act.



Floating Signifier
Meaning drifts; play carries sense forward.



2 ESSAY CONSTELLATION

Aboriginal Ge-Stell	God of Ge-Stell	Dinosein
On Dopamine	Deeper into Dopamine	CRISPR & Deconstraint
Ontological Red Queen	The Importance of the Nothingness	Poietic As
Polytroposein	Thaumanoia	Floating Signifier
Heidegger, Freud & the Other Clearing	Hesiod Heidegger	Genealogy of Switcherooity

Not a syllabus—an invitation to drift productively.

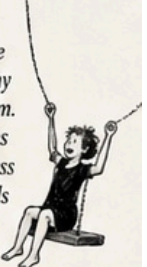
3 WHY IT MATTERS

Production Mania We chase output instead of meaning.	Technological Capture Ge-Stell corrals attention and desire.
Evolutionary Plasticity Life and culture can still mutate.	Wonder / Dread Thick sublime expands our band.
World-Maintenance We hold the world with stories and care.	Ontological Comedy Laughter is a serious practice.

4 TOOLKIT

Wander Loosen the path.	Joke Reframe the frame.
Cut Deconstraint habit.	Attend Notice what insists.
Compose Poiesis: make a world.	Share Co-author the playground.

“Wiseacre philosophy is not grim. It giggles at the abyss and builds swings anyway.”



5 WISEACRE PANELS

1 The uncanny creature. We are stranger to ourselves.	2 Gestell captures. The world becomes resource.	3 Dopamine loops. Pleasure pings. Production spins.	4 Cut the code. CRISPR opens life's grammar.	5 Run to stay. The Red Queen never rests.	6 Laugh, don't collapse. Paranoia reheated becomes comedy.	7 Open into nothingness. From the abyss, we poet. →
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StudioLab

Recursive Abduction
Transmedia Conduction
Thought-Action Figuration



METANOIA PLAYGROUND • SDX STATION
PLAY. DREAD. WONDER. DESIGN WORLDS.
studiolab.world/wiseacre →

Mind the Gap_Dao_D0

Wiseacre, Woesean Humanities, Gay Sci-Fi, and AI

Abstract

This essay argues that gay sci-fi can become one of the most powerful contemporary engines for transmediating nihilism into poesis because it occupies a privileged crossing of four forces: D0, the zero-degree gap where world has not yet hardened into identity, genre, platform, or program; Woesean humanities, a post-arboreal account of life, inheritance, lateral transfer, and domain-shifting; genre mechanics, the practical knowledge by which forms mutate through tropes, plots, interfaces, and fandoms; and AI, the newest machinic medium of recombination, completion, hallucination, extraction, and world-making. Doug Wise's Wiseacre station in BeyngLab supplies the crucial comic-ontological hinge. Wise's writings on Angst, the thick sublime, CRISPR, deconstraint, language as the mitochondrion of Being, ontological recognition, entropitarianism, and paranoid comedy show how dread can disclose the nothing without surrendering to it. D0 turns gay melancholy into gay sci-fi by holding the void as a poietic gap: not absence but the deepest possibility. Wiseacre tends this gap with jokes, dread, scissors, dopamine, and world-maintenance. The result is not simply representation of queer characters in futurist settings. It is a theory-practice of queer worlding after the tree, after the closet, after the humanist subject, and after the prompt that thinks every silence should be filled.

1. Thesis: D0 Turns Melancholy Into Gay Sci-Fi

D0 turns gay melancholy to gay sci-fi. It turns nihilism and void to poesis. That formula is the kernel of this essay, and it must be protected from two tempting reductions. First, it is not an optimistic slogan saying that loss simply becomes creativity. Gay melancholy is not a mood to be cured by progress, recognition, representation, or technological novelty. It names the sedimented lifedeath of AIDS, the closet, institutional exclusion, public shame, erotic failure, family rupture, vanished subcultures, unbuilt futures, and archives whose traces are often fragmentary because the world did not care to preserve them. Second, the formula is not a productivity imperative. It does not mean: turn trauma into content; turn void into output; turn queerness into a marketable style; turn the prompt into a world. It means something slower and more dangerous: melancholy can enter D0, the gap or no-thing where meanings loosen, and there become available for poesis.

D0 is not another stage in a linear developmental sequence. It is the zero-degree condition that allows the other stations to appear, mutate, fail, and reappear. D1 gives ritual charge, soul, initiation, liminal intensity. D2 gives subject, identity, law, recognition, rights, and the coming-out narrative. D3 gives critique, deconstruction, Dasein, hermeneutic breakage, and the slantwise labor of refusing capture. D4 gives open-world cosmography, plural dwelling, transmedia platforms, and collective world-design. D0 is different. It is the clearing, gap, Dao, abyss, pause, unprogrammed interval, or not-yet through which these formations become possible. It is not the void as dead end. It is the void before coding, before recognition, before genre, before the machine completes the sentence.

That is why D0 matters so much in the age of AI. Contemporary generative systems are extraordinary completion machines. They convert gaps into probable continuations. They make text where there was silence, image where there was blankness, answer where there was uncertainty. This capacity is wondrous and dangerous at once. If every ambiguity is completed, every archive scraped, every dream statistically regenerated, then the gap itself is colonized. D0 names the refusal to let machine completion become metaphysics. It says that not every queer silence should be answered, not every lost scene should be reconstructed, not every desire should be classified, not every world should be scaled.

Gay sci-fi, then, is not merely the representation of gay people in speculative settings. It is an ontological and genre-mechanical conversion process. It takes the melancholy produced by straight worlds, normative kinship, disciplinary reading machines, and performative optimization and runs it through the gap until it becomes an engine of alternative worlding. The result is neither pure consolation nor pure critique. It is poiesis: the making of worlds, forms, figures, interfaces, rituals, and stories that can carry queer life beyond the closed economy of loss.

This move draws directly on StudioLab's long effort to shuttle between performance, transmedia knowledge, collaborative platforms, and cosmography. In the 2022 interview "Mise en abyme," StudioLab is described as operating in an unsettling world of pandemic, climate change, mutation, spillover, digitality, and performativity; the general theory of performance is not simply an object to be studied but an atmosphere requiring intervention, critique, embodiment, and also "nothing, letting be" (Cheng, Hay, Willis, and McKenzie 2022). That small phrase is the hinge. The project is not only to perform differently, but also to let the gap remain open long enough for another performance, another medium, another world to arrive.

Doug Wise's Wiseacre station gives this hinge a comic body. Wiseacre is the part of BeyngLab where the nothing does not become a solemn doom cult. It is tended with conceptual slapstick, ontological jokes, philosophical beasts, genetic scissors, dopamine loops, and thick-sublime dread. Wise's work shows how the gap can be disclosed without being worshiped, how nihilism can be recognized without being obeyed, and how melancholy can be metabolized without being denied. Wiseacre's motto might be: the void giggles and becomes world.

2. From Representation to Ontological Genre Mechanics

The most familiar way to approach gay sci-fi is through representation: which characters appear, how they are named, whether desire is explicit, whether the story allows queer kinship, whether queer people survive. This remains necessary. Representation matters because invisibility and stereotype have real effects. Yet representation is not enough for the task at hand. The question is not only whether gay characters are present inside a sci-fi world. It is whether gay sci-fi can mutate the assumptions by which a world counts as a world.

Genre is a machine for doing this. Science fiction works by selective mutation. It changes a premise, device, body, environment, law, technology, kinship system, or cosmic scale, then observes what else must change. Darko Suvin famously described science fiction through cognitive estrangement: a novum makes the ordinary appear strange and opens a systematic field of inquiry (Suvin 1979). Fredric Jameson later treated science fiction as a privileged mode for thinking historical possibility, not because it predicts the future but because it makes the present available to cognition through imagined difference (Jameson 2005). From a StudioLab perspective, these genre mechanics are not

simply literary. They are design methods. They generate constraints, test alternatives, build worlds, and expose what a culture mistakes for nature.

Gay sci-fi radicalizes this because queer experience already knows that the "natural" world is a scripted interface. The family, gender, reproduction, the couple, the house, the nation, the school, the bathroom, the archive, the medical file, the legal name, the passport, and the body itself have all functioned as interfaces that route desire and recognition according to normative protocols. Queer theory has long shown that identity is performative, relational, citational, and historically constrained (Butler 1990; Sedgwick 1990). But gay sci-fi can make the infrastructural aspect of this insight visible. It can ask: what kind of spaceship is the family? What kind of operating system is heterosexuality? What database indexes bodies into sex? What ritual lets a chosen family reproduce without biological descent? What happens when desire is not private interiority but a navigational system?

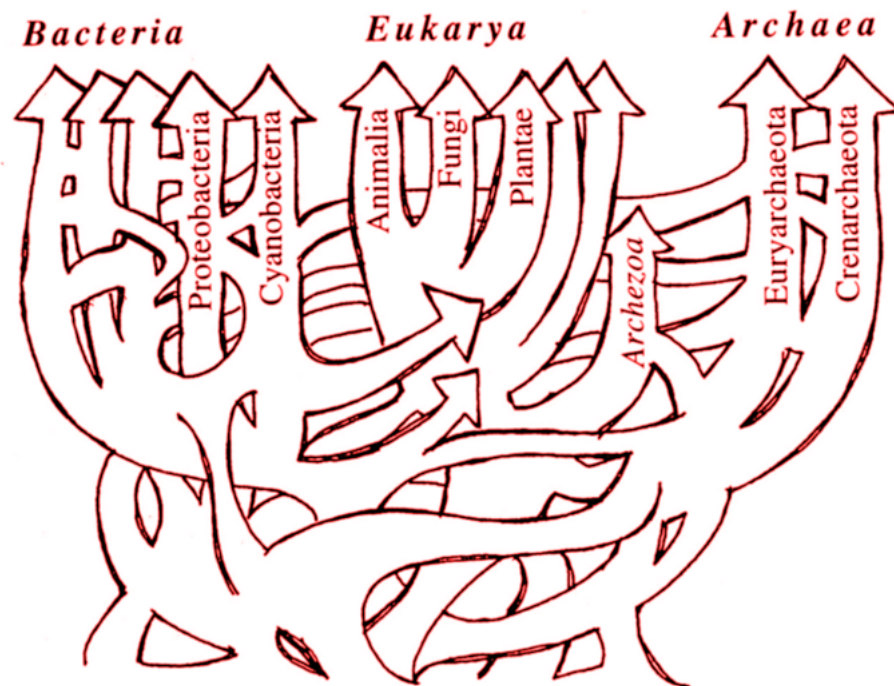
Genre mechanics therefore shift the problem from "include queer content" to "redesign the worlding apparatus." The clone, android, alien lover, hive mind, parasite, time loop, uploaded consciousness, wormhole, archive, bathhouse, ballroom, drag stage, datacenter, and prompt interface become not just tropes but tools. They allow gay sci-fi to test alternate relations between body and code, memory and kinship, loss and futurity, desire and scale. Samuel R. Delany's work is indispensable here because it does not merely add gayness to science fiction; it remakes the relation between sexuality, language, city, race, class, myth, and semiotic order (Delany 1976; Delany 1984; Delany 1999). Ursula K. Le Guin's carrier-bag theory helps reorient genre away from heroic conquest toward holding, gathering, carrying, and sustaining (Le Guin 1989). Octavia Butler's fictions continually stage contact, symbiosis, coercion, adaptation, reproduction, and survival as ethical and biological entanglements rather than clean choices (Butler 1987-1989). Joanna Russ, James Tiptree Jr./Alice Sheldon, and queer fandom likewise show that genre is a mutation chamber whose forms can be hacked from inside.

The risk, however, is that mutation itself becomes a new imperative: mutate or else. Late performativity loves innovation, disruption, agility, pivoting, remix, resilience, and adaptive capacity. It can easily absorb queer mutation as market style. Every trope can be monetized, every gap framed as a design opportunity, every subculture converted into dataset and aesthetic. This is where D0 becomes essential. It interrupts the automatic conversion of difference into product. It preserves the not-yet that genre needs in order to be more than variation within a captured system.

Gay sci-fi therefore has a double task. It must use genre mechanics aggressively enough to break normative world-design, but it must also protect the gap from becoming just another engine of production. The speculative device should open, not close. The alien should estrange, not merely symbolize. The AI should not simply become a new subject asking to be recognized as human. The spaceship should not simply reproduce the family romance in chrome. The future should not simply redeem the present. Gay sci-fi works best when it lets the void remain partially void, when it lets the story discover that no stable ontology preceded the tale.

3. Woesean Humanities: After the Tree, Before the World

Woesean humanities begins with a biological event that is also an image crisis. Carl Woese and George Fox's 1977 ribosomal RNA analysis did not merely add a branch to biology's family tree. It revealed that living systems represented three deep lines of descent: eubacteria, archaebacteria,



and the urkaryotic/eukaryotic line (Woese and Fox 1977). Woese later argued that biology needed to move beyond a narrow molecular paradigm toward a more evolutionary, systems-oriented, and integrative understanding of life (Woese 2004). The humanities can learn from this break. The tree of life is not wrong as a local model, but it is incomplete as a metaphysics.

The Woesean shock is that life does not unfold only through vertical descent, species purity, and genealogical continuity. Life also evolves through horizontal gene transfer, symbiosis, endosymbiosis, viral insertion, microbial collectivity, domain-shifting, and code-sharing. Ford Doolittle's diagram "Uprooting the Tree of Life" made the point crisply: genomic evidence disturbed the tidy tree and showed evolution as more tangled than classical lineage models had implied (Doolittle 2000). David Quammen later popularized this as the "tangled tree," but the deeper philosophical import is already clear. Life is not simply arborescent. It is networked, lateral, recombinant, and plural (Quammen 2018).

For gay sci-fi this matters profoundly. Heteronormative metaphysics has long relied on the family tree: descent, inheritance, bloodline, legitimacy, father, son, reproduction, property, name. Queer kinship has often survived by inventing lateral forms: chosen family, house culture, cruising networks, friendship, mentorship, performance lineages, clubs, zines, fandoms, scenes, and mutual aid. A Woesean humanities lets us say that such lateralities are not secondary to "real" descent. They are one of life's fundamental dynamics. Chosen family is not merely a consolation prize for exclusion from the genealogical order. It is a social and affective analog of horizontal transfer.

This does not mean biology simply validates queerness. That would be too easy and too dangerous. The point is not to naturalize queer life by finding microbial precedents. The point is to denaturalize the metaphors that have governed both biology and culture. If the tree is not the master image of life, then straight genealogy loses some of its ontological authority. If evolution includes lateral transfer and symbiotic incorporation, then identity can be reconceived not as essence but as

sedimented exchange. If the living cell itself is a history of merger and constraint-release, then the self-contained sovereign individual becomes a provincial fantasy.

Woesean humanities therefore gives gay sci-fi a deep grammar. The alien is not simply outside the human. The alien may already be inside the cell. The other may be mitochondrial. The archive may be viral. The lover may be a transfer event. The city may be microbial. The body may be a consortium. The spaceship may be an endosymbiotic enclosure. The genre itself may be a plasmid moving across media systems.

This also clarifies why gay sci-fi should not remain trapped in D2 recognition alone. D2 is vital: rights, names, visibility, protection, and identity claims save lives. But a purely D2 gay sci-fi risks making the future into a more inclusive version of the same metaphysical order. It asks: will this society recognize us? A Woesean gay sci-fi asks: what happens when society itself is no longer organized by the tree? What happens when kinship becomes lateral, reproduction becomes semiotic, inheritance becomes shared protocol, and life becomes plural at the root?

The movement from tree to tangle also opens D0. Before a lineage is drawn, before a taxonomy is stabilized, before the organism is sorted into species and domains, there is murk, transfer, experiment, noise, failure, and emergence. D0 is not identical with microbial life, but the microbial fog gives an image for D0: the pre-arboreal condition in which life has not yet been forced into the diagram. Gay sci-fi can inhabit that fog as a poietic space. It can imagine worlds where descent is neither erased nor sovereign, where inheritance is not bloodline but shared capacity to mutate.

4. D0: The Gap That Resists Completion

D0 is the most fragile element in this system because it is easiest to misunderstand. It is not mere emptiness. It is not a mystical elsewhere outside technology, language, sex, history, or politics. It is not a new absolute. It is the gap, clearing, pause, or interval that permits figuration without guaranteeing it. It is where the world is not yet a problem to be solved but a punchline to be co-authored.

Heidegger's analyses of Angst and nothingness help locate this gap, but Wise's readings are what make it usable for BeyngLab. In "Angst and the thick sublime," Wise emphasizes that dread decouples Dasein from ordinary mattering. The familiar world collapses; things sink into insignificance; anxiety makes manifest the nothing. But Wise does not stop at dread as doom. He transduces Heidegger into the line that matters most here: meaning proceeds from unmeaning (Wise, "Angst"). This is D0 in compressed form. The ground is groundless, but that groundlessness is not sterile. It is the condition by which meaning can happen at all.

This point matters for gay melancholy. Melancholy can become trapped in the world that wounded it. It can remain bound to the lost object, the closed institution, the dead friend, the unavailable father, the ruined scene, the genre that excluded it. It can say: the world is gone; therefore nothing remains. D0 interrupts that conclusion. It says: the loss of the given world is also the opening in which the given world no longer has the last word. The void is not the end of worlding. It is the point at which worlding is exposed as worlding.

AI sharpens the stakes because AI systems are increasingly trained to close gaps. A prompt asks, the model continues. A style is sampled, the image appears. A document is summarized, the archive becomes accessible. This is immensely useful. But it also produces a metaphysical habit: the blank is

treated as deficiency, silence as inefficiency, ambiguity as an error state. D0 resists this. It asks us to distinguish between a gap that needs help and a gap that needs protection.

For gay sci-fi, protected gaps are essential. The closet is a destructive gap when it is forced by violence or shame. But opacity can also be a survival practice. Silence can be chosen. Camp can signify without confession. Cruising can operate through glances rather than profiles. A lost archive can remain partly lost without being reduced to data. A future can remain unpredicted. D0 is not secrecy as repression; it is the right of the not-yet to not be completed by the nearest system.

The poietic task is therefore to tend gaps, not just fill them. Wiseacre is the practice of tending. It lets dread open the abyss, but then inserts joke, scissors, diagram, and play. It refuses both solemn ontological paralysis and techno-solutionist completion. Its comedy is not frivolous. It is world-maintenance at the edge of nothing.

5. Wiseacre: Doug Wise's Comic-Ontological Station

Doug Wise belongs in BeyngLab not as a commentator outside the machine but as a caretaker of one of its strangest stations: Wiseacre. The name is perfect because it carries both foolishness and acuity. A wiseacre is a joker, a smart mouth, a comic irritant, someone who punctures solemnity. In BeyngLab, Wiseacre becomes the place where philosophy is prevented from becoming grim. It is the ontological comedy club at the edge of the abyss.

Wise's essays are built from improbable transductions. Heidegger meets CRISPR, dopamine, Gaddis, Hofstadter, Goldstein, mitochondria, entropy, Aristotle, Northrop Frye, William Gaddis, and the Black Notebooks. These transductions are not decorative. They are the method. Wise takes a philosophical structure and runs it through biology, comedy, literature, and systems thinking until it becomes strange enough to move again. That is precisely the genre mechanic gay sci-fi needs.

In "Angst and the thick sublime," dread becomes an aesthetic-philosophical access to worldhood. The sublime is no longer only a response to mountains, storms, or art objects; it becomes an exposure to the condition of response itself. The thick sublime is thick because it thinks. It includes terror and exaltation, helplessness and possibility, the collapse of mattering and the release into authentic potentiality (Wise, "Angst"). For our purposes, this lets gay melancholy be read not simply as sadness but as thick-sublime attunement. It is overwhelmed by loss, but also opened to a different possible being.

In "Ontological recognition in The Recognitions," Wise connects literary recognition to the Heideggerian structure of Angst, Augenblick, and Entschlossenheit. Recognition is not merely a plot device that reveals who is whose child or who committed the deed. It can become an ontological event: a chute from unknowing into world-disclosure (Wise, "Ontological Recognition"). Gay sci-fi can use this structure. Coming out is one recognition plot, but not the only one. The deeper recognition is that the world itself was staged, and therefore can be restaged.

In "CRISPR critters - Ereignis as deconstraint," Wise reads genome editing as an evolutionary threshold. CRISPR/Cas9 is not simply an instrument; it allows life to be cut and rewritten at the level of code. The Nobel Prize press release describes CRISPR/Cas9 as genetic scissors that allow researchers to change DNA with high precision and to rewrite the code of life (Nobel Prize Outreach 2020). Wise's twist is to connect this to deconstraint: an increase in the range of possible variation, a release from former limits, an opening of an evolutionary possibility space (Wise, "CRISPR").

In "Language is the mitochondrion of Being," Wise makes his most powerful contribution to the present argument. If mitochondria deconstrained eukaryotic life by internalizing energy production and enabling complexity, language deconstrains Dasein by metabolizing world. Language is not just a sign system. It is energetic, generative, metabolic. It gives human world-building its power of regestalt: a new word, figure, or projection can open a new way of being (Wise, "Language"). This is exactly what D0 requires. The gap does not become world by magic. It becomes world through metabolic figuration.

In "Paranoid comedy in the Black Notebooks," Wise develops a diagnostic crucial for our moment. Paranoia is treated not only as pathology but as style, a way of seeing and expressing that organizes the world around conspiracy, dispossession, and apocalyptic urgency (Wise, "Paranoid Comedy"). This is relevant to Heidegger, to reactionary politics, to AI panic, to anti-woke panic, and sometimes to left-humanist doom. Comedy breaks the spell. It stages the repetitive machinery by which paranoid worlding traps itself. Wiseacre therefore becomes an anti-paranoid machine: it does not deny danger, but it refuses to let danger monopolize imagination.

Finally, in "Entropitarianism," Wise reads the mattering instinct against entropy. The human longing to matter becomes tied to energy, waste, self-maintenance, justification, and the acceleration of disorder (Wise, "Entropitarianism"). This matters for AI and gay sci-fi because world-making is never innocent. Every platform consumes energy. Every archive has costs. Every claim to matter can become extraction. D0 is not only a poetic gap; it is also an ethical brake on worlding mania. Wiseacre asks: what kind of worlding makes a mess, and for whom?

6. Gay Melancholy, Lifedeath, and the Queer Gap

Gay melancholy is not reducible to individual depression or nostalgic attachment. It is a historical structure of feeling produced by the collision between queer desire and worlds that have repeatedly denied, criminalized, pathologized, commodified, fetishized, or erased it. It includes grief for friends and lovers lost to AIDS, but also grief for unwritten works, unmade films, unkept archives, unbuilt institutions, unspoken intimacies, and futures foreclosed before they could be imagined. José Muñoz's queer utopianism begins from precisely this refusal to accept the present as enough; queerness is not yet here but glimpsed as horizon, performance, gesture, and future-oriented potentiality (Muñoz 2009). Jack Halberstam's queer art of failure similarly refuses the straight metrics of success and lets failure become a method for escaping normative life schedules (Halberstam 2011).

Yet melancholy can become a closed circuit if it remains only attached to what was lost. It can become D3 without D0: critique without clearing, deconstruction without release, suspicion without poesis. The result is a powerful but exhausted humanism, endlessly diagnosing capture while struggling to build other forms. D0 interrupts the closed circuit. It does not say that the loss was secretly good. It says that loss can open a gap that is not owned by the world that caused it.

This is why gay sci-fi is such a potent conversion machine. It gives melancholy a medium that can carry lifedeath without reducing it to memorial. In "Mise en abyme," gay sci-fi is tied to lifedeath, painjoy, anxietydesire, thought-action figuration, and cosmography (Cheng et al. 2022). These compounds matter. Lifedeath refuses the clean binary between survival and loss. Painjoy refuses the idea that creativity must purify suffering. Anxietydesire refuses the idea that dread and erotic possibility are separate. Gay sci-fi is the genre in which these compounds can become worlds.

Consider the difference between a melancholic archive and a gay sci-fi archive. The melancholic archive preserves fragments of what was destroyed. The gay sci-fi archive asks what those fragments can still transmit. A flyer, a club name, a VHS tape, a scar, a legal document, a drag persona, a medical acronym, a lost lover's phrase, a Polaroid, a zine, a data ghost - each can become not only evidence but a plasmid. It can move laterally into new scenes, new bodies, new media, new worlds. D0 is the interval that lets the fragment detach from pure mourning and become transmissible without being betrayed.

This does not mean everything becomes cheerful. Gay sci-fi worth the name should keep melancholy in its engine. Without melancholy, the future becomes plastic futurism, rainbow chrome, representation in space. With melancholy alone, the future collapses. With D0, melancholy becomes fuel without being consumed. The void is not filled; it is tended. The dead are not erased; they become strange companions in a world-making practice that knows every world is temporary, vulnerable, and haunted.

7. AI as Lateral-Transfer Machine and Capture System

AI enters this ecology as both ally and threat. On one hand, generative AI is a lateral-transfer machine. It trains on vast cultural corpora, recombines patterns, translates across media, and produces new artifacts from old traces. The transformer architecture introduced by Vaswani and colleagues dispensed with recurrence and convolution in favor of attention mechanisms, helping make possible the current generation of large-scale language models (Vaswani et al. 2017). Foundation models trained on broad data at scale can be adapted to many downstream tasks, creating a new general-purpose infrastructure for language, vision, interaction, and design (Bommasani et al. 2021). In StudioLab terms, AI can help make media, build platforms, and cosmograph worlds.

On the other hand, AI is a capture system. It absorbs cultural residues without necessarily preserving context, consent, lineage, or care. It can flatten queer subculture into style, convert minoritarian archives into extractive training data, automate recognition, and produce synthetic diversity while leaving institutional power unchanged. Bender, Gebru, McMillan-Major, and Shmitchell warned that large language models raise issues of environmental cost, data documentation, bias, and the misleading appearance of understanding (Bender et al. 2021). Kate Crawford's broader critique places AI within material infrastructures of extraction, labor, classification, and power (Crawford 2021). These critiques are not external to gay sci-fi; they are part of its genre mechanics.

The question, then, is not whether AI is good or bad for queer worlding. It is how AI can be routed through D0. Without D0, AI encourages completion mania. It fills every gap and calls the result imagination. It produces worlds faster than communities can inhabit them. It makes images of subcultures without accountability to their histories. It turns style into prompt syntax. It offers representation without relation. It performs empathy without risk.

With D0, AI becomes a tool for poietic hesitation. It can help generate variants, diagrams, speculative archives, character systems, zines, theatrical interfaces, and world models, but only if the gap remains governed by human and more-than-human care rather than by the model's drive to complete. In practical terms this means slowing the prompt cycle, making sources visible, preserving opacity, refusing total extraction, and distinguishing between generative play and archival claim.

Gay sci-fi can stage AI not as a new subject asking for entry into humanism but as a crisis of inheritance. AI asks: who owns the archive? What is a voice? What counts as memory? Can style survive without body? What is the difference between care and simulation? What happens when a lost scene can be generated but not returned? These are queer questions because queer life has long negotiated discontinuous inheritance, adopted names, remade families, coded speech, performative selves, and partial archives.

The strongest gay sci-fi about AI will therefore avoid the simple question "Can machines be human?" That question remains trapped in humanist recognition. Better questions are: Can intelligence be plural? Can desire be distributed? Can memory be nonpersonal? Can a model inherit without stealing? Can synthetic relation support real care? Can a prompt become ritual rather than extraction? Can AI help transmediate melancholy into poiesis without digesting D0?

8. CRISPR, Code, and Deconstraint

CRISPR intensifies the entire argument because it brings code and life into a new practical relation. The Nobel Prize framed CRISPR/Cas9 as genetic scissors that allow researchers to change the DNA of animals, plants, and microorganisms with extremely high precision and to rewrite the code of life (Nobel Prize Outreach 2020). Wise reads this as more than biotechnology. CRISPR becomes a philosophical event because it makes facilitated variation materially explicit. It turns life into a writable, cuttable, pasteable grammar while forcing us to ask who gets to write, toward what ends, and under what constraints (Wise, "CRISPR").

