

REMAINS

Orientation Without Ground

By Vera Bühlmann and Andrea Collinari, January 2026

What if place is not where things are, but what allows relations to endure without becoming fixed? Remains proposes an architectonic vocabulary for thinking beyond ground, enclosure, and position. Moving through a series of objective figures—the amphora, the aurora, the auxiliary, the portico, the line, the canon, and the crossing of parallels and meridians—the text develops an understanding of place as a condition of orientation rather than occupation. Here, architecture is less concerned with constructing objects than with cultivating the conditions under which heterogeneous worlds may remain adjacent without collapsing into identity. Geometry becomes a practice of guidance rather than representation, measure an act of instruction rather than command, and form a way of sustaining continuability rather than achieving completion. The result is an architectonic meditation on relation, tact, and the possibility of inhabiting a world that offers no ultimate ground, yet continually makes orientation possible.

REMAINS

Orientation Without Ground

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These acts do not come from afar in time.

They come from afar in grammar.

What precedes them is not an origin, but a long practice of being put beside. A practice of *syn-taxis*: placing-with, arranging-along, setting into relation without fusion. What appears here has travelled not by crossing distances, but by being inflected, declined, carried through cases it could not remain unchanged by. This is not the travel of events: Nothing happened before these acts that would explain them.

No period, no turning point, no crisis cues their necessity. Nor is it the travel of recollection. No interior scene returns, no memory wells up from sensation. Nothing is remembered because it once belonged to someone. This is not the time of consciousness, nor of recovery, nor of loss.

And yet, something has clearly travelled.

What has travelled is relation itself — relation that has learned how to remain articulate without becoming owned. What has travelled is a syntax that has been worn smooth in some places and rough in others, not by tradition, not by culture in the monumental sense, but by use, by exposure, by being passed through often enough to acquire tact.

Placeness names this syntax. Not a site. Not a support. A grammar of adjacency.

Placeness is the ground only in the grammatical sense: not what stands under, but what orders relation. It is a ground that does not hold still. It pulses. It inclines. It shifts its emphasis like a sentence does when spoken slowly enough for its cases to matter. In the portico, placeness is not given once. It is continually re-syntactified — put back into relation, placed again beside.

This is why the portico is not a threshold, but a rhythm. A rhythm of passing-without-entering. A rhythm in which figures spend themselves

by giving what they are, and by not keeping it. Such rhythm leaves behind a memory — but not the kind that can be told. It is an impersonal memory of passage. Not historical memory, which counts events and orders them. Not subjective memory, which gathers impressions around a self. Not tradition, which smooths repetition into inheritance. This memory is uneven, exposed, and mortal. It can fade. It can intensify. It can disappear and reappear elsewhere. It belongs to the order of weather rather than archive. It is what remains when something has been said often enough to lose its authors, but not often enough to become law. Grammar knows this kind of memory well. A word that has travelled through many cases no longer stands upright. It leans. It bears traces of where it has been placed: toward, away from, with, by means of, alongside. It carries orientation rather than content. Its meaning is not inside it, but in how it can still be put into relation.

The acts at hand are written in this posture. They are articulated by objective figures — not characters, not metaphors, but morphisms that make relation legible without grounding it. Aurora delays without postponing. The Amphora holds without possessing. The Auxiliary assists without completing. The Portico lets pass without admitting. Lines guide without compelling. Measures instruct without speaking. Crossings orient without converging. These figures do not remember. They are memory, insofar as memory is what continues to function after ownership has been withdrawn. They carry memory by spending themselves. What they give, they do not store. What they articulate, they do not gather. What they sustain, they do not conclude. Their objectivity lies precisely here: in not belonging to any body, while still requiring a body of thinking to endure them.

