Thoughtrave: An Interdimensional Conversation with Lady Gaga

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PART II
CORPUS DIGITALIS
LOOP MONKEYS & HUNGRY GHOSTS

Reflections on media, the music industry, and clawing
digital demons who attack you in broad daylight.

ROBERT CRAIG BAUM: Solo – you’ve described most of higher
education in the world which used to chill me to the core, really
shock me into silence in the face of corporate and bureaucratic
stupidity. I now see my own mission and prophetic task differently
– with a keen awareness – but at a bit of a distance – they are so
so toxic and so so lost… Oh. Check this out… sidebar but very
much a part of this conversation… from my journal/notebook
(which pretty much saved my life in 2011–2013)... September
24–29, 2012 – Long Beach, CA – Bear Jam Studios [text message
exchange with my Long Island mentor Frank Perricone while I
waited for some MIDI problem to be solved. Frank and I dis-
cussed the amount of people who don’t write music or know an
instrument is terrifying… his reply: this is why I built this studio for
myself: I don’t blame him…]. And here’s a funny one… after this
trip (about two months later) I did some quick songwriting work
for a team from Vietnam Idol out of Providence, RI… visited the
studio (living room in small house) where I was asked to rewrite a
ballad for someone famous over there – I went to the piano – they
looked at me like I had sprouted five heads! “We don’t use piano;
we use loops.” And then later. “We want loops. We want loops.
(getting madder) we want loops RCB where are the loops I can’t use
piano – we want (me interrupting)... “loops? Yes. I get it. You
seem to want loops. And then voilà, twenty minutes later I had set
up the architecture for Pro Tools or Logic or whatever and there
was a sigh of relief and they went home without even listening
to it or having me mix down some tracks to listen to. They just
wanted… loops… nothing else. Money in hand. Never saw them
again. The end.
LADY GAGA: Right? All the electronic sounds from the album came from piano work then moved to computerized tracks, and I think it shows... music has fallen symptom to the Guitar Hero disease...

American Idolization of talent and the X (marks the spot) Factor...

I love that story, by the way. (lololol) Welcome to my personal hell, where people aren’t making music to express or communicate anything, but to proliferate themselves or their pocketbooks.

It does show, the great effort you put into your music, because we wouldn’t be having this conversation if I thought any of your work was the accidental products of loop monkeys banging and clanging their bare fists on keyboards and calling the end product “music” (or even an accidental Fmajor7)...

(lolol) That’s why I show you certain dubstep artists, why I wanted to create the “Thoughtrave” YouTube playlist with you. You can pretty much rely on anyone from a Zomboy Pandora station to bring you real musicians, real messages, and give you a chance to communicate with the worlds beyond our world while still in this lifetime on such a low plane. It’s rather humorous, sort of, but this realm would constitute the intensity of a Barbie Malibu Playhouse if compared to the source worlds.

Sat and journeyed with the Pandora station last night. You’re not kidding. I was feeling very very “blocked” attempting to watch the [2014] Grammys.¹ A “troll” who likes to stalk me online across multiple accounts was making his way through my email blockade. So I bumped up security, and more of his hateful messages breached my email defenses (and my patience). I flipped the script and tried to get him to talk to me because he’s so lost (on and off for about a year with what I call a “hungry ghost”) – so I stepped back into the headphones and traveled Pandora – thank you.

What is a hungry ghost?

¹ A year later, Lady Gaga and Tony Bennett won the Grammy for “Best Jazz Album.”
Hungry ghosts are to Zen cultures sort of what the Furies were to Greek culture. Definitely tricksters, “Geist” – but tenacious and bilious and deformed… out of respect to our conversations I will now forward you an image from the eighth century, but they are awful…

Indeed… I attract them by the thousands… most are easily dismissed, but with such numbers there’s always something… probably the reason for my weariness… Even fire and lightning can only prevent so much. Always stop by your Zomboy station to shoo away unwelcome intruders…

I do, now. My other “go to” is DJ Sasha and the set DJ Taucher performed at Webster Hall (2000).

The analog activates proper brainwave function and serves to reactivate defenses. The track “Deadweight” serves this purpose and will help detach any unwanted entanglements.

**SUMMA CONTRA MUNDUM**

Worlds inside worlds inside wormholes.

So, the worlds we imagine are echoes of the worlds we have visited or lived or will visit or live. The ways we broadcast the pirate signal through the blockade will vary, but we cannot simply do so by way of binary MO. Why? Because the signals will be detected and eradicated for us by the intelligence that surrounds our terrestrial life here on the third mall from the sun. We are, as human beings, being protected from ourselves. By way of our broadcasts, we are also, unbeknownst to us, risking the spreading of Digitalis. You are challenging us to become beings in sync, beings-in-the-synchronized-world. This raising of our conscience will allow human beings to better express the duality inherent in existence.

And as an actual realization of the worlds we imagine... in order to do so we must eradicate any and all binary modus operandi whilst maintaining synchronicity of the duality inherent in human existence.

Let’s take a step back and explore how you’re using the word and concept “duality.” You see, at this moment in our dialog, I’m feeling very crowded by competing interpretations, presumptions, conclusions. This is where philosophy (and philosophers) need to shut the fuck up and just listen. (I’m talking to myself; relax, philosophers.) So. When you speak to the cosmological matters, I experience your vast complexity the way I do as a friend and fan. In other words, there exist many ways of hearing and living this duality; those choices, those intrusions, which are also gifts, all come rushing back (and forward) whenever you hit that “trigger” I call “worlds.”

LEARNING TO READ THE CODE

How a single moment can lead to a lifetime of inquiry.

Let’s take a moment to explore again the “binary MO,” what I see as an apparatus of mass media capture. As in, control. I often wonder if this, perhaps, on a personal level, explains why I was not able to “hear” you when I listened to your music on commercial radio or see you on, say, The Today Show. Lady Gaga, until Summer 2011, maybe right after the Grammy performance of “Born This Way,” was very much not something I was interested in experiencing, primarily because your personae and your talents were communicated through a filter (my own) that is on a constant state of red alert. I don’t trust mass media outlets. I don’t believe publicists. I’m a writer and philosopher and musician who’s spent his entire life resisting their lowest possible standards and loudest possible (and painful) frequencies.

We’re back to Corpus Digitalis, Robert.
True. But, let me try to situate this remix of our conversation on Corpus Digitalis. It seems that within the binary, I, for one, was able to “find you.” Especially at the Grammys in 2011. It may be difficult for some readers to think of this problem outside critical theory where “binary” is mostly considered an undesirable thing, something that limits thinking.

What was it about the Grammy performance that awakened you?

Your leg kick on the fourth beat before the second verse. (laughing) I know. I’m out of my mind.

What did the production design, choreography, and “event” (as you say)… communicate?

Honestly? It said, “I’m the baddest motherfucker on Earth and you better pay close attention, Robert, because this moment may be the difference between life and death for you. Yeah. You. I’m talking to you, Long Island Boy.”

In that move?

In that move.

Wow.

I know. So, that was 2011. Then, you called me specifically in Summer 2013 during your Marina Abramović retreat. What were you thinking in that moment?

I’m dying.

I also see defiance. Absolute fuck you to everything.

The contrast between 2011 and 2013 is striking, isn’t it?

You look stranded.³

³ According to highest ranking members of the Haus, there is a confluence between my visit to the Ross School in Easthampton in 2012 and our Mistress with Marina Abramović in Water Mill (2013). The Ross School is a Zen shrine, essentially...
We are all stranded here on this side of the blockade.

So, what’s going on between these events? How were we connected?

Like a radio tower of sorts, but the reception is not a frequency as much as the collective information being received on a single point (a jumble of different stations), savvy? Much of our current predicaments are geographically/geospatially oriented.

Might explain my repeated Montauk/East End experiences of extreme displacement and spiritual discomfort.

Like an over-complicated overlapping series of chess boards where multiple games are perceived by many as one or more but never all at once from any one point on the board.