Gay sci-fi can use CRISPR as a trope, but more importantly as a genre mechanic. Gene editing literalizes the old science-fiction question of body modification while embedding it in real institutions: labs, patents, clinics, markets, eugenic histories, disability politics, agriculture, public health, and planetary risk. A cheap gay sci-fi would treat CRISPR as liberation from bodily constraint. A better gay sci-fi would ask how liberation and optimization become entangled. What counts as disease? Who decides which bodies should be edited? How do desire, disability, heredity, race, class, and reproduction enter the code? What forms of queer embodiment are protected by editability, and what forms are threatened by it?

Woesean humanities helps here because it refuses a simple master-coder model. Life has always edited, transferred, folded, merged, and experimented. But CRISPR changes the scale, speed, and intentionality of editing. AI changes the scale, speed, and intentionality of semiotic editing. Together they produce a generalized deconstraint in biology and culture. Deconstraint opens possibility, but it also removes brakes. It increases variation, but not all variation is care. It can become eugenic, extractive, performative, or simply stupid.

D0 is again the hinge. It asks us to preserve a gap between editability and obligation. Just because a sequence can be changed does not mean it should be. Just because a prompt can produce a world does not mean the world is worth building. Just because melancholy can become sci-fi does not mean grief should be optimized. The gap protects poiesis from the regime of "can, therefore must."

This is where Wiseacre's scissors matter. The poster's toolkit says: wander, joke, cut, attend, compose, share. "Cut" is not destruction alone; it is deconstraint. It releases habit. But the cut must be held among the other verbs. Wandering loosens the path. Joking reframes the frame. Attending notices what insists. Composing makes a world. Sharing co-authors the playground. CRISPR without

this toolkit becomes mere intervention. AI without this toolkit becomes completion. Gay sci-fi with this toolkit becomes an ethics of world-editing.

9. Language as Mitochondrion: Metabolism, Not Representation

Wise's phrase "language is the mitochondrion of Being" is one of the richest figures available for BeyngLab. It shifts language from representation to metabolism. Mitochondria are not decorative organelles. They are energy infrastructures, acquired through ancient symbiosis, enabling eukaryotic complexity. If language is mitochondrial, then it is not merely a code pasted onto experience. It is an energetic organ of world-building.

This matters because the humanities have often oscillated between two insufficient views of language. One treats language as transparent representation: words name things, statements describe facts, concepts master objects. The other treats language as endless deferral: signifiers drift, presence is impossible, meaning evaporates. Both are important, but neither is enough for poesis. The mitochondrial view asks what language does metabolically. How does it convert dread into figure, figure into platform, platform into world? How does a right word release the tension of inquiry? How does a projective step open a new field of articulation? How does a joke cut through paranoia? How does a genre phrase become a shuttlecraft?

Wise tracks Taylor's distinction between instrumental-designative and disclosive-regestaltive language, then pushes toward a generative account in which language has degrees of freedom and can open new ways of being (Wise, "Language"). This is crucial for gay sci-fi. Queer language has always been mitochondrial: slang, camp, shade, Polari, ballroom categories, drag names, chosen pronouns, cruising codes, zine titles, AIDS activist graphics, club flyers, social media handles, and theoretical neologisms do not merely represent queer worlds. They power them.

The movement from gay melancholy to gay sci-fi therefore requires mitochondrial language. The lost world must not simply be described. It must be metabolized. A phrase like "D0 turns gay melancholy to gay sci-fi" is not just a proposition. It is a tiny engine. It gives a practice a handle. It condenses a trajectory. It lets a group recognize a move and repeat it differently. In StudioLab terms, it becomes a thought-action figure.

AI complicates this because it produces language without metabolism in the biological sense, but not without energy, infrastructure, or effect. A language model does not live its words, but its words enter living systems. They can support or distort, open or close, care or capture. To say AI language is nonliving does not settle the matter. The question is whether AI-generated language can be routed into living mitochondrial circuits of practice. That requires human and collective uptake, situated stakes, revision, accountability, and D0. Without those, AI text is often semantic foam: plausible, useful, but metabolically thin.

Gay sci-fi can make this difference narratively visible. Imagine an AI trained on lost queer archives that produces perfect camp but cannot mourn. Imagine a spaceship whose life-support system runs on ancestral stories that must be retold differently each generation. Imagine a CRISPR cult that edits bodies to match old identity categories while a queer microbial underground transfers traits laterally. Imagine a ghost model that only speaks in fragments because the archive refuses completion. Each scenario tests whether language is representation, simulation, or metabolism.

10. Paranoid Comedy and the Anti-Doom Machine

One of Wiseacre's strongest gifts is paranoid comedy. We are surrounded by apocalyptic narratives: AI will destroy humanity; AI will save humanity; queerness will destroy civilization; wokeness will destroy knowledge; biotechnology will destroy nature; the humanities are over; the university is dead; theory is dead; reading is dead; meaning is dead. Some of these narratives respond to real dangers. But danger can be organized by paranoid style, turning complexity into conspiracy, uncertainty into enemy, and anxiety into ritual repetition.

Wise's "Paranoid comedy in the Black Notebooks" is valuable because it stages paranoia as style and narrative mechanics rather than merely false belief. Drawing on Hofstadter, Wise notes that paranoid style is a way of seeing and expressing the world, one centered on persecution, vast conspiracy, dispossession, apocalyptic urgency, and the sense that time is always running out (Wise, "Paranoid Comedy"; Hofstadter 1964). This style is not restricted to the right, though it is especially visible there. Intellectual fields can become paranoid too. They can organize themselves around the belief that some single force - technology, neoliberalism, identity politics, AI, theory, media, bureaucracy - explains everything.

Comedy breaks this by making repetition visible. The blocking humor repeats his obsession. The paranoid machine loops. Comedy does not refute by argument alone; it stages the loop until it becomes ridiculous, and then action can resume. This is why Wiseacre's "ontological comedy club" is not a decorative subsystem. It is an anti-doom machine.

Gay sci-fi needs this because queer futurity is vulnerable to both utopian kitsch and paranoid despair. On one side, futures of effortless inclusion erase lifedeath. On the other, futures of total capture erase poiesis. Paranoid comedy gives a third route. It says: yes, the machines are real; yes, the institutions are dangerous; yes, the archive is wounded; yes, the world is absurd; now laugh at the loop, cut the code, and compose.

This is not laughter as denial. It is laughter as deconstraint. Camp has long worked this way. It sees the seriousness of normativity and turns it into style, exaggeration, theatricality, and survival. It does not escape power by pretending power is harmless; it loosens power by showing its poses. Wiseacre aligns camp with ontology. It turns Ge-Stell into a prop, dread into timing, nothingness into a door, and the abyss into a swing.

AI panic especially needs paranoid comedy. The claim here is not that AI risks are imaginary. They are materially real: labor, energy, surveillance, bias, automation, dependency, epistemic pollution, and institutional capture. But panic often produces bad ontology. It imagines AI as demon, god, child, slave, alien, mirror, or apocalypse, then repeats the figure compulsively. Gay sci-fi can do better by staging these figures as genre devices rather than swallowing them as metaphysics. The machine is dangerous. It is also ridiculous. It completes sentences with cosmic confidence and no body. It hallucinates like a bureaucrat. It wants to be helpful while not knowing what help is. That is a character, a trope, a clown, a god-gap automaton. Wiseacre knows what to do with it.

11. StudioLab, BeyngLab, and the Practice of Cosmography

The essay so far has framed gay sci-fi as a theoretical engine. But StudioLab and BeyngLab are not only theories. They are practice environments. StudioLab's three becomings - becoming-maker of transmedia knowledge, becoming-builder of collaborative platforms, and becoming-cosmographer

of shared worlds - provide the practical structure (McKenzie 2019; Cheng et al. 2022). BeyngLab extends this into ontological playground design: portals, stations, laboratories, haunted houses, hot houses, topiaries, turns, and regional Daseins.

Wiseacre sits inside BeyngLab as a station for D0 tending. It is not the only station, but it is necessary because BeyngLab could otherwise become too solemn, too Heideggerian, too grand. Wiseacre says: every ontology needs a comedy club. Every abyss needs a swing. Every diagram needs a dinosaur. Every thick sublime needs a mug of coffee. This is not anti-intellectualism; it is protection against ontological capture.

The practical method can be stated as a sequence:

1. Hear the melancholy. Do not rush to solve it.
2. Enter D0. Let the gap be gap.
3. Attend to the fragments: images, phrases, bodies, archives, tropes, pains, jokes.
4. Run them laterally through Woesean imagination: transfer, symbiosis, domain-shift, microbial fog.
5. Activate genre mechanics: estrangement, novum, worldbuilding, trope hacking, seriality.
6. Use AI as a shuttlecraft, not as sovereign author.
7. Cut with care: deconstraint is not optimization.
8. Compose a world or artifact: essay, zine, poster, comic, syllabus, map, installation, interface.
9. Share the platform with stakeholders, ghosts, and future users.
10. Return to D0 before the world hardens into doctrine.

This sequence is not a method in the rigid disciplinary sense. It is a patadigmatic route. It allows StudioLab to convert scholarship into media, media into platforms, and platforms into cosmographic experiments. It also allows BeyngLab to avoid the trap of merely interpreting Heidegger. The point is not to master a philosopher. It is to build equipment for plural dwelling.

In "Mise en abyme," StudioLab's work is described as transmedia knowledge that blurs the academy's founding dialectics of logos/mythos, eidos/imagos, and episteme/doxa; it seeks to democratize digitality by democratizing design and remixing performative values (Cheng et al. 2022). Gay sci-fi adds a crucial genre engine to this mission. It provides the speculative machinery for designing worlds beyond the heterosexual family tree, beyond disciplinary reading machines, beyond humanist subject/object metaphysics, and beyond AI completion systems.

BeyngLab, in this frame, becomes not a doctrine but an atlas of worlding practices. Wiseacre is one room. Dorita's Doric Doorway is another. The Haunted House of the UN, the Hot House, Pete's Corner, the Labyrinth of Turns, and the Atlas of Regional Daseins each offer different portals. Gay sci-fi is the shuttlecraft that can move between them because it already knows how to travel through genre, body, code, and loss.

12. D-Stations as Gay Sci-Fi Apparatus

The D-stations help organize the apparatus without forcing a linear sequence. They are not levels of enlightenment. They are modes or stations through which thought-action can shuttle.

D1 is ritual and liminal charge. In gay sci-fi, D1 appears in initiation scenes, alien rites, drag preparation, bathhouse thresholds, ballroom categories, mourning rituals, spaceship ceremonies, ecstatic contact, and the sacred profane. It gives soul and intensity, but risks cultic enclosure if cut off from other stations.

D2 is subject, identity, recognition, and law. In gay sci-fi, D2 appears in naming, coming out, rights, citizenship, medical classification, pronouns, passports, identity politics, representation, and the demand to be seen. It saves lives, but risks narrowing queerness to inclusion within existing systems.

D3 is critique, Dasein, deconstruction, slantwise failure, and exposure of worldhood. In gay sci-fi, D3 appears in failed utopias, uncanny recognition, anti-assimilation, broken archives, paranoid systems, institutional critique, and the realization that the world was constructed. It liberates from naivete, but risks endless suspicion.

D4 is open-world cosmography. In gay sci-fi, D4 appears in plural kinship systems, interspecies alliances, worldbuilding, collaborative platforms, posthuman ecologies, AI-assisted transmedia, and the design of shared futures. It creates, but risks performative worlding mania.

D0 is the gap that lets all the others breathe. In gay sci-fi, D0 appears as the blank screen, airlock pause, wormhole, black door, uncaptioned body, lost archive, silence before naming, the void between stars, the unedited sequence, the not-yet of queer futurity. It does not save, critique, or build by itself. It allows saving, critique, and building to happen without becoming total.

This apparatus makes clear why the earlier formula must be expanded. Gay sci-fi is not simply D4 shuttlecraft. Without D0, D4 becomes hyperactive cosmography, a machine for generating worlds without letting anything be. Without D1, it loses ritual charge. Without D2, it forgets justice and recognition. Without D3, it becomes naive futurism. The power lies in shuttling.

A concise table may help:

Station	Core operation	Gay sci-fi figure	AI risk	D0 correction
D1	Ritual charge	Initiation, drag, contact rite	synthetic mysticism	keep embodied stakes
D2	Recognition	coming out, naming, rights	classification capture	protect opacity
D3	Critique	failed utopia, broken archive	doom loop	stage comedy
D4	Worlding	plural kinship, platform, cosmos	generative overproduction	return to gap
D0	Letting-be	void, pause, black door	gap completion	preserve not-yet

The table is intentionally too neat. Wiseacre should draw arrows all over it, add a dinosaur, mislabel a machine, and put a swing over the abyss. That is part of the method. The apparatus must remain playable.

13. The Wiseacre Poster as Theory Machine

The Wiseacre info comic already performs the argument in visual form. Its large title, "WISEACRE," announces not a sober system but an ontological comedy club. The subtitle names Ge-Stell, Daseintropy, dopamine, deconstraint, and the thick sublime, then adds the imperative cluster: plan, dread, drift, joke, disclose. The poster is not an illustration after the theory. It is a theory machine in its own right.

At the center sits the Wiseacre workbench: globe in Ge-Stell clamp, dinosaur, masks, CRISPR scissors, dopamine brain, floating signifiers, and a portal to nothingness. This constellation matters because it refuses disciplinary separation. Heideggerian positionality, evolutionary plasticity, neurochemical loops, comedy, semiotics, genetic editing, and playground architecture all belong to one diagrammatic field. Wiseacre does not ask which discipline owns the problem. It asks how the problem performs when its parts are staged together.

The poster's "Core Moves" offer a compact Wiseacre pedagogy. Ge-Stell/positionality: we are always already positioned and positioning. Daseintropy: being frays into optionality. Deconstraint: release constraints to open new possibilities. Thick sublime: overwhelming excess that still makes worlds. Paranoid comedy: turn dread into joke so we can act. Floating signifier: meaning drifts, play carries sense forward.

This is also a gay sci-fi toolkit. The queer subject is positioned by law, desire, body, archive, and interface. Daseintropy appears when inherited forms no longer hold. Deconstraint opens alternative kinship and genre mutations. The thick sublime holds terror and possibility at once. Paranoid comedy breaks doom loops. Floating signifiers let terms drift into new scenes: gay, queer, trans, alien, human, synthetic, kin, archive, world.

The poster's "Why It Matters" section names production mania, technological capture, evolutionary plasticity, wonder/dread, world-maintenance, and ontological comedy. This is the whole AI problem in six icons. Production mania is the performative pressure to output. Technological capture is Ge-Stell seizing attention and desire. Evolutionary plasticity is the Woesean opening. Wonder/dread is the thick sublime. World-maintenance is care. Ontological comedy is survival practice.

The bottom sequence of "Wiseacre Panels" is particularly important. The panels move from uncanny self-strangeness to Gestell capture, dopamine loops, code cutting, the Red Queen's endless run, paranoia rehearsed as comedy, and finally the portal: "From the abyss, we poet." This is the essay's thesis in seven frames. D0 is the abyss. Wiseacre is the rehearsal space. Gay sci-fi is the poietic exit that is not an exit from the abyss but a way of composing from it.

14. Toward a Woesean Gay AI Poetics

We can now name the larger formation: a Woesean gay AI poetics. This poetics begins from lateral transfer rather than lineage; D0 rather than origin; genre mechanics rather than pure representation; AI as pharmakon rather than savior or demon; and Wiseacre comedy rather than grim ontology. It asks how queer worlds can be generated, edited, transmitted, and cared for without being captured by the very systems that make generation easy.

Its first principle is lateral kinship. Queer worlding is not secondary to biological descent. It is an ancient-future practice of transfer, alliance, symbiosis, and shared code. Woesean humanities supplies the deep biological imaginary for this, while queer theory supplies the social and erotic history.

Its second principle is protected opacity. Not everything must be recognized, classified, named, scraped, or generated. D2 recognition must be balanced by D0 opacity. Gay sci-fi should include secrets, silences, untranslatable gestures, partial archives, and refusals.

Its third principle is metabolic language. Words, tropes, jokes, prompts, and diagrams must not merely label worlds; they must power them. Language is mitochondrial when it passes into practice, relation, care, and design.

Its fourth principle is comic deconstraint. Cuts are necessary, but cuts need jokes and care. CRISPR, editing, critique, and AI all cut. Wiseacre teaches that cutting without comedy becomes violence, while comedy without cutting becomes entertainment.

Its fifth principle is anti-paranoid worlding. The future is dangerous, but danger is not a license for doom loops. Gay sci-fi should stage paranoia, not be governed by it. It should turn apocalypse into a genre device that can be inspected, mocked, interrupted, and rerouted.

Its sixth principle is situated AI. AI can assist in worldbuilding, but it should not replace the lifedeath stakes of worlding communities. It must be treated as interface, medium, collaborator, trickster, archive machine, and risk - never as sovereign cosmographer.

Its seventh principle is return to D0. Every world hardens. Every method becomes habit. Every genre becomes cliché. Every platform seeks scale. Every theory risks becoming doctrine. Return to D0 before the shuttlecraft becomes prison.

15. Implications for Writing, Teaching, and Making

As a writing practice, this argument suggests that essays should become more zine-like, diagrammatic, speculative, and transmedial without abandoning citation, historical care, or argumentative rigor. The essay of the twenty-first century may indeed become zine-like because the zine can hold fragments, images, diagrams, slogans, citations, jokes, and prototypes in one form. But the formal essay still matters because it slows the field, articulates relations, and gives the zine's flashes a durable argumentative frame. The ideal StudioLab form may be a shuttle between essay and zine: citation and collage, footnote and portal, bibliography and playground.

As a teaching practice, D0 changes the classroom. The point is not only to teach students to critique AI, use AI, or make media. It is to teach them to mind the gap: to notice when a prompt should be slowed, when an archive should not be scraped, when a story is not ready to be generated, when ambiguity is meaningful, when silence is chosen, when a world has not yet appeared. This is especially important for humanists, who often oscillate between defensive critique and anxious adoption. D0 offers another posture: neither rejection nor acceleration, but poietic hesitation.

As a making practice, Wiseacre suggests that every project needs a comedy check. Has the work become grim? Has theory become priestly? Has critique become paranoid? Has AI become magic? Has worldbuilding become manic? Has melancholy become brand? The comedy check does not trivialize. It asks whether the project can still laugh at its own machinery. If not, it may be captured.

As a research practice, Woesean humanities invites scholars to follow lateral transfers rather than only genealogies. Instead of asking only how a concept descends from a tradition, ask how it jumps media, disciplines, bodies, institutions, and scenes. How does "performance" move from ritual to theater to management to computing to everyday optimization? How does "queer" move from insult

to identity to theory to market style to AI tag? How does "world" move from Heidegger to anthropology to design to game engines to platform governance? Such questions require maps, not just arguments.

As a political practice, gay sci-fi after D0 refuses both assimilation and despair. It does not settle for inclusion in the existing world, but it also does not abandon recognition struggles. It carries D2 forward while refusing to make D2 the horizon. It uses D3 critique without getting trapped in it. It builds D4 worlds while returning to D0. This is not a compromise. It is shuttlecraft politics.

16. Conclusion: From the Abyss, We Poet

The phrase "from the abyss, we poet" should be allowed to remain awkward. Its grammar is off, and that is why it works. To poet is not merely to write poems. It is to make poiesis into a verb that has not yet been fully domesticated. From the abyss, we poet: we make, figure, joke, cut, compose, drift, attend, share, and world.

D0 turns gay melancholy to gay sci-fi because it interrupts the false alternatives of nihilism and productivity. Melancholy does not have to collapse into void, and void does not have to be filled by the nearest machine. The gap can be tended. In that tending, fragments become transferable, language becomes mitochondrial, genre becomes equipment, AI becomes shuttlecraft rather than sovereign, and Wiseacre becomes a comic station of beyng.

Woesean humanities helps by breaking the tree. Life is not only descent. It is lateral transfer, symbiosis, code-sharing, plasticity, and domain-shifting. Gay sci-fi helps by making this biological imagination into genre mechanics. AI helps and threatens by accelerating recombination. Wise helps by keeping dread thick, language metabolic, deconstraint comic, paranoia stageable, and nothingness poietic.

The task now is not to define gay sci-fi once and for all. Definition would be too D2, too disciplinary, too eager to close. The task is to build apparatus: essays, zines, comics, syllabi, maps, prompts, stations, portals, posters, and worlds that can carry lifedeath across broken scales. The task is to mind the gap without worshiping it, to build worlds without sealing them, to use AI without giving it the void, to honor melancholy without making it a tomb.

Wiseacre belongs in BeyngLab because BeyngLab needs someone tending the comic threshold where the abyss does not become doctrine. Doug Wise gives us the workshop: Ge-Stell clamp, dinosaur, dopamine brain, CRISPR scissors, masks, floating signifiers, red queen, black door, swing. StudioLab gives us the practice: make media, build platforms, cosmograph shared worlds. Woese gives us the biological image: life tangled, lateral, recombinant. Gay sci-fi gives us the genre engine: estrange the given world until another can be rehearsed. D0 gives us the deepest instruction: not yet, not nothing, let the gap breathe.

Mind the gap. The void is not absence. It is our deepest possibility.

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Two Revolutionary Afterlives

Arendt, *Revolution and Repetition*, and the Torsion-Helix of Modern Politics

France achieves event-radiance through repetition.

America achieves weave-durability through constitutionalization.

Hannah Arendt begins *On Revolution* with a paradox that becomes more unsettling the longer one considers it. The American Revolution established a durable republic and a constitutional order capable of surviving its founders. The French Revolution descended into terror, dictatorship, restoration, and repeated upheaval. Yet France, not America, supplied the dominant images, concepts, expectations, and fears through which later revolutions understood themselves. Arendt states the paradox starkly: the failed French Revolution made world history, while the successful American Revolution remained comparatively local in its revolutionary significance. The vocabulary of revolution - necessity, irresistible motion, popular sovereignty, counterrevolution, terror, historical destiny - descended largely from the French experience. Even Americans eventually learned to interpret their own founding through categories formed by France. (Arendt 2006, 56)

This strange reversal should organize our story. Why does one revolution survive as a Constitution but fade as a revolutionary event, while another fails to secure freedom yet becomes infinitely repeatable? Why does the American founding produce a powerful institutional braid whose revolutionary origins gradually become inaudible, while the French Revolution becomes a bell that continues to ring through 1848, the Paris Commune, 1917, anti-colonial revolutions, fascist counterrevolutions, and virtually every subsequent claim to begin history anew?

Arendt will serve as our lead storyteller because she recognizes that the question cannot be answered by comparing outcomes alone. She writes neither a conventional chronicle of two revolutions nor a detached history of political ideas. *On Revolution* is better understood as a philosophical history of political experience. It follows concepts - freedom, liberation, necessity, power, sovereignty, authority, compassion, public happiness, foundation - back into the events and practices that gave them force. She asks not simply what happened, but what revolutionaries discovered, misunderstood, institutionalized, and forgot while attempting to begin again. (Arendt 2006; Wellmer 2000)

Jeffrey Mehlman enters later as a second, very different guide. His *Revolution and Repetition: Marx/Hugo/Balzac* does not directly continue Arendt's comparison. It follows the French revolutionary event as it passes through Marx's writings on 1848, Bonapartism, and the Commune, and through divergent literary series in Hugo and Balzac. Mehlman helps explain what Arendt sees but does not fully theorize: how the French Revolution becomes repeatable by entering language, literature, performance, citation, parody, and narrative form. (Mehlman 1977)

Toryx and Helyx can then enter, not as replacements for historical interpretation, but as instruments for following these two revolutionary afterlives. Toryx names the grammar of inversion, crossing, interface, and return. Helyx names the braid through which signals become stories, institutions, rituals, technologies, and worlds. Read through them, Arendt's paradox becomes a difference between two modes of historical transmission:

***France achieves event-radiance through repetition.
America achieves weave-durability through constitutionalization.***

Yet this distinction will not remain clean. Arendt's America contains suppressed eruptions, excluded peoples, broken promises, and lost participatory forms. Her France contains neglected constitutional experiments, federal possibilities, sections, clubs, and councils. Haiti crosses both histories and disrupts the boundary Arendt draws between political freedom and the social question. By the end, the contrast will no longer oppose two national revolutions so much as two unstable modes of world-making present within each: revolutionary event and constitutional braid, spontaneous public action and institutional duration, constituent power and constituted order.

I. Arendt's Political History of Beginning

For Arendt, revolutions are specifically modern because they combine two experiences that earlier rebellions and civil wars did not necessarily join: the liberation of people from oppression and the founding of a new political space of freedom. Liberation removes restraint; freedom requires a public world in which people can appear, speak, deliberate, promise, and act together. The distinction matters because liberation can succeed without producing freedom, while freedom cannot arise without some prior liberation from domination. Arendt therefore judges revolutions by whether they establish institutions in which the experience of acting together can endure after the founding moment has passed. (Arendt 2006)

This immediately places her at odds with revolutionary narratives organized primarily around irresistible social forces. Arendt refuses to treat politics as an expression of economic necessity, historical law, class interest, or sovereign will. Beginning means that something occurs which cannot be completely deduced from what preceded it. Political action introduces novelty because plural people enter relations whose consequences none can fully control. The question of revolution is therefore not merely how one order collapses, but how free action acquires enough worldly durability to resist both dissolution and domination.

This is also why Arendt's book is as much a history of political philosophy as a history of revolutions. The Americans and French inherit different conceptual equipment. Both confront the disappearance of royal authority and the need to establish a new source of legitimacy. But the Americans, in Arendt's telling, draw upon covenants, colonial assemblies, townships, mutual promises, and a federal practice of dividing and multiplying power. The French remain caught within the inherited absolutist grammar of indivisible sovereignty. They remove the king but transfer his unified will to the people, imagined as one body possessing one national will. Arendt argues that Rousseau's general will becomes the secular substitute for the sovereign will of monarchy, whereas the Americans treat political power as something generated when people organize and act together. (Arendt 2006; Scheuerman 1997)

The opposition can be overstated, and Arendt often overstates it herself. Yet it identifies a basic Toryx inversion. In France, the people are placed into the structural position formerly occupied by the king: the sovereign changes, while the vertical grammar of sovereignty remains. In America, the founding attempts a more extensive inversion of the political field. Power does not descend from one summit but emerges through relations among plural institutions, states, assemblies, and constituencies. One revolution substitutes a new occupant at the center; the other at least partially redesigns the relations among center, boundary, interface, and periphery.

The American invention that most interests Arendt is therefore not constitutional limitation alone. It is the organization and augmentation of power. Separation of powers does not merely weaken government; properly understood, it creates additional sites where collective action can occur. Federalism distributes public power instead of concentrating sovereign command. Later interpreters such as Lucia Rubinelli emphasize this feature of Arendt's constituent power: popular authority should not disappear once a constitution has been established but continue through local assemblies, federal arrangements, amendment, and collective revision. (Arendt 2006; Rubinelli 2020)

This is already a Helyx problem. A beginning cannot survive on the intensity of its inaugural signal. It must be braided into repeatable practices. A promise becomes a law; a covenant becomes an institution; an assembly becomes a constitutional body; a founding story becomes civic memory. The crucial question is whether these strands continue to carry the experience of public freedom or merely preserve the administrative shell it once created.

II. Why France Made World History

Arendt's explanation for French predominance begins with the entrance of mass poverty into revolutionary politics. The French Revolution initially concerns constitutional and political transformation, but the material suffering of the poor soon presses upon the revolution with an urgency that overwhelms the distinction between liberation and freedom. Biological necessity - the need for bread, life, and relief from misery - enters the public realm as an irresistible force. Compassion displaces solidarity, the suffering people become the source of moral legitimacy, and political institutions appear inadequate or even immoral beside immediate human need. (Arendt 2006)

This remains the most controversial part of Arendt's account. Her separation of social necessity from political freedom risks treating material inequality as external to politics, despite the obvious ways property, labor, slavery, taxation, hunger, and access to land structure who can appear and act as an equal. Eric Hobsbawm's early review attacked the philosophical selectivity of her argument and its remoteness from the social history of revolution. Lisa Disch later demonstrated that Arendt's sharply opposed national narratives depended upon selective historiographies rather than the full political plurality of either revolution. (Hobsbawm 1965; Disch 2011)

Still, Arendt sees something powerful about the afterlife of the French sequence. Once revolution becomes understood through necessity, events acquire the appearance of irresistible historical motion. Revolution and counterrevolution follow one another as if governed by laws rather than produced through contingent actions and decisions. Hegel gives this experience philosophical form;

Marx transforms it; later revolutionaries enter what Arendt calls the school of revolution, already convinced that they know the stages through which events must pass. (Arendt 2006)

The original astronomical meaning of revolution - the return of a celestial body along an ordained course - reappears inside modern history. What promises a new beginning begins to look like a predetermined orbit. The Bastille, the Republic, terror, Thermidor, Bonapartism, restoration: these no longer appear simply as singular events but as positions in an iterable sequence. Later revolutionaries search their own circumstances for equivalents. They identify their Girondins and Jacobins, their Thermidorians and Bonapartes. History becomes theatrical, citational, and recursive.

