

# Danielle Pafunda

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## Punctuation re-invents an original privacy in the social space between words.

*The fragments among which we live are, in my view, cause for celebration rather than lament, an astonishing invitation to create new ideas of coherence, where boundaries are malleable and permeable, so that inclusion and exclusion are in unstable flux.*

-Anne Lauterbach

1           This manifesto explores two questions flowing from this aberration and  
legacy: 1) how might an ethics and politics committed to the flourishing of  
significant otherness be learned from taking dog-human relationships  
seriously; and 2) how might stories about dog-human worlds finally convince  
2 brain-damaged US Americans, and maybe other less historically challenged  
people, that history matters in naturecultures? But *politics* and *representation*  
are controversial terms.

- 3           • The alligator was manageable in size, snappish, and heavily armored.  
4           • Brown eggs were a novelty that fetched higher prices, and even today many  
assume that they are somehow more “natural” than the white ones.

5           Why do you think this is the case? These conflations of desire and Nature  
6 belong to a tradition of which Romanticism was the mere by-blow. Our  
7 individuality, in fact, is at odds with the concept of some core reality at the  
8 heart of our sense of being. The image suggests an impressive correlation  
between plant diversity, on the one hand, and highways and rural roads, on the  
other—

9           This essay is drawn from my experience in observing and interviewing women  
(and sometimes men) about the use of ultrasound accompanying  
10 amniocentesis. Not to do so is to perpetuate a hierarchical, binary construction  
11 of reality. Borrowing an image from Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, a political  
scientist at the University of Toronto, Kaplan positions his readers as  
passengers in a comfortable limousine cruising through the streets filled with  
the violent, the diseased, the hungry, the criminal, the deviant, the poor, the  
12 corrupt, and the uneducated. Christ and the missing baby coalesce. Now  
13 replace the bowl with the following “material objects”:

          a cathedral  
          a subway car  
          a wide meadow under a blue sky  
          a city street.

14          Journalists, psychologists, and neighbors who had never met these women  
were ready to describe them as callous murderers. The term *apprehension* is  
15 meant to name both a motivating anticipatory anxiety and what *Webster’s*  
*Dictionary* calls “the act or power of perceiving or comprehending.” This is a  
16 struggle over life and death, but the boundary between science fiction and  
social reality is an optical illusion.

Title. Hillman, Brenda. "A Cadenced Privacy (some thoughts on punctuation in contemporary poems)." *By Herself*. McQuade, Molly Editor. Saint Paul: Graywolf, 2000. 172-186.

Epigraph. Lauterbach, Anne. "Use This Word in a Sentence: Experimental." *By Herself*. McQuade, Molly Editor. Saint Paul: Graywolf, 2000. 187-191.

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Note: Each sentence in **Punctuation re-invents an original privacy in the social space between words.** corresponds to its position in the source text. Thus, the ninth sentence here is the ninth sentence in Rayna Rapp's chapter "Real-Time Fetus: The Role of Sonogram in the Age of Monitored Reproduction" in *Cyborgs & Citadels*. Had I greater patience and more hours on hand, this would be a 100-liner in keeping with the origin of *cento*.