NOT-YET CONTACT IMPROVISATION

#This is a writing un/re/de/folding from the research project 'From CI island to CI connective Rhizome' at the Freiburg Festival 2019.

by Flor Campise and Meldy Ijpelaar

What constitutes CI is not what's only happening in an institutional frame: jams, festival programs, classes, in CQ, in our duo. Although around these spaces/ practices is where **major**** narratives are constructed, simultaneously there are **minor**** events that are boiling and affect and are being affected with major narratives. We are interested in all collective practices that emerge outside the curricula: we would put our attention towards what happens around the kitchen-space in Freiburg Festival, what happens outside the jam during the jam, autogestion of helpers-labs during the teachers-meeting, the need to create a group to support people during the festival, meetings around consent, labing groups. All the trying outs, the **aberrant**** trying outs.

Popcorning with-in the text we would like to situate and dive into the wordings we are deciding to thread this never-resolving-monstrosity.

**major/minor - The Minor Gesture - 2016 Duke University Press - Erin Manning

The unwavering belief in the major as the site where events occur, where events make a difference, is based on accepted accounts of what registers as change as well as existing parameters for gauging the value of that change. Yet while the grand gestures of a macro-politics most easily sum up the changes that occurred to alter the field, it is the minoritarian tendencies that initiate the subtle shifts that created the conditions for this, and any change. The grand is given the status it has not because it is where the transformative power lies, but because it is easier to identify major shifts than to catalogue the nuanced rhythms of the minor. As a result, these rhythms are narrated as secondary, or even negligible.

Also check –→ Podcast 'Reciprocal Presupposition' by Joshua Noiseux
https://soundcloud.com/reciprocalpresupposition/009-the-minor-gesture-with-erin-manning

**aberrant - Here we evoke aberrant in the Deleuzian sense. Diego Sztulwark on diffracting from 'Deleuze. Les movements aberrantes' of David Lapoujade shares --> http://lobosuelto.com/tag/movimientos-aberrantes/

Susy Shock from "Poemario Trans Pirado"
[…] yo monstruo de mi deseo
carne de cada una de mis pinceladas
lienzo azul de mi cuerpo
pintora de mi andar
no quiero más títulos que cargar
no quiero más cargos ni casilleros a donde encajar
ni el nombre justo que me reserve ninguna Ciencia […]
https://susyshock.blogspot.com/2008/03/yo-monstruo-mio.html

Marie Bardet, when referring to *Aberrant Movements* in Lapoujade's work expresses (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZ9MeyJNyRU):
[…] gestures of 'instauración' (word in spanish) without foundation. It's not revelation of interests that would finally become conscious, nor the sum of claims that would converge […] but the 'instauración' of other sensibilities, imaginaries, gestures when what was going on is no more possible. […]

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In our research proposal for the Freiburg Festival 2019 we
wanted to address a somehow regular articulation around an
experience of freedom in CI practices/spaces. A relating
towards an experience of freedom as a freeing to let
something be what it is, a releasing of constraints, a
'letting go' for the possibility of 'being/letting arise
our true self'. And in particular, how this notion
provides a landscape where power dynamics and hierarchical
structures can emerge.

Are these assumed constraints released for everyone? What
is this 'thing' that we are letting go? And how does this
'letting go' shape CI spaces/practices and how is it
shaped by it? Is there an assumption that it's only one's
responsibility to think less and flow more? If you then
are not sensing freedom, is it because you're not 'letting
go' enough?

OK, wait... Actually we would like to think constraints
beyond the dichotomic relation it is often forced to have
with a particular notion of freedom. As Derrida suggests
the word freedom often seems to be loaded with
metaphysical presuppositions that confer on the subject or
on consciousness —that is, an egological subject— a
sovereign independence [...]**