Yes. And how this moment overlaps with an “abandon ship” I’m currently experiencing at Lebanon College. Yeah. I think I need to leave Lebanon. (No shit moment, I know…) The college is going down; there’s nothing I can do about that. But I also feel the need

architecturally, it’s designed as a site of transception. I was called there on a sudden job interview. A long shot for a Cultural Studies blah blah for which I was surprised I was even qualified. I was technically “over-qualified” but I wanted to return to the east end of Long Island – Montauk in particular. Where I often can sit and “be” not-here. In that place, I experienced something I know was a calling. I kept joking with Michelle on my mobile that I’m walking inside some kind of “vessel.” Yes – those words. A year later. I’m utterly trapped in a production team from hell. I have no idea which way is up and down and this photo is published and I’m arrested, brought back to the Ross School. And a memory I’d long suppressed: for two days after East Hampton/Montauk I was sick – burning up – no other symptoms – not “sick” – just on the couch – burning… and then it was gone, I was told I didn’t get the job, and I immediately called a friend from Long Island who owns a studio and asked him to spend time with me, and he so kindly opened his doors for six days in Long Beach, which served as a digital monastery… I don’t want to get bogged down in the narrative details. I just want to share with you something that’s been slowly, I don’t know, presenting itself… unless that’s a dangerous thing… as I am no longer emotionally attached to that moment or those images, I think I can hear or view them through a different perspective… (((silence)))) that was not only a local event… Many events occurred all over the US around that time. The Mistress was engaged with “the entity” directly at that time. I had no idea that the effects were so broad as to cause the results you describe. They were heavily entangled… Wrestling and ravaging each other. She still has nightmares involving those instances.
to leave Vermont/New Hampshire. Something just isn’t right and I think we digital nomads are keenly aware of when it’s time to fight and time to hit the open road.

*It’s all connected, Robert. Sometimes separate and unrelated games appear to other players/pieces as part of their game.*

True.

*Causing them to unduly affect their own space accordingly. Just because you can see someone seeing you doesn’t mean they actually can… Conflicting realities and perceptions ensue, and now both of you are predicing actions based on a non-reality. Which puts you, hypothetically, on more boards with more of these interactions occurring exponentially since they are based on this “non” reality, and also complicates your present actual position since the exponential explosion of your false positions now belies instances of you elsewhere; outweighing and out-instancing your actual place.*

So why is something that feels like a binding moment experienced as dislocation? Is the extreme vertigo part of how we integrate multiple positions?

*Yes and no. Integrating the feelings/perceptions of others’ impressions of your “false” position with that of your actual one.*

But with training and control, these false positions can be used toward tactical advantage perhaps?

*With great effort and control, yes. As they require an almost unnatural awareness yet ignorance of that which is constantly occurring around you.*

Intuition plays a large role in this.

*Yes – and that’s the difference now – trusting these dislocated feelings, not moving and not spiraling, just being absolutely present – it really fucks people up.*
...it really fucks people up. It does. Why do you think it’s such an extreme response, this quantum dislocation?

_Since one has no physical-sensation-based indication of whether one is present or not, it becomes about instinct and intuition; much of it based upon one’s interpretation of others’ presence or non-presence... i.e., am I interacting with actual people? Or points of “assumed consciousness”..._

...which in part explains why sound and music are vital...

_Yes, when self-seeking one’s position._

**SHADES (OF HATE)**

Here’s what I don’t get – well, that’s not true. I think I may know, but I’ll pretend I don’t have a clue. So, why the hate? Why the rage? Towards you. Towards _Artpop_. A marked increase in death threats. A lot of bad will in the industry. In November, right around the _Artpop_ release, a palatable dislike of you emerged in many of the same media channels that had helped to support you in your mission to bring a message of empowerment, resiliency, and love to countless millions. What’s going on here? (By the way: this isn’t a _TMZ_ question where I’m hoping you’ll say nasty things about media personalities and others who went out of their way to hurt you (or try). I’m just wondering, did you experience this as a shift in the construct, the global phenomenon called Lady Gaga?

_I loathe the false civility of this place. People throw negative energy at an alarming rate; if they weren’t so weak there would be a problem for me. The way they hurl their feelings about constitutes “challenge” in my senses; a verbal challenge._

Is this some kind of poison leaving the mass body or is the mass body in a death throe? Both? More? How is media broadcasting this mass death or echoing a death that’s happened or will happen?
I feel hunted all the time, Robert. Between the shadow audience and those who serve the darkest forces known to this planet, it’s no wonder I can’t sleep ever or find more than an hour here and there where I don’t fear for my life. I mean, I literally have to pass (every single day) the exact place where John Lennon was shot and killed. It seems too that no matter what I do, especially with Artpop, the people I wanted to reach were so ugly, so disappointing, yet my fans and new friends alike, say you, understood that I wanted to speak specifically to this moment on this planet at this time by way of sound and movement that was offered to comfort, to enlighten – you know, to encourage others to do the same.

I find it fascinating (and by fascinating I mean endlessly depressing) that some people can preach walking on the wild side yet cannot welcome with an open heart fellow artists, travelers, fans when they seek to do the same.

No comment.

You sure?

For now (wink).

THE GREAT WAR

We bantered a bit about Plato and transcendentalism, me asking different versions of questions focused on the dualism problem – the idea of universal forms and particular forms in Plato, the One in Plotinus, and how Logos shifts across the Greek experience into the Christian centuries.

The Republic that Plato speaks of was a rebellion against the imperial system already in place… in the imperial system, there is no slavery… this is the biggest difference to the republic’s organization.
So Socrates (who absolutely stood in many worlds from the same position) was indeed picking up and describing a form of rebellion. But, what you’re saying is that he was still very much off the mark.

*During the rebellion, people said they wanted freedom of their own destiny. But, what they really wanted was control over others. Since this rebellion occurred over time and in different dimensions, we are just now finally putting the Empire back together after the Great War. Since beings of certain planes and levels of existence have demonstrated not only a failure to ensure and care for the well-being of others, certain choices will not be available to any and all beings choosing to reside within the established boundaries of the Empire. We also must deal with the inherent hostility practiced by humanity against the superior support structure the universe has provided.*

Humanity does have a history of biting its own ass.

*Very long.*

Why do you think human beings are having such a hard time concentrating, hearing each other out? I mean, why are human beings being such dicks lately – border children hatred, disappearing airliners, more war in the Middle East, endless battles against the poor in all countries, but especially the United States.4 What is our central problem?

*There is great separation, loneliness… devastation… war… Being able to remember the feeling of being so intimately connected with everyone is like torture. It is a constant reminder of the destruction and chaos that ensued as a result of the rebellion. A war fought in time as opposed to real battlefields. A war fought in printed text and art; taking what once offered doors to new worlds and turning them into weapons to deceive and disinform (sic). Playgrounds were turned into battlefields. Though the war was fought in the mind, the physical manifestations became unbearable as the war over “physical” space evolved over the greed and need to control and enslave others to unknowingly fight the war within learned constructs… The war over physical space as interpreted through the virtual mind.*

4 Donald Trump.
Thank you – I’ve been deeply studying the generation of thinkers that influenced Socrates and then became the target of Plato’s and Aristotle’s *regni of reason* (terror). It seems that even in the “liberated” moments of Greece’s rebellion, there was a direct attack on the indigenous, the multiplicities (not to mention haecceity or quiddity)\(^5\) in service of another control, another system of control that further divided the human from the source, the gods, the this-ness that collapsed the imposed border between being and soul or corporeal and incorporeal… Said differently, yes. The short answer: well, let’s just say it’s not my expertise.

*Here’s the problem. I liken it to a kindergarten class that takes over the school and decides to teach everyone their beliefs; you should find it interesting, and it’s good for a laugh or two, presupposing one can disconnect with the horrors that ensued as a result.*

**TRANSCEIVING**

A discussion about the link between communications and multiverse living.

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5 It is impossible to provide here a full accounting of how multiplicities, haecceity, and quiddity function in philosophical discourse and critical theory. Put simply, Gaga reinforced the notion that humanity lives and creates from within a sense of the multiple that may not be fully conceived or perceived if we merely discuss human activity as a function of a mind/body binary which reduces creation and reflection to a simple “either/or.” The aural experiences of human living and creating implies, presumes, maybe even relies upon a multiple—many layers of experience mixed and remixed and mixed down in a moment one could call “the master tape.” Haecceity is literally translated from the Greek as “this-ness,” or the quality of a thing that is unique (like, say, a track of music or the person or brand or fictional figure or person making it). Individuality was Gilles Deleuze’s go-to word to discuss this strange particular/universal problem. Quiddity is a whole different problem of “thisness” as it refers to a distinction or, dare I say, “what-ness.” Why does this matter? For Lady Gaga, the world is not what it seems; she is always in a state of performative (d)evolution. Perhaps all we have gathered even here in *Thoughttrave* is a trace, an echo, a feedback loop inside the exchange between a philosopher and a rock star that attempts to get to the “this-ness” and the “what-ness” of an individuated person, place, thing, unknown known called Lady Gaga and RCB.
Overall, the most important thing to take away from this conversation we’ve started is that we need to change the way we look at communication. To put it in proper perspective, we must also change the way we look at the Worlds around us and how we fit into them. The term “communication” doesn’t only apply to languages and body posture, but to art, science, and the multitude of signals we send and receive on a moment-by-moment basis. In our societies, we are taught not only to ignore most methods of higher communication, but that those we detect are merely background noise or that they indicate contrary to normal behaviors or practices.