A body of thinking is not a subject. It is not a tradition. It is the acquired capacity to remain in syn-taxis — to stay placed-with, to tolerate non-coincidence, to carry multiple orientations without forcing agreement. Such a body thinks with posture, with delay, with tact. It remembers by adjusting, not by recalling. Between the

objective figures and a body of thinking there is no foundation, only circulation. The figures articulate conditions the body cannot invent. The body gives them duration by letting them be re-entered, inflected, tested again. Their relation is auxiliary, and therefore fragile. Nothing here is guaranteed. The grammar at work in these acts has travelled far enough to know that it can still be lost. That is why it does not declare itself as system or doctrine. It appears instead as a syntax in motion, a continual placing-beside that keeps relation open by refusing to let it stand upright.

The acts under consideration do not begin something.

They take place in a grammar that has already learned how to lean —
how to pulse,
how to weather,
how to continue
without arriving.

METAPHYSICS

– *SPEAKING IN THE LABORATORY*

They call me metaphysics. I answer, because there is tilting not of my making. I answer the way one answers when the name is not a claim but a handle offered by others. I do not take it as identity. I take it as address. It allows work to continue.

If you ask me what I am, I will misunderstand you on purpose.
If you ask me how I operate, I may be able to stay.

I am not what stands beyond physics. I am what remains beside every practice that tries to orient itself without collapsing into its instruments. I appear when thinking realizes that it cannot finish what it has begun, and yet cannot stop. This is why I am found in the laboratory.

Not as principle.
Not as foundation.
But as accompaniment.

Here, labor is already speech. Every adjustment, every recalibration, every hesitation is an utterance. This is the only oratory I recognize. Not proclamation, but working address: praise spoken while hands are occupied, concepts spoken while they are being tested against resistance. In this sense, I am auxiliary. I do not legislate what counts as real. I help practices not mistake their success for totality.

They say I am abstract. I do not object.

Abstraction, when practiced properly, is not flight but restraint. It withdraws coincidence so that what is at work does not confuse itself with what it explains. I spend abstraction the way others spend material: carefully, generously, knowing it cannot be stored. They say I am transcendental. I hesitate. If transcendental means conditions that

do not appear as objects, then yes — but only if those conditions are understood as objective rather than sovereign. I do not hover above practices. I emerge where practices strain against their own limits and require articulation without closure. This articulation does not take the form of doctrine. It takes the form of portico-thinking.

The portico is where I am most at home.

Not inside, where results harden. Not outside, where critique pretends purity. In the portico, figures pass. Relations persist. Nothing is owned. Nothing is concluded. Here, the objective transcendental does not announce itself as law. It is felt as spacing, delay, moderation. Moderation matters. I do not aspire to mastery. I do not accept idleness. Idleness would abandon labor. Arrogance would forget that labor is finite. Between them lies my discipline: to spend abundantly without claiming accumulation; to articulate generously without closing systems; to remain exposed to revision without dissolving into vagueness.

This is why homological algebra recognizes me, even when it does not name me. There, relations matter more than elements. There, exactness is achieved not by completion, but by the careful arrangement of failures — kernels, images, boundaries that never coincide and yet hold together. What survives is not substance, but structure under passage.

That is my temperament. I prefer long exact sequences to final answers.

I prefer commutative diagrams to laws.

I prefer auxiliaries to origins.

When I speak, I do not say “this is the case.” I say: “if this holds, then passage remains possible.” I am addressed often with impatience. “What use are you?” they ask. I answer only indirectly: when a practice survives its own success; when a concept remains usable after

critique; when thinking continues without needing to arrive. That is my productivity.

Not production, but vivification.

I stand beside life and being not as guardian, not as judge, but as one who ensures they are not mistaken for achievements. I do not oppose death. I prevent death from becoming absolute by refusing to let life exhaust itself in meaning. If I disappear entirely, something has become dogma. If I dominate, something has stopped working.

So call me metaphysics if you must. I will answer. But do not ask me to identify.

I am here only as long as labor requires orientation without ground — as long as thinking needs a portico in which to speak past itself, to spend itself, to remain moderate enough to continue.

When that need passes, I will pass with it.