————————————————————————

**Here we have to make a citation of a citation towards Derrida that
we took from this blogpost 'Derrida on Freedom':
https://philosophyinatimeoferror.com/2017/02/01/derrida-on-freedom/
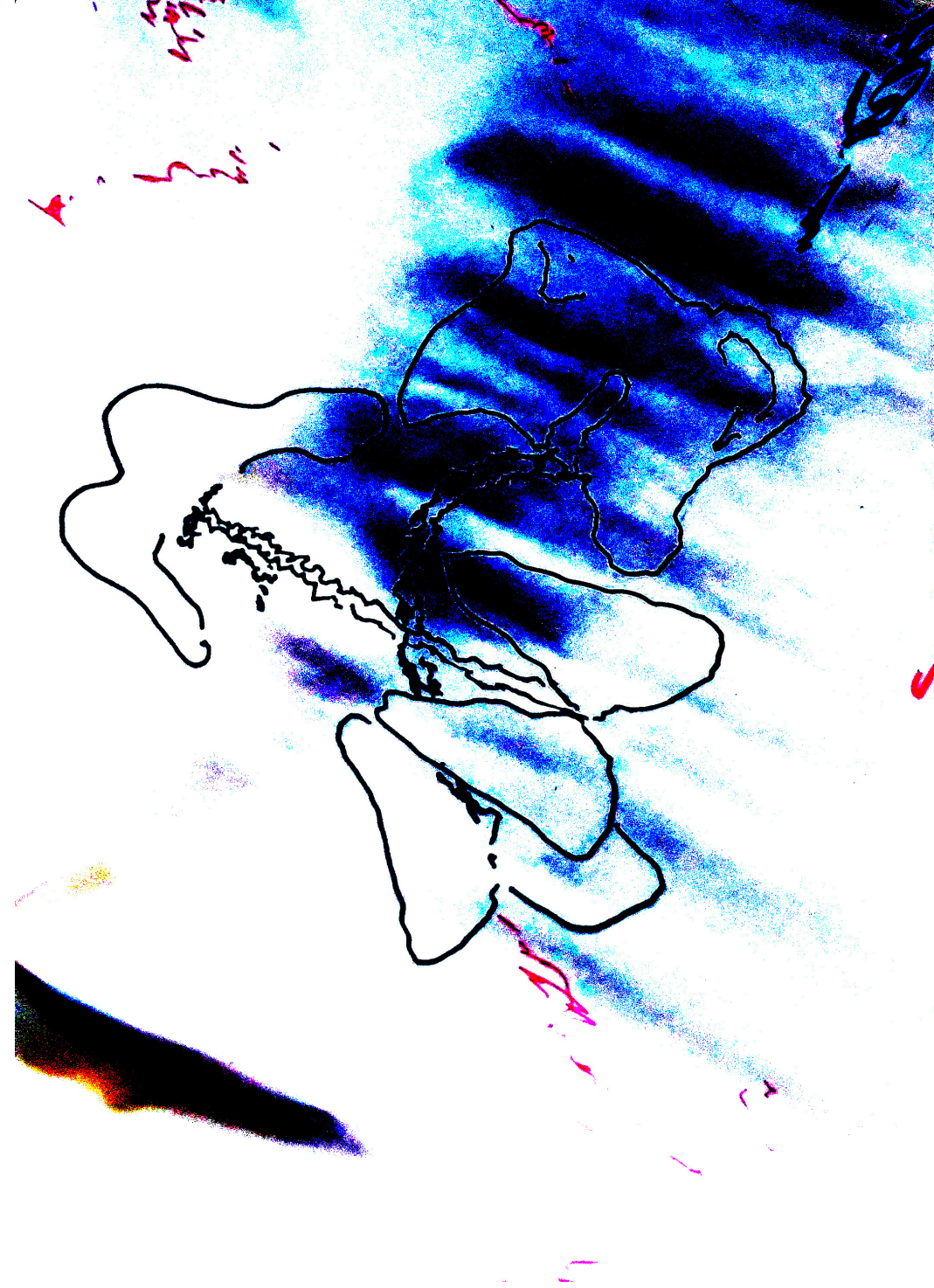
Then the presupposition of the 'true-self' somehow implies that we are autonomous and that we are sovereign. This 'true-self' is assumed already contained 'inside us' (in a limited-body-by skin) and can be reached through a release of constraints; much like the image of a sculptor who receives a rock and already knows the sculpture that it contains, as if no settings could alter its shaping. It seems to go against the **touch and being touched**** proposed by Barad. It assumes that we could switch on/off the possibility of not/relating, in the sense of not/being affected by relationality.

