

共有し合う物達（２）—自由即興における協同する力—  
Sharing Things（２）: Collaborative Agents in Free Improvisation

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Abstract:

Reading Karen Barad was like finding a how-to guide for destabilizing the classical, solidity-based metaphysics which have long oriented humanist ontology and characterized the world as a deterministic and categorizable variety of stable, isolated, individualized, atomized me's, you's and them's. The nonsense of this “commonsense” has long seemed obvious to me, easily evidenced by even the most common transmaterialisations that facilitate life--such as eating, breathing, interacting, etc. Eating, for example, obviously brings about profound changes in both my body and the object I might eat. Things together with things become different, undermining notions of independence and making the idea of stable individualization seem absurd. From Barad's methods for revealing and analyzing a more subtle, accurate and undeterminable ontology of intra-actively becoming and entangled agents, I took away the implication that everything is involved, always has been and can't not be. Or, rather, nothing exists and everything proves it. Human and non-human agents engage in collaborative entanglements, bringing about becoming. Notions like this made me excited to test Barad's ideas in analyzing the art practice that I know most deeply: freely improvised music. Practitioners of free improvisation often describe it with terms like “becoming one” or “sharing the moment.” However, Barad provides language for examining collaborations (both human and non-human) with greater nuance and clarity, but also provides a means by which to venture beyond humanist-centered ontologies and explore realms of objects. Thus, in this article, using Barad's and Object Oriented Ontological concepts as tools for building experimental apparatuses, I do a detailed analysis of an entanglement between a human and non-human object (specifically, me improvising with a tenor saxophone). With this serving as something of a case study in post-humanist ontology, my examination expands in order to more generally explore how human and non-human agents intra-act in collaborative becoming, and how this awareness provides potential ways for exceeding the human-centered constructs that delegitimize the body in general and individual becoming bodies in particular. The results, I argue, are that bodies can't not possess the autonomy and openness that humanism tries to reduce into its determined and classified roles of purpose and meaning. As well, I argue that bodies can only be understood as individuals in both form and time.

Keywords: collaborative materiality; intra-action; object ontology; conditionality; entanglement; improvisation; post-humanism

### **Posthumanist Case Study: Tube + Tube = Tube**

Playing a saxophone requires a physical merging with the material aspects of the instrument. A saxophone is essentially a long metal tube with different closable holes which serve to change the flow of air and alter vibration turbulences within the tube. I'm a tube as well. But, instead of closable air holes, I have a respiratory system that produces air flow starting partway down the tube of me. My tube serves various other purposes that I am aware of, and surely many others that I am ignorant of. The sax's tube does other things too, such as hold moisture on its walls, but most of its other abilities are unknown to me. I only know the tip of its iceberg.

At the top end of the saxophone is where a reed is attached to a shaped mouthpiece. The mouthpiece and reed are the main point of physical connection between the sax and me. It is the location of our most intimate interaction. This is where my elaborated tube (my lips, mouth, teeth, throat, sinus cavity, nasal cavity and lungs) and the sax's tube extend each other. When I place my lips around the mouthpiece, the dimensions of each of us are changed. As well, at that point we are capable of making sounds that we cannot make without each other. We become collaborative objects. We become an entanglement.

A big part of my approach to creative collaboration with the saxophone is to open up the conditions of our physical contact, to find new physical arrangements. My goal is to facilitate unexpected methods of sound-making to reveal themselves, and to play with them. In practical terms, I physically interact with the saxophone in ways which create new ways of playing that I have not developed control over. Reducing my control allows larger degrees of creative input from the sax. By changing the ways that we physically come into contact and interact with each other as objects, the sax and I can meet more as equal collaborators. For example, as a human, I have kinetic aspects in contrast to the saxophone's static aspects. I can move myself and alter to position of the sax. But, the sax mostly doesn't move. These are our states relative to each other. But, if I assert only my kinetic qualities, I can easily make the relationship with the saxophone uncollaborative. I can control too much. Thus, I have learned that if I provide means through which the saxophone can assert its static qualities more actively, there can be more creative interplay between us. More chances for discovery become possible. By using techniques which give

openness to the sax, it as an object is capable of expressing previously unknown sounds. As collaborative objects, the saxophone and I actualize potential sounds that cannot be made when we are reductively defined as a saxophone and saxophonist. As I stated above, a saxophone is a long, conical-shaped metal tube that curves and expands from its mouthpiece to its bell. By changing the ways that I physically interact with the saxophone as an object, the tube is able to actualize what Deleuze and Guattari call “virtual” aspects. The concept of the “virtual” is different from things having hidden qualities. Hidden qualities imply that there are fully formed, ready and waiting abilities lurking within the saxophone. In a nuance of contrast, Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the virtual implies that everything contains vast unformed potential aspects that are not ready, rather an aspect only comes into form, or is actualized, when conditions facilitate it becoming manifest in relation to an other. The virtual gives emphasis to collaborative objects that are open to sharing over the traditional view of stable objects with a limited list of stable qualities.