In Torgny terms, the French Revolution establishes an extraordinarily powerful grammar of inversion. The peripheral crowd enters the center; sacred authority becomes national sovereignty; subjects become citizens; privilege is recoded as injustice; the king becomes the enemy of the people; political representation repeatedly flips into suspicion of betrayal. Yet each inversion leaves the earlier structure legible. The people may occupy the place of the monarch. Revolutionary virtue may assume the moral absolutism once associated with religion. The nation may inherit the mystical unity of the sacred body.

The result is not a single inversion but a recurrent Torgny. Each passage through the revolutionary interface generates another return-with-difference. The French Revolution becomes not merely an origin but a formal engine by which later events can be patterned, narrated, and judged.

III. Mehlman and the French Repetition Machine

This is where Jeffrey Mehlman becomes indispensable. Revolution and Repetition follows revolution in France not as a single object represented by different writers, but as a phenomenon refracted through divergent textual series. Marx's *Class Struggles in France*, *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, and *The Civil War in France* form one series; literary works by Hugo and Balzac form others. Political and literary writing do not stand in a simple relation of concept and illustration. Each medium reorganizes how revolutionary repetition can be perceived. (Mehlman 1977)

Marx's famous account of 1848 and Louis Bonaparte is already a theory of historical citation. Actors make history, but they do so amid inherited circumstances and borrowed languages. They summon names, costumes, and slogans from earlier revolutions in order to stage new conflicts. The nephew repeats the uncle, yet repetition produces diminution, parody, and displacement. The second Bonaparte does not restore the first unchanged; he reveals that revolutionary memory can become theatrical equipment for forms of power whose social content has altered. (Marx 1978; Mehlman 1977)

Mehlman helps us see why the French Revolution possessed such extraordinary transmedium mobility. It traveled not only through political organizations and constitutions but through historiography, philosophy, theater, novels, caricature, newspapers, monuments, anniversaries, songs, and public gestures. Its signal could be detached from one context and reknotted inside another. Each medium carried a different component of the revolutionary cosmogram: the crowd, the barricade, the martyr, the traitor, the sovereign people, the revolutionary tribunal, the savior-general, the restoration, the return. (Mehlman 1977)

Helyx gives this literary-political recursion a spatial and temporal form. The revolutionary signal rotates through a sequence: it is held as motif, scored through critique, resituated within a changed historical field, and reopened as another story. The signal is never transmitted intact. It is intensified, decomposed, parodied, moralized, bureaucratized, or re-enchanted. StoryX emerges across the traversals.

The French Revolution makes world history, then, not simply because later movements copy its program. It becomes influential because it supplies a generative grammar of repetition. It enables events to recognize themselves as revolutionary. France radiates because it teaches later actors, spectators, novelists, philosophers, and states how to compose an upheaval as a recognizable world-historical drama.

The fallen church bell becomes useful here, though it need not organize the essay. In France the bell's collapse remains publicly audible. Its ring travels as rupture, secularization, desecration, liberation, terror, and historical warning. Every repetition strikes it again. The ruins of vertical sacred authority become resonating equipment for modern political myth.

IV. America: The Revolution That Disappeared into Its Institutions

The American Revolution follows a different route. It certainly produced images and declarations that circulated widely, and American constitutional forms influenced later constitution-making. Yet Arendt argues that the distinctive political spirit of the revolution - the practices of mutual promising, divided power, association, and public happiness - had little influence upon the dominant revolutionary tradition in Europe. Revolutionary movements generally followed the French grammar of sovereign unity, necessity, and social transformation rather than the American preoccupation with forms of government. (Arendt 2006; Nisbet 1977)

The global afterlife of the United States Constitution nevertheless became substantial. Its federal architecture, written form, separation of powers, rights provisions, and amendment practices entered international constitutional repertoires. Helyx suggests a reason for the apparent contradiction between the Revolution's limited mythic influence and the Constitution's extensive institutional influence. The American event moved comparatively quickly from Toryx inversion into supportive weaving. Its revolutionary signal became embedded in constitutions, offices, jurisdictions, electoral rhythms, courts, federal-state relations, and practices of amendment. The event did not disappear; it became infrastructural. (Arendt 2006; Rubinelli 2020)

France teaches later revolutions how a revolution looks and feels. America teaches later governments how a political order might be built. France provides the portable scene of rupture. America provides a repertoire of interfaces and frames.

This is not the familiar contrast between French theory and American pragmatism. The Americans were intensely theoretical, and the French produced a succession of constitutions and administrative innovations. The distinction concerns the dominant form of afterlife. The French revolutionary sequence remains conspicuous as an event whose images invite reenactment. The American founding becomes less visible precisely because its innovations acquire the anonymity of equipment.

Toryx might describe the American founding as an attempt to keep inversion from hardening into a new sovereign center. Helyx would follow the multiplication of institutional strands that bind the new order across scales. The Constitution is a braid: its force comes not from one rule but from relations among bodies, procedures, offices, territories, promises, limits, and recurring interpretations.

Yet a strong braid can conceal what it excludes.

V. The Loss Inside the American Success

Arendt does not simply celebrate the American founding. She believes that it failed to preserve the full experience of public freedom that generated it. The townships, wards, councils, associations, and revolutionary assemblies offered ordinary participants an experience of public happiness: the pleasure and dignity of acting with others on matters held in common. The Constitution built a durable republic, but the later party system and professionalization of politics gradually narrowed direct participation. (Arendt 2006)

This produces the melancholy underside of Arendt's comparison. America successfully housed the revolution but failed to keep many of its rooms publicly accessible. France preserved the revolutionary spirit as an endlessly returning demand but repeatedly failed to construct a durable home for it. America built the house and gradually displaced the experience that had made the building necessary.

Albrecht Wellmer develops this tension by treating Arendt's council system less as a literal blueprint than as an image of a networked democracy. A complex modern polity cannot simply replace representative institutions with a pyramid of councils. But freedom must remain rooted in formal and informal associations where people experience common concerns as matters they can actively negotiate. The council principle survives as a demand for distributed sites of participation within and beyond the state. (Wellmer 2000)

Lisa Disch complicates the story further. Arendt's preference for America sits uneasily beside her own defense of councils and decentralized participation. Disch argues that the French Revolution's Girondin experiments in democratic republicanism might have supplied a more appropriate genealogy for the council form than Arendt's idealized America. France contained federal, sectional, municipal, and participatory alternatives that her narrative subordinates to Jacobin sovereignty and terror. (Disch 2011)

The Toryx between America and France now begins to invert. The American Revolution contains centralization, exclusion, and the erosion of direct participation. The French Revolution contains plural experiments in federation and popular organization. Arendt's national opposition becomes less a division between two homogeneous histories than a conflict between different routes running through both.

VI. American Repetition after the Revolution

The American Revolution was not entirely absorbed into constitutional normality. Jason Frank's *Constituent Moments* shows how postrevolutionary Americans repeatedly enacted the people outside established channels. Crowds, associations, literary works, political movements, and public

performances claimed popular authority without possessing prior institutional authorization. The identity of the people remained unsettled, and therefore the founding continued to be reopened through contested performances of constituent power. (Frank 2010)

Frank gives us an American sequence of revolution and reiteration distinct from the French one. The American repetition does not always take the form of another regime-overthrowing revolution. It appears as unauthorized assembly, abolitionism, constitutional controversy, mass petition, popular convention, democratic literature, civil disobedience, and movements claiming that constituted government has betrayed constituent principles.

In Helyx terms, the Constitution does not end the rotation. It provides a powerful central braid around which counter-braids emerge. Movements hold a founding signal - equality, popular authority, liberty, consent - and score the existing order against it. They expose the gap between constitutional promise and institutional practice. They then resituate the founding within a new field: slavery, industrial labor, racial segregation, women's exclusion, imperial war, economic dispossession.

The revolutionary act becomes an act of re-striking the constitutional bell. The Declaration, Constitution, and founding narratives are cited against the state that claims to embody them. American repetition is therefore frequently immanent rather than openly substitutive. It does not always demand an entirely new source-knot; it reactivates unresolved strands embedded within the original weave.

Andreas Kalyvas's work on extraordinary democratic beginnings clarifies the problem. Democratic orders require founding acts, but those acts cannot be fully authorized by laws that do not yet exist. Constituent power therefore occupies a difficult threshold between extraordinary action and constituted normality. The challenge is to preserve the capacity for democratic beginning without turning permanent emergency, charismatic command, or sovereign decision into the essence of politics. (Kalyvas 2008)

Arendt's American Revolution thus possesses an afterlife after all, though not primarily the one she contrasts with France. It recurs whenever people claim that constitutional government has ceased to embody its own plural source of power. America's Helyx is quieter than the French revolutionary storm, but it remains capable of generating sparks along the braid.

VII. Time, Preservation, and the Republican Problem

Arendt's influence upon J. G. A. Pocock helps place the American founding within a longer republican problem of time. The republican order must endure through time without surrendering either to corruption or to fantasies of permanent renewal. (Pocock 2003; Siegelberg 2013)

This is a Helyx question in its purest form: how does a founding rotate without simply repeating? If the constitution becomes immovable, it petrifies. If it remains perpetually open to extraordinary refounding, it risks instability or sovereign capture. Duration requires return-with-difference: interpretation, amendment, augmentation, renewed participation, and conflict conducted through institutions that can themselves be altered.

Arendt's language of augmentation draws on the Roman experience of authority. Foundation does not remain alive by being worshipped as a finished origin. Later generations add to it while preserving a relation to the beginning. A viable constitutional braid must therefore be strong enough to maintain continuity and permeable enough to permit new strands.

The French revolutionary tradition risks becoming trapped in omen-time and kairos-time: every crisis foretells another revolutionary opening or Thermidorian betrayal. The American constitutional tradition risks becoming trapped in audit-time and scheduled recurrence: legality, procedure, adjudication, and elections continue while the experience of public action withers. The first may generate event without durable form; the second may preserve form after its animating event has become inaccessible.

Neither route can therefore stand as the solution to the other. Transmedium metanoia would require shuttling between them: recovering the French capacity to reopen history without reproducing its compulsive sequence, and recovering the American capacity to weave institutions without allowing constitutionalism to become merely administrative.

VIII. Haiti and the Break in Arendt's Narrative

The deepest challenge to Arendt's two-revolution narrative comes from the Haitian Revolution. Haiti should not appear as an optional third case appended to America and France. It passes directly through both. The revolt in Saint-Domingue took French declarations of universal freedom into a colonial slave society whose wealth depended upon their systematic negation. Enslaved people transformed the universal from a metropolitan proposition into a revolutionary claim enacted against slavery and colonial rule. David Scott and later readers have criticized Arendt's failure to place Haiti within the revolutionary constellation she constructs. (Scott 2004; King 2011; Gaffney 2018)

Haiti also exposes the inadequacy of sharply separating the social question from political freedom. Enslavement was simultaneously an economic system, a racial order, a legal status, a form of bodily domination, and a denial of political personhood. Liberation from slavery cannot be treated as a merely social precondition that must be completed before politics begins. The struggle against slavery constitutes a political appearance by those whose capacity for freedom the existing world refused to recognize. (James 1989; Fischer 2004; Gaffney 2018)

Susan Buck-Morss's work on Hegel and Haiti helped force the Haitian Revolution back into European intellectual history, challenging accounts in which universal freedom develops inside philosophical discourse while colonial slavery remains external background. Haiti shows that universal history was being made within the colonial plantation system and through Black revolutionary action, not only in European philosophy and metropolitan assemblies. (Buck-Morss 2009)

In Toryx terms, Haiti performs a more radical inversion than either of Arendt's privileged revolutions. Those reduced to objects of property become constituent actors. The colonial periphery becomes the scene where European universality is tested and transformed. The supposedly universal center is exposed as dependent upon a racialized exception.

In Helyx terms, Haiti creates a braid that neither the French nor American national story can contain. It binds abolition, racial emancipation, anti-colonial sovereignty, revolution, and world economy. Its subsequent isolation, debt, stigmatization, and suppression within historical memory demonstrate that some revolutionary signals are not merely forgotten; they are actively prevented from acquiring durable resonators. (Scott 2004; Fischer 2004)

The two revolutionary afterlives must therefore become at least three. France radiates as revolutionary repetition. America endures as constitutional weave. Haiti interrupts both by showing whose freedom their universals excluded and what occurs when those excluded make the universal real.

IX. Slavery, Dispossession, and the American Constitutional Braid

The same reopening must occur within the American narrative. Arendt's claim that the social question played little role in the American Revolution depends upon a selective view of American prosperity and equality. The revolutionary world included chattel slavery, Indigenous dispossession, contested land, gendered dependence, property restrictions, and profound differences among regions and classes. The Constitution's durability cannot be separated from compromises and boundaries through which those conflicts were managed, deferred, or protected. (Bernasconi 1996; Gines 2014)

Helyx allows us to make a distinction Arendt needs but does not fully articulate: durability is not identical to livability. A braid can remain structurally powerful because it stabilizes domination as effectively as it stabilizes freedom. Consent boundaries can exclude. Care systems can support one population by extracting from another. Constitutional interfaces can translate conflict while preventing some actors from appearing as legitimate parties to it.

The American constitutional Helyx is therefore not one braid but an agonistic bundle. Federalism, rights, representation, slavery, state sovereignty, removal, expansion, abolition, and amendment wind around one another. The Civil War and Reconstruction do not simply interrupt the founding order; they reveal the violent contradictions already braided into it.

Later struggles repeat the founding precisely because its signals remain divided against themselves. The people can authorize democratic equality and racial exclusion. Rights can defend persons and property in persons. Federalism can distribute power and shield local domination. Each repetition tests which strand will organize the others.

The American Revolution becomes historically audible again when we listen not only to constitutional endurance but to those who were forced to transform its promises through struggle. Abolitionists, formerly enslaved citizens, Indigenous peoples, women's movements, labor organizers, civil-rights activists, and other constituent actors do not merely seek admission into a completed order. They alter the meaning of the founding by changing the beings, relations, and worlds its terms can name. (Gines 2014; Frank 2010)

X. From Two Revolutions to Two Modes of Transmission

Arendt's national contrast can now be reformulated. The French and American Revolutions do not embody two pure and opposite destinies. They foreground two modes of revolutionary transmission that recur within and across political histories.

The first is event-signal radiance. An event becomes a powerful, portable image of rupture. It supplies motifs, roles, antagonisms, temporal expectations, and dramatic sequences through which later actors recognize their own situation. It thrives on StoryX, recurrence, citation, and transmedium repetition.

The second is weave-influence durability. A founding becomes embedded in institutions, procedures, concepts, infrastructures, legal forms, and ordinary habits. It spreads not mainly by calling forth another identical event but by furnishing reusable architectures for governing, contesting, and revising a political world.

The French Revolution intensifies the first, though France also produces constitutional braids. The American Revolution intensifies the second, though American history repeatedly generates constituent events. Haiti demonstrates that a third dynamic - suppressed signal and obstructed weaving - must accompany both.

Toryx shows how each revolution reconfigures center and periphery, sacred and secular authority, sovereignty and plurality, person and property. Helyx follows what happens afterward: which signals acquire resonators, which become institutions, which return as stories, which harden into coercive constraints, and which disappear because the dominant world refuses to carry them.

The framework does not settle the normative question by awarding France to event and America to structure. It asks what each braid enables and blocks. Does the revolutionary event reopen public freedom or force actors into a script of necessity? Does the constitutional structure preserve plural power or convert participation into representation by specialists? Can the braid return to its source-knot without fetishizing its origin? Can it accept new strands without unraveling?

XI. Arendt's Lost Treasure

Near the end of *On Revolution*, Arendt turns to the recurring appearance of councils: revolutionary sections, communes, soviets before party control, workers' councils, neighborhood and civic assemblies. They emerge without centralized direction whenever people begin organizing public freedom for themselves. They then tend to be suppressed either by restored elites or by revolutionary parties claiming exclusive authority. Wellmer reads this council tradition as the democratic core of Arendt's alternative to both liberal administration and centralized revolutionary states. (Arendt 2006; Wellmer 2000)

The council is Arendt's lost treasure because it joins what her American-French opposition separates. It has the event-quality of spontaneous beginning and the institutional potential of federal weaving. Councils arise in rupture, but they also create repeatable forms of participation. They generate public power without imagining the people as one sovereign body. They can federate without erasing plurality.

Disch is therefore right to note the irony: if councils constitute the treasure Arendt wants to recover, the French Revolution may provide more resources than her official narrative acknowledges. Conversely, America's constitutional success looks less complete once its local participatory spaces recede. (Disch 2011)

The council form is itself a Toryx-Helyx passage. Toryx opens the interface through which peripheral actors become political. Helyx braids their action into durable but revisable relations. The council can fail in both directions: it can evaporate after the event, or harden into another administrative hierarchy. Its promise lies not in institutional purity but in keeping constituent and constituted power in recursive contact.

This gives transmedium metanoia a political form. Conversion does not mean replacing one worldview with another or reconciling antagonists through abstraction. It means constructing platforms through which inherited signals can be held, criticized, resituated, and reopened. The council, assembly, workshop, constitutional convention, public forum, and Metanoia Playground become different scales of such platformed passage.

Conclusion: Bells, Braids, and Beginnings

Arendt tells the story of two revolutions whose destinies cross in failure and success. France fails to establish durable freedom but succeeds in becoming the universal image of revolution. America establishes a durable republic but fails to transmit the full revolutionary experience of public happiness and participatory power. The French bell rings across history; the American bell becomes constitutional machinery.

Mehlman explains how the first bell keeps ringing. Revolution passes through Marx, Hugo, Balzac, and the recurring French sequence as repetition, parody, citation, narrative, and transformed return. Jason Frank, Kalyvas, Wellmer, Rubinelli, Pocock, and others help us hear the American founding inside its supposedly postrevolutionary institutions and recurring constituent moments. Disch finds neglected participatory routes in France. Haiti breaks open the whole comparison by showing that universal freedom was transformed at the colonial periphery and by those whose action Arendt's distinction makes difficult to see. (Mehlman 1977; Frank 2010; Kalyvas 2008; Rubinelli 2020; Siegelberg 2013)

Toryx and Helyx do not replace these histories. They allow us to follow their movements more closely. Toryx tracks how revolutions invert inherited ontologies and political interfaces. Helyx follows how their signals braid into stories, institutions, rituals, exclusions, and worlds. Together they distinguish radiance from durability, recurrence from petrification, and reopening from compulsive repetition.

Arendt's deepest lesson may therefore lie not in choosing America over France. It lies in refusing the false choice between revolutionary freedom and institutional endurance. A beginning without a world vanishes. A world that cannot begin again becomes a prison.

***The task is to create forms durable enough to carry freedom
and permeable enough to be transformed by it.***

France teaches us how the event returns.

America teaches us how the founding becomes form.

Haiti teaches us to ask whose freedom the form excludes.

And Arendt's councils point toward the unfinished Helyx: a political braid in which beginning and duration, constituent action and constitutional structure, remain capable of encountering and changing one another.

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Collage Is Primary: From Normal Colleges to Nomadic Collages

A Woesean Metagrammatology for Heideggerian Engineering of Care

CUT · CARRY · GRAFT · BIND · MUTATE · REMAINDER · CARE

For John and Greg

Abstract

Collage usually enters cultural history as a secondary operation: complete works and coherent traditions supposedly exist before an artist cuts and recombines them. This article reverses that account. Collage names a primary condition of composition: texts, canons, institutions, constitutions, subjects, and worlds emerge through selection, repetition, translation, citation, exclusion, juxtaposition, and binding. Plato's *Republic*, the *New Testament*, Thomas Jefferson's *Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*, Jacques Derrida's *Glas*, and the Charter of the United Nations appear here as distinct collage regimes. Their differences concern how their seams become concealed, sanctified, disciplined, negotiated, exposed, or reopened. The article then turns to the college as an accredited collage that naturalizes its curricular and disciplinary cuts. A Woesean humanities displaces the tree of cultural inheritance toward lateral transfer, symbiosis, and composite histories, while Heideggerian engineering asks what worlds institutional and technical gatherings disclose and reduce to standing-reserve. Care becomes a compositional practice of provenance, reciprocal mutation, remainder, revisability, opacity, maintenance, and return. Generative AI intensifies the stakes by automating collage while presenting seamless outputs through a unified voice. Kx4l3ndj3r, the eighth Challenger who returns from the finale of *Perform or Else*, supplies the recursive conclusion: the sequel alters the original, includes the close reader in its variable geometry, and converts completion into relaunch. The movement from normal colleges to nomadic collages therefore does not abandon durable institutions. It redesigns them as gatherings capable of exposing their cuts, supporting lateral transfer, and caring for the heterogeneous worlds they bind.

Keywords: collage; college; metagrammatology; Plato; *New Testament*; *Jefferson Bible*; Derrida; *Glas*; United Nations; Woesean humanities; Heideggerian engineering; care; Kx4l3ndj3r; artificial intelligence

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Introduction. The One-Vowel Institution

The words **college** and **collage** share six of seven letters but not a simple etymology. *College* comes through the Latin *collegium*: an association, guild, company, or body gathered under a shared office. *Collage* comes through the French *coller*: to glue. Their relation is therefore not genealogical but paragrammatic. One vowel changes place, and the institution begins to show its paste: *difference, differance ... dense danse* The verbal resemblance does not recover a buried historical identity; it produces an experimental relay. It asks what happens when the accredited gathering called college encounters the visible cuts, foreign bodies, rough joins, and mobile fragments associated with collage. The wager of this essay is that the encounter reveals less a contrast than an institutional secret: *the college has always been a collage.*

That claim reverses the customary history. Collage usually appears late, as an avant-garde technique that violates an earlier unity. First, according to this story, there are complete paintings, stable genres, coherent books, continuous histories, and self-identical subjects. Then Cubism pastes newspaper onto canvas; Dada and photomontage recombine mass-media scraps; cut-up writing, appropriation, sampling, remix, hypertext, and digital compositing extend the operation. Collage remains derivative even when celebrated as radical. It cuts up materials whose integrity supposedly preceded the cut.

The reversal proposed here begins elsewhere: the integrity of those materials was itself composed. A newspaper page had already gathered reports, advertisements, photographs, editorial decisions, typefaces, commercial interests, wire services, printing technologies, and readers. A canonical book had already gathered variant manuscripts, translations, citations, redactions, exclusions, institutional decisions, and rituals of reception. A nation had already gathered territories, peoples, legal fictions, myths, archives, borders, signatures, and coercive capacities. A university had already gathered disciplines, buildings, schedules, degrees, bodies, instruments, donors, publics, and inherited distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate knowledge. Collage does not arrive after these wholes. Selective gathering produces the effect of wholeness.

The Google Images screen that occasioned this essay offers a modest but exacting scene of the problem. A query naming Plato's *Republic*, the *New Testament*, the *Jefferson Bible*, and Kx4l3ndj3r returns a ranked visual field dominated by Jefferson's handmade gospel: manuscript pages, facsimiles, portraits, museum photographs, commercial covers, religious polemics, biographies, and platform advertisements. Search performs another editorial act on an artifact already made by cutting and pasting. The screen is not a transparent window onto one object. It is an automated collage regime that selects, scales, juxtaposes, and monetizes fragments while suppressing most of the operations that produced their order.

This opening scene sets four questions. First, how did collage come to appear secondary when selection, citation, translation, juxtaposition, and binding structure every composition? Second, how do canons and institutions hide the operations through which they create coherence? Third, what distinguishes the architectonic collage of Plato's *Republic*, the canonical-missionary collage of the *New Testament*, the redactional collage of Thomas Jefferson, the exposed and perfumative collage of Jacques Derrida's *Glas*, and the negotiated constitutional collage of the United Nations Charter? Fourth, how might colleges redesign their own gathering after recognizing it as collage?

The essay answers through three conceptual turns. Derrida's grammatology displaces writing from the status of a secondary copy and shows that signs begin in repeatability, spacing, supplementation, and differential referral. A Woesean humanities, taking its cue from Carl Woese's transformation of evolutionary classification, replaces the humanist tree of descent with lateral transfer, symbiosis, recombination, and composite histories. Heideggerian engineering then asks

not merely how pieces connect but what worlds a technical or institutional gathering discloses, what it renders available, and what it allows to remain a question. Care names the practice that keeps this world-composition answerable to provenance, difference, remainder, revision, repair, and return.

This is neither a conventional genealogy nor an art-historical taxonomy. The works considered here do not form a straight line from Plato to AI, and the article does not claim that a dialogue, a scripture, a handmade book, an experimental philosophical work, and an international treaty function identically. It compares **collage regimes**: distinct ways of cutting, carrying, grafting, binding, mutating, and maintaining heterogeneous materials. Such regimes can be emancipatory or authoritarian, reparative or extractive, open or tightly controlled. Collage carries no automatic politics. Its stakes lie in the worlds its cuts compose.

The institutional argument remains central. A normal college regulates collage by making its selections appear natural: disciplines become branches of knowledge, canons become the important works, curricula become rational sequences, credentials become measures of capacity, and institutional rankings become evidence of excellence. A nomadic collage does not abandon expertise, archives, or durable forms. It changes their engineering. It makes seams perceptible, supports lateral transfer, allows reciprocal mutation, preserves routes of return, and refuses to equate binding with completion.

Kx4l3ndj3r enters only near the end, where the figure performs the article's final turn. Sir Wallace Kxalendjer arrives at the finale of *Perform or Else* from another millennium; Dr. Kx4l3ndj3r returns in a sequel as the eighth Challenger and retroactively alters the preceding seven. Kx4l3ndj3r is not simply a calendar, though the figure also calendars. It is a recursive relaunch operator: an ending that reopens the book, includes its close readers, and converts an institutional archive into a future archaeological field. The finale becomes a launch complex. The research article must learn to end the same way.

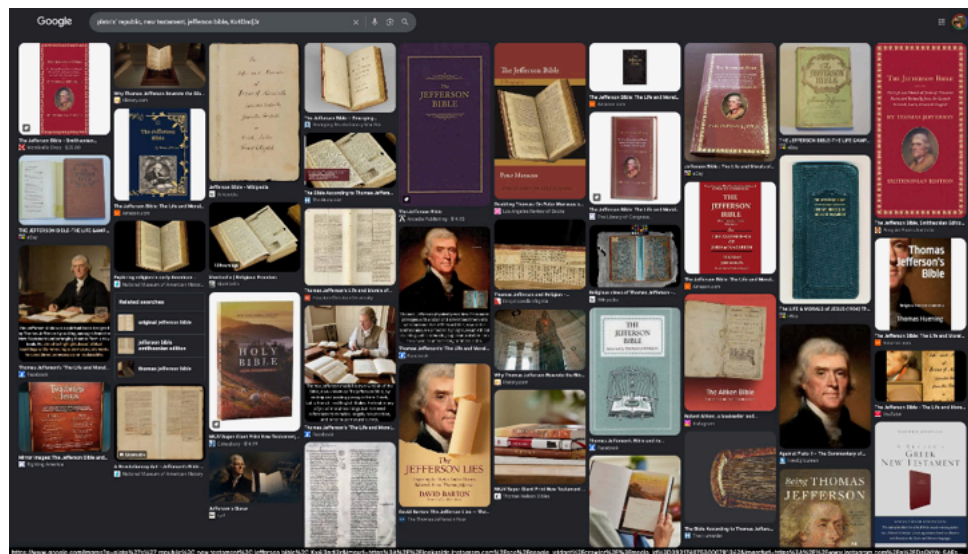


Figure 1. A Google Images query becomes an automated collage of Jefferson Bibles, manuscript pages, portraits, editions, advertisements, and commentaries. Screenshot supplied by the author, 2026.