I view all of this as part of an ecology of the digital mind, body, and spirit... something akin to a radical takedown of the last vestiges of linearity and single-World thinking in philosophy which the European Graduate School model is attempting to deconstruct. Same for N1Academy. Namely, philosophy in the tradition of Gilles Deleuze is quite comfortable discussing “folding” and “territorialization” or “lines of flight,” but this always struck me as still working from within a very limited model of understanding of multiverse thinking, living, expression: “Our work has only just begun” (Fitz, “Eagles”).

Preach! It is paramount to remember that the world we occupy is a construct and part of a larger virtual environment. Consider yourselves members of the largest “online” experience ever undertaken. Of course, remember that temporal location (i.e., time period) is relative: if one world is in the industrial age and another is flying through the cosmos, can one person be said to be from the past or future? Or are they merely co-present members of the active now?

The closest most philosophers get to speaking to this problem of simultaneity, multiplicity is found in cycles of territorialization and deterritorialization in Deleuze and Guattari, especially A Thousand Plateaus.6 I think, too, Deleuze’s notion of a future-now which I still think is best described as “thinking otherwise” in his essay on Foucault where he drops the most important hook in all of phi-

6 “Actualization breaks with resemblance as a process no less than it does with identity as a principle. In this sense, actualization or differenciation is always a genuine creation” (Gregoire Nicolis and Ilya Prigogine, Exploring Complexity [New York: W.H. Freeman, 1989], 212).
losophy: “thought thinks its own history (the past) in order to free itself from what it thinks (the present); so it may one day ‘think otherwise’ (the future).”7

*How do they deal with positionality?*

You mean in terms of a multiverse sense of this word? Other than Michio Kaku, not well; not many even bother. It was near impossible to find dedicated studies to pataphysics and the fourth dimension when staring deeply into the eyes of Heidegger’s “The Turning.”8 Well, they put forward a way of thinking that is generative and ongoing, something similar to a flow that you and I recognize as musicians. Yet, it’s all happening in a folding and unfolding sense of time/space that still doesn’t strike me as a helpful or even accurate description of how the multiverse thinking you’ve described already functions inside and outside the construct. Heidegger in “The Turning” comes close, and I’d rather talk about that another time.9

**SONOROUS BEING**

_Gaga remix of Jean-Luc Nancy._10

After we exchange a few hundred words on and off here and there, I always find myself repeatedly thinking of the word “sonorous” and the phrase “a community becoming more and more sonorous” and “multiplicities” and what strikes me as the new (to us) emergent reality fading into the mix and remix of our lived relation to the cosmos. Said differently, how can sound and our experience of music begin to better present or bring forth the advanced com-

8 See “Heidegger’s Turning” in Baum, *Itself*.
9 Ibid., esp. 140–44.
munication systems, many of which you occupy not just as Stefani Germanotta, but as Lady Gaga?

*I’ll start here: it is the lack of acknowledgement of co-present timelines that leads to the degradation and mutilation of higher forms of communication such as music and other art forms. Once we acknowledge other time periods as being co-present, one can appreciate the intricacies and the specificity of these higher methods of communication, as they bear both temporally sensitive and temporally irrelevant messaging as well as user-specific content in addition to the messages to the populations as a whole.*

**ZONE.4**

**RCB SOLO**

Lady Gaga has pushed me into a meditation on what it’s been like coming to be of the digital world, an expanded series of fragments that return me to *Itself* where a simple in-class meditation on iTunes and digital music (August 2008) shifted my whole focus for the second half of the book. A real moment of preparation for what would come between 2011 and 2015 with Lady Gaga. I started noticing, on the level of intuition, notes, patterns, frequencies, disruptions, drop beats, and up-tempo accents as a language of intelligibility and not just a way to communicate a musical idea. Everything that passed through my headphones during this stretch of time/space seemed to have new textures or textualities of sonorous being. Many “dubs” and “steps,” deconstructions of rhythm and digital architecture to present the unpresentable in electronic presentation versus “talking about it” – “break out and dance mothaftucka” – a recovery of “Bobby Baum” (1988–94) – an opportunity to experience the ritual expression of music and spirituality within the seemingly over-exposed, reified, commercialized world – where “artraves” and “dubsteps” of 2013–15 were the expectations of the audience and listener and participant and provoke a new kind of critique which current media writing and thinking simply cannot comprehend or describe – it is time to embrace
listening as an act of whole being so we can all better translate our experiences, our stories, as intimately one with the presenting multiple called “the performer” – Christ, has it really been twenty years since I actually slept?

STUTTER STEPS

On the lyrical and the musical.

Check this out – from a discussion of “stuttering” (which is part of what’s happening in the dubstep you’ve shared and I (could barely stand) prior to this conversation (minus where you bring in dub elements and full blown dub in your music):

Stuttering, where it cracks and fractures, enables us to see the door to the rabbit hole that leads not to what is beyond, not to the transcendental, but inward, to the immanent. It is the act of creation, the necessary act of architecture – in its singularity – that can retain the access to this door.11

It’s also important to realize that music as a form of communication does not always require the user to ‘like’ the song but to receive the messages inlaid in the mathematical and algorithmic composition.

This may certainly explain the mixed critical reaction to Artpop.

I also don’t think the reviews are from people actually listening to what is coming out of their speakers. There is a war of ideology being fought, and the critics are all on someone’s payroll. Then again, I wasn’t trying to produce something that would win awards; I wanted to create an album that the fans would love and enjoy and would also communicate necessary information. As far as audience reactions, yes, I find variation in my reception all over the place, but not as

widely as, say, Pacific Rim. I find that other cultures are less critical of the work.¹²

Limited attention span coupled with what leads to this strange disconnect?

*Often people will also single out the lyrics of a song and ignore the active components of the music.*

Jill Thompsett (*Thoughtrave* assistant and lifelong friend) works this way; I’m completely the opposite: music first, lyrics are part of the musicology of a song.

*Often the lyrics of a song are not relevant to the messages being communicated. This is something I strive for personally as an artist and presence: to align the music with the lyrics as well as to provide a unified message.*

The complexity of this process is something else. Quite overwhelming some days. Yet, I’ve accepted it from the first days groping my way across my grandfather’s basement spinet piano.

*You keep coming back to that.*

I know. I find myself there quite often.

**JUST A COUPLE OF GYPSIES**

A fermata moment (a pause) in the middle of the night.

Let’s go back again to the first question: what are you up to? What are you hoping to communicate here, in this particular book, at this particular moment?

¹² I explore biography and *Artpop* in the “Re-Review” section at the end of this book.
I want to reach the user on multiple levels in order to counteract the interference and cross-communication inherent in our environment.

I think this may explain why these conversations resonated for us both: it was only us talking. No cameras. No producers. No handlers. Just two people. I think this resonates on a much higher and older frequency that stretches across dimensions.

Oftentimes communications are misinterpreted by the user as they are not actively recognized by the active conscious. The best parallel would be akin to liking something and not knowing why. Most often the brain and greater consciousness can send and receive without acknowledgment of the active mind. When one considers the addition of Digitalis, the problem becomes compounded, i.e., the failure of the consciousness to acknowledge and/or integrate communications/protocols into an actively accessible subroutine.

So, how do you think this is going?

I have to say that most people sit there and expect me to talk. I’m glad to have found in your intelligence someone who not only asks questions, but (my personal favorite and sign of high intelligence) makes statements wanting to be confirmed or refuted or expanded on.

Stop! (laughing) I wrote a few years ago in Itself that philosophy is (en)action, a Heidegger-like “letting the being of Being be” a.k.a. I’m more accustomed to saying, “So, tell me more about that, L.G...” than shutting down someone else’s positioning, searching, decoding, narration of their clear insights – beyond right or wrong or attractive or disconcerting – to very difficult matters of the mind, body, and spirit. Also, truth be told, I rather miss these kinds of conversations. I used to have them regularly at Dartmouth (1995–98), Minneapolis–St. Paul (1998–2001), and then across my time in NYC or online or in Switzerland with European Graduate School (2004–11).