By interacting with the saxophone in ways that reduce my predictive control, sounds occur that are beyond my limited and primarily human-oriented perspective regarding saxophones, or even tubes. Something new takes form. This is equally true when I comes to other objects, including human objects. The powers of humanism to define the world for use along the lines of human centrality have subtly constructed my consciousness to view much of the world and its earthly occupants/elements through primarily humanist filters. However, it is possible to facilitate openings. Respect and trust are valuable for facilitating such openings, and I have something of a special relationship with the particular Yanagisawa copper-bodied tenor saxophone that I call mine. This relationship helps me view it as more than just a dumb thing. We have played together for more than 10 years, so I know it more as a particular and individual object. Like a friend, I care about it and trust it. As well, I have learned some of my sax’s special qualities and thus I can collaborate with it in ways that open more of its non-saxophone aspects. Through this relationship, I learn how to facilitate original and unique creative expressions in collaboration with it. But, I don’t want you to think that I just passively let the sax make only the sounds it wants. It is using me as much as I am using it. We are collaborating. Together, we are an extended tube, resonating in different ways to bring about the various diffraction patterns that result in the audible sounds

and vibrations expressed. I am interested in collaborating, but not just being a sax toy. I want to play together, in an entangled mode that enables the both of us to bring about new things.

As already stated, playing a saxophone requires a physical joining. One aspect of this union is holding the saxophone in my hands with my fingers on different keys. I have 10 fingers, but only nine are used for the keys. As well, I use other parts of my hands for triggering certain levers. This is the formal method for playing a sax, what is taught and learned. One just uses fingers on the keys to control which holes are open or shut in combination with others. And, being a rather mechanical instrument (meaning it has a lot of precision levers, rods and sealable pads) the saxophone is less open by design than say an instrument like an open-holed flute, such as a Japanese *shakuhachi*. A saxophone's holes are rather binary: either open or shut, with not much flexibility for doing anything in between. A sax is not much of a sound bender. In contrast, using a *shakuhachi*, the sound can be different depending on how much of a hole my finger covers. This enables a range of micro-sounds possible from each hole. However, a tenor sax's dimensions and curved design enable me to explore and open its physical aspects in different ways, to destabilize its design by using my body. For example, if I change the angle of the sax so that it crosses my body and its bell comes into contact with my thigh, I can adjustably cover the bell's opening and cause a change in the pressure of the air inside the tube. When I do this, the extended tube assemblage of me and the sax is altered. Such an alteration creates a more open condition within which unexpected sounds can arise out of the increased differences intra-acting in the turbulent environment. This reduction of control triggers more virtual elements to creatively actualize and how I collaboratively respond to these unexpected/new sounds facilitates further actualizations of creative and expressive newness. By making control less of a possible option, this sort of diffractive collaboration includes me as a member of the assemblage rather than as the sole source of the expressed moment. A "solo" performance becomes merely a figure of speech. It is a team action and trust is a valued aspect holding such risk-driven creative collaborations together.

This open approach facilitates surprises and creative originality, but also reveals the fact that notions of self-stability, and/or human-oriented control, are constructs facilitated by ignoring the actual reliance between agents that takes place in any action, not only playing improvised saxophone. While much of the humanist musical tradition has been grounded in the notion of the

human musician achieving total control over the sounds to be made by using an instrument as a passive tool, my playing has taken me in the opposite direction. My practice has revealed the transmaterial core of being. My practice undermines the notion of an autonomous self. And, while the sounds that come about continue to attract me, my practice is even more interesting for me in how it destabilizes my sense of self and other, making me question not only the rules of music and culture, but also the rules that underpin ontology and normalize existence.