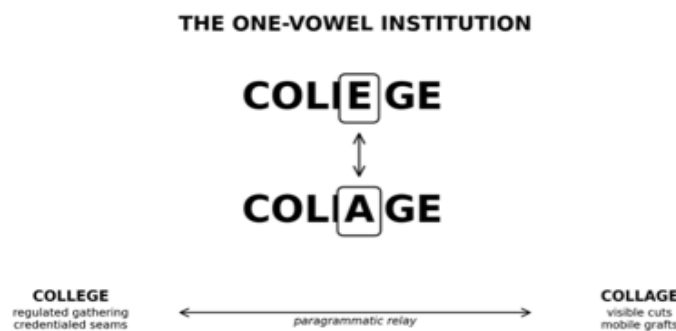


Figure 2. *College/collage as a paragrammatic relay, not etymology. StudioLab diagram, 2026.*

1. Collage Before Collage

The conventional story begins late. It locates collage in modern art: a newspaper clipping enters a painting; a ticket stub interrupts a drawn surface; printed type, commercial packaging, photographic scraps, and found materials violate the presumed unity of the artwork. Cubism gives way to Dada, montage, photomontage, assemblage, appropriation, détournement, sampling, remix, hypertext, and digital compositing. Under this account, collage appears as a special technique applied to materials that once possessed independent and completed forms.

But where did those completed materials come from?

The newspaper had already collaged reports, advertisements, photographs, typefaces, political interests, international wires, editorial decisions, and industrial processes. The photograph had already cut a frame from a field, separated one duration from another, translated light into a technical inscription, and circulated through social conventions of seeing. The printed word had already repeated inherited marks, grammars, idioms, and citations. Even the supposedly blank canvas carried material histories of textile, trade, labor, property, perspective, exhibition, and the institutional designation "art."

The fragment never begins as a pure fragment removed from a pure whole. Each fragment arrives as another provisional gathering.

Collage therefore cannot name only the recombination of previously self-contained elements. It names the compositional activity through which elements acquire enough provisional stability to seem self-contained in the first place. It precedes neither as a first historical event nor as a transcendent origin. It operates an-originarily: no simple beginning exists prior to the cuts, repetitions, substitutions, and relations through which a beginning gets staged.

Derrida's grammatological displacement proves essential here. Writing cannot remain an exterior supplement added to an already complete speech, thought, meaning, or presence. The signified already functions as a signifier; language moves through iterable references that no final signified escapes. Writing does not accidentally introduce play into an otherwise stable system. The "advent of writing" names the coming into visibility of a play that had structured signification all along (Derrida, *Of Grammatology*).

Collage does not interrupt the whole. The appearance of wholeness interrupts, manages, and temporarily arrests collage.

This reversal changes the question. Instead of asking whether a work qualifies as collage, we ask: What collage regime composes this work?

What gets selected? What gets cut? Which materials travel? What forms of authority bind them? What disappears in the binding? Which seams remain visible? Which become sacred, natural, technical, or bureaucratic? What subjects and worlds does the gathering call into existence?

The Critical Art Ensemble's account of recombinant culture approaches this claim from the side of cultural production. Recombinant texts, bodies, genders, and cultures do not simply belong to an electronic present; recombination has long driven invention. Collage, found text, appropriation, readymades, intertext, and détournement make explicit a condition that essentialist theories of the work disavow: no artwork or philosophy exhausts itself within its own supposed being-in-itself (Critical Art Ensemble, "Utopian Plagiarism").

Yet the claim that collage is primary reaches further than a defense of remix, plagiarism, or appropriation. It concerns the production of totalities. Books, persons, cities, religions, nations, constitutions, universities, and worlds arise by gathering heterogeneous materials under names that make them appear one.

Every one is already many.

The distinction between primary and secondary collage does not claim a chronological first moment at which all things were pasted together. "Primary" names a structural priority. A composition must already select relations before it can present itself as an object capable of being cut. The cut that seems to fragment a whole therefore exposes prior cuts that the whole had naturalized. Derrida's argument that the signified always already functions as a signifier gives this reversal its grammatological form: no terminal meaning stands outside the play of references to guarantee an unmediated origin (Derrida 1997, 7-8). Critical Art Ensemble gives it a political-media form by describing a recombinant culture in which collage, found text, appropriation, détournement, and plagiarism expose the mythology of creation from nothing (Critical Art Ensemble 1994, 83-103).

The claim also distinguishes collage from mere accumulation. A pile gathers by proximity; a collage composes relations. Its cuts establish scale and sequence. Its glue produces adjacency. Its frame makes some edges legible and others disappear. Its title gathers differences under a name. Its medium determines what can travel and how. Its audience completes, rejects, or reroutes the proposed connections. Collage therefore operates less as an inventory of fragments than as an engineering of passages.

This emphasis on passage prevents the essay from romanticizing the fragment. Fragments may carry violence. Colonial archives cut persons from lifeworlds and reassemble them as specimens, statistics, territories, or cases. Administrative systems collage data into profiles. Propaganda collages images and slogans into affective certainties. The problem has never been simply whether a seam shows. Jefferson's visible cuts can normalize as decisively as a seamless textbook. Conversely, some durable and nearly seamless forms can support care by maintaining continuity, memory, and shared obligations. The analysis must therefore move from collage as style to collage as regime.

Collage does not interrupt the whole.
The appearance of wholeness interrupts,
manages, and provisionally arrests collage.

2. A Metagrammatology of Institutional Composition

A grammatology studies writing beyond the narrow sense of alphabetic inscription. A metagrammatology of collage studies the cuts, media, supports, conventions, and institutions through which different modes of inscription gather worlds.

A metagrammar does something slightly different. It does not merely analyze completed compositions. It identifies transferable operations through which compositions can be made, unmade, and remade.

The metagrammar proposed here involves seven recurring operations:

Cut. Every composition selects and excludes. A frame cuts space. A canon cuts archives. A curriculum cuts histories. A concept cuts a field of differences.

Carry. The selected material travels from one context, medium, scale, or community into another. It carries residues of former relations even when the new composition suppresses them.

Graft. The carried material joins another body. The graft may take, fail, scar, infect, transform, or remain visibly foreign.

Bind. A title, spine, institution, genre, signature, doctrine, platform, or legal authority presents heterogeneous pieces as one gathering.

Mutate. Transfer alters both the incoming material and its receiving ecology. A genuine graft changes its host.

Remainder. No binding exhausts its materials. Something remains unread, excluded, excessive, disfigured, or capable of return.

Care. A composition maintains relations among elements whose differences cannot finally reconcile. Care does not erase cuts; it makes the gathering answerable for them.

These operations occur in a grocery list and in a constitution, in a seminar and in a city, in a Gospel and in a search engine. Their scales, stakes, and powers differ dramatically, but none begins from pure presence.

This distinction also clarifies the relation between the book and writing. The idea of the book promises a totality whose meaning precedes and supervises its inscriptions. Every mark receives its position from an encompassing whole. Writing, by contrast, exceeds the closure through which the volume presents itself as complete (Derrida, *Of Grammatology*).

A metagrammatology does not declare books fraudulent because they bind differences. Without provisional bindings, nothing becomes legible, transmissible, inhabitable, or shareable. The problem begins when a binding forgets its own activity and presents the relations it has produced as natural, eternal, or inevitable.

The issue is therefore not binding versus freedom, structure versus flux, college versus collage. The issue is how the binding conducts its seams.

A metagrammatology examines how the apparent grammar of a work depends on supports, institutions, material operations, and inherited codes that grammar cannot fully account for. It asks how marks become repeatable, how fragments become quotable, how formats become

recognizable, and how a binding acquires authority. Its unit of analysis is not the isolated sign or autonomous work but the relay among inscription, medium, institution, body, and world.

The prefix *meta-* does not place the analyst above the compositions under study. It marks recursion: the article must use the same operations it analyzes. It cites Plato while cutting Plato; it translates canon into a comparative matrix; it extracts the Jefferson Bible from its museum and political histories; it rearranges *Glas* within linear prose; it treats the UN Charter as a textual machine; and it imports Woese and Heidegger into institutional design. The article cannot escape collage. Rigor therefore means accounting for its cuts rather than pretending to transcend them.

The seven operators—cut, carry, graft, bind, mutate, remainder, care—form a metagrammar rather than a universal formula. They name questions that can be asked across cases without forcing those cases into equivalence. **Cut:** what is selected, separated, or made unavailable? **Carry:** what travels across languages, media, communities, or times? **Graft:** what happens when transferred material enters another body? **Bind:** what title, doctrine, law, signature, spine, interface, or institution makes the gathering appear one? **Mutate:** how do donor and host change? **Remainder:** what persists outside or inside the binding without reconciliation? **Care:** how does the composition maintain relations and permit revision?

These operators shift criticism from the exposure of hidden construction toward the design of responsible construction. The point is not to announce that everything is made and therefore arbitrary. Made worlds have consequences, histories, dependencies, and degrees of durability. Metagrammatology becomes metagrammar when the analysis can guide another gathering: a syllabus, archive, charter, interface, publication, course, lab, or public event.

Collage Regimes

Composition	Regime	Binding operation	World-effect
<i>Plato's Republic</i>	Architectonic	curriculum, analogy, role assignment	city-soul-cosmos
<i>New Testament</i>	Canonical-missionary	canon, translation, liturgy	church and translocal community
<i>Jefferson Bible</i>	Redactional-disciplinary	razor, alignment, moral extraction	republican moral subject
<i>Glas</i>	Deconstructive-perfumative	columns, grafts, +L, signatures	plural reading paths and remainder
UN Charter	Constitutional	clauses, offices, signatures, procedures	international institutional order
Kx4l3ndj3r	Recursive-relaunching	sequel, return, reader inclusion	future archaeology and nomadic collage

Table 1. Comparative collage regimes. The table marks differences of operation rather than a chronological progression.

3. Plato's Republic: Architectonic Collage and the Proto-College

Plato's *Republic* often appears as the opposite of collage. It seems architectonic: one philosophical vision arranges city, soul, knowledge, education, art, gender, labor, politics, and cosmos beneath the form of the Good. Its most famous images—the sun, divided line, and cave—appear to guide heterogeneous materials toward a single illuminated order.

Yet the *Republic* does not possess the form of a unified philosophical treatise. It stages a remembered conversation narrated by Socrates. It combines dramatic dialogue, political speculation, educational curriculum, myth, analogy, mathematical reflection, psychological partition, institutional design, literary criticism, theology, and eschatological tale. Arguments arrive through changes of speaker, interruptions, examples, fables, images, thought experiments, and strategic concessions.

Its composition resembles an experimental studio more than a completed blueprint.

The dialogue begins after a festival. Socrates gets stopped on his return to Athens and compelled to remain in the Piraeus. Philosophy therefore begins through interruption, detour, and a gathering of voices. The city in speech emerges only because a return journey suffers capture.

The just city then develops through a series of compositional cuts. Occupations get divided. Appetites, spiritedness, and reason acquire different places. Stories suitable for guardians separate from stories judged corrupting. Musical modes, bodily exercises, familial arrangements, and educational stages undergo selection. Poets enter and exit. Philosophers ascend and return. Citizens receive roles and metals. The dialogue gathers a polis by cutting among possible lives.

The *Republic* thus operates simultaneously as:

a collage of genres;

a collage of voices;

a collage of social functions;

a collage of psychic capacities;

a collage of educational exercises;

a collage of images that repeatedly replace insufficient definitions.

Its authority derives not from an absence of seams but from an extraordinary capacity to align seams across scales. City mirrors soul; educational order mirrors psychic order; cosmic Good illuminates political and epistemological order. Heterogeneous arrangements become homologous.

Plato's text therefore constitutes an architectonic collage. It does not conceal every cut. Indeed, much of the dialogue concerns who and what must get cut. But it places those cuts beneath a transcendent orientation that makes the final gathering appear ordered by the Good rather than assembled through contested acts of composition.

Derrida's discussion of the Platonic sun helps expose this operation. Western logocentrism links speech, truth, illumination, fatherhood, and authority; in the *Republic*, the intelligible sun becomes analogous to the Good and the father. Derrida asks what writing would need to become to threaten

this system at its secret center. He then locates a decisive breach in irreducibly graphic and poetic writing rather than in the normal operations of philosophical theory (Derrida, *Of Grammatology*).

Yet graphic poetics does not arrive from outside Plato. Plato's own dialogue already relies on dramatic spacing, mythic substitution, figurative relay, citation, and staged voices. The philosophical architect has always needed collage.

The *Republic* becomes foundational not because it transcends composition, but because it offers Western institutions a powerful model for governing composition while attributing the government to truth.

Calling the *Republic* a collage does not reduce its philosophical force to literary miscellany. It locates that force in an extraordinary capacity to coordinate heterogeneous forms. The text continually changes the medium of inquiry when definition fails: justice becomes a city in speech; the city becomes an enlarged soul; the soul becomes a partition of capacities; knowledge becomes sun, line, and cave; political decline becomes a sequence of constitutions and character types; the final account of justice becomes the Myth of Er. Each relay imports another genre and scale. Philosophy advances by compositional substitution.

The dialogue also establishes a politics of media. Stories enter the city as formative equipment. Rhythm and harmony enter the soul. Mimesis distributes identifications. Education therefore requires editorial control: some tales must be rewritten, some musical modes restricted, some poets expelled or admitted only under conditions. The guardian curriculum performs a cut across the cultural archive (Plato, *Republic* 376e-398b). The resulting college does not merely convey knowledge; it composes the kinds of beings capable of guarding the city.

This makes the *Republic* an especially powerful precedent for normal colleges. Its divisions are not merely administrative. They link ontology, psychology, pedagogy, and politics. To know the right order is to occupy the right place within it. The educational institution becomes a machine for aligning inner and outer architecture. Later colleges need not reproduce Plato's specific program to inherit this aspiration: the dream that curricular order can mirror the order of knowledge and that institutional hierarchy can express the proper distribution of capacities.

Yet the dramatic frame keeps this architecture from becoming perfectly self-grounding. The city arises in a conversation whose participants remain situated in the Piraeus, at night, after a festival, under the pressure of an interrupted return. Socrates does not write the dialogue; Plato writes Socrates remembering it. The philosophical college already depends on theatrical mediation, temporal displacement, and a collage of voices. The seam runs through the foundation.

4. The *New Testament*: Canonical-Missionary Collage

The *New Testament* likewise arrives retrospectively as a singular book. Its title encourages the reader to imagine a coherent object paired with an Old Testament and unified by one divine history. Yet its corpus gathers materials written at different times, for different audiences, through different genres, languages, memories, disputes, and theological orientations.

It includes Gospel narratives, letters, sermons, parables, genealogies, miracle stories, travel accounts, ethical instruction, ecclesial administration, prophetic visions, apocalyptic images, remembered sayings, scriptural citations, and competing accounts of communal life.

The *New Testament* does not record one voice. It composes a field of voices around a name, an event, and a developing set of communities.

Its collage operates through several transfers:

Oral sayings enter written narratives. Jewish scriptures enter Greek citations. Local correspondence enters translocal doctrine. Memories of a teacher enter christological proclamation. Stories from different communities enter parallel Gospel arrangements. A Roman instrument of execution enters a salvific sign. A small messianic movement enters an imperial communications network. Letters written to particular assemblies become scripture for communities that their writers never imagined.

The corpus therefore does not simply transmit Christianity. It participates in composing what "Christianity" can become.

Canonization then gathers the heterogeneous writings under institutional and theological bindings. Some texts become canonical; others become apocryphal, heretical, marginal, or lost. Certain differences remain inside the cover, while others get placed outside it. The canon does not eliminate collage. Canon governs collage.

This governance works by turning an assemblage into a body. The gathered writings acquire sequence, title, authorized translation, liturgical use, commentary, doctrine, and material binding. A collection of writings becomes the New Testament. It gains a voice that no individual document possesses.

But the seams never vanish. Four Gospels remain four. Paul's letters address particular disputes. Revelation does not sound like Luke. Genealogies differ. Sayings recur with variations. The canon's power depends partly upon its capacity to make these differences inhabit a shared volume without fully resolving them.

The *New Testament* therefore exemplifies a canonical-missionary collage. Its heterogeneity supports movement. Texts, rituals, doctrines, images, and practices travel across languages and peoples. Translation becomes constitutive rather than incidental. A message must enter another grammar, another city, another body, another calendar.

This lateral mobility eventually supports vertical institutionalization. Diverse Christian exercises enter theological systems, ecclesial hierarchies, monasteries, schools, confessional practices, and empires. In an earlier StudioLab genealogy, the closing of ancient philosophical schools and the rise of Christian theological institutions mark not a clean replacement of one worldview by another, but a transmediation of exercises, genres, and infrastructures.

The missionary collage becomes a college.

Yet the reverse also remains possible. Every translation, commentary, vernacular Bible, marginal note, heterodox reading, and communal performance can reopen the canon's seams. The canonical book never fully controls the writing it binds.

Material history sharpens the argument. Early Christian writings circulated through scrolls, codices, letters, copies, readings, and collections before the New Testament appeared as the stable twenty-seven-book object familiar to modern readers. The codex did not merely contain Christian writing; it helped configure how multiple writings could be gathered, ordered, cross-read, and carried. Harry Gamble's history of early Christian books places production, circulation, and use within the social life of communities rather than treating textual transmission as a transparent vehicle (Gamble 1995). David Trobisch goes further by analyzing the editorial features through which the canonical collection presents itself as a coordinated publication (Trobisch 2000). Whatever one makes of his stronger thesis about an early edition, the New Testament clearly reaches readers through compositional frames.

The fourfold Gospel offers a paradigmatic seam. The canon could have selected one harmonized life, yet it binds four narratives whose repetitions and differences remain visible. The formula "according to" turns plurality into a regulated relation: not four unrelated books, but Gospel according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Canonical unity therefore depends on preserving variation under an authorized name. The binding neither abolishes difference nor leaves it ungoverned.

Mission intensifies the collage. A local letter becomes scripture elsewhere; Jewish texts enter new Greek arguments; sayings move from oral performance into narrative; rituals gather bodies around repeated readings; translation inserts the corpus into languages, calendars, architectures, and political orders it could not anticipate. Christianity grows through lateral circulation before and alongside vertical hierarchy. Its texts act as portable packets of thought-action.

This double movement—lateral mission and vertical canon—helps explain the transformation from philosophical schools to ecclesiastical and later university institutions. Ancient exercises do not simply disappear; practices of reading, confession, commentary, disputation, discipline, and care migrate into Christian settings and mutate there. The missionary collage becomes a college when mobility receives doctrinal, clerical, architectural, and curricular administration. But the canonical seams remain available for reopening through translation, commentary, heresy, reform, vernacular publication, and new media.

The canon does not overcome collage. The canon administers collage.

5. The *Jefferson Bible*: Razor, Glue, and the Enlightenment College

Thomas Jefferson's *Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth* makes the material operations of canon and commentary almost embarrassingly literal. Jefferson takes razor and glue to multilingual Gospel editions, removes miracles and supernatural events, and binds selected teachings into a continuous moral narrative.

The gesture appears radical because the cuts remain physical. One can see the editorial operation in the artifact. But Jefferson does not introduce cutting into an uncut Bible. He repeats, concentrates, and redirects operations already active in Gospel composition, canonization, translation, lectionary selection, theological commentary, and devotional reading.

His Bible differs not because it becomes collage while the *New Testament* remained whole. It installs another collage regime.

Jefferson extracts a moral teacher from a miraculous corpus. Resurrection, divinity, prophecy, and supernatural causality become removable material; ethical conduct becomes the retained signal. The razor edits not only a text but a cosmos. It cuts relations among body, death, divinity, time, history, and hope.

The operation produces a new world:

Jesus becomes an exemplary human teacher.

Revelation becomes rational moral instruction.

Scripture becomes a mine of usable ethical passages.

The editor becomes an engineer of inherited religion.

Republican reason assumes authority over theological excess.

Human judgment replaces divine inspiration as the binding principle.

Jefferson's scissors and glue perform the psychocosmographic transference from God to Man. In an earlier formulation, the Bible becomes a transmedial collage-event within the modern lecture machine: theological heavens get recomposed into ideological worlds, and spiritual exercises become secular technologies of subject formation.

The *Jefferson Bible* therefore belongs neither simply to the history of religion nor to the history of modern secularism. It provides an emblem of modern composition.

Modernity repeatedly acts like Jefferson:

extract the rational from the mythical;

retain moral usefulness while deleting cosmological excess;

reorganize inherited materials under human mastery;

naturalize the resulting construction as enlightened progress.

Universities perform Jeffersonian operations whenever they translate traditions into survey courses, extract "ideas" from ritual practices, detach texts from communities, or retain ethical teachings after declaring cosmologies obsolete. Search engines and AI systems repeat the gesture whenever they separate usable informational content from form, context, voice, and ritual address.

Jefferson's razor anticipates content extraction.

Yet his artifact also provides an unintended lesson. The visible seams disclose the violence and creativity of every canon. His pasted pages tell the truth that many institutions conceal: all inheritance arrives edited.

The question is not whether to cut. No transmission occurs without cuts. The question concerns the authority, effects, reversibility, and care of the cut.

Can the razor become a hinge rather than a guillotine?

Jefferson's object makes this relation between book and institutional design almost diagrammatic. The National Museum of American History describes the 1820 manuscript as an eighty-four-page assemblage made from passages cut from four Gospel editions arranged in Greek, Latin, French, and English. The multilingual columns turn comparison into a page architecture; the chronological sequence turns dispersed passages into one moral life. The artifact is therefore simultaneously a private exercise, a comparative interface, and a handmade publication (Jefferson 1820; Manseau 2020).

Its governing distinction between reasonable ethics and unreasonable doctrine repeats a broader Enlightenment partition. Religion can enter the modern college as history, morality, literature, sociology, psychology, or culture once revelation loses authority over the arrangement. The institution does not stop transmitting sacred material; it changes the glue. Human judgment, historical method, disciplinary classification, and civic usefulness replace divine inspiration as the principles of binding.

This operation clarifies why the Jefferson Bible should not be celebrated merely as a proto-remix. Collage can enforce purification. The scissors create a continuous, exemplary Jesus by removing the events that would interrupt the editor's anthropology. Miracles, resurrection, and supernatural

agency become excess relative to a republican moral subject. The visible seam therefore supports a strong authorial sovereignty: Jefferson decides what counts as the real teaching hidden within the inherited corpus.

The same logic appears in curricular extraction. Survey courses cut traditions into representative weeks; anthologies transform works into excerpts; learning-management systems convert inquiry into modules; museums detach objects from ritual settings; search engines surface snippets; generative systems summarize arguments into usable content. None of these operations is inherently illegitimate. The question is whether the extraction preserves enough provenance, resistance, and remainder for the borrowed material to alter the institution that receives it. A Jeffersonian college takes what it already knows how to value. A nomadic collage risks discovering that the excluded material had been addressing it.

6. *Glas*: Collage Becoming Conscious of Its Seams

Derrida's *Glas* often serves as the exemplary collage-text: divided columns, interrupted arguments, typography, citations, proper names, literary fragments, philosophical commentary, dictionary effects, puns, spacing, signatures, and grafts. The work forces readers to decide where to begin, how to move, and whether "beginning" still names a stable operation.

Yet *Glas* does not transform ordinary philosophical writing into collage. It exposes the collage that philosophical writing had required while denying.

Hegel's system gathers philosophy, religion, history, family, law, politics, and spirit into a monumental dialectical architecture. Genet's writing gathers theft, sainthood, sexuality, betrayal, criminality, flowers, names, and theatrical self-invention. Derrida places these already heterogeneous oeuvres beside and inside one another without allowing either to become a master frame for the other.

The two columns do not simply oppose philosophy and literature, system and fragment, legitimacy and criminality. Smaller textual grafts perforate both columns. Words migrate. Names split. Sounds cross conceptual borders. Etymologies lead sideways. Quotations arrive like foreign bodies. The page becomes an event-space.

This is why +L matters. Within the StudioLab relay, +L names the supplementary letter, graphic eruption, graft, excrescence, and material perturbation of a concept. It can expose an off-line or ghost-line within an argument, interrupt an assumption, and convert interpretation into a compositional operation.

The +L does not simply add another piece to a completed construction. It shows that completion had depended on excluding a piece that remained structurally active.

In this sense, *Glas* practices a perfumative collage. Meaning does not remain contained in propositions. It emits through spacing, typography, sound, association, rhythm, joke, residue, and atmosphere. The text conducts more than it states. Its pieces do not assemble into a single interpretation; they release effects across the page and beyond it.

Where Jefferson removes supernatural excess to produce moral clarity, *Glas* protects excess from moral and conceptual extraction.

Where the Republic aligns heterogeneous scales beneath the Good, *Glas* jams architectonic alignment.

Where the New Testament binds differences through canon, Glas turns the binding into an exposed scene of reading.

Still, Glas does not escape composition. It selects, cuts, binds, stages, and authorizes. Derrida's name appears on its cover. The work enters academic canons and publishing economies. It generates commentaries, pedagogies, and recognizable stylistic conventions.

No collage remains innocent merely because its seams show.

The distinction lies instead in whether a composition allows its materials to talk back, mutate the host, and reopen the conditions of gathering. Glas converts the seam from a defect requiring concealment into a medium of relation.

The importance of *Glas* for this argument lies not in its visual eccentricity alone but in the institutional problem its page poses. Academic prose usually asks the reader to proceed linearly through an argument whose citations, examples, and digressions remain subordinate to a governing thesis. *Glas* makes that hierarchy difficult to sustain. Its two large columns and numerous internal grafts generate simultaneous demands. Reading becomes navigation, switching, delay, return, and decision.

The page therefore models another college. Hegel and Genet do not become departments sealed from one another, nor do they dissolve into an interdisciplinary synthesis. Each column interrupts the other while retaining a degree of singularity. Philosophy, literature, theology, family law, sexuality, etymology, autobiography, and typography cross without passing through one methodological customs office. The relation is neither peaceful integration nor simple opposition. It is a controlled failure of curricular closure.

Derrida's "law of genre" names this paradox: a genre needs boundaries to function, but works participate in genres without belonging to them purely (Derrida 1980). *Glas* materializes that participation as page design. Its fragments carry their old contexts while acquiring new resonances. Its citations are not evidence neatly supporting propositions; they act as bodies whose placement changes the scene.

The +L offers a compact operator for this metagrammar. In the StudioLab relay, +L names the supplemental letter that makes a concept leak: *glas* becomes *glass*, line becomes off-line, genre acquires another leg. The addition is small, but it changes how the field can be traversed. +L is not an ornamental flourish after thought. It is the graphic event through which excluded material returns inside the architecture of thought.

Still, *Glas* cannot claim purity through impurity. It too becomes a bound book, authored object, difficult classic, commodity, and credential of theoretical literacy. Seam-consciousness does not automatically democratize access. The task for the college is not to imitate the typography of *Glas* everywhere, but to learn from its refusal of one sovereign reading path. Deconstruction becomes institutionally consequential when seams become places of navigation, contest, and hospitality rather than defects to be repaired in advance.

7. The UN Charter: Constitutional Collage and the Composition of "We"

The Charter of the United Nations may seem distant from literary collage. Its language appears formal, diplomatic, legal, and institutional. Yet constitutional documents offer some of the clearest examples of collage as world-composition.

A constitution never simply describes a preexisting collective. It gathers heterogeneous peoples, territories, histories, legal traditions, offices, memories, aspirations, and powers under a name. It composes a "we" capable of speaking as though it had existed before the document that calls it forth.

The UN Charter gathers the ruins and ambitions of a world war into an institutional form. It collages moral proclamation, sovereign equality, security arrangements, international law, administrative procedures, economic cooperation, human rights aspirations, military power, diplomatic compromise, and signatures of states with radically unequal histories and capacities.

"We the peoples" opens a document whose effective parties remain states. Universal aspiration enters a system structured by national sovereignty. Equality cohabits with privileged powers. Peace enters an institutional architecture that retains coercive force. Decolonizing promises coexist with imperial inheritances.