The 'letting go' and the idea of the 'true-self' seem to co-constitute each other, to reinforce the other. Although one could refer to a possibility of transformation of the 'true-self', a possible becoming, the smallest root of a core-self implies an entity that can relate but at the same time has the privilege of not being transformed or being affected by its relating. It assumes a border; inside the border resides the true-self, outside the rest.
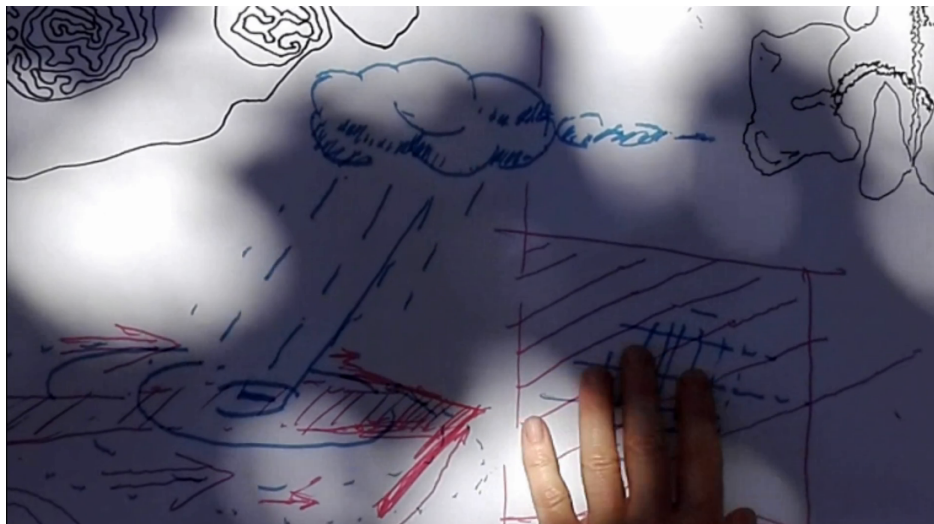
At this point we would like to pause. To suspend the threading and maybe cut it. This text is not attempting to be an understanding, it doesn't want to catch, grab, explain what 'is' there in CI spaces. We are looking for tools with which to think together the CI spaces we inhabit, the CI spaces we are, beyond a specific gridded space-time.

We do not attempt to describe what CI is or how it can be improved. For us, already the activity of working together with experiences around CI allows for movement, for a becoming. This is something we are encountering through our research, because our first question actually intended to foreground a new setting, like a rhizomatic one.

**touch and being touched - We would suggest thinking with intra-action.

Lecture of Karen Barad at conference-festival 'Hold Me Now – Feel and Touch in an Unreal World' organized by the Gerrit Rietveld Academie at Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam on March 24 2018.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7LvXswjEBY

On Touching – the Inhuman That Therefore I Am. Karen Barad. Differences (2012) 23(3): 206–223
https://www.academia.edu/7375696/On_Touching_-_The_Inhuman_That_Therefore_I_Am_v1.1_)rps

Our intention through the research project has been to think relationality weaved with affection: relating that allows us to affect and be affected, not as an economical trade as if we exchange and nothing else happens beyond the exchange. It's not the exchange itself or interaction, but here we would like to evoke the term **intra-action** by Barad:

The neologism "intra-action" signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies. That is, in contrast to the usual "interaction", which assumes that there are separate individual agencies that precede their interaction, the notion of intra-action recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action. It is important to note that the "distinct" agencies are only distinct in a relational, not an absolute, sense, that is, agencies are only distinct in relation to their mutual entanglement; they don't exist as individual elements.**

Could we suggest the settings duet, trio, solo work like this? We are noticing that sometimes we dance them as if they would be separate entities in a CI frame: we identify them as ways of interacting with a certain number of people, without recognizing that affections are taking place all over the place. Going from one to one other; then again going from A to B. So, what does the concept duet, solo, trio perform? and that of 'enter and go out of duo, solo, trio'? It would seem as if these are separate entities, as if they were separate islands. How would it be to dance acknowledging the multiplicity of affections? Maybe what separates could simultaneously articulate. What would it be be-ing all of this: not as a stacking one after/before the other in a linear progression of time, but a multilayered-multidirectional-multitemporal dancing-moving-being-becoming?