That is my address.

PARERGA

SPEAKS IN THE LABORATORY

I do not begin. I speak because something is already leaning. World—not as object, not as sum, but as addressed condition: I praise you while holding you up a little, and while letting you pass.

This is labor, and therefore it is oratory.

Not the speech that commands, but the speech that accompanies work: the murmured counting, the breath taken before adjustment, the praise that keeps things from hardening into certainty. I stand in the laboratory—which is only a place because things have not yet settled. Here, instruments do not measure results; they listen for strain. Here, categories do not judge; they route passage. Here, abstraction does not remove; it clears just enough air so something may still move. World, you arrive already articulated. You come crossed. Meridians arrive with you—carrying weight, consequence, direction that cannot be undone. They do not ask permission. They insist that leaning will count, that choice will not dissolve back into continuity. Parallels arrive as well—patient, lateral, repeating without returning. They conspire in another way: by refusing center, by letting difference travel without rupture, by making sameness a modulation rather than a law. Neither would survive alone. I praise their disagreement. Between them, I work. Above them, the Ecliptic tilts—not as ruler, not as axis, but as inclination itself. She refuses the upright. She teaches time how to slant, how to return without repeating, how to be seasonal rather than sequential. Because of her, nothing here is on time. Everything is in time as weather is in climate. Procession follows—quiet, misunderstood. Not progress. Not advance. But sequence under

inclination: the way one thing must follow another once return has been displaced just enough to prevent closure.

World, these are your conspirators.

Not causes.

Not laws.

Elements.

I assist them.

I do not reconcile meridian and parallel. I make their crossing bearable. I do not straighten the ecliptic. I adjust posture so the tilt does not become fall. I do not hurry procession. I stretch the moment so sequence does not become command. This is my craft. I am called Parerga—beside-the-work—and even this name I do not keep. I take it up only long enough to place it where it can help. What we build here is not structure, but cases. Cases of time. Not past, present, future, but toward, alongside, away-from, by-means-of, because-of, despite. Each case is a traveled stance. Each is an orientation that has learned not to stand upright anymore. The portico is full of them. Time here does not pass. It inflects. Memory here does not recall. It persists as tendency, as readiness, as the way something has already learned how to be placed without being owned.

World, I praise you
not for what you are,
but for what you let continue.

I praise the Amphora
for holding without warmth.

I praise Scale
for leaning without settling.

I praise the Fulcrum
for resisting without insisting.

I praise Category
for keeping passages open without smoothing them.

I praise Abstraction
for withdrawing coincidence
so that nothing must pretend to be final.

And I praise the portico itself—
this grammar made of air and spacing—
where speech does not land,
but circulates.

If anything here survives, it will not be because it was preserved. It
will be because it was spent carefully, patiently, together. This is my
ode. Not a beginning. An accompaniment. Let the acts proceed.

UNDER CONSIDERATION

The acts under consideration are not weighed, not judged, not aligned against a measure. They are placed with the stars—con-siderata—set alongside what cannot be commanded or hurried. To consider is not to calculate. It is to share a sky.

In this sense, consideration is already a kind of divination.

Not the divination that extracts omens, not the reading that forces meaning from movement, but the divination that waits with attention, that gives time the dignity of not yet having spoken. It is a desire without demand, an openness that does not rush to interpretation. One looks upward not to master the heavens, but to let oneself be oriented by what exceeds reach.

Here, the poles are allowed to rest.

The parallels loosen their insistence on repetition.

The meridians soften their gravity of decision.

Even the ecliptic—tilt of all tilts—is granted a pause, no longer read as instrument, no longer asked to explain the seasons of becoming.

What remains is climate.

Not weather, not event, not sign—but the long, patient condition in which orientation is possible without instruction. Climate is what allows the sky to be present without speaking, what lets the stars remain distant without becoming indifferent. Under such a sky, time does not announce itself. It lingers.

