

# A SPELL FOR TOGETHER- ING CAN OR CANNOT BE WRITTEN WITH WORDS

Jacob Wren

## PART ONE

This is also why, for Freud, “everything has a sexual connotation,” why sexuality can infect everything: not because it is “the strongest” component in people’s lives, exerting a hegemony over all other components, but because it is the one most radically thwarted in its actualization.

Slavoj Žižek, *Less Than Nothing*, 2012

Years and years ago, I chose to write fiction instead of theory because I didn’t want any position I took, any statement I made, to be understood as a literal truth. I wanted the freedom to be wrong, to change my mind, to walk, step by tentative step, out onto a limb, find out if it breaks and, if so, in exactly what way. I’m not sure if this decision—fiction instead of theory—is something that actually took place in my mind at some point in my past or if it is only a kind of story I tell myself. I have been writing for over twenty-five

years and, by this point, have published many things that I now almost completely disagree with. Considering the theme of eros, perhaps what strikes me most immediately is the feeling that the way I’ve previously written about sex and sensuality is almost wildly off the mark, that I’m simply the wrong man for the job, even though it is a topic that has taken on increasing prominence in my recent books.

Sometimes I think that sex might have a politically emancipatory potential and at other times I think it simply does not, or at least no more or less than any other aspect of human life. I write about many things I know relatively little about, but somehow writing about sex makes me feel most like a hypocrite. My thinking around writing about sex has undergone many seismic shifts: when I first read *I Love Dick* and *Aliens & Anorexia* by Chris Kraus, when I read the first section of *The Savage Detectives* by Roberto Bolaño, when I read each of the books by Tamara Faith Berger as they were published. Yet all of these shifts happened before I seriously sat down and tried to write sex as part of my own attempts at literature. Now that I have done so I no longer know where I stand.

I started thinking about all of this again, almost from the beginning, when I was reading *Bluets* by Maggie Nelson. Particularly this passage:

In his book *On Being Blue*, William Gass argues that what we readers really want is “the penetration of privacy”: “We want to see under the skirt.” But his penetration is eventually tiresome, even to himself: “What good is my peek at her pubic hair if I must also see the red lines made by her panties, the pimples on her rump, broken veins like the print of a lavender thumb, the stepped-on look of a day’s-end muff? I’ve that at home.” After asserting that the blue we want from life is in fact found only in fiction, he counsels the writer to “give up the blue things of this world in favor of the words which say them.”

This is puritanism, not eros. For my part I have no interest in catching a glimpse of or offering

you an unblemished ass or an airbrushed cunt. I am interested in having three orifices stuffed full of thick, veiny cock in the most unforgiving of poses and light. I will not choose between the blue things of the world and the words that say them: you might as well be heating up the poker and readying your eyes for the altar. Your loss.<sup>1</sup>

And suddenly I realized that so many of my ideas about writing sex actually came from reading *On Being Blue* over twenty years ago. It was the first real reflection I ever encountered on the topic. I believe I first read it in 1991, when I was twenty, and the main thing I took from it was the idea that writing sex is often simply bad writing. In my recent rereading, I trace this idea back to the following passage:

No, they [dirty words] are not well-enough loved, and the wise writer watches himself, for with so much hate inside them—in “bang,” in “screw,” in “prick” in “piece,” in “hump”—how can he be sure he had not been infected—by “slit,” by “gash”—and his skills, supreme while discreet, will not fail him? Not an enterprise for amateurs. Even the best are betrayed. Lawrence is perhaps the saddest example.<sup>2</sup>

It is this “Not an enterprise for amateurs. Even the best are betrayed” that I remember most. Perhaps because I was a young writer at the time, still just an amateur, and I imagined the injunction applying directly to my own tentative attempts. Only now does it strike me that the idea of “no one loving dirty words enough” is actually the worst kind of upmarket elitism, a snob looking down on how much people do actually love to cuss, and denying the enormous degree of ludic imagination it is often possible to bring to the task.

Though it was a book that influenced me at the time, I don’t particularly remember liking *On Being Blue*. However, in my recent rereading I found it painful and often disturbing. In section two, Gass quotes many examples of sex writing, six in prose and nine in poetry. Of the prose examples, three are entirely descriptions of

violence against women: a gang of pirates raping a “whoreship,” a man beating a woman with a truncheon, a man raping a woman with a corn-cob. Directly after the truncheon passage (taken from John Hawkes’s *The Lime Twig*), Gass comments: “This passage is impossible to overpraise.” All of this basically makes me sick.