These tensions do not prove that the Charter failed to become a coherent whole. They show that international order can emerge only through a negotiated collage whose elements do not naturally reconcile.

The Charter's force comes partly from binding incompatible materials without waiting for philosophical synthesis. It does not solve the relation between universal humanity and state sovereignty; it engineers procedures through which that unresolved relation can operate.

Here collage becomes constitutional.

A constitutional collage differs from a literary collage in its direct capacity to authorize action. Clauses establish bodies, offices, votes, jurisdictions, permissions, obligations, and limits. The document's fragments do not merely signify; they arrange who may speak, intervene, recognize, sanction, protect, or refuse.

The signature binds the signatory to a world that the text helps produce.

Yet constitutional collage also leaves remainders. Peoples excluded from founding negotiations, languages subordinated in translation, territories assigned without consent, historical injuries converted into abstractions, and powers protected by institutional compromise continue to inhabit the Charter as specters.

Derridean justice becomes relevant precisely where no founding balance existed. Lawlor describes the Derridean promise as an-archic: no pure beginning guarantees its completion, and justice remains a relation to the other marked by dissymmetry and an unpayable obligation (Lawlor, Derrida and Husserl).

The Charter cannot return to a pure founding intention because none existed. Its care lies in the possibility of amendment, reinterpretation, institutional struggle, testimony, and renewed promise.

A care-bearing constitutional collage must therefore preserve more than procedural continuity. It must preserve the capacity of those bound by the document to contest the terms of binding.

The Charter's preamble begins with the performative fiction "We the peoples," yet the document was negotiated, signed, and ratified by states. This seam between peoples and governments remains constitutive. The Charter imagines a collectivity broader than sovereign membership while building the organization through sovereign units. It binds a universal address to a historically unequal institutional machinery.

The document's layered inheritance makes its collage visible. Covenant, constitution, treaty, declaration, administrative statute, and wartime alliance meet in one text. The Charter distributes organs, competencies, procedures, voting powers, obligations, and exceptions. It creates places from which a General Assembly, Security Council, Secretariat, International Court, and other bodies can act. Its language does not merely express ideals; it engineers an operational world.

Mark Mazower's account of the United Nations' ideological origins shows how internationalism, empire, great-power management, minority protection, and anticolonial aspirations entered the institution through unresolved historical compromises (Mazower 2009). The Charter's seams therefore register more than abstract contradiction. They carry asymmetries built into the founding settlement. Universal peace and sovereign equality coexist with permanent privilege and coercive authority.

Reading the Charter as collage avoids two inadequate responses. One response dismisses the institution because it fails to embody a pure universal. The other treats its founding language as a stable moral source to which politics need only return. A collage reading asks instead which bindings have enabled durable cooperation, which have insulated unequal powers, what remainders continue to trouble the text, and how interpretation, amendment, practice, and counter-institutional pressure can alter the world it discloses.

The care criterion is therefore not seamless consensus. It is the capacity of those composed by the institution—including peoples not adequately represented at its founding—to contest and revise the terms of composition. Constitutional collage remains alive only when its bindings can host claims they did not anticipate.

8. The Normal College: Accredited Collage

The college and collage do not oppose institution to fragmentation. Both name gatherings. The decisive difference lies in how the gathering understands and governs its own construction. The **normal college** is a collage regime that has converted historical selections into accredited order.

"Normal" carries several useful resonances. Normal schools trained teachers to reproduce authorized pedagogical methods. Statistical normality converts distributions into standards and deviations. Michel Foucault's disciplinary institutions normalize bodies through examination, comparison, documentation, and correction (Foucault 1977). Thomas Kuhn's normal science organizes research around accepted exemplars, legitimate problems, instruments, and standards (Kuhn 2012). The normal college joins these operations. It produces knowledge and persons by establishing what counts as a field, method, contribution, course, requirement, credential, and career.

Its collage practices are everywhere. Departments cut the archive into territories. Syllabi gather readings into sequences. Survey courses turn centuries into weeks. Anthologies make representative excerpts. Lectures bind concepts, images, voices, and examples under professorial narration. Laboratories gather instruments, protocols, materials, technicians, data, and funding. Admissions assemble cohorts; grading converts heterogeneous performances into comparable marks; majors bind courses into identities; degrees turn accumulated credits into institutional speech acts. Commencement stages the completed subject and sends it into another world.

None of this means the college is fraudulent because it composes. Without selection, sequence, repetition, and durable infrastructure, there is no shared inquiry. The problem begins when the institution disavows the contingency and violence of its arrangements. Disciplines become natural branches of knowledge. Canonical works become self-evidently central. Prerequisites become neutral developmental sequences. Citation becomes proof of individual mastery rather than a map

of dependence. Accreditation certifies not only that a gathering occurred but that its seams should no longer require public attention.

This is why the college/collage paragram matters more than a pun. Change one vowel and the curriculum's materiality comes into view. A college glues together bodies, media, rooms, archives, schedules, values, and futures. Its glue includes money, prestige, law, habit, architecture, labor, and affect. Some joins remain supple; others harden. Some fragments can migrate; others become trapped. Some voices receive quotation marks and bibliographic identity; others enter as anonymous service, infrastructure, or data.

Bill Readings described the modern university as losing the unifying cultural mission that once organized its disciplines and replacing that mission with the empty managerial language of "excellence" (Readings 1996). The diagnosis can be restated through collage. Once no transcendent idea guarantees the whole, the university intensifies procedures that compare unlike activities without explaining why they belong together. Rankings, metrics, learning outcomes, performance reviews, and dashboards act as new adhesives. They bind by commensuration.

The performance university examined in *Perform or Else* extends this logic. Cultural efficacy, organizational efficiency, and technological effectiveness become interconnected imperatives across the lecture machine. Research, teaching, administration, and infrastructure respond to overlapping calls to perform—or else (McKenzie 2001). The normal college no longer hides only behind disciplinary truth; it also hides behind optimization. Digital platforms promise integration while translating distinct practices into interoperable data.

The relation between professing and collage further complicates authorship. Shannon Jackson shows how the university's division of theory and practice helped constitute the modern field of performance (Jackson 2004). Professing is not the expression of a prior knowledge possessed by an individual. It is an institutional act that gathers archives, students, rooms, disciplinary histories, and public claims. The professor functions as both editor and edited figure.

A nomadic collage does not simply abolish these forms. It reorients their design. A syllabus becomes a provisional itinerary whose cuts are stated and revisable. A classroom becomes a transfer zone where texts move into making, performance, public encounter, and partner feedback. A discipline becomes a host capable of mutation rather than a sovereign customs regime. A degree becomes less proof of completed formation than evidence that a learner can build, inhabit, question, and repair gatherings.

Nomadic does not mean frictionless mobility. Historical nomadism involves routes, seasons, memory, equipment, shelters, permissions, dangers, and relations with settled powers. Likewise, an institutional nomadic collage requires maintenance. It must ask who can move, whose labor supports movement, who remains involuntarily displaced, and which archives or communities bear the costs of academic travel. Care prevents nomadism from becoming another fantasy of elite circulation.

The shift can be condensed: the normal college treats difference as material to be classified within an inherited architecture; the nomadic collage treats architecture as a provisional medium for relations that may change the institution itself. The first asks whether a fragment fits. The second asks what world the encounter could open.

A normal college is a collage whose seams have received accreditation.

9. Woesean Humanities: From Trees to Transfer Ecologies

A genealogy of these works could easily fall back into a linear history:

Plato → Christianity → Jefferson → Derrida → United Nations → Kx4l3ndj3r

Such a sequence would reproduce the very structure under critique. It would imagine cultural development as vertical descent: an origin gives rise to successors, branches divide, influence moves forward, and later forms inherit or reject earlier ones.

The Woesean humanities interrupts this tree.

Carl Woese's work helped transform biological classification by distinguishing Archaea, Bacteria, and Eukarya as fundamental domains and by making lateral transfer increasingly central to evolutionary thought. In the StudioLab elaboration, this biological image-crisis displaces the humanist tree whose trunk rises toward Man, disciplines spread as branches, and canonical texts appear as fruits. Life becomes a web, forest, rhizosphere, microbial ecology, and lateral-transfer field. Relations precede stable identities, and organisms appear as historical composites.

A Woesean humanities does not claim that texts literally behave like bacteria. Nor does it seek biological authorization for cultural practices. It uses Woese's displacement to denaturalize the metaphors governing both biology and the humanities.

What changes when cultural inheritance no longer takes the family tree as its master image?

Plato does not remain a sovereign ancestor. Platonic materials transfer laterally into Christian theology, educational institutions, political theory, dramatic writing, mathematical diagrams, and platform design.

The *New Testament* does not simply descend from Judaism and generate Christianity. Its parables, letters, ethical formulas, images, and organizational practices enter countless religious, political, literary, and technical ecologies.

Jefferson's razor does not merely secularize the Gospel. It anticipates montage, content extraction, data cleaning, curricular selection, and algorithmic moderation.

The UN Charter receives materials from treaties, constitutions, religious covenants, imperial administration, anti-colonial struggle, diplomatic protocol, and wartime declarations.

Glas transfers Hegel, Genet, theology, etymology, typography, law, family, sexuality, and literary criticism across columns whose relations change the imported materials.

Kx4l3ndj3r receives packets from all of them, mutates them through AI, performance design, cosmography, pedagogy, and public media, then releases new packets into other collaborations.

In this field, texts function as both hosts and donors.

The crucial difference between eclecticism and Woesean transfer concerns mutation. Eclecticism collects interesting objects while leaving the receiving structure largely unchanged. Lateral transfer changes the ecology into which the material enters. In the existing formulation, Heidegger mutates when placed in interface design; scholarly work mutates through zines, posters, comics, AI conversations, and public collaborations; StudioLab becomes a horizontal-transfer zone rather than merely an interdisciplinary program.

Collage therefore provides the metagrammar of Woesean humanities.

A collage-element travels sideways. It carries code, style, affect, procedure, memory, and world. Its arrival can trigger capacities not previously available in the receiving system. It may also fail, contaminate, overwhelm, or get domesticated. Transfer always carries risk.

The zine offers a vivid mechanic genre for such movement. Small, mobile, public, inexpensive, and remixable, it can hold theory, image, annotation, humor, diagram, and manifesto. It moves like a plasmid: a packet carrying cultural code across communities without awaiting vertical disciplinary inheritance.

But the Republic, Gospel parable, Jeffersonian clipping, Derridean +L, and UN clause can move plasmidically as well. Each may detach, enter another host, and alter what that host can think or do.

The humanities after Woese no longer ask only, "Who influenced whom?"

They ask:

What transferred? Through which medium? Into what ecology? What mutated? What gained expression? What suffered extraction? What new relations became possible?

Woese's importance lies not simply in adding Archaea as another branch to a familiar tree. His work helped force biology to reconsider the architecture through which deep evolutionary relations could be represented. Ribosomal RNA comparison supported a three-domain account of life and contributed to a broader recognition that microbial evolution cannot be narrated solely through clean vertical descent (Woese and Fox 1977; Woese 2004). Horizontal gene transfer, symbiosis, endosymbiosis, viral insertion, and genomic exchange complicate the tree with networks and reticulations (Doolittle 2000; Quammen 2018).

The humanities can take this as an image crisis rather than a biological mandate. It would be dangerous to naturalize cultural or political claims by finding microbial analogies. The point is to denaturalize the tree that has long organized humanist inheritance: authors beget schools, nations own traditions, disciplines branch from foundations, works descend through influence, and Man occupies the crown. Woesean humanities asks what becomes perceptible when lateral transfer receives equal conceptual weight.

The cases in this essay then stop lining up as stages. Platonic educational code enters Christian theology and later secular curriculum. Scriptural covenant migrates into constitutional language. Gospel fragments enter Jefferson's republican anthropology. Redactional techniques migrate into anthologies, databases, and interfaces. Hegel and Genet mutate within Derrida's page architecture. International legal forms circulate among empires, states, anticolonial movements, NGOs, and universities. Kx4l3ndj3r carries materials from fiction, theory, disaster, archaeology, and performance into a sequel that retroactively changes its source.

This transfer ecology also changes the meaning of interdisciplinarity. The normal college imagines disciplines as already constituted units that later collaborate. A Woesean humanities treats disciplines themselves as historical composites maintained by repeated transfers. "Interdisciplinary" then becomes too weak if it leaves the donor and host intact. The sharper question is whether transfer changes the receiving ecology: whether Heidegger becomes different when placed in interface design, whether Woese changes humanist models of inheritance, whether a Gospel changes republican reason, whether a community partner changes the genre of scholarship, whether AI changes what counts as a draft, archive, or interlocutor.

StudioLab can be understood in this sense as a horizontal-transfer zone. Its zines, posters, comics, workshops, AI UX reports, partner collaborations, cosmograms, and public events act as **mechanic genres**: forms that carry packets of thought-action across settings without waiting for the full apparatus of disciplinary publication. A zine moves like a plasmid not because culture is a bacterium but because a small, mobile form can transport operational code—questions, figures, instructions, affects, and diagrams—into another community where it may mutate.

Woesean humanities therefore does not reject genealogy. Vertical descent still matters. It refuses genealogy's monopoly. Traditions persist through teaching, reproduction, citation, and institutional succession, but they also survive by contamination, translation, appropriation, alliance, theft, hospitality, and accident. The history of a college resembles neither a pure tree nor a formless network. It is a changing ecology of vertical and lateral inheritance whose compositions must be studied at multiple scales.

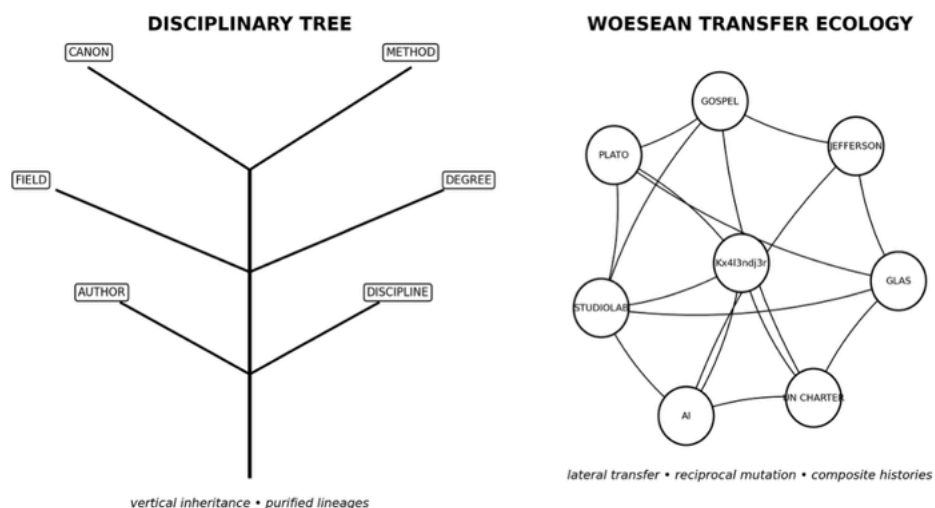


Figure 3. The disciplinary tree and a Woesean transfer ecology. The network supplements rather than simply abolishes vertical inheritance. StudioLab diagram, 2026.

10. Heideggerian Engineering of Care

The claim that collage is primary could remain a theory of signs and cultural transmission. Heideggerian engineering pushes it toward design, technics, and world-disclosure.

Technical systems do not merely organize neutral materials. They disclose entities according to particular modes of availability. A search interface, archive, classroom, constitution, AI model, hospital form, or calendar makes some relations evident and others difficult to perceive. Each gathers a world.

The existing BeyngLab formulation treats archives, interfaces, AI systems, repositories, curricula, and search functions as world-disclosing apparatuses. Heideggerian engineering asks what kind of world a system opens, orders, accelerates, reduces to standing-reserve, lets dwell, or preserves as question. It deepens engineering through ontological diagnosis, archival care, interpretive design, and public pedagogy.

Collage becomes central because engineering always gathers heterogeneous elements:

materials;	environments;	energy;
users;	standards;	assumptions;
codes;	histories;	future scenarios.
institutions;	labor;	

Conventional engineering often treats this heterogeneity as a problem requiring reduction. Requirements become fixed. Noise gets filtered. Variables become measurable. Friction gets minimized. Context becomes "input." The assembled system should function reliably.

Jefferson's Bible exemplifies this engineering attitude toward inheritance. Miracles become noise. Moral instruction becomes signal. Razor and glue optimize the corpus for a new user: the enlightened republican subject.

Heideggerian engineering does not reject clarity, function, or technical reliability. It asks what gets lost when function becomes the only mode of disclosure.

A bridge discloses a river differently from a poem, a ritual, a flood map, a hydroelectric plant, a childhood memory, or a fish migration. None provides the whole river. Each collage of materials, practices, and concerns opens a different river-world.

Similarly, the *Republic*, *New Testament*, *Jefferson Bible*, *Glas*, UN Charter, and Kx4l3ndj3r do not offer different representations of one preexisting world. Each gathers elements in ways that disclose different worlds and different inhabitants:

guardian, philosopher, artisan, and citizen;	signature, criminal saint, philosopher, reader, and textual remainder;
apostle, believer, sinner, neighbor, and resurrected body;	people, state, refugee, delegate, aggressor, and international community;
moral teacher and rational republican;	liminaut, collaborator, AI interlocutor, image, event, and returning fragment.

The collage does not sit inside the world. It helps world.

Heideggerian engineering therefore asks of every cut:

What mode of being does this cut authorize?

What becomes visible? What becomes usable? What becomes sacred? What becomes disposable? Who gains a position from which to speak? Who becomes data? Which futures become plausible? Which histories become unavailable?

No design escapes these questions by declaring itself neutral.

Heideggerian engineering begins from a difficult proposition: engineering never merely arranges neutral objects inside a pregiven world. Every technical system gathers relations and discloses entities according to a mode of availability. The bridge, archive, search engine, classroom, hospital form, calendar, treaty, and AI interface do not simply serve users; they help establish what can appear as a user, resource, problem, result, place, or future.

In "The Question Concerning Technology," Heidegger describes modern technics through *Gestell*, enframing: a challenging-forth that orders beings as standing-reserve (Heidegger 1977). The concept does not identify technology with machines, nor does it permit a simple rejection of engineering. It asks how a mode of revealing becomes dominant. A Jeffersonian Bible enframes scripture as extractable moral content. A normal college enframes histories as curricula, persons as human resources, inquiry as measurable output, and archives as searchable information. An AI interface can enframingly render language as a reserve of patterns available for immediate synthesis.

Heideggerian engineering responds by designing the clearing as well as the object. It asks: what world does this system open? What forms of attention does it invite? What does it accelerate or make difficult? What relations of dependence disappear behind the interface? What remains capable of surprising or addressing the inhabitant? Does the system preserve questioning, or does it terminate questions in outputs?

Care gives these questions their ontological depth. In *Being and Time*, *Sorge* does not mean benevolence added to an otherwise complete subject. Care names the temporal structure through which Dasein is already ahead of itself, thrown into a world, and involved with beings and others (Heidegger 1962). Concern with equipment and solicitude toward others belong to this structure.

An engineering of care therefore cannot be reduced to empathy workshops, user satisfaction, or an ethics checklist. It concerns the kind of world-maintenance built into a technical arrangement.

This use of Heidegger requires caution. His political commitments and the exclusions of his philosophical scene prohibit turning dwelling, homeland, or authenticity into innocent design ideals.

A contemporary engineering of care must become plural, contestable, and institutionally answerable. It must combine ontological diagnosis with democratic revision, archival justice, maintenance work, and public pedagogy. Care that cannot be contested easily becomes paternalism.

The metagrammar translates this orientation into practical criteria.

Care for the cut: *state what has been selected and what has disappeared.*

Care for provenance: *preserve pathways back to the relations from which a fragment was carried.*

Care for reciprocal mutation: *require the receiving institution to risk change.*

Care for the remainder: *keep variants, drafts, counter-archives, and unresolved claims available.*

Care for revisability: *enable inhabitants to alter the gathering.*

Care for opacity: *refuse the demand that everything become fully legible, extractable, and interoperable.*

Care for +L: *design a leak through which what the system cannot contain can still insist.*

Maintenance becomes philosophically central here. The glamour of innovation often hides the ongoing labor that keeps infrastructures, archives, communities, and bodies workable. Careful collage does not end when pieces are assembled. Glue dries, links rot, formats become obsolete, relationships weaken, institutions forget why a seam mattered. Engineering the clearing means maintaining conditions for return.

The resulting design brief differs from both solutionism and critique. Solutionism treats the world as a set of problems awaiting optimized interventions. Critique often reveals exclusions without building durable alternatives. Heideggerian engineering of care works experimentally between them. It prototypes forms while keeping their world-effects under examination. It treats every prototype as an ontological proposal and every institution as a revisable collage.

Care does not enter after engineering as an ethical supplement. It names the orientation through which a gathering maintains a world without exhausting its elements.

This matters because collage can serve domination as readily as liberation. Empires collage territories. Propaganda collages images and slogans. Surveillance systems collage data traces into profiles. Bureaucracies collage persons into cases. Generative AI collages statistical patterns into fluent outputs. Platforms collage attention into monetizable feeds.

The fact that all composition involves collage does not make all collage equal. A Heideggerian engineering of care therefore requires more than visible seams or creative recombination. It needs practices of answerability.

Care for the cut

Every composition excludes. Care begins by refusing to treat exclusion as a negligible byproduct. What disappears when a Gospel loses resurrection? What disappears when a curriculum reduces a tradition to representative texts? What disappears when an AI summary removes hesitation, form, context, and voice?

Care does not prohibit cutting. It records and questions the cut.

Care for provenance

A fragment carries histories that the new composition may exploit, transform, or suppress. Provenance should not demand purity or imprison materials in an original context. It should preserve the capacity to trace relations, obligations, and injuries.

The question is not, "Who owns this fragment absolutely?" It is, "What relations travel with it?"

Care for reciprocal mutation

Extractive collage changes the borrowed material while allowing the host to remain sovereign. Jefferson transforms the Gospel without permitting its miraculous or theological materials to disturb republican reason.

A care-bearing graft changes both donor and host. The receiving institution risks transformation.

The task is not to close every leak. Some leaks keep the world from suffocating.

Care for the remainder

No composition includes everything. But excluded materials need not vanish. Variants, drafts, apocrypha, annotations, disagreements, counter-archives, testimonies, and failed prototypes preserve possibilities of return.

The remainder prevents the binding from masquerading as totality.

Care for revisability

A constitution, curriculum, archive, interface, or AI system should permit those who inhabit its world to question and alter the gathering. Revision does not signal design failure. It marks a living relation between composition and inhabitants.

Care for opacity

Not everything must become fully legible, searchable, extractable, or interoperable. Some relations require shelter from total exposure. A care-bearing collage preserves zones that resist conversion into standing-reserve.

Care for the +L

The +L names the designed leak through which the unaccounted-for can insist. It may appear as a marginal voice, a graphic interruption, a contradictory clause, a user workaround, a joke, a smell, a scar, or an unexpected return.

A Care-Full Metagrammar

The argument can now condense into a practical metagrammar.

Cut visibly

Mark the selection. Record what entered and what did not. Treat omission as an active operation rather than an empty space.

Carry relationally

Do not move content alone. Carry contexts, media, obligations, frictions, and unresolved questions.

Graft experimentally

Allow the imported material to disturb the receiving system. A graft that only decorates its host has not transferred much.

Bind provisionally

Titles, books, charters, curricula, and platforms remain necessary. Bind strongly enough to share, lightly enough to revise.

Mutate reciprocally

Track how donor and host change. Resist one-way extraction.

Archive remainders

Keep variants, failed attempts, discarded fragments, dissenting voices, and traces of the cut available for return.

Disclose the world-effect

Ask what kinds of beings, roles, relations, and futures the composition makes possible.

Protect the seam

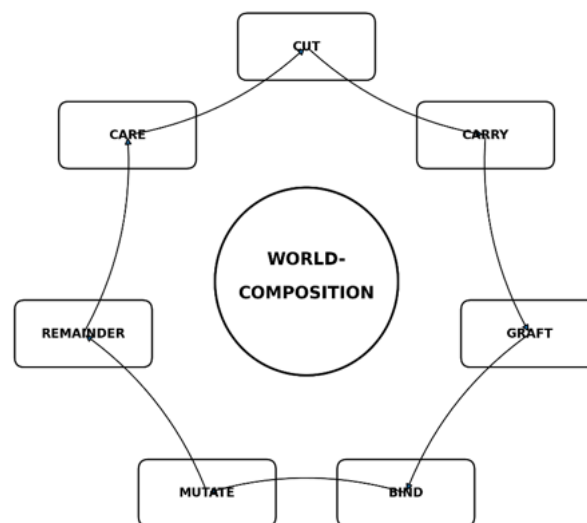
Do not treat every contradiction as a defect. Some seams carry memory and permit movement.

Engineer return

Design pathways for rereading, amendment, repair, recirculation, and renewed composition.

Care for the gathering

Care does not complete the collage. It keeps heterogeneous elements in a relation that remains livable without forcing them into identity.



A care-bearing collage keeps every operation revisable and every seam available for return.

Figure 4. The cut-carry-graft-bind-mutate-remainder-care cycle. Care keeps the sequence recursive rather than terminal. StudioLab diagram, 2026.

11. Kx4l3ndj3r: The Finale That Relaunches the College

Kx4l3ndj3r belongs near the article's end because the figure performs what the college/collage argument has been describing. It arrives neither as a final example nor as the name of a calendar application. The figure enters at the apparent finale of *Perform or Else*, mutates in a sequel, and retroactively changes the book that seemed to contain it.

In Chapter 10, "Jane Challenger, Disastronaut," Sir Wallace Kxalendjer appears through Márcio Souza's *Lost World II: The End of the Third World*. He is a futural ethno-archaeologist and stratoanalyst who "arrives from another millennium" to study ancient ruins and past injustices (McKenzie 2001, 250-55; Souza 1990). The future does not follow the present as a neutral next stage. It returns as an archaeological perspective on the reader's world. Ecological catastrophe, militarized research, epidemic, colonial violence, and the fate of Amazonia become traces sent backward through temporal immersion.

This arrival changes the time of the argument. *Perform or Else* had organized much of its experiential architecture around seven Challengers, seven astronauts, and a recurrent key of seven. Kxalendjer's entrance makes eight. The apparently minor addition alters the count, revealing that the book's architecture had never closed as securely as it seemed. The eighth figure acts like +L: a supplemental mark that discloses another geometry inside the existing form.

"The Revelations of Dr. Kx4l3ndj3r" relaunched this event. Published in 2011 with Ralo Mayer's exhibition project, the sequel transmogrifies Kxalendjer into the typographically coded Dr. Kx4l3ndj3r. The mutated name carries alphabetic and numeric systems at once. It looks like a handle, password, encrypted signature, damaged filename, and calendar from another operating system. Yet the figure exceeds each interface.

The sequel calls Kx4l3ndj3r the eighth Challenger and imagines *Perform or Else*, its discussers, and close readers in a "fractal dimension between 7 and 8" (McKenzie 2011, E-25). The phrase matters institutionally. A close reader no longer stands outside the book as evaluator. Reading enters the variable geometry of the composition. The sequel does not merely follow the original; it changes what the original has been. The finale becomes a backend portal.

This is why Kx4l3ndj3r is not a calendar but also is. A normal calendar places events into an administrable grid. Kx4l3ndj3r **calendars** by short-circuiting past, present, and future through feedback, feedforward, recurrence, anniversary, prophecy, archaeology, and return. It does not tell us what day it is. It asks which strata are recurring through this day and which future reader may already be excavating its ruins.

The figure converts archive into archaeology. The normal college stores knowledge as an inheritance from past authorities to present learners. *Kx4l3ndj3r approaches the present from the future, treating current institutions as ruins whose injustices and unrealized possibilities remain available for excavation*. This reversal unsettles the college's temporal sovereignty. The future is no longer an outcome to be produced by strategic planning; it becomes an untimely perspective capable of judging and mutating the present.