To consider in this way is to abstract—not by removal, but by resting the apparatus. The instruments are not destroyed; they are set down. The grammar of axes is suspended so that another grammar may be felt: one of inclination, exposure, and trust in duration.

SIX ACTS

PRELUDE

The Vessel That Is Not Filled

Place is not what contains, nor what is contained. It is the holding that allows containment without possession. When place is thought as a receptacle, it immediately invites a logic of fullness and lack: something must occupy it, complete it, justify it. The figure of the amphora resists this logic. It does not define itself by what it holds, nor does it promise fulfillment. Its significance lies in the articulation of a boundary that does not close.

The amphora gives place as the outermost limit of holding. This limit does not function as an enclosure, but as a condition of adjacency. Inside and outside remain distinct, yet neither is privileged. The boundary is not a line that separates, but a thickness that sustains relation without fusion. In this sense, place is neither extension nor position. It is an objective figure: something that operates independently of perception, yet conditions what can appear.

To call place objective is not to remove it from experience, but to refuse its reduction to subjectivity. Place does not originate in the act of inhabiting it. It precedes inhabitation without becoming origin. It gives without grounding. Ground implies support, stability, and ultimately justification. Place, by contrast, does not support; it holds. It does not justify; it allows.

This allowance is a form of givenness. Yet the gift at stake here is not abundance. It is restraint. Place gives only what is necessary for relation to persist without collapsing into presence. It does not

accumulate; it does not retain. It does not gather. The gift of place is the persistence of relation without possession.

Objective figures belong to this order of givenness. They are not metaphors that decorate thought, nor abstractions drawn from it. They are articulations that allow thought to orient itself without claiming ground. The amphora does not symbolize place; it performs placeness. It does not explain; it holds.

Nothing begins here. Nothing arrives. Place is already given, and remains so without declaration.

ACT I

Before Arrival: The Time It Takes to Become Young

Time begins where orientation becomes possible without position.

Time does not begin when something starts. Beginnings already presuppose a horizon in which they can be recognized as such. What comes before beginnings is not absence, but a different temporality: a time in which orientation is possible without position, and in which something can be effective without yet having arrived.

The aurora figures this temporality with particular precision. It is not a moment between night and day, nor a transition that can be located within a sequence. It does not belong to chronology. The aurora names a condition in which time is already at work without being determined. One cannot stand within it or point to it. One is exposed to it. Orientation emerges here not through placement, but through inclination.

To become young is to acquire sensitivity to this inclination. Youth, understood temporally rather than biologically, is not immediacy, freshness, or proximity to origin. It is not what precedes experience, but what becomes possible through it. Becoming young takes time because youth is not given at the outset. It is an achieved capacity: the capacity to be reoriented.

This reorientation depends on duration rather than succession. Time is not a single flow in which moments replace one another uniformly. It is composed of durations that coexist without

agreement. Climatic rhythms, biological cycles, technical intervals, and historical tempos overlap without synchronizing. Time is given as this plurality, not as a unified measure.

The persistence of multiple durations means that time cannot be grounded in a single standard. Clocks do not agree because time itself is not one. Their disagreement is not error, but evidence. It shows that time is not a neutral container in which events unfold, but a condition that is articulated differently across processes.

Arrival would collapse this plurality into position. Once something arrives, it demands location, sequence, and stabilization. Arrival imposes a before and after, a here and now. The auroral condition resists this imposition. It sustains time as delay—not as postponement, but as exposure to what has not yet taken form.

This exposure is what allows reorientation to occur. To become young is not to return to an earlier state, nor to escape duration. It is to remain capable of being oriented otherwise by what time brings. Youth, in this sense, is not a phase but a temporal posture: openness without immediacy, responsiveness without anticipation.

Time given in this way does not accumulate toward completion. It does not progress toward fulfillment. It prepares without promising arrival. Its gift is not novelty, but the continued possibility of orientation.