We would suggest many layers somehow compose us moving, and we could suggest the same for Contact Improvisation. We/it can act multidirectional as gravity, as an island, as a rhizome, as a connective tissue, and, and… Not to think of it as if it would transform from one thing to another, but a recognition that it is a becoming composition of many (different/multiple entities, past, present, present-to-come), and others.

CI, multilayered CI; juxtaposition, **ch'ixi**** of many aspects, experiences, desires, constellations and configurations. Talking about one aspect, forgetting the multilayered strata (that coexists with space-time/nospace-notime) and pretending to define or characterize CI or a particular aspect of CI, is to forget, neglect, all the constellations that are coexisting within and relate with CI. CI as not-yet, as not-yet-CI. Not-yet as *What (Never) was and Might Yet (Have) Be(en)**.*

**intra-action - Karen Barad. Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning. Duke University Press. 2007.

https://www.academia.edu/1857617/_Intra-actions_Interview_of_Karen_Barad_by_Adam_Kleinmann

**ch'ixi - ''[ch'ixi] es una designación de un color, el color hecho de punto blancos y negros yuxtapuestos, que de lejos se ve gris como si fuera un tercer color que no es ni negro ni blanco, pero es un tercer color que está hecho de la contradicción de dos colores opuestos, y que esa contradicción es la que desarrolla su potencia.'' / [ch'ixi] is a designation of a color, the color made of juxtaposed black and white dots, which from a distance looks gray as if it were a third color that is neither black nor white, but is a third color that is made of the contradiction of two opposite colors, and it is through this contradiction that (the ch'ixi) develops its power.' (Translated by us)

Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui in an interview, coproduction of Revista de la Universidad de México and TV UNAM.

https://www.revistadelauniversidad.mx/articles/57b6364b-5413-4083-9b0d-c886cdb22cca/utopia-ch%27ixi

****Kared Barad. TransMaTerialiTies. Trans*/Matter/realities and Queer Political imaginings. GLQ 21:2-3. 2015 by Duke University Press.

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And when we are talking about a CI community, what are we referring to? Are we referring to a common? If we talk about the common, then could we also talk about the non-common?

Does the common ask for consensus?

The idea of the common and consensus, a 'consensus for the common', reminds us of a writing of Erin Manning: *Can we not listen to one another disagree, instead of imposing consensus and thus silencing all others, even ourselves?***

This notion of community through an articulated shared common needs identification of these commons, a sense of unity, that undercuts the possibilities for emerging singularities. Identification needs naming, and it needs things to 'be', to be static.

A static common, a static identity. The common in these terms intends to aglomerate, to put together -but not as **togetherness****-, and it is in this putting together that things (and people) are left out. How does this notion of the common perform? How is it built? What happens then with the non-common? The agglomeration around the common
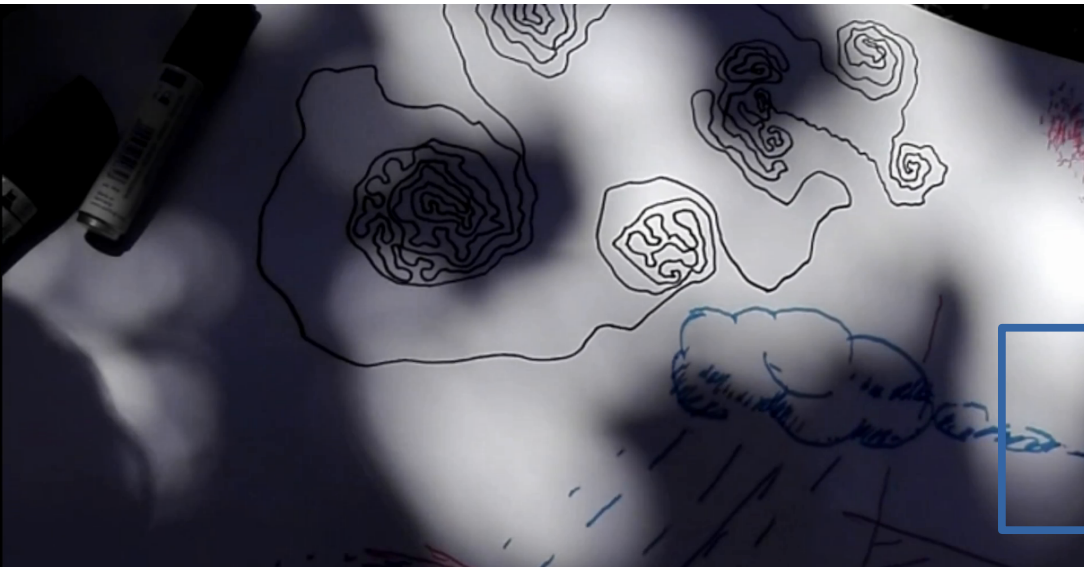
works together with the idea of IN, to be part of. Then, a border is built and an OUT emerges. The common constitutes the center of the agglomeration. The notion of the common will be always understood in a dialectic sense, whether you are part of the commons or you are not. And in this sense we should also acknowledge that the common appears through an articulation of it, and **it excludes also the non-human entities that could be intra-acting, changing and being changed, touching and being touched.**