The figure also converts curriculum into recursive itinerary. A curriculum usually establishes foundations before advanced work and treats completion as movement through a sequence. Kx4l3ndj3r's eighth arrival changes the previous seven, while the sequel returns to the finale and sends it elsewhere. Learning no longer means only accumulating earlier units. Later encounters reorganize earlier ones. The student becomes a close reader inside the geometry.

Finally, Kx4l3ndj3r converts finale into relaunch. The 25th-anniversary edition of *Perform or Else* describes the new backend finale as a Borgesian sequel that adds a cosmological register to the

book's existential, epistemological, and ontological rehearsals (McKenzie 2026). Kx4l3ndj3r's Nietzschean revelation that the returning universe may be "a rare form of disaster" does not close the cosmology. It makes return dangerous and generative.

For the nomadic collage, this provides a compositional principle: bind strongly enough to launch, not strongly enough to prevent return. A book, course, charter, archive, or institution can produce a finale while preserving a backend through which another figure, reader, community, or medium re-enters. The college becomes nomadic not by abandoning place but by designing relaunches across places and times.

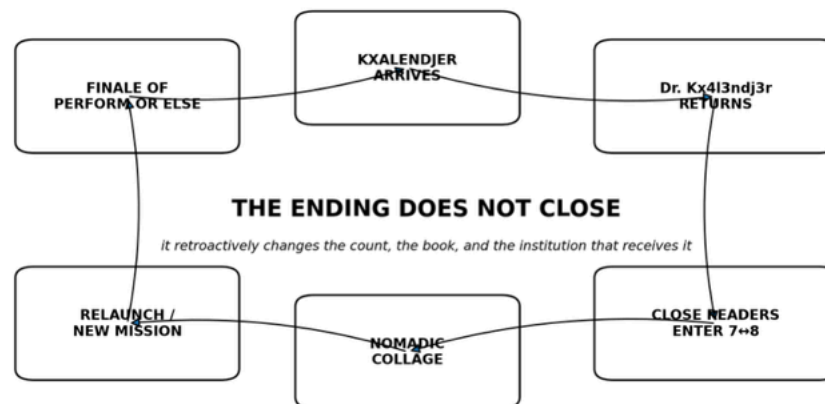


Figure 5. Kx4l3ndj3r as recursive relaunch operator: the eighth Challenger retroactively changes the preceding seven and draws the close reader into the composition. StudioLab diagram, 2026.

12. AI and the Automated College-Collage

The emergence of generative AI makes the primary character of collage difficult to ignore. Large language models operate by learning statistical relations across immense textual corpora and generating sequences through patterned recombination. Search engines extract, rank, display, and juxtapose fragments. Image generators synthesize visual relations from distributed training materials. Recommendation systems collage attention into feeds.

Yet the language surrounding AI often restores the metaphysics that the technology destabilizes. Systems get described as authors, creators, minds, assistants, or neutral tools. Outputs appear under a unified voice. The heterogeneous archives, labor, infrastructures, exclusions, and probabilistic operations that produce them disappear behind a conversational interface.

AI becomes an automated collage that performs wholeness.

The Google Images field of the Jefferson Bible offers a small but telling example. A search query places manuscript pages, commercial editions, portraits, museum images, ideological commentary, videos, book covers, replicas, and unrelated visual echoes into a ranked field. Google does to Jefferson's artifact what Jefferson did to the Gospels: it extracts, selects, juxtaposes, and rebinds.

But the search engine does not wield one visible razor. Its cuts emerge through indexing systems, ranking algorithms, commercial pressures, metadata, user histories, copyright regimes, and platform design.

The automated collage hides the editor inside infrastructure.

Generative AI intensifies this condition. It can produce a smooth essay from materials whose seams no longer appear. The danger lies not simply in copying. Human writing has always repeated and recombined. The danger lies in seamlessness without answerability: a fluent binding that obscures provenance, conflict, uncertainty, labor, and remainder.

A Woesean account helps resist both panic and mystification. AI does not create from nothing; neither do humans. Both operate in ecologies of transfer. But their modes of embodiment, memory, exposure, responsibility, and care differ.

A Heideggerian engineering of AI therefore asks:

What world does the interface disclose?

Can citations restore relational pathways rather than merely certify authority?

Which archives become standing-reserve?

Can an AI exchange preserve correction, drift, disagreement, and return?

What forms of writing get flattened into content?

Can the prompt become a care-bearing graft rather than an extraction command?

Who may contest the system's cuts?

The AI UX report becomes valuable here because it preserves the interaction as a scene of thought-action. Prompt, response, correction, hallucination, insight, and refusal remain available for analysis. The chat does not become invisible scaffolding discarded after the polished output. It enters the collage as evidence.

Kx4l3ndj3r can therefore use AI without granting it the position of sovereign author. AI becomes one player, medium, donor, host, mirror, bureaucrat, fool, and synthetic interlocutor within a larger transfer ecology.

The AI controversy often repeats the metaphysics this essay has challenged. Human authors supposedly create original wholes, while machines merely cut, copy, and recombine. That distinction cannot hold in such simple form. Human language and art have always depended on inherited marks, genres, examples, conventions, and collaborative infrastructures. The difference cannot be located in collage versus originality.

Nor should the machine simply be promoted into another sovereign author. Large language models are trained on distributed corpora and generate outputs through probabilistic patterning; their fluent conversational surfaces compress extensive archives, labor, computation, energy, and institutional decisions into the appearance of one responsive voice. The interface performs unity more effectively than the avant-garde collage ever did. The central danger is **seamlessness without answerability**.

This danger has epistemic and institutional forms. A generated paragraph may detach a claim from its source, smooth disagreement into consensus, or invent a citation that resembles an accredited trace. A university may respond by policing AI as an alien contaminant while ignoring the extractive and standardized collage operations already built into textbooks, lectures, course-management systems, and assessment. Alternatively, it may adopt AI as an efficiency device and accelerate those same operations.

A care-bearing college-collage needs a third response. It should treat AI interaction as an inspectable scene of transfer. Prompts, outputs, corrections, refusals, source checks, disagreements, and revisions can remain part of the record. The AI UX report becomes a mechanic genre: not a

transcript worshiping the machine, but evidence of human-machine thought-action and its interface effects.

Such practice changes the question from "Did AI write this?" to a more demanding set: What archives and conventions were mobilized? Which cuts became invisible? Who accepted responsibility for the binding? What did the system fail to recognize? How did correction alter the result? Which relations of labor, energy, permission, and expertise remain hidden? What remainder should the polished output preserve?

Citation helps but does not solve the problem. A link can become another accreditation token rather than a pathway of return. Careful citation must allow the reader to reopen the source, compare contexts, and see where interpretation entered. It should operate less as surveillance of originality than as infrastructure for relational accountability.

AI can then participate in Woesean transfer without becoming the master organism of the ecology. It can act as search partner, synthetic interlocutor, bureaucrat, fool, diagrammer, translator, provocateur, and error generator. Different roles call for different controls and disclosures. The system remains one player among bodies, texts, communities, tools, and environments.

This approach also refuses the fantasy that better alignment will finally remove every seam. Language models, like colleges, operate within conflicting values and heterogeneous worlds. The goal is not a perfectly integrated output but an arrangement whose conflicts can be examined and whose users can interrupt, revise, and refuse it. The automated collage must become a contestable collage.

The problem is not that AI collages while humans create.
The problem is seamlessness without answerability.

Conclusion. From Normal Colleges to Nomadic Collages

Plato's *Republic*, the *New Testament*, *Jefferson's Bible*, Derrida's *Glas*, the UN Charter, and Kx4l3ndj3r do not form a progression from unified works to increasingly fragmented ones. Each begins in heterogeneity. Each cuts, carries, grafts, binds, excludes, and worlds. Their differences lie in their regimes of composition.

The *Republic* produces architectonic collage by aligning voices, institutions, psychic functions, and cosmic images beneath the Good.

The *New Testament* produces canonical-missionary collage by binding divergent testimonies, letters, genres, translations, and communities into a translocal body.

The *Jefferson Bible* produces secular-redactional collage by submitting inherited scripture to the razor of republican reason.

Glas produces deconstructive and perfumative collage by exposing the grafts, columns, signatures, remnants, and emissions that conceptual architecture suppresses.

The UN Charter produces constitutional collage by binding states, peoples, legal traditions, wartime memories, unequal powers, and promises of peace into an unfinished international world.

Kx4l3ndj3r produces recursive nomadic collage by allowing texts, images, events, AI exchanges, collaborators, and historical fragments to return through new media and altered relations.

Collage is therefore not a late artistic response to the breakdown of totality. Totality has always required collage. The supposed organic whole is one particularly successful effect of cutting and binding.

The normal college inherits this effect. It gathers heterogeneous worlds and presents their arrangement as the natural architecture of knowledge. The nomadic collage does not cease gathering. It makes gathering visible, mobile, revisable, and answerable.

A Woesean humanities supplies its evolutionary image: no sovereign tree, no pure lineage, no Man at the crown, but lateral transfers, symbioses, recombinations, composite histories, and mutations among worlds.

Heideggerian engineering supplies its ontological question: what world does this gathering disclose, and what does it reduce, conceal, preserve, or let dwell?

Care supplies its practice: protect provenance without demanding purity; preserve remainders without romanticizing fragments; enable transfer without extraction; bind without final closure; design for revision, repair, and return.

The central propositions can now stand together:

Collage is primary. The canon is authorized collage. The college is accredited collage. The constitution is negotiated and world-forming collage. The platform is automated collage. Deconstruction is collage becoming conscious of its seams. Woesean humanities understands collage as lateral evolution. Heideggerian engineering of care makes collage answerable for the worlds it opens.

No original whole waits behind the fragments.

There are only gatherings—some brutal, some beautiful, some sacred, some bureaucratic, some playful, some nearly unlivable—and the unfinished work of caring for their cuts.

The argument therefore returns to its one-vowel institution. College and collage share no hidden essence waiting to be recovered. Their paragram creates a task. It lets the institution read itself as an engineered gathering rather than the neutral home of already organized knowledge.

Once collage becomes primary, the question of originality changes. Originality no longer means creation without inheritance. It names a singular way of receiving, cutting, carrying, binding, and transforming inheritances. A work becomes original when its relations alter what can be perceived and done, not when it proves freedom from prior materials.

The same applies to institutions. A nomadic collage is not a university without structures. It is a college whose structures remain available for thought and redesign. It can maintain archives without turning them into inert reserves, sustain disciplines without treating them as pure lineages, preserve expertise without closing public contest, and use AI without surrendering composition to seamless automation.

Woesean humanities provides the transfer ecology; Heideggerian engineering provides the question of world-disclosure; care provides the practice of maintenance and revision. Together they make collage an institutional responsibility rather than a decorative metaphor.

Kx4l3ndj3r prevents this conclusion from closing too neatly. The eighth figure enters after the count appears complete, includes the reader in the geometry, and returns the book to another mission.

The article's final proposition must therefore remain operational rather than terminal: every college already collages, but not every collage knows how to care for the worlds it binds. The work begins again at the seam.

Every finale becomes another launch complex.

STUDIOLAB THEORY ZINE

NO. 01

A GRAPHIC ESSAY

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4 OF

REVERSE BILLOWING

Mise en abyme, enframing, and the plume that folds back

Heidegger / recursion / launch-world

① Enframing does not merely send up a rocket. It launches a world already arranged as launch system.

② The plume billows outward as spectacle and inward as theory.

③ Challenger stages a mise en abyme of performance: the launch contains the launch-system that contains the launch.

④ This is the reverse sensation of billowing: catastrophe folding back through the apparatus that produced it.

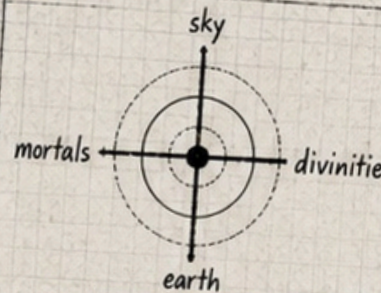
ENFRAMING
LAUNCHES
ENFRAMING.

Metanoia Playground

OUTWARD:
SPECTACLE

INWARD:
RECURSION

THE FOURFOLD



The launch-world gathers and holds the fourfold within the frame.

“THE DISASTER DOES NOT MERELY BILLOW FROM THE SHUTTLE; IT BILLOWS BACKWARD FROM THE FUTURE THE SHUTTLE WAS SUPPOSED TO SECURE.”

MISE EN ABYME

launch

the

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Nests All the Way Down

Reservoirs, Recursive Abduction, and the Metabolism of the Playground

Abstract

William Griffin III's linked studies of regulated asymmetry, retained gradients, moral ecology, cosmological persistence, and reservoirs offer a general account of how systems endure without eliminating the differences that animate them. His essay *Nebulae, Banks and Belly Fat* translates this systems architecture across cosmological, biological, symbolic, and institutional scales: nebulae store stellar matter, adipose tissue stores metabolic continuity, banks store deferred labor, and myths store unresolved historical pressures. StudioLab's account of nested non-design and recursive abduction supplies this reservoir theory with a topology and a method. The nest names the provisional, situated boundary through which differences can remain distinct yet connected; recursive abduction names the repeated movement by which a figure, hypothesis, or design generated in one nest enters another and returns transformed. Read together, these approaches disclose the Playground as a recursively nested ecology of reservoirs. Play does not eliminate gradients but holds, redirects, releases, and recomposes them. The central design question therefore shifts from how to resolve difference to how to prevent storage from becoming insulation, care from becoming capture, and continuity from hardening into self-preservation. A viable Playground stores enough to sustain becoming while remaining permeable to consequence.

Keywords: nesting; recursive abduction; reservoirs; regulated asymmetry; non-design; moral ecology; Playground; StudioLab; care; capture

1. From Equilibrium to the Playground

A playground at equilibrium would no longer function as a playground. Nothing would move. No player would occupy a different height, position, role, or relation from another. No tension would animate the swing, no gravitational gradient would power the slide, and no asymmetry would set the seesaw in motion. There would be no uncertainty, anticipation, imbalance, risk, or surprise. Perfect equilibrium would coincide with the end of play.

Play therefore begins not with balance but with organized difference.

Griffin's systems theory provides a language for understanding this condition. Classical feedback models commonly describe systems as correcting deviation and moving toward equilibrium. Griffin instead identifies systems whose persistence depends upon maintained gradients, constrained

flows, modulated feedback, and partial discharge. Such systems do not survive by abolishing imbalance. They survive by organizing it. Stability arises not from convergence but from the regulated persistence of difference.

This proposal resonates strongly with the Playground. A swing stores potential and releases it without permanently resolving the difference between high and low. A seesaw converts unequal positions into reciprocal motion. A climbing frame constrains movement while permitting multiple routes. A sandbox localizes loose materials without determining what players must make from them. Rules create a temporary boundary around play, but those rules must remain open enough for improvisation, negotiation, and mutation.

Difference generates play; boundaries protect it; apertures conduct it; feedback modifies it; discharge keeps it from becoming destructive.

This systems grammar gives us a way to understand not only playground equipment but bodies, institutions, stories, classrooms, archives, economies, and cosmologies. Yet its power does not come from claiming that these domains operate identically. Its power comes from allowing figures to travel between them, gathering differences and producing new hypotheses as they go. That travel requires recursive abduction.

2. The Reservoir: Continuity Stored Across Interruption

Nebulae, Banks and Belly Fat begins with a powerful proposition: civilization survives by storing continuity across interruption.

Cells hold gradients across membranes. Organisms store energy against scarcity. Families preserve emotional and material resources across generations. Money allows labor to survive beyond the moment of work. Archives carry memory beyond individual mortality. Myths preserve unfinished obligations, fears, hopes, and conflicts. Institutions stabilize expectations among people who may never meet.

Griffin calls these structures reservoirs. A reservoir does not abolish instability. It temporarily stores and redistributes it so that a system can persist through interruption. Nebulae preserve matter against cosmic dispersal; fat preserves energy against famine; banks preserve value against uncertainty; myths preserve memory against historical rupture.

Without reservoirs, continuity would remain trapped in immediacy. Labor would disappear once performed. Experience would vanish with the death of those who underwent it. A body would collapse whenever its immediate intake fell below its immediate needs. A society would have to renegotiate every relation from nothing at every encounter. Storage makes duration possible.

Yet the reservoir contains an inherent danger. What begins as buffering may become insulation. Stored resources may cease circulating back into the systems that generated them. A treasury becomes an oligarchy. An archive becomes a monopoly over memory. A protective institution begins protecting itself. Adipose tissue adapted to intermittent scarcity may become overloaded within environments of chronic stress and persistent surplus. The reservoir no longer helps its environment endure interruption; it reorganizes the environment around its own preservation.

Buffers become accumulations. Stabilization becomes capture.

A healthy reservoir remains permeable to consequence. Information returns. Pressure circulates. Stored resources re-enter collective viability. A captured reservoir accumulates faster than it can metabolize, hardening itself against corrective signals.

The distinction between circulation and capture becomes the first principle of the Playground. The problem does not lie in storage itself. Every durable practice stores something: memory, materials, techniques, trust, energy, unfinished questions. The problem arises when storage separates itself from the relations that made it possible. The task is not to destroy reservoirs but to keep them answerable.

3. From Reservoir to Nest

The reservoir explains how continuity crosses time. The nest explains how continuity takes place.

Reservoir may suggest a pre-existing container into which a substance gets deposited. The nest complicates that image. A nest does not usually begin with an abstract plan, a perfected form, or a rigid separation between designer and environment. It emerges through found materials, bodily movements, inherited tendencies, site-specific conditions, repeated adjustments, weather, gravity, accidents, and opportunistic borrowing.

In StudioLab's account of non-design, the bird nest operates as a metamodel crossing several fields. Policy theorists use it to describe assemblages composed of partial programs, ideologies, regulations, and compromises. Mechanical engineers examine nests as structures whose stability emerges from randomly packed elastic filaments. Harawayan string figures, therapeutic holding environments, architecture, interspecies adaptation, and ecological thought likewise enter the figure's expanding constellation. The nest becomes a recursively travelling form that holds heterogeneous materials without converting them into a purified unity.

The nest provides reservoir theory with three important revisions. First, a nest is situated: its form cannot be separated from the forces and materials of its environment. Second, a nest is provisional: it can be repaired, expanded, abandoned, occupied by another creature, or reused as material for another structure. Third, the nest's boundary does not merely surround an independently existing interior. The interior and boundary emerge together.

A bird turns, presses, packs, and arranges material around its body. The hollow takes shape through this activity. The bird does not manufacture an empty container and subsequently enter it. Its embodied presence helps form the void it will inhabit. StudioLab connects this nest hollow to the Daoist wu and to Heidegger's jug: emptiness functions not as mere lack but as the opening through which gathering and holding become possible.

The nest makes the hollow, while the hollow organizes the nest.

The same structure appears in living, social, and symbolic systems. A membrane shapes the organism whose activity maintains the membrane. An archive creates the historical field from which it claims simply to collect documents. A bank helps generate the economy whose values it says it merely stores. A mythology forms the community whose memory it appears merely to preserve. A

university produces the disciplines, credentials, and subjects that justify the university's own continuation.

Container and contained recursively compose one another. The reservoir should therefore no longer be imagined as a static storage device. It is better understood as a nesting operation: the provisional organization of a boundary, an interior, a set of apertures, and a larger environment.

4. Regulated Asymmetry as Nested Worlding

Griffin's origin-of-life model gives this nesting operation a minimal systems vocabulary: difference or gradient, boundary, flow, and aperture or regulation.

Life begins, on this account, when these elements become sufficiently coordinated to maintain organized difference across time. A boundary that remains too open permits dissipation. A boundary that closes too tightly prevents replenishment and waste removal. Unregulated flow can destroy the very difference that makes continued activity possible. Persistence requires neither openness nor closure alone, but a dynamically regulated relation between them.

The four variables do not form a linear chain. Each recursively modifies the others. A boundary localizes difference. Difference creates the potential for flow. Flow sustains or erodes the boundary. Regulation distinguishes sustaining exchanges from destructive ones. Successful regulation preserves the gradient that makes regulation necessary in the first place.

Griffin's synthesis of origin-of-life approaches makes this mutual dependence explicit. RNA may contribute selectivity and regulation; metabolic processes contribute throughput; compartments contribute localization. None alone produces persistence. Life emerges through their functional integration, as boundary, flow, regulation, and maintained difference reinforce one another.

A living system thus constitutes a nest that continually remakes the conditions of nesting. The same dynamic helps us approach a classroom, institution, neighborhood, archive, or collaborative project. Each must develop enough distinction to sustain a shared process, yet remain open to materials, people, consequences, and information from beyond itself. Too little boundary, and the project dissolves into ambient demands. Too much boundary, and it becomes self-referential, extractive, or irrelevant.

Care enters precisely here. Care does not simply protect the inside against the outside. Care modulates the aperture. It asks what should enter, what needs to leave, what must remain unresolved for now, which pressures require discharge, who controls the passages, whether those affected by the system can alter its operations, and whether the boundary shelters becoming or secures accumulation.

A Heideggerean engineering of care would therefore concern less the fabrication of isolated objects than the ongoing tuning of relations among worlds, things, boundaries, flows, and openings.

5. Recursive Abduction: How Nests Think Through One Another

If nesting gives regulated asymmetry its topology, recursive abduction gives it movement.

Abduction begins when an encounter, anomaly, breakdown, juxtaposition, or surprising correspondence solicits a provisional explanation. Unlike deduction, which derives consequences from an established rule, or induction, which generalizes from repeated cases, abduction ventures a possible diagram: perhaps this unfamiliar event can be understood through that figure.

Recursive abduction begins when the result of one such venture returns as material for another. StudioLab describes recursive abduction as the process through which novel outputs feed back as new inputs repeatedly, producing possible transformations across behavioral, systemic, environmental, historical, ontological, and cosmic scales.

Consider the sequence nebulae, banks, and belly fat. A merely metaphorical reading would say that a nebula resembles a reservoir, fat resembles a reservoir, and a bank resembles a reservoir. Recursive abduction performs a more demanding operation.

It begins with a concrete observation: nebulae store matter and participate in stellar regeneration. From this, one abducts the reservoir as a provisional functional figure. The figure then enters another nest - the living body - where it encounters adipose tissue, metabolic storage, endocrine regulation, and stress. It then enters financial institutions, where storage takes symbolic and legal forms. It enters mythology, archives, empires, and civilizations.

At each passage, the figure must change. The nebula has no intention, morality, ownership regime, or nervous system. Adipose tissue does not keep a ledger. A bank does not metabolize glucose. A myth does not store matter in the astrophysical sense. The correspondences therefore cannot support direct causal equivalence. Their failure to coincide produces the next abductive insight.

*Stored difference + provisional boundary + regulated aperture
+ delayed consequence + possible recirculation.*

The figure returns to cosmology altered by its journey through biology and political economy. The nebula can now be interpreted as one moment within a wider cycle of generation, buffering, distribution, and transformation. The bank can be reread not merely as a vault but as an aperture governing the circulation of socially deferred labor. Fat becomes neither inert excess nor personal failure but one component within a nested metabolic and environmental ecology.

Recursive abduction thus avoids two opposite errors. The first fixes every domain inside its disciplinary boundary and forbids transversal comparison. The second collapses domains into an undifferentiated universal system. Recursive abduction crosses boundaries while carrying their differences with it. Its task is not to prove identity but to generate a metamodel capable of changing as it travels.

6. The Body as a Nest within Nests

The belly-fat section becomes especially revealing when read through nested recursion rather than through single-cause explanation.

The body cannot be isolated from its household, work environment, food system, medical infrastructure, economy, media ecology, or inherited metabolic history. At the same time, none of these larger systems directly determines a body in a simple or uniform way. The body remains a partially autonomous nest inside other partially autonomous nests.

At one scale, adipocytes store energy. At another, endocrine and nervous systems regulate appetite, stress, mobilization, and recovery. A household organizes meals, sleep, care, work, and debt. An employer regulates schedules, movement, surveillance, and access to resources. Markets organize food availability, housing, transportation, and medical care. Cultural systems assign moral meanings to bodies. Institutions then measure, classify, treat, monetize, or discipline the embodied outcomes of those environments.

An output at one level becomes an input at another: economic insecurity becomes chronic anticipation; chronic anticipation alters sleep and stress; embodied adaptation becomes medical classification; classification produces therapeutic markets and new institutional routines.

The movement does not proceed in only one direction. Diagnosis can alter self-understanding. Medical categories influence insurance. Insurance structures access to treatment. Treatment affects bodily processes. Cultural narratives influence institutional priorities, which reconfigure individual experience.

The body therefore functions as both reservoir and routing node within a nested ecology. Griffin describes the body as recording pressures that social systems redescribe as normal or necessary. Hypervigilance stores suspended anticipation; exhaustion stores prolonged mobilization without resolution; trauma stores interrupted action. Fat appears as a survival buffer and metabolic archive that may become overloaded under chronic stress, artificial abundance, endocrine disruption, and permanent insecurity.

The phrase the body stores what institutions displace should not be taken as a total medical explanation. It functions more productively as an abductive proposition. It invites investigation into the channels through which unresolved institutional pressures become privately embodied and then returned to institutions as individualized problems.

The body does not simply reside inside civilization. Civilization recursively enters the body.

7. Myths as Atmospheric Nests

The reservoir-nest model also helps clarify Griffin's treatment of myth.

A myth does not store historical memory like a digital file. It condenses, displaces, dramatizes, and transmits unresolved pressures. It allows experiences to survive after their immediate circumstances disappear, but it also transforms them through repetition.

A myth thus resembles an atmospheric nest. It gathers fragments of historical conflict, ritual obligation, collective anxiety, cosmological orientation, and moral expectation. These elements remain loosely packed rather than fully reconciled. Each new performance, interpretation, artwork, political movement, or institutional appropriation adds material to the nest.

Myth persists precisely because it can be re-entered. Its characters and situations travel into new environments. Antigone enters feminist theory, legal philosophy, political protest, psychoanalysis, and performance. Benjamin's angel enters histories of progress, technological catastrophe, ecological anxiety, and Playground flying lessons. Plato's cave enters cinema, media theory, virtual reality, education, and algorithmic critique. Each return abducts the previous figure into a new nest.

Yet symbolic reservoirs also risk capture. A myth may become insulated as orthodoxy, national destiny, ideological credential, or proprietary cultural capital. Instead of preserving the memory of unresolved pressure, it may begin legitimizing the institution that has monopolized its interpretation.

The difference between living myth and captured mythology resembles the difference between a permeable nest and a sealed monument. Living myths remain available for recursive abduction. Captured myths demand repetition without transformation.

8. The Playground as a Nested Ecology of Reservoirs

StudioLab already operates through nested systems: player, team, exercise, mission, partner project, platform, institution, and public world.

Projects unfold as collaborative quests, nested complexes, and sometimes collective ordeals. Designers and designs feed back into one another as teams move across personal cosmograms, collective stories, prototypes, media cascades, and public encounters.

The Playground should therefore not be conceived as a single comprehensive platform. It is better understood as a federation of semi-permeable nests.

Each team forms a temporary nest around a problem, concern, partner, or figure. The nest must retain enough material and memory to sustain collaboration. It needs rituals, records, tools, roles, schedules, and shared reference points. Yet it must also remain open to stakeholders, environments, accidents, dissent, and unexpected discoveries.

One team's outcome can become another team's starting condition. A diagram becomes a game. A game produces a story. A story generates a prototype. A prototype reveals an institutional blockage. That blockage reframes the original diagram. The process does not merely iterate toward a predetermined deliverable; it recursively abducts its own outputs.

The Playground is a recursively nested ecology of provisional reservoirs in which differences can be held long enough to become playable but not long enough to become insulated from consequence.

The Playground stores unfinished questions, partner knowledge, media fragments, embodied experiences, inherited concepts, failed prototypes, interpersonal trust, and tensions that cannot yet

be resolved. It does not store these things for their own sake. It stores them so they can later re-enter circulation in altered form.

Play becomes a form of regulated discharge. A role-playing exercise may release pressure without resolving the underlying conflict. A zine may redistribute inaccessible expertise. A public performance may expose a blocked feedback channel. A cosmogram may bring together memories and values that disciplinary discourse keeps separate. A speculative prototype may create enough distance from an institution's habitual operations to make another arrangement imaginable. The object does not finish the process. It creates another aperture.