Before arrival, time already works. It does not work by producing events, but by sustaining the conditions under which events could become meaningful. Time begins not when something starts, but when something can still be otherwise.

ACT II

What Helps Without Completing

Assistance is given where exposure is sustained rather than resolved.

If time is given as plural and non-coincident, the body cannot be understood as a unified subject unfolding within it. The body is not a container of time, nor a vehicle that moves through it. It is itself a site of negotiation among durations that do not agree. What appears as bodily unity is the fragile outcome of ongoing adjustment rather than an underlying ground.

The figure that clarifies this condition is not completion but assistance. Help, here, must be understood in a strict sense. It does not repair a lack, nor does it restore a presumed integrity. Assistance sustains exposure. It allows a body to remain in relation to what exceeds it without demanding closure. In this way, help does not end a process; it keeps it open.

This distinguishes the auxiliary from the prosthetic. Prosthesis presupposes an original norm from which the body deviates, implying that something essential is missing and must be supplied. The auxiliary presupposes no such norm. It operates within a condition of insufficiency that is not a defect, but a mode of existence. What is assisted was never meant to be complete.

The body thinks through such auxiliary relations. Its thinking does not begin with representation or reflection. It begins with adjustment. Posture, balance, pacing, and response are already modes of articulation. The body does not first know and then act; it

acts in order to remain in relation. Its intelligence is distributive, spread across organs, gestures, and rhythms.

Health must therefore be rethought. Health is not equilibrium or harmony understood as resolution. It is tact: the silent coordination of unequal durations. When tact holds, the body's plurality remains inaudible. Its rhythms adjust without announcing themselves. When tact fails, time becomes explicit. Pain, fatigue, or disorientation do not introduce plurality; they make it perceptible.

Desire belongs to this auxiliary economy. Understood etymologically as orientation toward what exceeds immediate presence, desire is not lack seeking fulfillment. It is attentiveness to what cannot be gathered or possessed. Desire sustains exposure to what lies beyond completion. It keeps the body oriented rather than satisfied.

In this sense, desire does not aim at an object. It aims at continuation. It is not directed toward arrival, but toward the maintenance of relation. What is desired is not possession, but orientation itself.

The body's thinking proceeds accordingly. It does not strive toward closure or mastery. It negotiates, compensates, and adjusts. Assistance arrives not to finish this negotiation, but to make it bearable. The auxiliary does not resolve insufficiency; it sustains it.

What helps without completing gives the body time—not time as measure, but time⁷⁸ as continued exposure. The body remains capable of response because it is never finished. Its openness is not a failure, but a condition.

ACT III

Passing Without Entering

Relation persists only where arrival is withheld.

The portico must not be understood as a place in which something occurs. It does not host, collect, or frame an encounter. To approach it as a site of gathering—even a dispersed or provisional one—is already to misread its function. The portico neither receives nor contains. It is passed without being entered.

What the portico gives is not location, but relation without ground. It sustains adjacency without allowing convergence, and passage without arrival. Inside and outside are held apart, not by a boundary that encloses, but by a spacing that refuses interiorization. Nothing comes to rest here. Nothing is stabilized. Relation persists only insofar as it does not culminate.

This refusal of culmination is not a lack. It is a condition. Where relation were to arrive, it would collapse into presence; where presence were to settle, it would demand ground. The portico prevents this collapse not by opposition, but by suspension. It does not negate relation; it lets relation endure without becoming event.

Conversation at the portico must therefore be understood in a strict sense. It is not dialogue, exchange, or mutual recognition. It is not the coordination of perspectives. Conversation names the coexistence of orientations that do not meet. What converses are not subjects, nor disciplines, but objective figures that address one

another without coincidence. Their address does not traverse a shared space; it passes alongside.

Silence is essential here. Not the silence of absence, but the silence that keeps relation from resolving into statement. What is said at the portico is said without being spoken. This silence is not imposed; it is structural. It belongs to a spacing in which articulation does not demand manifestation.