**Cited from: Politics of Touch. Sense, Movement, Sovereignty. Erin Manning. University of Minnesota Press. 2007

**togetherness - Cited in Thinking with Whitehead: A Free and Wild Creation of Concepts. Isabelle Stengers. Translated by Michael Chase. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England 2011 (From Alfred N. Whitehead, Process and Reality, corrected edition by D. R. Griffin and D. W. Sherburne (New York: Free Press, 1979)

"Together" is a generic term covering the various special ways in which various sorts of entity are "together" in any one actual occasion. Thus "together" presupposes the notions "creativity", "many", "one", "identity", and "diversity". The ultimate metaphysical principle is the advance from disjunction to conjunction, creating a novel entity other than the entities given in disjunction. The novel entity is at once the togetherness of the "many " which it finds, and also it is one among the disjunctive "many" which it leaves; it is a novel entity, disjunctively among the many entities which it synthesizes. The many become one, and are increased by one.

are we referring to? We don't need to name a common to do a reference to togetherness, to experience togetherness. Togetherness does not only imply connection, but also disconnection -dis/connection-. If we would intend to grasp this common or a certain sense of connection, then we would be trying to build a community around a certain identity/identification which has to do with a consensus politics. There is no need to grab or understand/know the dis/connection.

Can we recognize all the contradictions that coexist within Contact Improvisation? -----> How could we address this question differently?

This dialectic proposition of the *common* nevertheless cannot force it. Singularities do not resolve into a higher or common unity. Multiplicity exists, and co-creates CI spaces: there are people working in the kitchen, the night, others who do tantra, the wet towels hanging around, people thinking it's not necessary to talk about consent, people that have a fellowship, the lake, people thinking the community self-regulates, people that can pay, the tea ritual, feminism, the clocks that stop. It's also the material conditions, with all its living materiality. When we articulate 'the CI community', what

Instead what we would like is not to understand, to think or question what keeps us together. Not one time one space, but entangled with multiple time-space-matter(s). Encounter through singularities, that doesn't reduce us to one, but one more. You don't combine singularities to become one, but you add one more to all singularities. That is the *intra-action*.

How can we then place attention to our situatedness? Situated needs… Maybe it's easier if we set an example: for us consent is an important topic within our CI practices/spaces. When we speak about this topic we wonder

what strategies we use to ask questions and move towards actions or taking actions. Are we aiming to move everyone in the same direction, from one point to another over a linear grid? Are we intending to set rules to prevent unconsented situations? When trying to set actions or taking decisions we are confronted with the everopening, everlooping search for a common idea around consent. This has raised the feeling that we were stuck in the same place. We question our strategies, we question the search for the common. How can we move-towards taking a decision that does not function as law, that is not imposing and needs policing at the same time? For us already articulating questions around how others have dealt with consent or not generates movement and has resonances. Not only in what is yet to come, but also in what has happened. Now that we talk about consent we have a new question in our pallet of questions: 'is this/that a consented situation?'. The question already moves and performs.

Our research-project in Freiburg became a process of placing our attention towards where at the same time no/borders, no/identifications and no/resolutions were being not/imposed by us, others and situations. In the dance-floor, in the lake, in the labs, in the jams, in the *'Kitchen-Table' score**… We could see how strategies were emerging within situatedness, it didn't have to do with

arriving at a resolution, but with co-composing space-time that would allow events to emerge.