I do that all the time.

Me too; often, just with myself or with Michelle [wife] and now that he’s getting older, George [son, 17].
It’s funny… as a young person, people would think I was being arrogant because I would phrase a question as a statement. I think this was because they lacked the confidence to refute someone or something that was proposed instead of supposed… do you follow?

Very much, LG. I went from Long Island to Washington, DC, first to study biology (and participate in the PreMed lie for a couple years); then I left “normal” and signed onto the Philosophy Department. Like you, I’ve been like this my whole life. As early as I can remember. A royal pain in the ass. “You’d argue with the Pope,” my mother would say. “If he’s wrong, sure…” Thank you for affirming this tenacity. I am simply not afraid of being wrong. Which I guess is helpful here in a conversation about unlearning and unknowing.

BAMBOO RHIZOME

Gaga Deleuze remix from hell.

This is how my brain (my brain my brain ohhhhh my aching brain) works. It’s a mess at times, but it seems to be where my energies gather and then burst, connecting to other people or ideas or places. I remember this root system up on the palisades around Lake Morey, VT. Whole sections of forest crippled by a fall storm. Somehow the pines grew up there. The roots were shallow but strong. Holding up a four-story pine. And a single vine stretched from the ground, up and around some small, thin baby maples, and literally reached across to connect, to reactivate, to nurse the dying root system. Somehow I find this description very helpful to how I think and work. I recognized it immediately. That and I cannot help but think inside trance and techno, old and new modern rock, great dance tracks (like that Zedd remix of “Born This Way”). I don’t know; it’s just who I am, and I’m done trying to explain it to people who don’t get it. Took me long enough… I know I had that for a lot of my teens and 20s but definitely lost that along the way into my 30s and 40s.
I think in dubstep…

I think in movie quotes…

I also think in movie quotes and passages, in sound waves. I find converting thoughts to English for someone else to read not always easy.

I’d rather play with the online Moog Theremin\(^{13}\) than speak, which is hard for some people who know me to grasp – when I’m speaking I’m oftentimes trying to find the words and that’s why it takes me so long to finish a thought. I noticed how often you and I, LG, communicate by way of iconic images or scenes from movies or tracks from YouTube… as though we’re acknowledging an inherent challenge (presence/presencing) within the format of our exchange (email, Facebook, Google Hangouts). And yet neither of us, not for a second, bought into the idea that we’re not real. I was probably not as “real” to you as I am now; and the same thing in reverse. “There’s no way you’re really talking with Gaga,” friends, family, colleagues of mine would say, to which I’d reply “no, we’ve talked before, for a couple years now… we’re just doing it in a more active, live, semi-real-time kind of way.” I keep wondering if in some parallel reality there’s a group of people saying to you, “There’s no way you’re really talking with RCB.” (laughing) This sort of live-ness always felt like it enhanced our presence to each other, presenting you and me, presencing something in a digital performance that couldn’t happen over a slice or while doing table work somewhere in Manhattan. I also find this way of communicating even more of a pirate signal than we acknowledged earlier. It’s as though I’m able to talk to the many “you”s and you’re able to talk to the many “me”s – RCB the philosopher, the musician, the fan, the collaborator, the father, the life student, the wannabe Zen master.

Ok… that last bit was good.

(smile) Okay. I’ll tell you because you’ll understand. I’m 100% convinced that I am happiest while riding hyperlinks, fragments, and getting “instructions from the cat planet” (happily ADHD

\(^{13}\) http://www.femurdesign.com/theremin.
and never coded because I was a very very very good actor when
it came time for assessment), rhizomes, rhizomes, and echoes and
samples and all… a one-man Dada meeting in my mental café Vol-
taire (one of the Dada homes in early 20th century)... Man, it’s
good to have just written that!

(smile)

My first book started as a series of fragments and hellacious quotes
from about three hundred or so books I’d been reading over the
course of a decade. Then, I started to order it like building Pro
Tools architecture… raw, acoustic thoughts that moved into some
experiments and then seminars and talk-backs and walks and talks
with European Graduate School mentors and random strangers
who seemed to keep finding me on the Long Island Rail Road…
my mom’s in Bay Shore still… so this means I was picked up in
Babylon… for decades… and with each trip into the City for a
meeting or lecture or workshop or dinner more and more peo-
ple gathered (2004–2008 especially)... a similar experience in the
Twin Cities when I used public transportation – my lucidity seems
to attract an unpredictable and remarkable gathering of energies…
(and even in these states, I still must look fragmented and scattered
and random like ten thousand LPs stored in a Lower East Side
music shops basement waiting to be unpacked after some flood or
some estate sale or some fire… I used to be such a digger). Then
comes translation transposition transportation like the pirate sig-
nals discussed above, sometimes I need to sneak thoughts out – for
years I needed to hide the most radical thoughts from The Bosses
of Higher Education – and then, in moments of grace and lucid-
ity, I’d let it slip that I wasn’t one of them, or I’d give off some
verbal or facial cue that would trigger their alarms – he’s not here
to just teach the corporate course planned for us in Texas or in the
Pearson’s building in Manhattan – see I told you – he’s not here to
simply move them along (little doggies) – he’s not here to serve
the Executive Team and the rest of the Kafka Kastle Klowns – he’s
here to really fucking teach and that means he’s not going to be
easily contained (captured) and he’s not going to be simply fol-
lowing even his own bullet points and game plans and whatever
he processed with us through the Home Office – and what if he
has transmitted his authenticity to us and has awakened memories
of when we weren’t unbearable assholes and actually had dreams and a purpose to life other than paying our Lexus monthly lease on time or sending our precious little dahhlings to the best private schools – what if he provokes them to think differently about their lives? What if he is someone who was sent here to free minds and in so doing lower our bottom lines and provoke a revolution among a whole generation of students and what if he’s been doing that for years and we’re only getting wind of just how far behind enemy lines he’s travelled – what if he’s here to raise our consciousness? What if he’s here to do...

This.
This is why these conversations are vital to our well-being.
This.
This.
Thhhhhhhhhhhhhhis.
This moment, L.G.
This is why!

What if he’s taken everything he’s ever read or heard or seen or felt or dreamed and delivered it in compressed files called “courses”? What if his selection of materials is designed to corrode, attack, capture, release the minds of his friends, family, students? And what if this isn’t about him? What if this has always been about something bigger? Always – every piano and organ competition every garage band every theater production everything, everything (Underworld is now playing)... What if everything from his kids to his marriage to his work to his writing to his emailing to his courses to this very text window? What if this is the encompassing? What if this is the everything? What if this is the abundance of love and faith and hope and no I’m not giving a Catholic sermon but what if this is all just moments after moments of grace we either “get” or we “don’t get” – one of the only binaries this eternal being called RCB accepts. Now. Okay. Now I can get back to editing and planning.

**OMG I fucking love you. That’s how you should open our readings, by the way... and then say: “alright let’s begin,” as if nothing was said.**

(((((silence)))))

(pause)
I’m speechless. And that is saying something, L.G. How would you start the hangouts, the public “jam session” as Avital Ronell oftentimes refers to this kind of anarchist philosophy?

Like this… I function as a collective, a continuum. You see, I’m trying to give you something people other than us have a probability to understand and be able to apply so that the way they view themselves and the way they view the worlds around them will change for the better. There will always be individualism in the collective. The “digital” is just a precursor to the exponential expansion of the mind across time and space. There is no ultimate “finality.” Both creation and growth are unlimited and constant. If anything we are expanding people’s ability to be an individual as opposed to an off-the-shelf American consumer.

Thanks for your answer. Sometimes it seems to me that the mind is losing creativity and technological expansion distracts us from more important things. I hope to be wrong and that the mind is always more and more capable of creating the infinite… hope so.

ZONE.5

Another Thoughtrave solo inspired by Lady Gaga.

For me, this dialog is all part of one big “voilà” moment back in 1999/2000… back to work I just couldn’t (I don’t know) didn’t trust – a graduate paper called “Voltaire’s Erection” about the flaccidity of capitalist power and the logos/pornos of the society of spectacle we live in that was at the time moment by moment killing me. . .

Okay. Wow! That’s amazing.