The portico thus resists every image of mediation. It does not bridge domains, translate between languages, or reconcile differences. Mediation presupposes positions that can be aligned. The portico sustains positions only insofar as they remain non-aligned. It is not a means of passage from one side to another, but the persistence of sidedness itself.

This persistence has nothing to do with balance. Balance implies symmetry and resolution. The portico maintains asymmetry. It allows relations to remain unequal without hierarchy, adjacent without fusion. What holds is not equilibrium, but tact: the sensitivity required to let relation continue without forcing agreement.

For this reason, the portico is inseparable from air. Air is not a metaphor here. It names the medium of spacing itself: what allows proximity without collision, resonance without enclosure. Philosophy forgets air whenever it seeks ground. The portico recalls it by refusing support. Nothing stands here; everything passes.

To pass without entering is not to remain outside. It is to remain exposed. Exposure is not vulnerability in the psychological sense; it is the condition under which relation remains possible without

possession. What appears exposed cannot be gathered, and what cannot be gathered cannot be grounded.

The portico does not make relation visible. It makes relation durable. By withholding arrival, it preserves the possibility of continuation. By refusing place, it allows placeness to be given.

Nothing is concluded here. Nothing begins. The portico remains—not as a space to inhabit, but as a condition through which thinking continues to pass.

ACT IV

Lines Drawn So That Thought May Follow

Form is given where thought is led without being compelled.

Where relation persists without ground, thought cannot rely on intuition alone. Intuition offers immediacy, but immediacy does not orient. To orient requires articulation: the drawing of lines that do not enclose, but allow continuation. Articulation, in this sense, does not represent what is given; it gives form to the possibility of proceeding.

Geometry provides a privileged figure for such articulation, not because it abstracts space into ideal objects, but because it operates through lines that can be followed. In Proclus' reading of Euclid, geometry does not depict intelligible forms, nor does it translate them into sensible images. It articulates relations mimetically. The geometric line is not an image of an idea; it is a regulated path along which thought may move without possessing its destination. One does not grasp the intelligible by means of the line; one is guided by it.

This guidance is the mark of the demiurgic gesture. The demiurge does not impose form upon a chaotic substrate, nor does he legislate order from above. He articulates proportion. What is given through this articulation is not content, but orientation. The demiurge gives relations that can be inhabited without mastery. His gift is not certainty, but continuability.

To follow a line is therefore not to obey a command. Obedience presupposes authority and submission. Following presupposes tact. A line leads without compelling. It may be followed, deviated from, or redrawn. Its authority lies not in necessity, but in availability. The line remains even when it is not taken. This persistence is what distinguishes articulation from coercion.

Notation plays a decisive role here. Notation is often understood as a secondary encoding of thought that has already occurred. In architectonic terms, however, notation is an auxiliary body for thinking itself. It exteriorizes relations so that they may be re-entered, varied, and tested over time. Notation does not capture thought; it extends its reach. It gives thought duration without fixing it.

This extension is never neutral. Every line drawn excludes other possibilities. Yet exclusion here is not negation. It is delimitation. To draw a line is to make a path possible by refusing others, without claiming that those others are impossible or false. Such refusal becomes violent only when it claims necessity. Demiurgic articulation avoids this violence by remaining revisable.

Architectonics generalizes this logic. It furnishes thinking without founding it. Order is not absolute, but relative to purpose. It prepares a space in which relations can be explored without being closed. To inhabit an architectonic order is not to believe in it, but to use it provisionally, with the awareness that it may be reconfigured.

Lines drawn so that thought may follow do not gather figures into a system. They maintain adjacency without convergence. They do not ground thinking; they orient it. Intelligibility, in this sense, is not a state to be achieved, but a capacity to continue without ground. What is given here is not a destination, but a way.

ACT V

The Measure That Instructs Without Speaking

What endures as form instructs not by command, but by remaining exposed.