Where are we placing our attention? In the rules we need to create? Are we placing our attention on the process of taking a decision and becoming in moving? How can we move our attention? How can we create new ways of attention-ing? Can it be an improvisation?

We seem to have been talking discontinuously. Jumping from one to one more. From a need to talk about these things, without first understanding the togetherness. We feel they are somehow entangled, so we started writing. While articulating them an image is flash-ing up: that of a center. A center from which things are thought-felt-moved and narratives-politics-and are unfolding. The 'true-self', common ideas, major narratives...a discourse around a center. Center-ing. Where a center is the one which articulates. As if our epistemology, our ways of thinking/composing things, would always need a center to sit around in a circle.

**'Kitchen-Table' score http://idocde.net/idocs/1210

Somehow now unfolding from borders, bridges, inclusion... sounds like center-ing; maybe that's why we are struggling so much on reaching towards the subject, trying to build a language around islands and borders that wouldn't talk dichotomically -In and Out, lifting borders..-, re-generating over and over the center. A looping trying to run away from a center-ing that we are/ were simultaneously feeding.

We wonder how a center carries attention. What carries attention? What particular modes of attention is it carrying? Is center-ing a particular mode of attention-ing? Could there be a relating between power and certain modes of attention-ing?

Carriers of attention. Our question is not how to put attention to all other things that haven't got it. Neither are we suggesting to become more sensitive. Rather we question how to tune** attention.
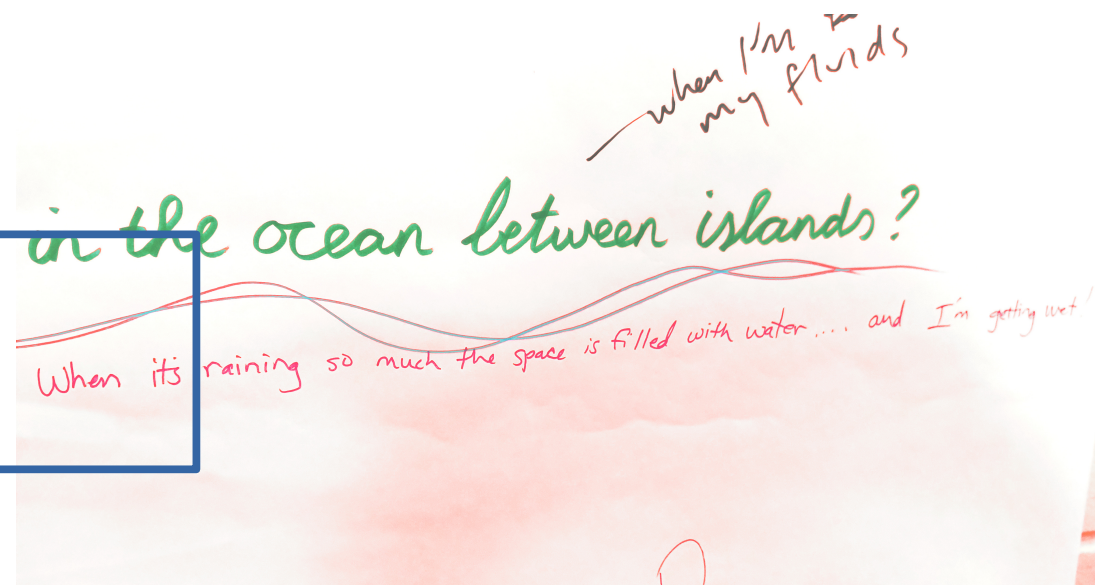
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Infinite-things are wickedly entangled… And this is too tidy…

**Vinciane Despret. Habiter en oiseau. Ed. Actes Sud. 20 19:

...Non pas devenir plus sensibles [...], mais apprendre à devenir capable d'accorder de l'attention. Accorder prend ici en charge le double sens de 'donner son attention à' et de reconnaître la manière dont d'autres êtres sont porteurs d'attentions…

when I'm my fluids

in the ocean between islands?

When it's raining so much the space is filled with water…. and I'm getting wet!

green ----> wordings we're now not so comfortable with
orange ---> things we would like to highlight somehow