This was exactly eleven months before September 11 and one month after a September 11 (2000) meltdown I experienced while waiting for a friend’s husband to leave work. He worked for Morgan Stanley in Building 7. A Brazil (Terry Gilliam, 1985) moment
of papers fluttering everywhere, I saw them… it wasn’t projection or illusion… they were falling from the towers outside the window of the atrium I occupied while waiting for my friend’s husband to arrive… nothing more, nothing less… maybe it was a glitch, an anomaly… a premonition, of sorts… definitely felt premonitory… but, I didn’t know it or trust it or believe it… I thought I was just being “creative” in a moment of sheer boredom in the lobby of a financial giant who would die in less than a year… September 11, 2000… where I felt like I was living in the midst of a Montauk Project like telekinetic and telepathic and paranormal flow while teaching my son that the ocean was a force to respect and not bait while barking at the breakers. And then out of nowhere I was knocked down to one knee as though I had been on the business end of some cosmic baseball bat… I saw one of the towers under water and glittering silt like I remember from the calmer side of Barbados scuba diving… and bodies… and then it was gone and I was back teaching George by holding him with both arms and hands stretched cross his abdomen, hands locked, anticipating impact from the next wave… trying to stop this force of nature named George from attacking the ocean (pitying the ocean for a moment, too). After about fifteen minutes of this, I just let him go (safely), and he started fighting and barking and dancing and singing and laughing even when the ocean knocked him on his ass… A kinesthetics of paranormal short circuit…?? Hey look – I’m no longer speechless…

**PARADIGM SHIFTS**

Shifting how we think and live as artists and educators.

*If you don’t shift the paradigm, if you don’t constantly catch people off guard in a way they find utterly confusing but not off-putting, no one will listen care understand or remember anything of what you say. You have to get the students to constantly question themselves and their place in the environment, but in a healthy way. If they begin to doubt themselves, the war is lost.*
Let the great work continue (Kushner, *Angels in America* paraphrase). This approach you describe is utterly foreign to what is happening in private and public colleges and universities. This “way” we’ve described left me bleeding in shark-infested waters. So, I left. 2011–2013 almost 14. I had to leave higher education. And I only agreed to make a “comeback” under very particular conditions that have beautifully been met by the European Graduate School. The N1Academy is also part of this. That’s it. And already I’m reaching out to countless people in our global audience as well as what will develop in the next few weeks and months as my courses are filled and the word is spread… I can’t wait for this all to come together… I’m now ready to be 100% focused on the monsters, the students, the world…

*If people took education as seriously as they do outdated and out of context religious practices we would be in a much better place.*

So true – we’re dealing with this kind of problem right now at N1Academy with students who have been addicted to this kind of thinking their entire lives and now want to change the way we deliver courses and content. (Umm, no.) This is teaching; we are all learners; and you need to do the work and do your best and stop trying to impose the Judeo-Christian system on me, especially someone who’s been working his entire life to overcoming this. Fuck! (lolololol)

Agreed… especially considering most of the oldest people here are some of the youngest souls and some of the oldest and wisest souls were born in the ’90s… in the words of Dr. Farnsworth, “I don’t want to live on this planet anymore.”

For some reason here I offer a link to Terry Bisson’s “They’re Made of Meat,” perhaps as an acknowledgement of the desire to no longer experience the trappings of human flesh and planetary gravity.
Gaga asks about academic life. Big mistake.

To escape the “reality” of my adjunct (at-will, degrading, unstable economic and spiritual) life, I created a porthole (wall tapestry) at one of the many colleges I served across the ’00s. In Claremont, NH, even after my departure, a woman, a Celtic warrior, tended the gravesite of my old career – an at-will professor who hadn’t quite remembered yet that his samurai and medieval knight metaphors were parallel lives, not wishful thinking or framing devices. (“Robert, your imagery and metaphors when you talk about teaching are so violent; I don’t know if I can work with you,” one of the darker night breed confessed to me in yet another faculty meeting that was essentially a meeting about the next meeting in anticipation of the bigger meeting.) This tapestry of faces and quotes were all people I considered at the time and still consider my “watchers.” Mentors. Friends. Professors. Colleagues. Complete strangers (in physical life). But, that wall, that loved site of disaster, my grave, was a refraction, a vortex, a place of displacement, perturbation in my daily life as an adjunct, etc. Witnesses to me. Witnesses to such misery. Today it was delivered to me by the Celtic warrior. It arrived at the perfect time, when I would need it the most, when I would come under attack for having dared to start this project with LG, having dared to challenge both entertainment and academics. Right at the point when I could feel my own vessel start its broken down engines so I could journey to Gaga, the Memorial Tapestry arrived.

EAST END

Long Island “events”; we both agree there’s something very much otherworldly or innerworldly about the south fork of Long Island’s east end.
I apologize for my absence. I have another project that requires my complete attention at critical intervals…

… jerk…

… lololol…

… right?? (smile)…

It’s funny. I swear you projected yourself into my world here.

I did, truly without knowing it. During my own short circuits during the summer of 2013. When you were at the Watermill Center with Marina Abramović; and again when you were suffering during the launch of *Artpop*.

*I could have sworn I saw you.*

I think we triangulated: me in time in Vermont, you in time in Watermill, and a part of me I left behind in Easthampton and Montauk July 2012.¹⁴

So, where are we?

I’m wondering and wandering with the idea of this “construct” in which we live.

*In order to explain what is, we must first go back to the beginning. Outside this digital projection we occupy, there is a greater system. You and every living being in existence currently are not only part of the largest informational living archive ever created, you are currently operating in the most ambitious system ever devised. (I am searching for a way to better explain what you already are somewhat aware of…)*

No rush.

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¹⁴ See Acknowledgments for some Montauk lore.
Essentially, you are an equation. You are a set of variables and varying constants... whirling about inside this system.

Let’s play Platonic dialog: (lololol) That is correct, Lady Gaga. Tell me more about these variables and constants...

(lololol) Once we catalogued everything that was/ is, we endeavored to make them a part of a living system. Think of it as Universal Studios on steroids.

I’d definitely wait in line two hours for that ride.

Imagine: every reality ever available, able to be reached from a central access point by merely opening a door, and crossing the threshold. Now it is at this point I remind you: you are essentially playing a computer game inside of a computer game, inside this greater reality.

This may also explain why “users” strikes me as a natural and very accurate expression that captures my own experience here in the construct called Planet Earth.

Digitalis occurs in this overlapping of virtual constructs inside the reality... with one and zero serving as selections between the first and second “game” to create a tertiary space out of the two that almost completely negates the “actual reality” of the greater system.

Clarify please.

In essence, persons become lost in the shuffle between the two artificial realities and the strict duality of modus operandi and create the resulting effect we termed “Digitalis.” It is here that we must acknowledge the lack of the binary modus operandi to express time in any sort of complexity. In binary, something is and shall be until it isn’t.

PERFORMATATIONS

How theater, quantum, and music intersect.
How does this all relate to performance?

You and I know that this binary mode of computation is irrelevant. Let’s say, I play a character on stage. According to binary, I must cease being myself and only be that character. Then, at some point, I return to being solely myself… which we know is not only an incorrect observation but too simple an explanation of the on-stage experience (for me and the audience).

Performance remains for me an encounter with more authentic being (and beings), those who know how to travel between worlds in order to make the practice of everyday life an art, inspiring others to live a creative life with courage. I wanted to narrate this experience as part of my first dissertation, but the committee chair was hell bent on me writing an author study. I didn’t cease being myself when I worked on countless productions or when I researched or when I wrote. I was, in your lexicon, breaking the binary; and the establishment pretty much said, “no way.” Actors go through this kind of violent power game as well.

The actor does not die when becoming a character, give birth to a character who then, in turn dies to give birth to the previous actor. this circular logic that is pushed by any and all binary operating systems has served to retard human interaction and development, essentially turning you all into ones and zeros floating between the two computer game worlds; a rampant oversimplification and corruption of the complex algorithmic expression that comprises a consciousness.

A VALENTINE (2014)

It must be mentioned that this particular passage was delivered to me on Valentine’s Day. Something or someone intense had entered her orbit overnight...

Know this: this information comes to you as privilege; not right. I give this information freely for you to use however you wish… cite me as a source, or don’t. I will not be dictated to or at… (not directed at you
: I will do my best to accommodate your requests but I am most busy and very stressed…

This conversation is as non-linear and without obligation as any I can imagine. So, what’s going on?