However, as Maggie Nelson has already pointed out, the larger point he wants to make has nothing to do with writing sex. He is trying to convince the reader that the real eroticism of literature is to be found in how a writer uses words:

Compare the masturbation scene in *Ulysses* with any one of those in *Portnoy*, then tell me where there authors are: in the scene as any dreamers, night or day, might be, or in language where the artist always is and ought to be.

If any of us were as well taken care of as the sentences of Henry James, we’d never long for another, never wander away: where else would we receive such constant attention, our thoughts anticipated, our feelings understood? Who else would robe us so richly, take us to the best places, or guard our virtue as his own and defend our character in every situation?<sup>3</sup>

It is a slight caricature of Gass’s position, but I can’t help but read this as another way of saying: it doesn’t matter what position a writer takes, as long as they write it up beautifully and with great attention to detail and language. This is so often my caricature of the artists and writers I can’t stand: empty formalism. I generally prefer writers who focus on questions of content, which are always also questions of ethics, and then search for ways to bring their content and ethical paradoxes into words.

If it hadn’t been such an unacknowledged influence on my formative thinking, *On Being Blue* would simply be an empty straw man I here can’t help but throwing into the wind. But so many things influence us along the way, and these influences don’t simply disappear as our thinking evolves. We must trace them back, see them more clearly, see them for what they are.

## PART TWO

In abstraction, sex reveals the intangible force of its own irreconcilability and becomes what it is in reality: a spell for togethering doubling as a boundary.

Paul Chan, *The Essential and Incomplete Sade for Sade’s Sake*, 2010

Since I published my last novel, *Polyamorous Love Song*, various people, many of them relative strangers, have spoken or written to me about their sex lives and their attempts to be polyamorous. Each time they do so I feel like coming clean, admitting that I basically have no sex life, often go years without so much as touching anyone. Yet in general I just listen, barely speaking about myself. I think when people tell me these things it’s mainly because they want someone to listen. But it seems I also very much don’t want to publicly cast my life in this “no sex” light, though it definitely is the way it most often appears to me in my private thoughts. Having done something infrequently doesn’t actually tell us so much about the possible intensities of the experience. As well, as I’m slowly realizing, I barely want to write about my own life at all. Or as I recently wrote about another project: “In my two-year attempt to write a kind of strange, fictional autobiography I now realize the block is very simple: I don’t want people to know about my life.”

This dynamic took on an unusual twist when I was invited to attend a topless reading group of *Polyamorous Love Song* out in the park in May. But before I was invited I ran into A., who initiated the undertaking, and she asked me if I would be comfortable with the idea. For some reason I lied and said I would. She also asked me if I’d attend and, more truthfully, I also said yes. When first asked, why exactly was I not okay with the idea and why did I then lie and say I was?

The most obvious reason for my discomfort is I felt if it were an idea I had come up with and implemented it would be sexist. A man asking women to take off their tops and discuss his book seems to me to be simply a sexist idea. But I certainly didn’t want to tell A. that I thought

her idea might be sexist, and the fact that it was something she initiated, and clearly wanted to do, gave it agency, perhaps undermining all or some of the possible sexism. I actually wasn’t sure. There is no question anyone is capable of generating an idea that seems progressive to them in the moment but upon later reflection turns out to be less progressive than it at first seemed. On the other hand, there is nothing more condescending than a man telling a woman what is or isn’t feminist. And these questions, in their more nuanced forms, often depend so much on context and texture. I wondered if an idea with a certain degree of possible sexism becomes anti-sexist if done in the right spirit and implemented mainly by women. (Would I find the idea less problematic if it were a discussion of a book written by a woman? Or simply a book not written by me?) As well, being topless in public isn’t exactly the most sexist thing I can imagine. Why should men be allowed to walk around without their shirts all summer long while for women the exact same act is often illegal and always considerably more sexualized. Just another bullshit double standard.