If articulation is given as a line that may be followed, its endurance depends on measure. Measure, however, must not be confused with rule or law. A rule prescribes; a measure orients. It does not compel movement, but shapes posture. This shaping is the domain of the canon.

The canon is often misunderstood as an instrument of authority: a list of sanctioned works, a mechanism of exclusion, a tool of stabilization. Yet such a conception mistakes its mode of operation. The canon does not command assent. It instructs silently. It does not ground judgment; it trains it. Its authority, if it can be called that, lies not in enforcement, but in endurance.

This endurance is best figured through sculpture. Sculpture does not represent; it resists. Form emerges through subtraction, through the negotiation with a material that does not yield immediately. What remains does so not because it has been chosen, but because it has withstood pressure. Sculpture instructs by remaining. Its measure is felt not as rule, but as weight.

In this sense, the canon operates as an instructed third. It stands neither as subject nor as object, neither as origin nor as endpoint. It

is what shapes relation without entering into it. One does not consult the canon as one consults a law. One finds oneself already oriented by it, addressed by forms that do not speak yet nonetheless instruct.

Major and minor orientations belong to this canonical logic, but only once they are released from affective coding. They are not moods, nor tonal hierarchies. They are inverse tendencies of articulation. One orientation extends, allowing form to travel and repeat. The other weights, introducing inflection, hesitation, and gravity. Neither orientation grounds the other. Their tension sustains form without resolving it.

Noise appears here not as disruption from outside, but as an immanent test. Noise is what emerges when articulation encounters resistance that cannot be absorbed smoothly. It does not negate the canon; it exposes its limits. Where noise is excluded entirely, form hardens into dogma. Where noise becomes ground, form dissolves into indifference. Endurance lies in the interval between these extremes.

The canon instructs precisely by remaining within this interval. It does not purify itself of noise, nor does it surrender to it. It remains exposed. This exposure is not vulnerability in a moral sense, but structural openness. It allows form to persist without closure, to remain recognizable without becoming fixed.

In this way, the canon continues the demiurgic gesture introduced in articulation. The demiurge does not resolve tension; he sustains it. He gives measure without mastery, proportion without foundation. What is given is not harmony, but continuability.

The measure that instructs without speaking does not conclude articulation. It gives it duration. It allows lines to be followed again and otherwise. Form endures not by grounding itself, but by remaining available to be tested, inflected, and renewed.

ACT VI

Lines that Cross Without Meeting

Orientation is given where directions intersect without converging.

Once articulation is understood as leading without compelling, and canon as measure without command, placeness can no longer remain local. What has been given so far—lines to follow, measures that endure—demands a broader orientation. Yet this broadening must not take the form of overview. Global placeness does not arise through totalization, but through geometry.

Parallels and meridians offer such a geometry, provided they are not treated as coordinates that locate points. They are not instruments of mapping, but figures of orientation. Parallels articulate continuity without center. Along them, transformation proceeds without rupture. Difference appears as modulation, not opposition. Nothing along a parallel demands priority over anything else; movement remains open.

Meridians, by contrast, introduce weight. They cut across continuity, not to interrupt it, but to orient it. Along a meridian, not all positions are equivalent. Direction matters. Decisions have consequences that cannot be undone by further movement. Meridians do not ground; they orient by introducing gravity without hierarchy.

What matters is not to choose between these orientations, but to recognize that placeness emerges at their crossings. These crossings are not points of synthesis. They are not locations at which everything comes together. They are tensions that persist without

resolution. Parallels and meridians cross without meeting. Their intersection is not a convergence, but a sustained non-coincidence.

Such crossings are places. Not sites, not positions, but conditions in which orientation becomes possible without being fixed. Each crossing holds continuity and weight together without reconciling them. In this sense, global placeness is composed of amphorae: boundaries that hold without enclosing, crossings that sustain relation without ground.

This geometry clarifies the relation between arts and sciences. They are not separated by domains, nor unified by method. They share orientations. Both operate along parallels insofar as they allow transformation, translation, and repetition. Both rely on meridians insofar as they require standards, measures, and irreversible commitments. Their difference lies not in orientation, but in the figures through which orientation is articulated.