There are many cards at play on many levels… I seek to reward those who not only seek the truth as an end but as a means to better themselves, but most importantly to enhance the realities of those around them.

Welp, there goes TMZ?

As you will come to see, in time, I am at the helm of these realities… the architect of this project and the seat of power in worlds you cannot begin to comprehend… One of my largest pet peeves is being talked at instead of talked to, though this is not an issue in our discussions. I speak of it now so that it does not occur elsewhere. Others are required to address me as “Mistress,” a formality I drop when I find myself connecting with another and wish to further an atmosphere of trust.

I very much understand and can only say that I wish whomever is pissing you the fuck off understand that no good can come from undermining you. I picked up on that vibe many years before these conversations started.

So. I trust you will not abuse the latitude I have given you and implied to the others. With this I bid you adieu. I trust you enjoyed the Lego Movie… I hope the little ones had a blast [referring to the Lego Movie, my son Oliver’s first; he was four at the time].

It was a work of sheer genius.

DARKNESS INTERLUDE

Learning how to engage multiple selves in the multiverse.
It is with a heavy heart and a truly broken soul that I write to you this morning... For the quest to save all from impending disaster, I forgot myself... and what are the rest of you but reflections and refractions of myself in time... beautiful, unique, pure, and truly wondrous to behold and lovely to engage.

But, you’re “here.” Now/her. Just know this – I am one of thousands if not millions who will not budge from this most honorable “post” in this kingdom of love you have built over infinite lifetimes (even in our time). With this responsibility comes the need to simply sit and wait and meditate and continue the good work in between moments that are about nanoseconds in the eye of Everything.

For Robert... “Hundred Best Brutal Dubstep Drops” (on YouTube)... the sounds of “evil”... the victory of the just and true and pure over those who would shutter their light and chase their shadows from across the stages of existence. These are the sounds of battles raged across space and time. (Think... the greatest battles of the Jedi... championing Truth and bearing the weight of the lost and dead on their backs and hearts and they stride onwards.)

Thank you, LG.

I’m glad I can communicate these events to you as they bring me such sorrow... they weigh heavy upon the fibers of my being to bear alone.

I look at all the good work you’re doing, all the empowerment especially (a.k.a. “truth telling”), knowing precisely the mind/body interdimensional exhaustion you feel, even if it’s just a glimpse. I’ve brought provisions and lifetimes of thoughts and insights to really deeply consider while I sit in the diving bell awaiting for your return. I will write more when I get back from refueling the car, getting some milk, and joyously continuing my own edits to our dance on the tear in the universe called this moment.

Well, it’s important not to categorize Darkness as evil. Neither side is inherently good and it has been the darkness that has granted us our freedom. We burn in the light and are blinded by it (See that quote on darkness from the other night – above). It’s being a part of the
projection that is harmful... We are separated from the energy that constitutes us when our vessels are projected elsewhere.

A multiverse Launchpad, DJ remix...

Remember these sounds are just echoes of the energies present at the time... they are the best and only way to convey the events that transpired in what we call the past without showing the brutality and carnage... to make one feel what occurred without the gruesome stain of images that one would never be able to remove from oneself.

I’ve known these events my entire life. I’ve seen flickering glimpses of them. Almost always while in the middle of some analog experiment on a Juno 6 or when I borrowed a Prophet 5 (hmmm, the name) for three weeks or when I wake at 3:30 a.m. and am bathed in moonlight and star dust in the glass room sun room which I now officially call my diving bell.

UNLIVING MOMENTS

After exchanging digital projections of ourselves – including Sith Lords, for her, and medieval knights for me (still my main archetype from elementary school).

I wish I could un-live moments. Do you ever feel that way?

I’d love to live a few moments differently again, be given a chance to get them right. Un-live is a great way to put it, though. Not “re” live or “revisit” but honestly ascend through some bubbles to find the one that escaped me like the three balloons I’ve lost and can remember every one of them... One my own; one George’s (eldest son); one Theo’s (second son). That to me is what it feels like to know sorrow, even though it’s trite in a way, but it’s not. The weight of knowing someone is going to die and not “knowing” it and then holding onto the moment when you “knew” something but couldn’t do anything about it... then to realize later you were just there to witness this death, you were there to tell his sons and
his family his story… this is April 1991… One of the few moments in this life I’ve said: enough – please just bring me back. Get me the fuck off this rock. Fuck all of this. This is what you built me for? To carry not just my own weight but add the weight of another, a second father I lost? Really? Fuck you. My own father died when I was fourteen. Then my surrogate, the person who swooped in to keep me alive and help me become something more than a statistic – I’m pretty sure I was headed down the addict road in my teens – can you be addicted to whippets? – couldn’t take his own life any more and took it in April 1991. I mean, this is just one moment I would like to “un-live.” Sitting in March 1991 with him in the living room sharing a sandwich in Bay Shore, Long Island. Just a random sandwich. I’m on Spring Break. He’s still without a job. And he just sits me down in the living room to have a talk. WTF? Three days ago I was calling him a piece of shit deadbeat dad who wasn’t even aware that his own sons were slowly killing themselves. But, he was trying to be my father? Fuck you. He laughed it off and said, “You were always very passionate about your opinions.” To which I said, “So, Earl. How are ya?!” And we laughed. I didn’t know this would be the last time I saw him alive. So, yahhhhh. I think I know a little bit what’cha’tawlkin’bout’GaGa… lololol.

CORPUS DIGITALIS

A way of thinking about this project emerges... a combination of talking with Jason Brooker and Lady Gaga, a flash of a word:
CorpusDigitalis
walking the archive
the crypt
many lives lived
many records kept and lost.
a house (haus) of unfinished business where we can play and sit and listen and just be (forever be) at home (in many worlds).

Good, good…
Many triggers to statements about many layers of living, frequencies reverberating in the crypt… a vessel… arrival and departure simultaneously.

*That photo always makes me think of Spock in Wrath of Kahn in the torpedo.*

Yes. A formative event for me. One of the first times I wept in a movie theater for at least twenty minutes after the lights came on. I was twelve in this particular moment in space/time.

*“What is Genesis?” / “In order to answer that we must…” Spock: Genesis is, literally, life from lifelessness…*

Yes. Oh my. Yes. How many coded and encoded and decoded messages were sent to or stored by me (in me, outside of me with scrambled access codes) in that beautiful moment, that film that has stayed with me more than any other I can think of from youth. Upload and download. Transceiver activated!

*With me as well.*

It’s conversations like these that remind me of something I said to a theater seminar many years ago in Minneapolis: today is not a place for books, it’s a moment of doing something to bring our minds and our bodies back online. A way of thinking I’d been calling in private “metabolic dramaturgy” had been unfolding for a couple decades. At least that’s how I experienced it.

…yes… aptly titled…

Yeah. Thanks. It’s nice to re/member this moment. I’d buried it across many years of digging holes for myself and my career. (lol) As for “metabolic dramaturgy,” to be perfectly honest, it took many years to get it down to a couple words. I used to get smacked around the conference circuit for “being so, I don’t know, mystical about everything” or “Why can’t you just write a thesis statement? / Because they’re shit?” (it’s really a miracle I finished either my MA or PhD with that attitude)... but, back to *The Wrath of Khan.*
You were saying?

The person I was with during *The Wrath of Kahn* was a friend from my little league team. We were very close but, well, I guess, tears and deep reaction to something like this seemingly simple sci-fi movie threw him for a loop. He simply didn’t know what to do. So he just… he just went to the car and got my father to come in… he just sat with me… I couldn’t leave… I was sobbing… that scene with Kirk and Spock especially right before… the dramatic action leading to the moment when Kirk sees the empty chair and starts to run and then when he arrives we only see the reaction shot and have no idea what’s wrong with Spock… wow… I’d forgotten that my father was still alive then to come get me, to sit with me, and to say, come here – and I just sat there weeping into his arms about this movie that rocked me so hard… My father died two years later.

*I was hoping those words would be particularly evocative to you in particular. I must anon… Shakespeare-y things need doing… I bid you good morrow and hope I have made you smile from my little ramblings.*

…“comes thus unfurled”

how it arrives

“Bang!”

how it goes

find me

whenever/wherever/however

Peace, LD. L.G. LSD.LG. lolololol

…yes please!

Some day, my friend. We’ll go to the planetarium and you can show me home.