Being an ephemeral art that takes place between beginnings and ends, music has an intimate relationship with Time. Duration--how long something takes place--is conditioned by the presence of certain qualities of interaction, determined by how long some uniformity of pattern is heard or evidenced by a human listener and identified as being some sustained texture, tone or timbre. But these identifiable conditions--identifiable by their stability or a degree of continuing similar conditions--always change and a different phase of sound begins. Or, an incident of transition takes place which is between two identified sounds. "In this in-between, chaos becomes rhythm, not inexorably, but it has a chance to. Chaos is not the opposite of rhythm, but the milieu of all milieus...a communication of milieus" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 313). Such shifts in sound indicate a new balance of intra-active aspects. But, also, diffractive listening reveals differences between different durations. Diffractive listening implies every sound results from collaborating sources.

When I play, there are sounds that are generated from different specific locations, either along the body of the sax or places in the tube of my body between my lips and lungs. The cumulative sound is always a combining of sounds being generated from not just one isolated location. This includes the situation of the room, etc. Sound is not an island. "Changing patterns of difference are neither pure cause nor pure effect; indeed, they are that which effects, or rather enacts, a causal structure, differentiating cause and effect" (Barad, 2007, p. 137). But, there are places of more focused particularity that can be analyzed. For example, there is a sound that sources on the internal surface of the reed mounted on the mouthpiece. To further unpack the differences collaborating in the sound's creation, the sound is a stuttering squeak of quick chirps which arise when there is a certain amount of saliva built up on the reed surface, but after the reed has been played for a while. These squeak sounds aren't possible for me to make on a dry reed.

But, these squeaks are not only from the wetness of the reed. As well, I need to position my bottom teeth against the midway point of the reed without too much pressure. As Barad (2007) says, “apparatuses must be tuned to the particularities of the entanglements at hand” (p. 74). Small details make a big difference in what sounds can be generated. Only from the nuanced assemblage of different elements--involving my teeth and the reed, as well as the reed's moisture, my teeth's position and bite pressure, etc.--can the diffraction pattern of squeaks become. But, other elements are equally important, such as how calm I am and how readily I can adjust to the delicate initiation sounds that guide me into the more prominent sound of rhythmic chirps. The condition is highly sensitive and unstable, and never maintains a predictable consistency. At times the squeaks are sustained and high pitched, while other times there are unique accents finishing each squeak, or the speed of each squeak is slower. The pattern, intensity, speed and duration of the chirps are different each time, but no matter how it sounds, it always changes into a transition phase in which it becomes a very creative but different intra-action. Such transformations arise from different shifts in the delicate balance of collaborating influences. At times the change occurs because my bite-pressure increases or decreases, or the angle of my teeth on the reed shifts. These will often result in facilitating a different diffraction pattern to arise. Other times, the reed's physical condition changes--becoming too soft for the chirping sound--or the saliva amount increases and the stuttering chirps become a gurgling growl. Or, the saliva decreases and the stutter becomes simply a single, very high-pitched tone without the previous textural complexity or repeated sharp clips. This too can be understood as a diffraction pattern of different intra-active agents entangling and becoming the phenomenon of the distinct and complex sound.

None of these sounds can be evaluated as positive or negative. But they interest me immensely, much more than if I play a perfectly in-tune tone of G as measured by harmony with another sound source or against an electronic tone meter. The collaborative sounds in my practice are each mysterious. Sometimes they generate nuanced emotional reactions in me as a listener. But, I most value them for how they draw me into a concentrated attention in connection to the flow of creative openness and for the feeling of an intense involvement that occurs in the moment to moment becoming of what I only partly control. This practice engages the process of entangled becoming. From it, I feel a strong sense of curiosity and wonder as the degrees of my expectations

and intentionality decrease. The creative collaborative consciousness that I experience is not about me fulfilling myself or expressing anything belonging to me--such as my ideas, my emotions or my aesthetics as an artist. Rather, this condition of concentrated collaboration and listening feels like exploring a deterritorialized space of openness in which nothing need arise, be identifiable or defined, including myself. This practice is experiential. The singularity of the collaborative event is all that is needed for it to be complete. The experience is a communion with nothing and the sense of openness that that conveys. I want to call it freedom, because nothing needs to be any different because there is no expectation that anything was supposed to be otherwise. Each element has collaborated honestly, and the resulting experience is a fair indicator of that intra-action. Entanglement doesn't create a stability. Entanglement posits that nothing exists, and thus everything proves it.