It also crossed my mind that I never go to the beach or go swimming, am noticeably out of shape, and can’t remember the last time I was out in public without a shirt. At the very least I was worried I’d come away from the experience with a painful sunburn. So clearly there were various aspects to my discomfort. Then I learn that A. did not come up with the idea alone, that it was in fact a collaboration with C. I don’t know C. at all, but upon meeting him my first impression is that he’s not particularly feminist (but first impressions may or may not be accurate.) C. tells me he first had the idea a few years ago but couldn’t find the right book, and when my book came along it seemed like the perfect fit. On the Facebook event someone asks if being topless is optional, and the answer was yes, so if everyone does no more or less than they want, I tell myself, I guess it’s all right.

A few days before the event, I get a message telling me that it won’t be happening. After a few back and forth emails we find another date in July. I have already been writing about it

here, and wonder if it's enough to write about my apprehensions without having a description of the event itself as a sort of pinnacle for this section. I feel this topless reading group has already become for me a kind of confused *petit objet a*. A few days after the cancellation I once again run into C. He knows A. much better than I do, and tells me he thinks it's not unlikely that the thing is now never going to happen. "Remember I told you I was going to do it a few years ago," he tells me, "what happened was the women I was planning to do it with all got boyfriends, and now they're all pregnant or have babies." The moment he says this I realize I absolutely can't stand him, perhaps because this is a slightly uglier version of a thought I so often have about my own life and history.

It was only after it was all over that I remembered the well-known anecdote about Theodor Adorno. This is how Wikipedia describes the incident:

For the summer semester Adorno planned a lecture course entitled "An Introduction to Dialectical Thinking," as well as a seminar on the dialectics of subject and object. But at the first lecture Adorno's attempt to open up the lecture and invite questions whenever they arose degenerated into a disruption from which he quickly fled: after a student wrote on the blackboard "If Adorno is left in peace, capitalism will never cease," three women students approached the lecturer, bared their breasts and scattered flower petals over his head.<sup>4</sup>

**Adorno's (private) response to the incident is even more telling:**

To have picked on me of all people. I who have spoken out against every type of erotic repression and sexual taboo. To ridicule me and set these three girls dressed up as hippies against me in this way. I found that repulsive. The laughter that was aimed at me was basically the reaction of the philistine who giggles when he sees girls with naked breasts. Needless to say, this idiocy was planned.<sup>5</sup>

For me, Adorno seems comically uptight in this reaction. Someone who doesn't, and will never, really get it. I find myself focusing on the sentence: "I who have spoken out against every type of erotic repression and sexual taboo." Because being against erotic repression and taboo, or for sexual emancipation and joyous embodiment, in words and speech, seems almost to miss the point. Maybe everything in life is only meaningful if we find some way to more fully embody it. Talking and writing about sex seems to only be meaningful if we also find some way to live our reflections. Or maybe not. Perhaps talking and writing about sex are erotic acts in and of themselves, and should be taken seriously as such.

In the Facebook event for the topless reading group, A. had posted the following: "Reflecting on what this reading group is actually exploring, I refer to the words of Elizabeth A. Povinelli in *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and, Carnality*":

Thus this book [*The Empire of Love*] is not interested in the study of identities so much as it is interested in the social matrix out of which these identities and their divisions emerge, including: where and what sexuality is; where and when a person is a token of a type of social identity; [...] which forms of intimate dependency count as freedom and which count as undue social constraint; which forms of intimacy involve moral judgment rather than mere choice; and which forms of intimate sociality distribute life and material goods and evoke moral certainty if not moral sanctimoniousness. This approach to intimacy and governance does not collapse these two worlds; it does not make them two versions of the same thing. Instead it allows us to see how their differences emerge diagonally to the deafening drum of liberal figurations of freedom and its others and their racial and civilizational inflections.<sup>6</sup>

**"Which forms of intimate dependency count as freedom and which count as undue social constraint," and who gets to decide. In one sense**

the answer is clear: everyone gets to decide for themselves. But this only brings us to the beginning of a conversation, since deciding only for ourselves cannot bring our eros into conversation with the eros of others. We need to decide for ourselves and learn from each other all at the same time. Writing all this, I keep wanting to censor myself, to try to re-write what I have written to make myself seem more sophisticated, knowledgeable, open-minded, and emancipated. But confusions are what I feel and think, and perhaps writing about sex is nothing without such confusion, tension, and doubt. I now wonder if those are some of the qualities most unfortunately missing from many of my previous attempts at writing sex.

### PART THREE

Another paradox: Often the one most plagued with lust is the one most capable of restraining it. The monk and the philanderer are likely to be the same person.