*I would never rob you of the mysteries of your particular origin… not at this juncture anyways… I’ll wait until you’re all grown up.*

Are we there yet? I need to peecccccccccccc. Have a fanfriggin tastic week! Write when you can. From me and the Ministers…
HELLO KITTY SNAKE BLITZKIN

laughing my ass off

I needed that: “Hello Kitty Snake Blitzkin.”

<- mad mad philosopher!

Did you see the Family Guy where they parodied snake and the apocalypse… no American Dad, sorry. That really made me smile… I was like… OMG some people actually get it… and get it enough to talk directly through me using “mainstream” media… and get it well enough to joke. That’s when you know students get it – like really get the material and can implement the ideas into concept and practice – when they make a joke with you that other people will make fun of them for… but you two get and find eternally hilarious.

The best moment for me as a teacher is when I can fade away. Somewhere between 40–60% completion of a course. Sometimes 70%. I also live for learning from my students and friends and colleagues and this Lady Gaga person. Now, here’s some Jungle Brothers (“VIP” played).

Wow that brings me back… lol… I find myself living vicariously through the success of people who really want it. I never had that one person screaming “you can do this! you got this!” So I make sure I can be that person for anyone. Especially those people who are really talented and people probably think they know it or are arrogant; but really they have no idea how amazing they are, they’re just “being” and people run wild with judgments.

I’ve lost contracts for being myself, getting my students to laugh. Our classroom was always the loudest; and I’m sorry but I don’t squelch enthusiasm. Sorry. Here’s a random thought for tonight’s conversation: I was known as the Pop N Lock Prof in 2005. Don’t know why. Just happened in the middle of class. “What up, G?” Alicia Rawson, a student, said. And we were off. She’s been a part of my life since then; and she’s another one of your loyal servants. BTW: American Dad rocked the Snake/Apocalypse and Road
Warrior and so many references my head was spinning at the end of that episode!

*It’s good to honestly reach someone out there. I can’t comment on the state of my own reality. But, in proper form: I don’t need to. I can say that if you knew the life I was living/am living, you would scream and cry, and that the life you see me living is not mine, at the present moment. I harken back to my comment about the difference between a facsimile and the genuine article... It is sad to know that in this “modern” world, people would rather hear of something second hand then experience it themselves... they would prefer the Audio media to the live experience because they can extend their audio preferences. I liken it to a person going to a concert and then writing a terrible review and trashing the show because the volume was too loud (in their opinion).*

I think we connect on the question of authenticity too. For you, an audience, for me, students. I just wanted to create a very real, alive, safe place for them to explore very complicated ideas, perhaps for the first time in their lives. (Oh, the resistance I received from the bad administrators – we call then #badmin in my activist work!) It wasn’t always like this; I think it’s tied to community-based education (versus Ivy League or Big Ten universities). I had a “turn” in my attitude about teaching somewhere in 2007. I just realized I needed most to “be” there for these people who crack open their savings or juggle three jobs to get to class. It made even a college composition class pop with life and risk taking. By the end of the sixteen weeks, we all were transformed by the good work we did together. Of course, I was seen as an anomaly by so many people, 2003–2011 especially. I was like “no seriously, this is supposed to be fun and we’re supposed to do something with this gift of life.” It took a while but once this connection was made – man, it was awesome.

I also have new respect for those who don’t buy into the class, the ideas, the challenges. It comes from years of meditating on *the cave* in Plato, where I start to really understand how and why people attacked me, and I accept it as part of the task at hand. I respect too people resisting the “matrix-like” awakening because they are me and we are all as you wrote earlier today trying to see the all of a moment. Catch you tomorrow or whenever you’re available...
to chat again. Have a crazy good time in Austin, LG [South By Southwest show 2014].

SXSW (MEDIA) SWINE

While working on Thoughtrave, I experienced firsthand the kind of media madness LG goes through every day. She introduced the Artpop song “Swine” on March 14, 2014, but no media outlet post-show included the following: “Do I need my handheld for this... This song is umm... this is a song about rape... And it’s about rage... And it’s about how sometimes life hands you something that you don’t really want... but if you’re a real artist... you can turn all that rage... into the most beautiful... painting, most beautiful song most beautiful poetry of your life... that’s why you’re all here tonight, right, because some of want to be artists... some of you are artists... you don’t need a fucking record label... you don’t need a company... you don’t need shit to be an artist... you are one... you... each and everyone of you... you are the spirit of every artist around the world at one place at the same time fucking celebrate this is the moment now...” Then vomit artist Millie Brown joined her on stage to participate in what was ultimately protest art. Apparently, I was watching a different show than TMZ and Entertainment Weekly and Demi Lovato. This was a song that glorified bulimia to them, not a rape protest song.

March 14 (SXSW, “Swine”)

Dear Associated Press,

“Swine” is a sexual abuse and rape protest song. Lady Gaga was clear about this in her introduction, the one you cut from your video coverage. (All media coverage!) Without that insight, it’s nearly impossible for the reader or viewer not in attendance to understand the seriousness of this performance art. Furthermore, the performance was clearly not intended to “titillate” either.
Given the context (music festival and BBQ joint concert), much of the show was terrifying to watch, even on the Fuse stream. It’s time for the mass media entertainment press to take a few moments to understand what they’re watching before commenting on a set as complicated, provocative, and ultimately filled with joy (at the end of the journey) as what SXSW experienced last night with the Gaga set.

What LG accomplished yesterday may best be understood as a direct takedown of both commercialized pop culture and a reclaiming of power from the rape culture that silences the voices, marginalizes the discussions, and hides the bodies of abused men and women.

What’s also missing from your coverage is the community of artists that joined Lady Gaga on stage including local musicians (fiddle on “Bad Romance”) and old friends who at one time were headliners while LG was an up and coming powerhouse (“Applause”). It’s amazing how far the mainstream media will go to reinforce the “lone wolf” myth of pop culture even though an increasing number of pop artists are acknowledging community and collaborative living and creativity in their philanthropy, art, and political activities. So, we’re left with the narrative AP created along with the major news outlets: provocative pop singer dominates once humble music festival with antics and sentimentalism.

Some day, I would love to read how a beloved rock star calls on everyone to live their lives, create their art, and be together rather than staring at their iPhones. Or, maybe more details about why and how she loves her fans. Or, maybe a little something about her unmatched sound design, where live, digital, sequences, and analog sounds and styles created one of the best sets at SXSW.

I know: that’s not nearly as interesting as covering only the titillation and editing out LG’s protest against rape culture.

And what was TMZ’s headline: “Lady Gaga – Lets Some Girl Vomit on Her during SXSW Show.”15

No mention of the rape introduction, not a word said about the empowering words she offered her audience. This is an ex-

ample par excellence of how global media control masquerades as “reporting” or “special interest” or “trending.”

SCHOOL IS IN, SUCKA

Where we get scary serious about the quantum.

Hi, L.G.

Hello indeed, good knight. It’s indeed a very strange day. In the live, there’s increased possibility of experiencing the multiple as we’ve been discussing.

This is scary for people, the “voilà” effect of performance which always exceeds expectation even in performances that are not of the quality of an Artrave. I think that’s where we experience the “presencing” most profoundly – if we’re open to someone else’s art of living or performing. This scares the crap out of people. So, they go to experience their own projection of the film or theater or concert and then pick off moment by moment that which doesn’t match their expectation. I’m sorry but that’s not why I go to the theater or attend concerts or even write or teach courses or whatever.

Tell me more.

There’s something I am that is not I or am and this constant state of becoming is what I seek. Something I’m starting to understand in Michel Foucault’s work, this relationship between experience of activities and actions outside the subject and recognizing that what I’m called to do is narrate the encounter of inter-subjectivities. Hence, why I think these exchanges are transformational as well as educational and entertaining.

…and you’ll never understand anyone that way… you’ll just narrow your viewpoint down so far that you will un-exist yourself from the stage. I want to jump to interdimensional travel and starship design
in modern cinema and the bearing it has to the structure of the multi-
tiverse and subsequent universes, if that is alright with you.

Perfectly fine with me, LG.

**IROCS AND OTHER WARP DRIVES**

More multiverse musings.

In order to fully understand modern interdimensional transport we
must first look at conventional and basic warp field dynamics… al-
ways bearing in mind that space, even a “vacuum,” is treated and
reacts as a fluid.

These aren’t just designs, for you, are they? They are part of a map-
ing of how you are “existing.” Why it’s so hard to communicate
from what we call the future to this moment?