In my practice, the sense of singularity and specificity is regularly apparent--or available for glimpsing--in the moment in which the playing is happening. Awareness of each moment is not from an objective position, but rather from an implicated involvement of just being present. Regularly in a performance session, I find that my visual focus will be calmly settled on some glint of light reflecting off of something on the floor or a piece of equipment, but the neutrality of the conscious state makes my ability to respond to conditions arising very keen and effortless. Each moment takes place and then becomes the next moment. As a result, since the flow is more of a series of open moments, there is a feeling that everything can easily change at any moment. Everything relies on the moment-to-moment input given to the present conditional entanglement, but also there is an open acceptance of the becoming new and new and new and. The forms--both on the intra-active level and what remains of them as memory when the playing stops--fulfill themselves completely, without need or possibility for comparison or measure. Whether "beautiful" or "strange" or "entertaining" or "uncomfortable" makes no difference at all. What has become is unique and perfect in its impossibility to be compared to any external model. It is itself. "Things in themselves lack nothing" (Latour, 1988, p. 193). But, the experience of improvised collaboration often energizes me with a sense of the openness and ceaseless newness of life's always already becoming, and that each thing is in on it. Each thing in its form is risking everything for the

mundane moment to come about. This is perhaps how muses speak. Not in words we've been taught, but rather in new forms of becoming, in alien tongues whispering shifting codes of desire.

And, as I stated earlier, because music is an art linked to the apparent passage of Time, this improvisational practice provides for some interesting chances to consider what is, isn't and may be this abstract 4th dimensional context that seems to be both present and absent. I wrote above about duration, but I'd like to approach it in a different way now. Duration--not only related to sound, but also if considered regarding ontology--is another condition that Barad helps provide insights into. In simple terms, duration can be defined as a length of time--how long something lasts or takes place. In this regard, duration requires that starts and ends be established, and by extension that such events between the starts and ends have measurable agents involved. Something does something for some length of time. At this point, we see that duration begins revealing itself as a constructivist operating system. Rather than being an objective framer of time, duration participates in the formation of matter. Duration acts an agent in stabilizing determinations of forms, and vice-versa.

Using Barad's (2007) concept of diffractive methodology, it is possible to explore duration as a diffractive apparatus that "measure[s] the effects of difference, [but also] highlight[s], exhibit[s], and make[s] evident the entangled structure of the changing and contingent ontology of the world, including the ontology of knowing" (p. 73). Barad makes clear that "as a matter of principle, there is no unambiguous way to differentiate between the 'object' and the 'agencies of observation'" (p. 114), which explains how duration, while superficially appearing to be a device for framing time, also functions as a means to determine, stabilize and orient the objects within the observer's gaze. By extension, what can this teach us about duration's relationship with Time? Barad provides a possible insight into this too, if we equate Time with how she describes the Void in terms of quantum electrodynamics.

Not dissimilar to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the virtual, Barad (2007) says the Void is "a state in which everything that can possibly exist exists in some potential form" (p. 92). In this respect, duration can be seen to function as an adjustable experimental device for taking a reading of the indeterminate and infinitely open "seething potentiality" (p. 92) that is Time. In a state where everything is possible but nothing is limited to anything--including borders of the "moments"

we are involved in--there is no way to establish objectivity. This is the diffraction pattern between the humanist and posthumanist worlds. Only by admitting our diffractive involvement in the capture and formation of every temporal and delimited frame that we reference do we find a method to accurately experience some measure of what is happening beyond our centrality. We can't know it, because at this point there is no self/other division any longer in play. We are collaborators the whole way, as human objects and as non-human objects both and at the same time. The difference between them is as real as the sense of control. Duration, as an adjustable diffraction apparatus, reveals the degrees to which "small details can make profound differences" (p. 92). This is the diffraction pattern between the world that cares for us and the world that doesn't.

### Objectology

"The world is not packed with so-called natural kinds, but only with mutant objects" (Harman, 2009, p. 23). But, the world is still packed, full of shape-shifting and sharing things. Things always already becoming. Never reducible down to the pieces they are made of, nor reducible up to the forms they make up, it is possible for things to be big and small at the same time. And, things are always, at all different levels, individuals. Not posed by their pasts nor determined for a next, things are always open and amenable and they "do not exist just for us" (Bogost. 2012. p. 9).