**Qiu Miaojin, *Last Words From Montmartre*, 2014**

**I wanted to make a survey of each and every time I had written sex in my books and use this survey in order to try to understand why I feel I have done so inadequately. I thought there would be relatively few instances but in fact there are many. After some consideration, I decided to start with only the instances in which I discuss polyamory. In a way, I already know how I address this topic: I romanticize it, celebrate it as having the potential (at least in theory) to be politically and erotically emancipatory. However, more and more I am backing away from this approach. Most people I know who have seriously tried it have had bad experiences, often some of the worst romantic experiences of their lives. Of course, almost everyone has also had negative experiences with monogamy. But when monogamy fails there is considerable social and cultural support for the ensuing heartbreak. When polyamory fails mainstream culture generally tells you it's your own damn fault for attempting such a fanciful and improbable utopian dream. Failure happens all the time, at every level of our**

lives and thoughts, but how these failures are contextualized and given meaning go a long way towards either ameliorating the experience or making it more painful. (If you are reading this as someone who has had mainly positive experiences with being polyamorous, I would like to apologize. I am obviously here going on only the flimsiest of anecdotal experience. There must be many exceptions, hopefully far more than are required to prove the rule.)

In my book *Revenge Fantasies of the Politically Dispossessed*, there are many passages celebrating non-monogamy. These passages take place in a book within the book, a book written by a character known only as the Writer, a book she eventually goes to jail for having written. Here are two examples:

In one sense, non-monogamy seems to comply too well, fit too neatly, with the requirements of late capitalism. The imagery suggested by the term evokes a free market in which sexual partners come and go like so many obsolete commodities. It can be argued that the open possibility of many partners creates a competitive economy, a marketplace within which the intimacy of direct physical contact is downgraded, replaced with a series of encounters that, because they are numerous, are at the same time implicitly less important, more superficial. However, if we take friendship as a model, it is unlikely we think any one of our friends is less a friend to us simply because we have many. Sexual intimacy certainly complicates friendship. But it also generates another quality of connection, another strata where all kinds of new energies and communications have the potential to emerge.<sup>7</sup>

[...]

Capitalism thrives on a high degree of disconnection. In contrast, at its best, sexual intimacy is one of the most intense fields of connection two people are capable of experiencing. In this sense it might seem there are aspects to sexual connection that are progressive or subversive. Compare the

value of heartfelt sexual connection with the overwhelming barrage of slick sexual imagery we are subjected to on a daily basis. Photographed and televised sexual imagery creates a continuous stream of low-level desires, desires that the corporations who produce such imagery have absolutely no intention of satisfying. They are designed to generate within us an infinite, gnawing dissatisfaction. In contrast, certain kinds of sexual intimacy have the potential to be satisfying, to connect us to each other in the long term, to generate ongoing solidarity. But I fear I am painting too rosy a picture of what is possible. Intimacy generates many powerful, conflicting emotions. With love comes the potential for jealousy. For every desire to assist and nurture there is a contrasting desire to possess or entrap. Opening a dialogue about how we might build on the emancipatory potential inherent in sexual intimacy might also generate insights as to how we might better manage the emotionally painful aspects that arrive alongside it.<sup>8</sup>

**This is of course not an uncritical position. But each criticism is matched by an equal degree of defense. More to the point: this is sex as an idea, and what this writing so often, at least for me, fails to properly convey is that sex can never be only an idea. There is always a margin of personal history and experience that any idea about it cannot fully contain. Writing this it occurs to me that it might also be true of any thought, and the desire to bring the “idea” of each thing to the forefront is, at the same time, a desire keep everything else at bay, at a certain distance. At least for those of us who feel particularly comfortable in the realm of ideas, who reach towards ideas for some sense of temporary safety. But there is always the rest of reality haunting the background, itching to set us straight.**

Perhaps the real reason the Writer goes to jail is her admission and celebration of the fact she has a long history of sleeping with her students:

The intimacy I felt with these students led

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to some of the most thorough theoretical investigations I have ever had the privilege of experiencing. The fact that such discussions were interspersed with kissing, with touching, stroking and licking, with wetness and stickiness, only leant intensity and resonance to the complexity of the matters under discussion. I was teaching and giving and taking pleasure both in the ideas being expressed and in the intensity of physical contact I was able to generate with these young men.