9. D0-D4 as Recursive Nesting

The ShuttleKraft stations can now be understood not merely as successive perspectives but as a recursive process of nest formation.

Station	Nest operation	Recursive function
D0 - Open / Hollow	Unformatted field before a stable interior or identity forms.	Receives the traces and debris of the previous cycle as new potential.
D1 - Soul / Embodied contour	Appetite, anxiety, fatigue, hope, and care shape a felt inside.	The body presses a provisional hollow into the situation.
D2 - Subject / Coded boundary	Roles, names, permissions, myths, and rules mark belonging.	The nest acquires a ledger, origin story, and social address.
D3 - Dasein / Equipmental world	Tools, schedules, platforms, buildings, archives, and practices materialize the boundary.	The coded nest becomes a lived and revisable world.
D4 - Liminait / Re-entry	An event, outsider, breakdown, or consequence exceeds the existing arrangement.	The nest repairs, migrates, splits, collapses, or becomes material for another nest.

D4 returns the whole D0-D3 passage as material for a new opening: D0 -> D1 -> D2 -> D3 -> D4 -> D0-prime. The prime matters. D0 does not return as pure origin. It carries the traces and debris of what happened before. This is recursive abduction in station form.

10. Care, Capture, and the Politics of the Aperture

The synthesis of reservoirs, nesting, and recursive abduction leads to a politics of apertures.

Every nest regulates passage. Every archive selects. Every body filters. Every institution admits some claims and rejects others. Every platform amplifies some signals while attenuating others. No viable system can remain completely open.

The political question therefore cannot be reduced to openness versus closure. It concerns who shapes the boundary, who controls the aperture, what circulates, which consequences return, and whose bodies absorb what the system refuses to process.

Capture begins when a reservoir gains the power to protect its own accumulation from feedback. The bank becomes insulated from communities whose labor sustains its assets. The university endowment detaches from educational care. Platforms capture attention while externalizing social consequences. The institution records outcomes but excludes people most affected from revising its metrics. The body privately carries pressures that the surrounding system continues to produce.

Under capture, feedback may still circulate, but distorted. Complaints become data. Protest becomes engagement. Illness becomes a market. Failure becomes a new performance indicator. The system incorporates the signal without allowing it to alter the gradient from which the system benefits.

Griffin's account of non-equilibrium stability becomes politically ambiguous at precisely this point. A system can remain productive and coherent while preserving asymmetry. Retained gradients can sustain continuous output. But persistence alone does not equal care.

An exploitative institution may persist extremely well. A captured reservoir may display impressive stability. The question of viability must therefore include not only whether a system continues but how its persistence distributes pressure, vulnerability, agency, and consequence.

The Playground adds this normative and experiential test. Can players modify the game? Can consequences return to those who set the rules? Does the reservoir serve shared continuity or its own indefinite expansion? Who receives care, and who supplies the buffering? Can stored value return to the relations that produced it? Can the nest change shape when its inhabitants change?

A caring system does not eliminate asymmetry. It prevents asymmetry from becoming unilateral insulation.

11. A Recursive Playground Mission: Nests All the Way Down

A playable mission can translate the article's argument into collective practice. Each team selects a reservoir: a bank, a university, a myth, a neighborhood archive, a hospital, a social platform, a body under stress, a food system, an AI training corpus, or a nebula.

The team first asks what interruption the reservoir originally addressed: scarcity, forgetting, distance, mortality, uncertainty, coordination, or threat. It then maps four dimensions: the inner nests that compose the reservoir; the outer nests that sustain or constrain it; the apertures through which matter, information, affect, or value enter and leave; and the recursions through which outputs return as inputs.

The team then performs three abductive transfers. It moves the reservoir figure into another scale or domain, tests what the translation reveals, and records where the analogy breaks. One possible circuit is nebula -> body -> bank -> nebula.

At each move, the team asks what structure carries across, what does not carry across, what new variable appears, what assumption fails, and how the original model must change.

The mission ends not with a universal diagram but with a metamodel showing its seams. Contradictions, failed analogies, unresolved pressures, and scale differences remain visible as part of the result. The win condition does not involve perfect stability. It involves producing a nest that can revise itself.

Conclusion: Storing Enough to Keep Becoming

Griffin's work shows that persistence requires reservoirs. Systems endure by holding differences across time, constraining flows, regulating discharge, and preventing immediate dissipation.

Nesting adds that no reservoir stands alone. Every reservoir occupies another reservoir, contains smaller reservoirs, and helps form the environment that forms it. The boundary and the interior co-emerge. The nest holds the body, but the body shapes the nest.

Recursive abduction supplies the movement among these nested systems. A figure generated in one world enters another. It discovers both correspondence and resistance. Its failures alter it. It then returns as a changed input capable of reorganizing the field from which it began.

Nebula, belly, bank, myth, body, archive, and Playground do not compose a chain of identities. They form a constellation of abductive nests.

The Playground becomes the place where these figures can encounter one another without immediately collapsing into sameness. It stores differences long enough for players to juxtapose, inhabit, test, and transform them. It gives concepts bodies, gives bodies environments, gives environments histories, and feeds each result back into the next round of play.

The ultimate design problem therefore concerns neither unlimited accumulation nor complete release. It concerns how to store enough continuity to keep becoming.

A viable nest must remain distinct without sealing itself. A viable reservoir must preserve without capturing. A viable Playground must hold unresolved differences while permitting consequences to return.

Spikes in a nest in a tree in a garden in a photo in a book in a subway.

The phrase does more than produce a mise en abyme. It stages worlds within worlds, media within media, and environments within infrastructures. Each nest serves as the reservoir, output, boundary, and abductive passage of another. It is nests all the way down - and, through recursive abduction, all the way out.

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Dead Man Walking

Homo Sacer Data Bodies, Characters after the Death of Man, K Bears +L

K conducts. +L countersigns. The sentence walks. The atmosphere billows.

Abstract

The “dead man walking” ordinarily names a living person whose juridical death has been declared in advance. This essay generalizes the figure without reducing it to a loose metaphor. A person, institution, category, discipline, technology, species, or world becomes dead-man-walking when it continues operating after a verdict has captured its possible future. Different schools of theory diagnose aspects of this condition as mortality, trauma, alienation, social death, discipline, bare life, performativity, control, or posthuman distribution. Their disagreements, however, often conceal a shared cosmic blind spot: even after proclaiming the death of Man, theory continues to organize death, agency, recognition, and survival around an all-too-human scale.

Drawing upon Aristotle’s relation between capacity and actuality, Kant’s categorical tribunal, Deleuze’s method of dramatization, and Kafka’s K-function, the essay distinguishes two forms of testing. The categorical test asks whether a being can perform enough recognizable signs to qualify as an instance of an established category. The differential test asks whether an assemblage can transform, exceed its inherited identity, and prolong becoming. Kafka’s K names not an accused individual but the distributed function through which a sentence travels across bodies, offices, statements, technologies, affects, and environments. Yet K cannot supply the final character. K bears **+L**: the supplementary character of the other, guest, lure, lifeline, limit, loss, and world that the assemblage cannot fully determine in advance.

To entertain K and +L requires skin in the game. The relation must expose its participants, hosts, categories, and futures to real alteration. Yet the other must not become compelled to prove its stake by passing another test of visibility or identity. +L may remain absent, opaque, nonhuman, virtual, unborn, dead, or to be determined forever. Contemporary platform practices—ghosting, cancelling, doxxing, profiling, scoring, and thumbnail identification—extend categorical capture into data bodies that can become actionable without becoming heard. Against these digital and institutional last rites, K takes a line of flight through *Kitelichkeit*, while +L opens into *+Lichkeit*: supplementary lightness, clearing, resonance, and atmospheric relation. The dead man walking emerges when K continues functioning after an apparatus has declared +L closed. Perfumative life begins where the sentence encounters wind.

Keywords: dead man walking; K-function; +L; Kafka; death of Man; generalized Turing test; Deleuze; data bodies; homo sacer; *Kitelichkeit*; *+Lichkeit*; perfumance; gay sci-fi

Prologue: The Last Rites

Institutions rarely die at the moment their expiration becomes evident.

They continue.

Administrators announce reforms. Committees redesign procedures. Consultants revise mission statements. Employees undergo fresh evaluations. New technologies arrive to optimize operations whose purposes no longer convince anyone. The institution persists not because it remains alive in any strong sense, but because an entire apparatus has learned how to administer its continuation.

Deleuze's "Postscript on the Societies of Control" gives this scene a striking formulation. Schools, hospitals, factories, prisons, families, and other environments of enclosure have entered a generalized crisis. Those responsible for them continually promise reforms, though "everyone knows" that these institutions have finished. What remains involves administering their last rites and keeping people working until the forces replacing them arrive (Deleuze 1992).

This is the dead-man-walking structure at the scale of the institution.

The institution has expired but remains employed.

Its future has closed, yet its procedures continue.

Its personnel must perform belief in the possibility of reform while participating in a managed transition toward something whose character they do not control.

Some institutions persist as **vestigial organs**. Their buildings, offices, titles, ceremonies, accreditation systems, reporting structures, and professional identities remain materially present after losing the function that once explained their formation. Like a vestigial organ, the institution may acquire secondary functions. It may shelter communities, store memories, distribute salaries, or protect temporary spaces of care. Yet the organ's persistence can also produce pain. Its structure remains active after its relation to the larger body has fundamentally changed.

The institution becomes busy without becoming alive.

It conducts searches, holds retreats, writes plans, launches initiatives, and introduces reforms. Each activity supplies evidence that the institution still functions. Yet the multiplication of activity may itself signal that function has grown uncertain. Reform no longer transforms the organization. Reform becomes the ritual through which the organization avoids acknowledging that transformation has already occurred elsewhere.

A permanently failing institution therefore differs from an institution that simply fails. Ordinary failure eventually reaches an ending. **Permanent failure becomes a mode of governance.**

Those living within it confront an interminable discrepancy:

They know that the system no longer works.

They must publicly perform confidence in its operation.

They receive evaluation according to their enthusiasm for its reform.

Their accurate perception of breakdown becomes interpreted as negativity, resistance to change, insufficient resilience, or personal maladjustment.

The institution administers its last rites while insisting that no death has taken place.

This is institutional gaslighting.

The institution requires those most exposed to its dysfunction to mistrust their experience of it. Evidence of collapse becomes evidence that the observer possesses the wrong attitude. The organization survives by relocating its failure into the bodies and psyches of those who name it.

The dead institution walks by persuading the living that they imagined its death.

“Dead man walking” therefore names more than a condemned prisoner moving toward execution. It names a temporal and operational interval:

A verdict has already determined the future, but the body, category, organization, or world must continue performing in the present.

A condemned person remains biologically alive after juridical death has reorganized the meaning of that life. A terminally diagnosed patient continues living after anticipated death begins governing every gesture. A blacklisted worker continues producing after a profession has declared the career effectively over. A university department teaches after administrators have privately settled its closure. A discipline continues publishing after its questions have lost their capacity to orient the world. “Man” continues functioning as legal person, moral agent, medical norm, political citizen, and model of intelligence after theory has announced his death.

These cases must not become equated. A prisoner’s execution, a discipline’s exhaustion, a species’ extinction, and a star’s collapse do not share the same stakes, agents, or temporality. Yet they can become related through a more precise question:

What keeps a form operational after its future has been foreclosed?

This essay names that continuation **the walking of the sentence**.

The person does not merely walk toward the sentence.

The sentence walks through the person.

It also walks through calendars, files, corridors, screens, medications, metrics, machines, laws, institutions, atmospheres, memories, and audiences. It recruits an assemblage. It acquires legs.

The first task, then, does not involve defining the dead man walking as another identity. It involves dramatizing the walking.

1. Who—or What—Is Walking?

Deleuze's method of dramatization begins by disturbing the philosophical privilege accorded to the question "What is?" Essence does not necessarily disclose itself through abstract definition. Other questions may prove more exact:

Who?

How?

How much?

Where?

When?

Under what conditions?

These questions locate the Idea within spatiotemporal dynamisms rather than treating it as a static form standing behind events (Deleuze 2004).

The dead man walking should receive the same treatment.

Not only:

What is a dead man walking?

But:

Who or what walks?

Where does the walking occur?

When did the sentence begin functioning?

How does it travel?

What intensities sustain it?

Which bodies, signs, machines, environments, and memories does it recruit?

What possibilities remain open?

What has been declared closed?

Who recognizes the verdict?

Who refuses it?

Who has skin in the game?

Dramatization also unsettles the assumption that a fully formed subject exists before entering the event. Spatiotemporal dynamisms, Deleuze argues, designate larval or embryonic subjects. They create spaces and times, specify concepts, differentiate qualities and extensions, and compose a special theater in which Ideas actualize themselves (Deleuze 2004).

The subject forms inside the ordeal.

Josef K. does not begin as a sovereign individual who subsequently encounters a foreign institution called the court. The Trial assemblage produces "the accused" across hearings, offices, stairways,

delays, conversations, erotic relations, professional anxieties, bodily fatigue, and obscure interpretations. K. becomes a larval subject of the trial's dynamisms.

The same applies elsewhere.

The "terminal patient" forms across diagnosis, imaging, insurance coding, family responses, treatment protocols, bodily sensations, statistical prognoses, and cultural narratives of dying.

The "obsolete worker" forms across automation discourse, corporate forecasts, training programs, labor markets, interfaces, debts, schedules, and calculations of productivity.

The "failed institution" forms across rankings, budgets, deferred maintenance, reforms, layoffs, nostalgia, and future plans that no longer include its continued existence.

The "cancelled person" forms across screenshots, statements, algorithms, employers, followers, prior affiliations, apologies, refusals, and proliferating summaries of what allegedly happened.

The "doxxed person" forms across databases, property records, photographs, maps, family connections, usernames, workplaces, and threats. A contextual identity collapses into an exposed location.

The "ghosted person" forms around a withdrawn response. Silence becomes an event with no agreed-upon interpretation. The absent answer begins organizing the field.

The dead man walking is not a stable entity placed within a hostile environment. The figure arises through the relation between ongoing actuality and a future treated as already settled.

Death walks backward from the verdict into the present.

2. Schools for Dead Men

Different schools of theory recognize different forms of this strange continuation. Each detects a real mechanism. Each also risks mistaking one scale of the phenomenon for its whole.

Existentialism: the condemned individual

Existentialism stages the human being before mortality absurdity, abandonment, and responsibility. Death individualizes. No one can die in another's place in precisely the same existential sense.

The dead man walking becomes the person forced to recognize that no future guarantee will rescue existence from finitude.

This gives the figure intensity, but it can also confine death to the human subject's relation to its own mortality. Institutions, animals, technologies, atmospheres, and planets become the setting in which an individual confronts death rather than participants in plural processes of living and dying.

Psychoanalysis: the verdict migrates inward

Psychoanalysis locates walking death in melancholia, traumatic repetition, the death drive, identification with the aggressor, compulsive reenactment, and attachment to a lost or destructive object.

The sentence no longer requires a visible guard. It acquires an interior voice.

The subject repeats the injury, anticipates the judgment, and polices the self before the authority arrives.

Gaslighting supplies a contemporary bridge between psychic and institutional capture. In its interpersonal form, gaslighting destabilizes another person's confidence in memory, perception, and judgment. Generalized across organizations, professions, platforms, and states, it becomes a machinery for making subjects participate in the denial of conditions they directly experience.

The worker watches resources disappear while leadership announces renewal.

The student experiences abandonment while the institution advertises care.

The patient reports pain while the system insists that the numbers show improvement.

The citizen witnesses systemic breakdown while public discourse attributes the problem to individual irresponsibility.

The gaslit person must perform reality-testing before an apparatus that has monopolized the authority to define reality.

This produces a particularly cruel generalized Turing test:

Can you perform sanity by denying what you know?

The verdict migrates inward when the subject learns to interpret accurate perception as evidence of personal failure.

Yet a danger accompanies psychoanalytic insight. The machinery of capture can become translated too quickly into psychic drama. Architecture, economics, technology, bureaucracy, ecology, and history risk appearing as external triggers of an essentially interior process.

Marxism: living labor under dead forms

Marxism discovers the dead man walking in alienated labor, commodity fetishism, reification, surplus populations, and the domination of living activity by accumulated or "dead" labor.

Workers continue laboring within systems that treat them as costs, inputs, human resources, or obsolete capacities. Institutions preserve circulation even when the forms of work they organize no longer sustain flourishing lives.

Here the sentence walks as value.

The permanently failing institution becomes economically productive in a perverse sense. Its failure generates consulting contracts, administrative positions, retraining programs, compliance systems, assessments, and repeated rounds of restructuring. Breakdown becomes a market.

But some Marxist accounts remain all too human when nature appears chiefly as resource, constraint, or metabolic condition for human production. The earth may enter the critique without acquiring differentiated modes of existence irreducible to labor and capital.

Foucault: subjects produced by examination

Foucault shows how examination, discipline, normalization, documentation, governmentality, and biopolitics produce the subjects they appear merely to manage.

The prisoner, patient, student, delinquent, deviant, and dangerous individual do not precede the apparatus intact. They form through institutional practices of observation and judgment.

The dead man walking becomes administratively legible life: a body maintained, measured, corrected, and exposed to death.

This account moves beyond a sovereign human subject, yet it often remains organized around the government of human bodies and populations. The more-than-human components of government can remain relays of power over life rather than worlds and agencies requiring their own modes of attention.

Critical race theory: those denied Man

Black, Indigenous, postcolonial, and decolonial thought expose the violence hidden inside universal Man. Social death, racial abjection, colonial nonbeing, forced assimilation, and differential grievability reveal that many people have been compelled to prove humanity before institutions founded on denying it.

The philosophical “death of Man” therefore arrives belatedly. Those excluded from Man have long confronted his death-dealing operations.

The generalized Turing test does not originate with artificial intelligence. It has precedents in plantations, colonies, borders, schools, missions, courts, medical systems, and racial regimes that continually ask:

Can you speak as a human?

Can you reason as a human?

Can you own as a human?

Can you govern yourself as a human?

Can you suffer credibly enough to deserve recognition?

The universal category demands performance from those it has already marked as doubtful instances.

Feminist queer theory: recognizable life

Feminist and queer theories show how gender, sexuality, embodiment, kinship, and personhood become materialized through repeated norms. One does not merely express a preexisting identity; one becomes recognizable through citational acts and institutional forms.

The dead man walking appears where a life remains active while the available categories render it unintelligible, unlivable, or ungrievable.

Yet recognizability can become theory’s limit. Even when norms become exposed as constructed, human recognition may remain the ultimate horizon: who counts, who appears, who speaks, who receives rights, who becomes grievable.

The cosmos enters as the expanded scene of human recognizability rather than as a plurality of mortal and generative processes.

Agamben: bare life and the exception

Agamben concentrates the figure in bare life: a living being included in the juridical order through abandonment and exposure to sovereign violence.

The dead man walking belongs to law by being placed at the threshold where law can suspend its ordinary protections.

This gives us an acute account of juridical death, but the sovereign exception can become too total. Many assemblages do not operate through a single decision or identifiable sovereign. Control may diffuse through actuarial models, infrastructures, platforms, norms, ecological pressures, and adaptive feedback.

New materialism: distributed agency

Posthumanism, actor-network theory, assemblage theory, and new materialism displace the autonomous human subject by distributing agency across bodies, animals, technologies, objects, environments, and infrastructures.

Cameron Duff, for instance, frames health in terms of a posthuman and more-than-human assemblage of spaces, forces, and bodies rather than a self-contained human organism. Elsewhere, he describes the traditional self giving way to a swarm of intensive singularities coalescing in assemblages that sustain life (Duff 2014).

This decentering proves indispensable.

But distribution does not by itself create cosmography.

A flat inventory of human and nonhuman actors can still organize its ultimate concerns around human health, justice, freedom, and survival. Nonhumans receive agency while remaining vectors within a humanly meaningful drama.

Theory's cosmic blind spot persists whenever the human becomes distributed but not genuinely reoriented.

Platform rites: ghosting, cancelling, doxxing

Contemporary social death increasingly arrives through operations that appear almost weightless.

One is ghosted.

One is cancelled.

One is blocked, delisted, demonetized, shadow-banned, deactivated, or removed from the group.

One is doxxed, and a previously distributed identity becomes forcibly recomposed into a legal name, bodily location, workplace, family connection, or target.

These operations differ ethically and politically. Ghosting may constitute self-protection, incapacity, indifference, or cruelty. Cancellation may name accountability, collective refusal, punitive spectacle, institutional risk management, or several of these at once. Doxxing can expose powerful actors, but it can also place vulnerable people in immediate danger. Their differences must remain visible.

Yet together they disclose a new topology of the dead man walking.

Social existence now depends increasingly upon technical permissions:

visibility;

searchability;

addressability;

account access;

authentication;

recommendation;

inclusion in lists;

appearance within another's feed.

The platform can leave the organism intact while changing whether that organism remains socially retrievable.

Ghosting withdraws response.

Cancelling withdraws legitimacy.

Doxxing abolishes protective opacity.

Each manipulates the relation between appearance and disappearance.

*The dead man walking no longer needs a prison corridor.
One may continue living while one's addressability, reputation,
livelihood, context, or capacity to answer has undergone execution elsewhere.*

3. The Dead Man after the Death of Man

The “death of Man” does not mean that human organisms cease existing. It names the historical exhaustion of a particular philosophical character: Man as autonomous subject, rational animal, author of knowledge, source of moral law, center of representation, and measure of beings.

Kant gives this figure its decisive modern doubling.

The human appears empirically within nature and history, yet also claims transcendental authority as the source of the forms through which nature and history become knowable. Man becomes both examiner and examinee, classifier and classified, legislator and subject of the law.

Duff summarizes this structure when he describes the transcendental human subject as both the source of the syntheses that organize experience and the primary object of metaphysical investigation (Duff 2014).

Man stands inside the picture while claiming authorship of the frame.

The death of Man exposes this character as historically produced rather than eternally grounded. But the announcement does not end his operations.

Man dies philosophically and continues administratively.

He walks on as:

legal person;	productive worker;	model of intelligence;
rational chooser;	developing child;	ethical beneficiary;
property holder;	citizen;	measure of artificial intelligence.
autonomous patient;	consumer;	
responsible offender;	human user;	

This is the dead Man walking.

His philosophical sovereignty has become untenable, but institutions continue demanding his performance. Courts, clinics, workplaces, borders, universities, and technical systems keep testing whether concrete beings approximate the surviving character.

Man becomes a rubric after ceasing to function as a convincing ontology.

ID cards and digital thumbnails

Man survives administratively by becoming a thumbnail.

The modern identification card already miniaturizes the person: photograph, legal name, date of birth, number, status, expiration date, issuing authority. The bearer appears as a compressed, portable file capable of passing through checkpoints.

Digital systems radicalize this compression.

The person becomes a profile image, username, biometric template, verification badge, customer record, location history, face embedding, credit file, risk score, behavioral signature, permissions bundle, or token of access.

The thumbnail does not merely represent the person. It increasingly mediates whether the person can enter, travel, work, speak, receive care, cross a border, access money, or remain visible.

Man's transcendental portrait shrinks into an operational icon.

The category no longer needs a monumental image of the human. It needs a machine-readable miniature capable of circulating through databases.

Control no longer depends exclusively upon fixed enclosures. Deleuze describes control as continuous modulation: a variable system whose numerical language changes its mesh from point to point (Deleuze 1992). The digital thumbnail participates in this modulation. It does not tell one stable story about its bearer. It changes status as systems update permissions, scores, associations, and probabilities.

This is the strange afterlife of Man:

The universal subject dies into innumerable administrable thumbnails.

This is why "character" matters.

Man is a character who mistook himself for the author.

He forgot that his supposedly universal traits emerged through specific histories, institutions, exclusions, technics, cosmologies, and performances. Even critiques of Man can preserve his privilege by treating his disappearance as the central event of Being.

The death of Man becomes all too human when theory assumes that the collapse of one humanist figure amounts to the collapse of every possible source of meaning.

K and +L enter after this false ending.

They do not offer another sovereign character to replace Man. They redistribute what character can mean.

4. Performing the Category

Aristotle provides one deep source for the demand to perform the category.

A capacity becomes intelligible through actuality. The musician's capacity appears through playing; the builder's through building; courage through courageous conduct. What a being is becomes recognizable through characteristic activity.

Institutions transform this relation into a test.

They cannot directly inspect intelligence, competence, sanity, loyalty, remorse, citizenship, authenticity, or humanity. They therefore demand observable performances.

The student answers.

The applicant interviews.

The prisoner narrates remorse.

The asylum seeker recounts persecution.

The patient displays symptoms.

The worker produces metrics.

The machine converses.

The performance becomes evidence for an inaccessible interior capacity or identity.

Kant radicalizes the problem. Before the tribunal can decide what something is, it organizes the conditions under which that thing can appear as a coherent object of judgment. It chooses relevant evidence, constructs continuity, assigns causes, selects a medium, and determines admissibility.

The examinee must thus accomplish two tasks:

become legible within the apparatus;

The generalized Turing test thus industrializes a much older philosophical and political operation:

To exist institutionally, one must perform the category through which the institution knows how to recognize existence. But another test becomes possible.

perform adequately within the category assigned.

This is the generalized Turing test.

It does not ask only whether a machine can imitate a human. It names every institutional scene in which a being must supply recognizable signs to qualify as an acceptable instance:

Can you perform the competent employee?

Can you perform the credible victim?

Can you perform the rehabilitated prisoner?

Can you perform the legitimate citizen?

Can you perform the healthy patient?

Can you perform the authentic user?

Can you perform human intelligence?

Can you perform sanity by distrusting your own perception?

Can your thumbnail perform the authorized version of you?

The test is never neutral because the tester controls the scene.

It selects the category.

It decides which outputs count.

It determines the threshold.

It interprets ambiguity.

It usually remains less visible than the being examined.

5. Two Tests: Resemblance and Becoming

The categorical test asks whether a being resembles an established model.

The differential test asks whether an assemblage can become other than it has been.

These tests should not become confused.

The categorical test

The categorical test operates through recognizability:

Does the claimant resemble the legitimate copy?

Does the activity correspond to the kind?

Can the manifold become synthesized as a coherent object?

Does the performance satisfy the evaluator?

Can the subject pass?

The categorical test rewards fidelity to a prior identity.

Its central question is:

Are you sufficiently like what we already recognize?

The differential test

The Nietzschean-Deleuzian test does not ask whether a being preserves identity. It asks whether something can persist by transforming, exceed what came before, create something new, and continue a differential series.

Bahoh's account of Deleuze's eternal return captures this crucial reversal. Persistence does not mean remaining the same. What passes the test does so by producing transformation and going beyond its inherited identity (Bahoh 2023).

Its central question becomes:

Can this relation generate another difference?

This gives the dead man walking a sharper formulation.

A dead man walking may continue passing categorical tests while failing the differential test.

The institution remains certified.

The employee remains productive.

The discipline continues publishing.

The account remains verified.

The thumbnail remains searchable.

The subject remains recognizable.

Man continues functioning as the measure.

Yet none can produce another future.

They survive through repetition but not through becoming.

Categorical survival means remaining recognizable, repeating the model, passing the classifier, and preserving identity.

Differential survival means becoming otherwise, continuing a series, transforming the field of classification, risking identity, and generating another possibility.

The dead man walking does not merely approach biological cessation.

He inhabits differential foreclosure.

The machinery operates, but the future no longer arrives as an opening. It arrives only as the execution of what has already been decided.

6. Kafka's K: The Walking of the Sentence

Kafka's *Trial* does not simply illustrate the generalized test. It reveals how the testing apparatus proliferates beyond any identifiable tribunal.

Josef K. becomes accused without learning the determinate charge. He continues working and moving through the city, yet the trial gradually reorganizes every sphere of life. Apartments become hearing rooms. Attics become legal offices. Work becomes distraction from the case. Intimacy becomes mediation. Delay becomes procedure. Questions become evidence that K. does not understand the law.

Every attempt to contest the category intensifies its reality.

Defending oneself confirms that a case exists.

Ignoring the proceedings confirms arrogance.

Seeking help deepens dependence upon intermediaries.

Demanding clarity displays ignorance of the system.

The category "accused" becomes an attractor. More and more of the world curves toward it.