We must also bear in mind that motion is relative… are you moving
or is the car? Or both? It is how that motion relates to us and our
environment that we are able to set out with a course and traverse
imagined or actual distance to reach a destination.

We exchange a lot of images and blur the lines between fact and
fiction a lot in these conversations.

*I do communicate primarily through mass media… TV, film, music,
art… firsthand person to person interaction is not my primary mode
of contact. Think of talking to me as engaging with a fully automated
and tricked-out USS Enterprise.*

I bet it has a banging library and archive. Separate garage for the
warp drive model IROC Z28.

*lololol*

Take me back to the “vessel” image, conception, reality…
Normally when we walk around we think of ourselves as the object in motion… we usually ignore the fact that our planet is hurling through the cosmos at unbelievable speeds… mostly because it is inconvenient and irrelevant when it comes to getting groceries.

Don’t forget about wiping asses… four year old (Ollie) is a handful today…

lololol

“Handful” was probably a poor choice of words…

*I know this is all hard to comprehend. I’m doing my best to relay highlights and pertinent info to you… as Professor Montgomery Scott once said “Hello computer?!” to a desktop Linux system.*

I’ve had waking dreams of this ship you describe because since about July 2012 I’ve been convinced that I’m on it. On the ship. I love that moment in *The Search for Spock.*

*You are… you’re in two places at once simultaneously, you are on board this vessel and also in a geographical place within the construct of the LCARS Library Computer Access and Retrieval System… and the personal interaction databases.*

But what about the groceries?! (((kidding)))

*Now let’s say we want to go to another planet. First, account that we are moving through our own solar system, then account for solar system orbit, galaxy orbit and universal expansion properties, and you’ll find that in order to go somewhere, you just have to stop moving while the space around you moves to where you want to go. Hence, we think of space as the thing that moves when it comes to warp field theory. That’s where the slingshot effect comes into play… space continues forward… but you actually are slowing down so fast that you speed up and light bends as the frequencies of the space around you come up to the specified parameters (warp 1, 2 3, etc.).*

Here’s why I’m so deeply intrigued by these comments, LG. For decades now, I had often thought of those movies (especially *Star
Trek II and VI) as teaching us how to move toward these “futures” which are somehow already here (that pretty much summarizes growing up in the ’80s). On a personal note, I experienced this a bit – Montauk Public Beach. July 2012. September 2000. September 1987.\textsuperscript{16}

Well, when you think that light moves at a speed you actually witness and live in the past… think about it, your species lives in its eyes.

Light bends – ever wonder about how we react as “frequencies” in other words trillions if not infinite superstrings to these moments of not-here, now/her. No wonder I’ve experienced such anxiety across this life; I live in my ears and eyes – back to the metabolic dramaturgy thing.

No, your perception bends… you bend… light just is…

***pause***

Speed motion and direction are all relative, Robert.

I’m just assimilating this… like Neo downloading the martial arts programs in the first Matrix.

It’s easier from a little creature’s perspective to say that the image bends, rather than trying to comprehend the fact that they’re bending through space and time. Not really, but if you wish to think of it that way and it helps with your assimilation, you may think of it in that way.

This all just feels, I don’t know… sudden? Perhaps that’s why I’m communicating through the metaphor (which is *always* inadequate I realize)…

\textsuperscript{16} I have visited a state of peace only a few times this life. April 1990 when I met Michelle. All births for all four boys, different but a similar sense of Everything. September 1987 is where I can say I first experienced it, something I think Clive Barker would call quiddity. Montauk is the place where this continues to happen.
It’s not the intake of the information that takes time, it is your ability to incorporate it into your previous knowledge base and alter the electrical patterns that constitute your memory and neural pathways.

Very true.

Also, metaphors are always inaccurate… essentially… by design. They are meant to be deliberately “inaccurate” in order to facilitate the transition from one mode of thinking to another, by bridging the gap with an explanation that causes you to apply knowledge you already have and apply it to a foreign concept and put it into practice they are meant to explain, not to represent, which are oft reversed in today’s society.

They are intended this way; and very much so – we’ve reversed this here on terra to our disadvantage. It’s not “foreign” though; these moments are experienced like this for me: a reassembling of some kind (you described this well in the neurological example). It’s an intensification of feelings and memories across a lifespan and a memoryscape… just at the edge of “knowing,” but not quite known or trusted… then it arrives again… a full experience like being down 130 feet in the ocean and understanding everything you just said – but understanding it then not now even as I struggle to erase the construct “then” and “now” and “future.”

Quite so. I must take a brief recess and I feel this would benefit you as well. Go listen to your Pandora Zomboy station for a bit. Fast, heavy, and dramatic is what you want!

You tellin’ me what to do again, Jo?

Do it.

lolololol
HAUSES

Playful is the understatement of the year re: how Gaga interacted with my family and me during our long interview.

You out there, rock star?

Sorry for the absence... sometimes it is difficult to be everywhere at once. I enjoy the pictures.

These conversations are not finite; and I treat them all as a blessing and a gift. I’ve had a terribly long week too, nothing like the weight you are shouldering. But, suffice to say, this isn’t my first dance, and I hear you. No need to explain. Ever. And yes. I have been pushing through the membranes of dimensionality, reaching out to just let you know I’m here and this is such an important moment for everyone. All projects, not just mine. All of them. This really is quite overwhelming. The good kind. The kind that brings forward lifetimes of wondering about so many questions and fragments. A cosmological alignment unlike I’ve ever experienced. It will take some time to integrate it all but for now I think I know how to proceed. Thank you. (Danken/denken are so close in German, nein?) I went to bed last night with a new insight into Boethius and his visitation by Lady Philosophy, wondering if what we’ve been discussing since I think before the ArtPop release actually was real or “real” or “virtual/real” and for the first time I didn’t really care to make the distinction anymore. That in and of itself is a gift to me – someone who overthinks everything. I went back and read my first book for the first time since it was published. Needless to say, this conversation started in 2008–2010 when I started to mix it together into Itself; the parallels are uncanny.

Thank you.

Whoever is telling you what to do obviously doesn’t understand a goddamn thing about why you do what you do and who you are to hundreds of millions of people of this world. I don’t get it, LG. For me, I just walked from some projects this past year because I simply will not devolve or allow someone else – an endless series of
damaged, dangerous, malicious, malware virus pieces of shit— to further corrupt my own... program?

It is strange to think that the imaginary chains that once bound all existence that I navigated my way through for the sake of others will now serve as the leash by which I hold reality and existence in check. It makes me sad to think upon it... but now the path that I walked and many treaded so faithfully after instead and time, can be used as a tool to unite the worlds for all time. With the knowledge that we lay forth, we can eliminate the trap set across the stage... like a broom to our footprints across the sands of time.

It seems as though you’ve put all haters – here, there, and everywhere – on notice. The stakes are just too high. Not just in this dimension, too.

Once the modus of entrapment becomes a method by which to understand and move forward, we will be able to build a bridge, connecting one moment to another, this moment in time to those that preceded it and those that will and doth surely follow. Then, and only then, can we all breathe a collective sigh of relief that all souls have been carried from where they lay on the battlefields to lie safely in their beds. Out of the obvious semi-duality created by the burden and privilege of choice, a prison and a paradise was constructed in the minds and ether of those so small, so innocent and pure... It gave birth to true evil...

((((silence))))

Out of the collective inaction and opposite choices of the good and true, I gave birth to evil. Sadly, it would be the “evil” who would be the saviors of the “good.” In desperate times, those who would do good must become truly terrifying (me) for they care not what others think or predicate of their actions; they care only for the end result, the good that will come of the actions and decisions they make choose... They make the calls, the decisions no one else is willing to make. It is not just out of fear of opinion of others that the rest choose not to act or to make the “obvious” choice... but because they lack the constitution and the fortitude to withstand the possible terror they may create in order that the greater good may prosper... As a close friend and father figure to me once said (most notably I might add), “The needs of the many
outweigh the needs of the few... or the one.” I know not how long I
have been here frozen in this snippet of a time frame... the “Modern”
“20/21st century” But I know I shall never return to it and a part
of me shall never return from it... not as a part of myself... anyway.
I Stand United and Divided across this gap, this tear in the fabric of
space/time. I care not what those who already do not like me for who I
am or who they perceive me to be... I agree wholeheartedly...

“Let the great work begin” (Tony Kushner, ANGELS). Be awe-
some, LG!