The almost complete, but temporary, loss of self that was involved—a loss of self present in all intense sexual encounters—doubled as an open door through which one could enter new areas of thought, as if one had left one’s old self behind, as if within this new, amorphous territory, in which one was no longer one’s previous self but had not yet become anything else, infinite modes of discovery became possible. The intimacy of our nakedness made us feel, or at least gave the illusion, that we were so much more directly engaged, both in dialogue with the larger world of ideas and with each other. This directness: of being intertwined, exhausted and sated, of drifting in and out of sleep and having the strains of our discussions, of our nightly lessons, freely intermixed with half-remembered dreams, forms the basis for a different kind of learning, learning that enters not only through the mind but also through the skin and sweat and pores. In this way ideas are divested of their previously cold abstraction and instead gain heat, momentum and complicity. This is the deep learning, and there is no conduit for it other than one’s intimate and ongoing personal experience.<sup>9</sup>

**I re-read all of this and, in some sense, still agree with it. But, at the same time, I have to admit to myself that it has almost nothing to do with my lived experience. It is a kind of fable, an ideal, a dream of how things might be but are not. In a way it is simply fiction, understanding that fiction often entails a rather high degree of fantasy. But re-reading it now I also worry that it might seem like I’m genuinely trying to convince**

**others when, I can now see, I’m mainly trying to convince myself.**

**In my following book, *Polyamorous Love Song*, at one point I attempt to overcome these shortcomings, breaking the fourth wall of the narrative, criticizing my portrayals of sex in the book so far. This attempt comes in two parts:**

**When I write about sex, I always feel like someone who has never had sex writing about sex, so distant is my experience from the words I am able to get down. I have often felt that I should try to remedy this dilemma, to write my actual, emotional experience of sex, as accurately as possible, but it seems beyond my abilities, the nuances too paradoxical and complex, too many emotions and desires conflicting in too many ways. Or perhaps it is only shame that stops me. I believe I experience a low-level lust towards basically every woman I see. This isn’t so unusual, but it constitutes the background, the pulse of subconscious daily dissatisfaction that informs any experience I might have of actual sex. I do not believe sex is normal or natural. It seems rare and strange, a momentary exception amongst a vast expanse of unrelated, yet intensely related, activities. I’ve never been in love and I don’t play any sports. I’ve once again failed in my attempts at description, failed to even begin, and I don’t know why anyone would want to read this paragraph. Then again, on the part of the reader there is often a considerable desire to learn biographical information about the neuroses of the writer.<sup>10</sup>**

**On the next page I come back to the thread:**

I will try again. At first all I feel is the desire to be close, to feel the warmth of another body pressed against my own. Already I know that within me there exists much more desire than this simple, rather sweet, need for contact, but in the first moments it is all I am able to access. Yet as soon as there is contact the arousal kicks in, an intensity, hard and fast, throwing me off, striking me off-kilter as if I hadn’t been expecting it, a confusion. I know I want something but I don’t know what. I bite, lick, struggle, caress and stroke. My fingers want to go everywhere. If my partner seems

excited by something I do then I do it more, if she is excited then my excitement grows out from hers like a vampire seeking energy. I am hard and soft and hard again and it seems to make no difference. I want to go forever but I don’t know where. I feel tired, sad and excited. My body is doing one thing and my mind is wondering why, starting to become bored, thinking I should end the relationship before it becomes too serious, starting to think about other things, almost coming but feeling its too soon so pulling away, disengaged but pulsing everywhere until, a few rounds later, I come, a small sudden jolt, and completely collapse. In less than one second, sex and my partner are the furthest things from my mind and there is a certain degree of guilt I feel almost too exhausted to access.<sup>11</sup>

**This is maybe the closest I’ve ever come to sex writing related to my actual life. And yet I still feel it is so far away. The main thing missing is any sort of dialogue with another person. I don’t want people to know about my actual life, and am nervous I am revealing far more than I think, while at the same time knowing I might also be revealing far less than I wish.**

#### PART FOUR

The ubiquity of such struggles occurs, not because of some fundamentally problematic quality of sexuality, but on the contrary, because sexuality has qualities that draw other problems to it as people seek sexual solutions for the never-ending conflicts and ambiguities of the hassle of living life as a human being, whether male or female. The entangled relationship between the sexes is the site of attempted solutions, which give the appearance of “problems” only because the solutions are unsuitable. Sex is an arena within which other kinds of problems get played out.