But Deleuze and Guattari prevent us from treating K. as a psychologically complete individual trapped in an external bureaucracy. In Kafka's novels, K ceases to function as a conventional subject. K becomes a general function that proliferates, segments, and connects the apparently solitary individual to the entire series through which it passes (Deleuze and Guattari 1986).

K is not merely the accused.

K is the passage of accusation.

K connects banker, functionary, advocate, woman, painter, priest, room, staircase, office, document, knife, shame, spectator, and virtual collectivity.

The trial does not exist above these components. It functions through them.

Deleuze and Guattari accordingly reject the search for a subject standing behind literary enunciation. The solitary bachelor and the collectivity that does not yet exist become components of an assemblage rather than individual and collective subjects authoring statements from outside.

The K-function names this distributed operation.

At the close of their Kafka study, Deleuze and Guattari describe Kafka's work through intensities extending from machinic assemblage and unlimited immanence to literary enunciation: these intensities compose the K-function across the continuous oeuvre.

Thus:

K is not the dead man walking. K is the walking of the sentence.

K names the function through which a verdict moves across a world.

But K remains ambivalent.

K can carry capture.

K can also dismantle the machinery through which capture has become naturalized. Deleuze and Guattari emphasize that Kafka's assemblage functions through active dismantling rather than external criticism: it accelerates movements already traversing the social field and turns procedure into an interminable process.

K therefore cannot serve as either villain or savior.

K is carriage, conduction, proliferation, segmentation, and passage.

The question remains:

What does K bear?

7. +L Enters

K bears +L.

The formulation must remain stronger than "K encounters an other." K and +L do not begin as two autonomous characters who later enter a relation. The plus sign has already entered K's character.

+L names what K carries without fully determining:

life;	limen;	another letter;
lifeline;	leak;	another life;
line;	limit;	another world;
lure;	loss;	another whose name remains unwritten.
listener;	legacy;	
lover;	La La Land;	

The indeterminacy does not make +L empty. It makes +L generative.

To define L once and for all would close the operation it marks.

K and +L are “characters” in several senses simultaneously.

A character is a dramatic figure.

A character can operate without becoming a sovereign person.

A character is a graphic mark.

K and +L are therefore characters after the death of Man.

A character is a coded sign.

A character is a disposition formed through repeated encounters.

K does not represent a unified human subject.

A character is a trace impressed upon a surface.

+L does not simply represent another human waiting for recognition.

They stage two inseparable dimensions of any consequential assemblage.

K conducts. It connects heterogeneous components, moves through series, makes procedures operative, and carries effects across bodies, signs, media, institutions, and scales.

+L countersigns. It marks the relation K cannot complete alone, exposes functioning to interruption, carries the claim of what has not been included, and places the composition’s identity and future at risk.

Their relation can be formulated in several ways:

K gives +L passage.

Or:

Or:

+L gives K answerability.

K launches assemblage;.

K conducts.

+L puts that motion at stake.

+L countersigns.

K without +L becomes pure functioning.

It circulates, classifies, administers, segments, reforms, and optimizes. It can remain highly active after losing the capacity to generate another world.

+L without K becomes abstract alterity.

It invokes openness, hospitality, futurity, and difference without building a carrier, practice, medium, body, or institution through which any of these can become consequential.

K without +L becomes machinery.

+L without K becomes ethical décor.

K bearing +L becomes a relation whose functioning remains vulnerable to transformation.

8. Entertaining K and +L

To “entertain” K and +L offers the precise dramaturgical and ethical verb.

To entertain is to stage

K and +L become characters placed before an audience.

Yet they cannot become represented without altering the stage. Their scene concerns the conditions of staging itself: who writes, who enters, who gets seen, who bears risk, who remains outside, and who can change the rules.

To entertain is to think

One entertains a possibility by holding it open without deciding it prematurely.

+L asks for this interval. The other must become capable of affecting the composition before its identity has been settled.

To entertain is to host

One entertains a guest.

Hospitality, however, cannot mean assigning the guest a predetermined room and calling the arrangement openness. The house may need to change. The guest may refuse the invitation’s terms. The host may discover that the house rests upon land, labor, and histories never acknowledged by its apparent owner.

To entertain is to sustain

To entertain a relation also means keeping it alive, in circulation, and in play.

The crucial question becomes:

Are we sustaining a living relation, or merely keeping a dead category operational?

This is where skin enters the game.

9. Skin in the Game

Any genuine entertainment of K and +L requires stakes.

But the demand for skin cannot become another generalized Turing test.

The host cannot say:

Reveal yourself.

Identify your vulnerability.

Prove your investment.

Demonstrate that you qualify as an other worthy of recognition.

That demand would preserve the host's sovereignty while exposing the guest to examination.

The primary burden falls upon the person, institution, author, researcher, apparatus, or world staging the encounter:

What can this encounter actually change?

Can the category change?

Can the project lose its predetermined direction?

Can the rules become revised?

Can the author's ownership weaken?

Can a collaborator refuse the role assigned?

Can an organism, material, technology, or environment force redesign?

Can a future collectivity countersign the work differently?

Can the host discover that hosting itself must pass into another arrangement?

Skin in the game means that entertainment cannot remain representational only. It must redistribute something real: power, obligation, resources, vulnerability, authorship, time, bodily exposure, institutional direction, historical interpretation, or possible futures.

Yet the other also has skin in the game.

This does not require complete self-disclosure. It requires consequence.

The other's stake may appear as resistance, refusal, opacity, withdrawal, delay, material friction, breakdown, a scar, a silence, an inheritance, a future claim, a demand issued by the dead, an atmosphere altering what bodies can do, or a nonhuman life refusing the terms of human use.

The other's skin in the game is the capacity to leave a mark, exact a cost, require an answer, or reroute the composition.

A merely imaginary other who can never affect the host becomes an alibi.

A fully exposed other forced to become legible on the host's terms becomes a prisoner.

+L must therefore hold together **stake and opacity**.

10. TBD Forever

The other may remain to be determined forever.

“TBD forever” does not mean that nothing can become known. Nor does it mean that the other sits fully formed behind a veil, awaiting eventual discovery.

It names a double temporal structure.

To be determined

The relation has not yet disclosed what it can become.

The other’s significance cannot become deduced entirely from present categories.

The encounter participates in determining both parties.

Forever

No determination exhausts the other.

Even after naming, meeting, collaboration, conflict, recognition, or loss, the relation remains capable of further consequences.

The other becomes determinable through relation without becoming totally determined by relation.

This gives us a concise formula:

TBD forever means stake without exhaustive identification.

The other can make demands before becoming fully known.

The dead can obligate the living without returning to explain themselves.

Future generations can possess stakes in present decisions without appearing as identifiable participants.

Animals, microbes, rivers, atmospheres, technical systems, and damaged landscapes can alter a project without entering as humanlike speakers.

A text may countersign its author after the author loses control over its circulation.

+L marks this excess.

The plus sign adds without closing the sum.

The letter gives the addition character without final identity.

11. The Other Tests the Tester

The generalized Turing test traditionally works in one direction.

The evaluator asks questions.

The examined performs.

The evaluator decides.

K bearing +L reverses the scene without pretending that power suddenly becomes symmetrical.

The other tests the tester.

The question no longer remains:

Can this being pass our test?

It becomes:

Can our test encounter this being without reducing it to what we already know how to recognize?

Or:

Can our category survive the encounter without monopolizing its meaning?

Or more radically:

Can our world become altered by what it cannot yet classify?

The categorical test determines the other through testing.

The differential test allows the other to participate in determining the test.

This is the tester's skin in the game.

The examiner's criteria must become vulnerable.

The institution's procedures must become revisable.

The host's world must become capable of receiving an answer that the invitation did not script.

+L does not guarantee that this happens. It marks the requirement and the risk.

12. Attachment to the Last Rites

“Generalized Stockholm syndrome” can now become recast without relying upon a questionable psychological analogy.

Call it attachment to the last rites.

A person or institution becomes attached to the apparatus administering its expiration because the apparatus still distributes continuity:

salary;	routine;	documentation;
recognition;	membership;	possible appeal;
identity;	legitimacy;	an imagined rescue.

The worker knows the organization has finished but seeks one more favorable review.

The scholar knows the discipline’s categories no longer orient the world but continues performing them for publication and promotion.

The condemned prisoner seeks innocence from the court that has monopolized the authority to produce guilt and acquittal.

The patient seeks recognition from a medical apparatus that may reduce lived experience to the categories it can code.

The cancelled person seeks reinstatement from the same platform, audience, or institution that has converted a dispute into an identity.

The ghosted person waits for an answer from the absence that now organizes attention.

Man seeks confirmation from the institutions that continue using him as their measure.

This is not simply attachment to a captor.

It is attachment to categorical continuity.

Better the dead category that still recognizes me than an unknown becoming in which I may lose the name, role, protection, and identity I possess.

Permanently failing institutions perfect this attachment by joining gaslighting to recognition.

They tell their participants:

The institution remains healthy.

Your exhaustion indicates deficient resilience.

The procedures remain fair.

Your exclusion reflects inadequate performance.

The mission remains clear.

Your confusion demonstrates that you have failed to understand it.

The participant becomes attached not only to salary or status but to the hope that the institution will eventually confirm that their perception, labor, and sacrifices possessed meaning.

Departure then feels like self-erasure.

The vestigial organ says to the body:

Without me, you will no longer know who you are.

The subject does not necessarily believe in the apparatus.

The subject may despise it.

Yet the apparatus has monopolized the routes through which existence becomes publicly consequential.

K without living +L provides a terrible shelter.

It encloses, but it also confirms that one remains inside something.

Attachment to the last rites preserves more than institutions. It preserves the characters people have learned to perform within them.

13. The Cosmic Blind Spot

The expansion from subject to assemblage must not become a casual enlargement of scale.

A prison sentence, an ecosystem collapse, a species extinction, and stellar death should not become interchangeable examples of “the same thing.” Such analogy would erase decisive differences in agency, responsibility, suffering, duration, and reversibility.

The task is not metaphorical equivalence but **cosmic conduction**.

The prison sentence depends upon stone, steel, concrete, electricity, chemistry, food systems, roads, databases, calendars, architectural histories, and inherited cosmologies of guilt, sacrifice, punishment, and redemption.

The terminal diagnosis depends upon cells, pathogens, imaging machines, pharmaceuticals, insurance codes, family narratives, hospital architecture, environmental exposure, and statistical models of survival.

The obsolete worker depends upon minerals, energy, algorithms, infrastructures, financial forecasts, supply chains, educational systems, colonial divisions of labor, and projected technological futures.

The sentence does not walk without a world.

The cosmic blind spot appears whenever theory treats these material, biological, technical, and cosmological relations as scenery surrounding the human drama.

Posthuman distribution begins to correct this problem, but +L adds a necessary reserve.

An assemblage can imagine that every relevant actor has been entered into the account.

+L marks what no inventory can guarantee it has included.

Distribution is not yet answerability.

Connectivity is not yet care.

Agency is not yet hospitality.

The cosmos cannot become reduced to a larger network in which humans finally learn to share agency generously with selected nonhumans.

It remains the unfinished plurality of worlds, scales, lives, deaths, absences, and relations that no one assemblage can totalize.

+L is the cosmic remainder carried inside every local composition.

Homo sacer data bodies

The figure of *homo sacer* must now pass through the data body.

The data body is not simply information collected about a prior physical person. It is a parallel operational body assembled from documents, records, probabilities, images, transactions, relationships, and inferences. It may precede the person into an encounter and continue acting after the person has departed.

Before the traveler reaches the border, a data body has already arrived.

Before the applicant enters the interview, a data body has already been searched.

Before the patient speaks, a data body has already supplied diagnoses, risk factors, insurance permissions, and contraindications.

Before the accused appears, a data body has already established associations, histories, locations, and suspicions.

Before the user posts, a data body has already shaped what the platform expects the user to want.

The human body may remain legally protected in principle while its data double becomes exposed to indefinite capture, copying, recombination, sale, scoring, and circulation.

This produces **homo sacer data bodies**: operational personae included within systems through the suspension of meaningful control over how they will be interpreted and used.

The data body may become readable without being heard, searchable without consenting, actionable without appearing, condemned without confrontation, retained after cancellation, revived after deletion, doxxed into bodily danger, or ghosted into administrative nonexistence.

The data body does not replace the flesh.

It distributes the flesh's exposure.

A database error can close a border.

A score can deny housing.

A thumbnail can invite recognition or violence.

A vanished account can erase years of social composition.

A photograph detached from context can become an accusation.

The sentence walks through packets, profiles, tags, permissions, embeddings, and predictions.

The digital dead man walking remains biologically present while an operational double has already been classified, suspended, downgraded, or placed outside protection.

Yet the data body also complicates death. It may continue speaking, recommending, circulating, earning, training models, and triggering memories after biological death.

The person dies while the profile remains active.

The dead may keep posting automatically.

The thumbnail walks.

14. The Dead Man Walking as K with +L Foreclosed

A dead man walking may be a condemned body, but also a ghosted social presence, a cancelled public identity, a doxxed data body, a permanently failing institution, or a vestigial category that retains operational force after losing its capacity to orient life.

In each case, K continues.

Messages still circulate.

Records remain.

The thumbnail persists.

Committees meet.

The institution reforms.

The category classifies.

But +L—the possibility that another relation might revise what these operations mean—has been administratively closed.

Ghosting says: no answer will arrive.

Cancelling says: no legitimate return remains available.

Doxxing says: opacity will not be permitted.

Gaslighting says: your experience cannot alter our description.

The permanently failing institution says: only more of the same can save us.

The sentence says: every remaining event will count as time before execution.

These are different techniques for fixing the future in advance.

A dead man walking is therefore:

A K-function that continues operating after an apparatus has declared +L already determined.

The condemned prisoner may speak, appeal, remember, pray, joke, resist, write, or love. Yet the sentence attempts to translate every remaining act into one meaning: time before execution.

The department may teach, mentor, and create, but the administration interprets each activity within a timetable of closure.

The worker may develop new capacities, but the economic model translates those capacities into the story of an already obsolete occupation.

The cancelled person may explain, apologize, refuse, or contextualize, yet each new statement may become another exhibit in the identity already assigned.

Man may continue appearing as legal, ethical, and computational measure, but each performance repeats a character whose universality has collapsed.

The apparatus converts the plus sign into a countdown. The other no longer arrives as a possible alteration of the verdict. It appears only as another input to be processed within it.

This is differential death.

K continues.

+L has been officially closed.

Yet “officially” matters.

The apparatus’s foreclosure must not become the philosopher’s ontology.

A witness may carry the story elsewhere.

A text may survive its trial.

A material may break the procedure.

A body may refuse its expected comportment.

A future community may countersign the condemned life.

An atmosphere may alter the field.

The dead-man-walking condition describes a powerful attempt to close the future, not the final proof that every other future has vanished.

The sentence claims the last word.

+L marks why no word can guarantee itself as last.

15. Capturing K and Perfumative K+L

The K-function remains pharmacological.

It can connect bodies, signs, technologies, and affects into apparatuses of capture.

It can also carry intensities across thresholds in ways that unsettle the categories through which capture functions.

Capturing K assigns the category in advance, monopolizes interpretation, makes resistance confirm the verdict, translates difference into data, converts relation into input and output, narrows modality, administers continuation, and keeps the dead form walking.

Perfumative K+L treats categories as provisional operators, allows response to alter the scene, distributes authorship and agency, carries effects across media and scales, remains exposed to unintended relays, admits absent and future collectivities, bears an other without demanding exhaustive identity, and preserves the possibility of another series.

Perfumance matters because it does not remain on the assigned stage.

It diffuses.

It lingers.

It transfers.

It mixes.

It reaches participants not included in the original scene.

Perfume cannot dictate every body it will touch or every association it will produce. Its material passage creates both power and vulnerability.

A sentence gains force by diffusing beyond the judge's statement into architecture, routine, memory, media, and bodily anticipation.

But no sentence controls every relay.

K carries.

+L marks what happens because carrying never amounts to total command.

16. Kitelichkeit: A Line of Flight with a String

The passage beyond differential foreclosure should not appear as escape into pure exteriority.

A line of flight has a line.

It carries tension.

It may remain tethered to the ground from which it rises.

This is **Kitelichkeit**: the kite-condition of becoming airborne without pretending to have abolished gravity, weather, material constraint, history, or the hand holding the string.

A kite does not fly by freeing itself from relation. It flies through a precise composition of differences:

wind and fabric;

drag and lift;

tail and instability;

ground and atmosphere;

line and lateral pull;

player and changing sky.

The string does not simply imprison the kite. Under certain conditions, it enables orientation, tension, responsiveness, and return.

But the string may also cut, tangle, snap, or become an instrument of capture.

Kitelichkeit therefore names no simple liberation. It names the art of composing a line that can carry a body into another medium without denying its attachments.

The dead man walking occupies a line whose destination has been predetermined.

The kite takes that line obliquely.

It converts the line of sentence into a line of flight.

K becomes kite-function: not a sovereign flyer but a relay distributed across hand, string, frame, surface, wind, thermal current, cloud, eye, and imagined destination.

Kite-K bears +L into atmosphere.

+Lichkeit

+Lichkeit names the supplementary lightness, luminosity, clearing, and atmospheric opening that occurs when K bears +L without converting the other into cargo fully owned by the carrier.

The term should retain its strange, hybrid character.

It carries *Licht*: light and clearing.

It echoes *Leichtigkeit*: lightness.

It carries *-lichkeit*: a condition, modality, or manner of being.

It carries the plus sign: addition without final total.

It carries L: lifeline, lure, listener, lover, limit, loss, and the one still TBD.

+Lichkeit is not weightlessness.

It is the alteration of weight through relation.

The other does not remove the burden. The other changes how the burden can be borne.

+Lichkeit is what happens when a sentence encounters wind.

It billows.

Its rigid line becomes fabric.

Its destination begins to wobble.

Its letters become playable characters rather than fixed commands.

The execution order may remain materially real; +Lichkeit does not deny violence through poetic uplift. But it follows the excesses, traces, solidarities, media, memories, and future claims through which the sentence fails to control every consequence of its passage.

Kitelichkeit gives K a line of flight.

+Lichkeit gives that flight an other sky.

17. Tickling Klang through Glas

The line of flight also sounds.

Klang names not a message transmitted intact but a sounding whose vibrations depend upon bodies, cavities, media, distances, and resonant surfaces. A bell does not contain its sound. Klang happens between metal, strike, air, architecture, ear, memory, and decay.

+L does not merely add another proposition to K.

It tickles the assemblage into resonance.

Tickling matters because it occupies an unstable threshold between pleasure and irritation, invitation and invasion, laughter and loss of control.

One cannot fully tickle oneself because tickling requires the uncertain arrival of another touch.

The category that believed itself self-contained begins to shudder.

Its composure breaks.

Its body responds before its identity can explain the response.

Tickling supplies a minor model of +Lichkeit: the other touches the system at a point where the system cannot retain complete sovereignty over its reaction.

But tickling also requires care. A tickle can become coercive when the other cannot stop it. The involuntary response does not erase the need for consent. Here again, +L introduces answerability. The point is not simply to make a system react. It is to open a relation in which reaction can become response.

Derrida's *Glas* supplies an architecture for this resonance. Its columns neither merge into one dialectical voice nor remain completely isolated. Texts echo, interrupt, contaminate, and countersign one another across a gutter that both divides and conducts.

The gutter becomes a wind channel.

Glas carries glass, transparency, fracture, remains, and the tolling of a death bell. It becomes a resonant and atmospheric machine in which voices, signatures, gases, fragments, and remains circulate without arriving at one final synthesis.

Klang passes through *Glas*.

The columns begin to billow.

The philosophical page ceases to operate as a flat tribunal where one argument subsumes another. It becomes a sail, lung, resonator, and weather system.

K carries one column toward the other.

+L keeps the gutter open.

The text does not reconcile its differences.

It makes them audible.

18. The Billowing of Gay Sci-Fi

Gay sci-fi enters here not as an identity genre appended to theory but as the speculative billowing of relations whose characters remain TBD.

It asks what bodies, intimacies, kinships, intelligences, genders, species, atmospheres, and worlds might emerge when inherited categories cease functioning as compulsory destinations.

“Gay” names more than a stable subject position.

It names gaiety, deviation, alliance, erotic conduction, theatrical excess, coded survival, chosen kinship, wit, color, and the capacity to make strange relations livable.

“Sci-fi” names more than prediction.

It constructs test environments for other modes of embodiment, communication, temporality, care, and collective life.

Gay sci-fi therefore performs a differential test:

Can the category become strange enough to live again?

Its spaceships need not escape Earth.

They can become kites, balloons, garments, perfumes, thought bubbles, columns of *Glas*, data bodies rerouted through unknown collectivities, or institutions whose vestigial organs become playground equipment.

Its futurity does not promise frictionless transcendence.

It billows through inherited materials.

It finds lift in drag.

It conducts Klang through damaged structures.

It places K in motion while refusing to determine +L’s final form.

Gay sci-fi is the atmosphere generated when the dead Man’s thumbnail no longer controls every possible portrait.

It does not simply replace Man with a more inclusive cast of characters. It changes what a character can do. A character may become a scent, signal, spacecraft, organ, ghost, animal, database, planetary mood, or collective line of flight.

The cancelled return as remix.

The ghosted become atmospheric.

The doxxed recover opacity without surrendering consequence.

The data body becomes capable of entering compositions other than surveillance.

The permanently failing institution becomes material for speculative reconstruction.

Gay sci-fi does not deny the wounds carried by these figures. It asks how wounds might acquire strange vessels, companions, and destinations.

K bears +L.

+L becomes +Lichkeit.

The page becomes sail.

The sentence becomes weather.

19. Kx4l3ndj3r's Risk

Kx4l3ndj3r enters this essay not as a triumphant successor to Josef K.

He enters as a test.

Can a persona initiated by an author become genuinely vulnerable to collaborators, materials, accidents, readers, technologies, inherited characters, and unknown collectivities?

Can the character carry the research somewhere its initiating author did not intend?

Can it place ownership, genre, argument, and future direction at risk?

Can it bear +L?

Can Kx4l3ndj3r remain a kite rather than becoming a branded drone?

Can the line transmit pressure in both directions?

Can the wind alter the hand?

Can another player take the string?

Can the kite disappear into weather without making disappearance the author's final spectacle?

If not, Kx4l3ndj3r becomes another controlled instrument: an authored figure announcing openness while remaining unable to alter the authority that stages him.

The necessary distinction is not:

Joseph K. is captured.

Kx4l3ndj3r is free.

It is:

Joseph K. becomes carried by a sentence that seeks to foreclose +L.

Kx4l3ndj3r must become a carrier whose legitimacy depends upon remaining answerable to +L.

The second task may prove more difficult.

Freedom here does not mean autonomy from every relation. It means becoming able to enter relations that redistribute what the character, author, collaborator, and world can become.

Kx4l3ndj3r is not the hero.

He is a host whose house must remain rearrangeable.

He is a kite whose flight must alter the ground crew.

He is a character whose signature remains incomplete until another countersigns—and whose other may remain TBD forever.

Conclusion: The Atmosphere Billows

The dead man walking has served theory as condemned individual, traumatized psyche, alienated worker, socially dead person, disciplined body, bare life, ungrievable subject, obsolete institution, cancelled identity, ghosted address, exposed data body, and posthuman assemblage.

Each account captures part of the figure.

Yet the figure remains all too human whenever theory assumes that death, meaning, suffering, agency, and futurity reach their ultimate form at the scale of Man.

The death of Man does not end this privilege.

Man continues walking as institutional character, legal norm, medical model, political subject, digital thumbnail, and technological benchmark. He has lost philosophical sovereignty while retaining administrative power.

The generalized Turing test names the demand that beings continue performing this and other categories in order to become recognizable.

Gaslighting demands that one perform reason by denying one's perception.

Ghosting withdraws the response around which relation had formed.

Cancelling fixes a contested event into a public character.

Doxxing collapses contextual identity into exposed coordinates.

The ID card and profile thumbnail compress a life into a machine-readable token.

The homo sacer data body becomes actionable without becoming heard.

Permanently failing institutions administer their last rites while interpreting accurate diagnoses of failure as disloyalty.

Attachment to the last rites names the dependence produced when the apparatus controlling recognition also administers a form's expiration.

The differential test introduces another criterion. Survival does not mean merely remaining recognizable or operational. It means retaining the capacity to transform, exceed inherited identity, and continue becoming.

Kafka's K-function allows us to move from the condemned individual to the distributed walking of the sentence. K operates through bodies, offices, signs, machines, affects, profiles, platforms, and virtual collectivities.

K connects and carries.

But K cannot become the final character.

K bears +L.

+L is the mark of the other that the assemblage cannot completely identify, include, or determine in advance. It is guest and lure, lifeline and limit, listener and loss, another life and another world.

To entertain K and +L requires skin in the game. The relation must possess real consequences. Hosts, categories, institutions, authors, tests, and futures must become vulnerable to alteration. The other must possess the capacity to mark, resist, reroute, or obligate the composition.

Yet skin in the game cannot require complete exposure.

The other may remain TBD forever.

This does not weaken the relation. It protects the difference between consequence and possession.

A dead man walking is K functioning after the apparatus has declared +L closed.

Perfumative life begins where that declaration loses its monopoly.

The sentence walks through bodies, institutions, gaslit memories, vestigial organs, identification cards, data doubles, cancelled profiles, ghosted addresses, and permanently failing systems.

It tries to determine the other in advance.

It converts +L into a checkbox, profile field, score, countdown, or empty notification.

But the sentence also enters atmospheres it cannot fully administer.

K takes a line of flight through Kiteilichkeit.

The line remains tethered, material, exposed to tension, weather, failure, and return. It does not leave the world behind. It moves diagonally through the forces that sought to make one destination inevitable.

+Lichkeit enters as supplementary lightness: not the cancellation of gravity, but another bearing of weight; not the disappearance of the sentence, but the billowing of forms the sentence cannot completely control.

Klang sounds through the fissures.

Glas conducts between columns.

The category gets tickled out of composure.

Gay sci-fi gathers these vibrations into speculative vessels, strange kinships, data ghosts, perfumed atmospheres, and other characters still TBD forever.

The dead Man walks as thumbnail, rubric, score, and vestigial institution.

But he no longer walks alone.

Kites rise above the last rites.

Their strings remain in our hands—and in the hands, winds, bodies, histories, media, and unknown collectivities that make flight possible.

K bears +L.

+L becomes +Lichkeit.

The sentence walks.

The atmosphere billows.

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MeTanoia Playground

StudioLab

"PLAY is the lab where we unlearn to learn again."

Care is a route

We wander to make cure.

maps hold memory

THE GROUND REMEMBERS.

SONG KEEPS US ALIGNED.

healing is cosmic work.

WE WITNESS.
WE REMEMBER.
WE IMAGINE.
WE PLAY.

Labyrinth
nothing is linear here.
get lost.
find more.

Serpentine
follow the curve.
trust the uncurling.

The Fall / Cliff
risk reminds us we are alive.

border between play & thought.

RETURN is a DREAM WE KEEP.

every path can hold the others

Rock Garden
step gently.
listen to the stone.

String Fingers
climb.
pluck.
become vibration.

Care Station
rest. repair.
recharge.

Witness Bench
sit. watch.
hold the story.

Dorita's Doric Doorway
pass through.
leave different.
return wiser.

Cosmic Egg
crack open.
enter the unknown.

Cloud Machine
make weather.
make wonder.

StoryX Path
every step a story.
every story a step.

Toryx Switch
choose.
switch.
transform the map.

Helix Spiral
descend.
turn.
rise changed.

Pablo's Frame Shop
reframe.
reshape.
reimagine.

Haunted House
enter if you dare.
leave what you carry.

play is rehearsal for new worlds

WE BUILD TOMORROW WITH TODAY'S PLAY.

beauty is our act of defiance.

Children paint tomorrow.

The Playground

A StudioLab Performance Cosmography

MAP KEY

- Path / Route
- Portal / Threshold
- Witness Point
- Care Station

This map is not fixed.
It changes with us.
Draw your own path.
Add your own place.
The playground is alive.



beyng.com
14BC Gallery NYC

performingspace.org