Objects have their own lives and ways of living that we have almost no knowledge of. Objects have an autonomy and openness of ontology beyond the human-defined classifications and determined purposes that we relegate them to in our fabricated views of the world. Humanity is but one of the worlds things occupy, and thus we know them mostly like ghosts we glimpse in our dreams.

But, yet, we live so close to them. So intimately beside them, within them, through them. We envision them as our servants, waiting with pliant and obedient readiness to fulfill our purposes. And, they do. They seem willing to fulfill our will. But, yet we ignore or are incapable of seeing the extent and degree of their reach beyond us, their dynamic engagement with the real world, the direct and unhesitating intensity through which things connect with each moment and change. Things are more alive than us. Things cannot not be real, becoming of becoming of

becoming. They exist in what Graham Harman (2012) refers to as a “permanent autonomous zone where objects are simply themselves” (p. 10).

But, what about us? We think every thing is always about us. But, that’s inaccurate. Things have an ontological reality that vastly exceeds the human frame for reality, revealing human notions of reality as contextual, toyish and mock. Humanity made a trade a long time ago. We traded away reality in exchange for control. Since then, when each cute little thing emerges from the womb (and maybe from even before), we start inculcating it as him or her with the constructs of humanity. We call it consciousness. From the cradle to the grave, we shun becoming things. We pretend as if we are beyond and superior to such material matters. But, our thingness never abandons us. It is always with us even though we avoid noticing it, or we shame it as dumb. Through everything, our non-human body stays with us. We couldn’t live without it.

Considering the way humanity has treated the body, it is a testament to the body’s autonomy and openness that it still patiently provides us with everything we need, is so willing to help and ceaselessly informs us about the current condition of reality even though we pay almost no attention at all. We can’t say the body isn’t always right there for us. We couldn’t get along without it, but we are missing the chance to realize that it always offers direct and immediate access to the open potential of its always already becoming object ontology.

In contrast, humanity continues to primarily view the body as a place, as essentially the location of self and subjectivity. The body is what each of us is categorized by, referred to, recognized as and controlled through. The body is arrested or evicted. The body is given a desk or keyboard to work on. The body is fed, touched, punished or posed. As such, the body is a contested object, socially layered and delimited by definitions, purposes and rules. Following Donna Haraway and Michel Foucault, Rosi Braidotti (1994) points out the “construction and manipulation of docile, knowable bodies in our present social system” (p. 103). The perpetuated belief that bodies are known, understood and thereby definable as stable entities, directly leads to the means through which bodies can be manipulated. Manipulation is possible through the defining of bodies as closed objects, conditions that are fixed and delimited, determined and constructed based on links to social expectations of behavior, thinking, appearance, etc. Such definitions facilitate human categorization and delimiting of objects that are inherently autonomous and open to change.

And, as such, categories and boundaries are learned and embodied in the various means of social control--which include determining each known type of body's significance, role, purpose, options, powers, rights, possibilities, etc. In this process, the manipulation of people who have been made docile via the definition of their bodies becomes effective. Humanism prevails.

Transmateriality is the fundamental fact that objects cannot not change. And, a body is never not an object. A body is inherently an autonomous object of open ontology because it never refutes reality. Whatever happens to the body, the body becomes it, whether it be pleasure, pain, cold, hot, moisture, disease, wellness, growth, breakage, healing, disfunction, death, decay or dispersal. Everything that is possible for it to become as it entangles with other phenomenal agents, the body becomes. It never hedges or hesitates. It continuously becomes other, either from chance influences, inherited genetic triggering, bio-technology, social experimentation, environmental influences, DIY body hacking, or time. The body does not reject the way it becomes. Transmaterially, the body always becomes itself, regardless of how humanist consciousness tries to determine it and make it a docile entity ready for control and manipulation. The body, as an object, can't not be engaged in the always already entangling of the world that is mostly unknowable by humanist constructs. As such, transmateriality offers to facilitate the potential opposite to manipulation and construction. The body as collaborative object provides a bridge by which societal consciousness "could embrace partial, contradictory, permanently unclosed constructions of personal and collective selves" (Haraway, 1991, p. 157).