**Sheldon B. Kopp, *If You Meet Buddha On The Road, Kill Him*, 1972**

**In her email postponing the topless reading, A. writes: “So if you’re interested, I encourage you**

to take some time to consider what public social intimacy means to you and why.” And asking myself this, a first answer immediately comes to mind: public social intimacy is something I don’t think I’ve actually ever experienced. Is writing sex a form of public social intimacy? I grew up in Toronto but now live in Montreal. A few years ago, when a Quebecois friend visited Toronto with me, walking down a residential street, she said something like: “The Toronto houses are all so cute. They’re so close to each other but never actually touch. Just like the people.” It’s sometimes noted that I rarely touch anyone in public, and I often think this has a lot to do with where and how I grew up. I often write about loneliness.

In *Brecht and Method*, Fredric Jameson writes:

In the 1960s many people came to realize that in a truly revolutionary collective experience what comes into being is not a faceless or anonymous crowd or “mass” but, rather, a new level of being [...] in which individuality is not effaced but completed by collectivity. It is an experience that has now slowly been forgotten, its traces systematically effaced by the return of desperate individualisms of all kinds.<sup>12</sup>

I’m always nervous about romanticizing the sixties. I was born in 1971 and can’t really believe there was some time before I was born that was so much better than now. Every moment and era has both difficulties and potentials. But if I try to consider something a bit like “a truly revolutionary collective experience”—and I find it almost impossible to imagine what such a thing might be or feel like—I have to admit that I imagine it as a different relation to one’s own body and to the bodies of others, and that this difference might also have something to do with sex, though actual sex wouldn’t necessarily have to be involved. It also feels almost impossible for me to know to what extent this imagining is only searching for release in one of the places I find myself most blocked, or if it might actually be emancipatory in some more general sense. If it’s only important for me or actually important for everyone. If I ask myself again what public social

intimacy might mean to me, this might be the closest I come: an intimacy “in which individuality is not effaced but completed by collectivity.” And I’m back almost where I began: sometimes I think that sex might have a politically emancipatory potential and at other times I think it simply does not. But hopefully something has also changed along the way.

I don’t have friends I talk about sex with. In fact, this text is most likely the most I’ve ever talked about (or around, or past) sex in my life. There is a collective aspect to my thinking and experience that is clearly missing. And yet I also write as if dealing with sexual desire was one of the main collective undertakings we all experience, the rules and taboos in and around it forming so much of our daily engagement with society. Every comedy ends with a marriage. (I feel this entire text could also be summarized in a tweet: Only women and queer people should write sex. Straight men should avoid the topic at all costs.)

When you write alone it’s called writing, but when you have sex alone it’s called masturbation. Masturbation is also a word used to criticize art seen as overly self-indulgent. Therapy is another such word. For most of us, sex is something had with one other person at a time. It is a form of communication and often a form of miscommunication. People do things for sex that make absolutely no sense in regards to any other aspect of their lives at the time. There is always a part of me that thinks sex is an experience that should mainly be lived, and therefore does not particularly need to be written about. At the same time, it is an aspect of life that draws readers towards it like no other. Thinking about it the way I’ve been working through it here makes me feel incredibly neurotic, which of course I am. Since perhaps sex is a topic that does need to be written about, to let us know more clearly that our neuroses are not only our own, and in this way help us feel just a little bit less lonely.

**1** Maggie Nelson, *Bluets* (Seattle: Wave Books, 2009), 24–25.

**2** William H. Gass, *On Being Blue* (New York: NYRB Classics, 1975), 29.

**3** *Ibid.*, 44

**4** Theodor W. Adorno, *Wikipedia*, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodor\\_W.\\_Adorno](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodor_W._Adorno).

**5** As cited in Wilber W. Caldwell, *1968: Dreams of Revolution* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2008), 170.

**6** Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 3.

**7** Jacob Wren, *Revenge Fantasies of the Politically Dispossessed* (Toronto: Pedlar Press, 2010), 108–109.

**8** *Ibid.*, 109–110.

**9** *Ibid.*, 117–118.

**10** Jacob Wren, *Polyamorous Love Song* (Toronto: BookThug, 2014), 134.

**11** *Ibid.*, 135–136.

**12** Fredric Jameson, *Brecht and Method* (London: Verso, 1998), 10.