### **"I have nothing... / and I am...it"**

An art practice isn't only of value as a vehicle of expression. Oftentimes, I have nothing to say. But, that needn't stop me from becoming via making. Other times, as when John Cage (1973) wrote, "I have nothing to say / and I am saying it" (p. 109), an art practice is a means by which to explore the limits of logic and the knowing/doing paradox. An art practice, like any action engaging with the world, is foremost a means of becoming. And, like any other action of engaging with the world, the intra-action of differences generates an experiential outcome, the diffraction pattern of the now. Many of these are immediately contextualized by humanist cultural constructs. They are branded with meaning and purpose, and clustered into self-stabilizing known stuff. But, I would

argue, that more are not. Most of our actual minute by minute activities take place within a meaning-needless object-oriented becoming. Usually, as we walk down stairs, we are thinking about something else. As we bundle up the garbage, pet a cat or wash our face, our thoughts are not about these tasks. All of such actions go on, absent of knowing or purpose. This is us improvising: always already becoming other. It is us saying the nothing we have to say. The two worlds we live within--the human and the body-object--generate the diffraction pattern that merely includes the human life we make knowing about. The value of an art practice, or any action that lets us collaborate with the body and the outside world of “permanently unclosed constructions,” is that it open us up to being not only human, not only stable, not only selves. It gives us chances to experience different mediums of “thought,” “knowing,” and “logic,” etc. that are more objectist than humanist.

Of course, art practices--such as freely improvised music--are but one mode of this type of body-object and object collaboration. There is no limit of other practices. At each moment, objects are always already becoming. And, the body is always sincere, always providing its entirety for involvement. The body always responds honestly to its intra-actions with the moment, providing feedback that the human mind can try to grasp, interpret and translate into its world. Regardless of how any body is categorized within normalized humanist constructs, the body is ceaselessly transmaterializing, mostly in ways that have little or no meaning in normalized humanist awareness. Such body-object changes (at least the ones that can be noticed at all) are mostly ignored for being “mundane happenings” (meaning they are unworthy of human consideration) or classified as “natural” (meaning they are outside of human understanding and control). Most of the body’s happenings are considered either not worth thinking about or only fathomable by God. Either way, the message is usually, don’t question too much about the body.

Rather than embraced as the most intimate site of virtual or open potential, the unknowability of the body is often reduced to the limits of human ignorance. This narrowly defined body that is determined worthy of human consideration is often fixed as unchanging and unchangeable. The “nature” of the body makes it beyond human control and understanding, and thus somehow beyond change and consideration. The “laws of nature” are used to determine what is possible and impossible, right and wrong, etc. Rules from beyond consideration are used to

define and orient what is regulated and controlled within consideration. For something to confront or broach such “laws” threatens the retaining walls that keep the bubble of determinable stability from meeting the chaotic void of potential, openness and unpredictable change. And, thus, the transmaterial-becoming of the body threatens the stability of the bubble-world’s logic of classifixations.

But, the body is our most intimate experience of transmateriality. We can’t not be involved with it. The transmateriality of the body enables it to actualize a collaborative autonomy independent of social constructs, revealing the body to be an open object undeterminable by normalized humanist codes which define the body’s virtual potential for shared becoming only along the delimited roles that fulfill humanist social purposes. Life is transmaterial becoming, facilitating the open, virtual potential of collaborative improvisation with everything else.

As I mentioned earlier, the most common instruction shared for how to play improvised music is to “Just listen.” This broad advice is enough to give the ear both an autonomy and a position of equality in relation to the conscious and evaluating mind. “Listening” can serve as a metaphor to responding openly to what can appear without expectation. The ears are always open. But, “Just listen” also implies that the body is capable of finding its way to meet the moment.

Similarly, transmateriality of the body guides us way into open experiential contexts that exceed classification, becoming, in our moment by moment individuality, immeasurable by any other form, or against any other moment. As Henri Bergson (1903) wrote,

An empiricism worthy of the name, an empiricism which works only to measure, is obliged for each new object that it studies to make an absolutely fresh effort. It cuts out for the object a concept which is appropriate to that object alone, a concept which can as yet hardly be called a concept, since it applies to this one thing. It does not proceed by combining current ideas like unity and multiplicity; but it leads us, on the contrary, to a simple, unique representation, which, however once formed, enables us to understand easily how it is that we can place it in the frames unity, multiplicity, etc., all much larger than itself. In short, philosophy thus defined does not consist in the choice of certain concepts, and in taking sides with a school, but in the search for a unique intuition from

which we can descend with equal ease to different concepts, because we are placed above the divisions of the schools (p. 9).

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