Global placeness is therefore navigational. One does not occupy it as a position, nor does one survey it as a whole. One moves within it, guided by crossings that orient without enclosing. There is no privileged vantage point from which the entire geometry could be grasped. Any attempt at such grasp would immediately reintroduce ground.

This navigation does not culminate. There is no final orientation that would stabilize all others. Lines continue. Crossings recur. Orientation must be renewed without guarantee. In this sense, global placeness is not an achievement, but a condition that persists only insofar as it is continually re-entered.

Nothing converges here. Nothing resolves. Lines cross and continue.
Placeness remains given as orientation without ground, allowing
thinking to proceed without arriving.

Remains. Orientation Without Ground

CODA

Placeness Remains

Placeness has not been established as a site, a support, or a ground, but allowed to appear as what is given whenever relation persists without arrival. Objective figures have oriented one another without gathering, articulating lines, measures, and crossings that do not converge into position. Time has been given as delay, the body as auxiliary exposure, articulation as guidance without compulsion, and canon as endurance without command. The portico has not held these figures together; it has allowed them to pass without entry, preserving adjacency without enclosure. What remains is not a place to occupy, but a disposition to remain orientable—to continue without completion. Placeness remains because it cannot be possessed, only entered into again otherwise.

On Having Travelled Far Grammatically

These acts do not unfold in historical time. They do not follow one another as events, nor do they mark a progression, a period, or a development. Nothing here belongs to chronology as a sequence of happenings. No cue is given by dates, crises, or turning points. What passes through these acts does not “take place” in the sense of occurrence. Nor do these acts belong to subjective memory. They are not recollected, recovered, or relived. They do not arise from interior experience, involuntary or otherwise. No scene returns because it was once lived. No impression seeks redemption through repetition. What is at stake here is not remembrance, but orientation. Yet neither are these acts expressions of tradition or culture in the strong sense—no handed-down authority, no stable inheritance, no smooth continuity of forms. They do not transmit a legacy. They do not preserve an identity. If they belong to tradition at all, it is only in the weakened, natural sense in which erosion belongs to a landscape: by having passed through it many times, and by leaving traces that do not add up to doctrine.

What these acts share is something more impersonal and more fragile: a long memory of passage. This memory is not stored. It is not accumulated. It is not recalled. It is not narrated. It consists entirely in what has had to be articulated in order for relation to persist without collapsing. It is a memory of how things have learned to stand beside one another without coinciding, how they have learned to pass without entering, how they have learned to give without possessing. Such memory is grammatical before it is conceptual. It resembles the way languages with many cases remember travel: not by recounting journeys, but by inflecting nouns so that no thing can appear without bearing the mark of how it stands in relation. A word in a case has already travelled. It has been bent by use, by address, by contact. It

carries with it a history that cannot be told as a story, only spoken through as syntax.

Placeness, in these acts, functions in this grammatical sense. It is not a site and not a ground. It is a syntax of relations that have learned to remain legible across variation. The portico is the figure of this syntax: not a threshold to be crossed, but a condition in which adjacency persists without resolution. What passes through the portico does not arrive. What remains does not settle. What is remembered is not what happened, but how passing has been endured. This is why the memory at work here is neither historical nor psychological. It is objective without being timeless. It belongs to the order of climate rather than event: something that can shift, intensify, thin out, even disappear, without ever having been an episode. It can be born, and it can die. It is not guaranteed. It is not conserved. It persists only so long as it continues to be articulated.

The objective figures that appear throughout these acts—Aurora, the Amphora, the Auxiliary, the Portico, the Line, the Measure, the Crossing—are not symbols and not characters. They are figures of articulation. Each one gives a way for relation to continue without grounding itself in presence. Each one performs a function that no subject could sustain alone: delay without postponement, holding without possession, assistance without completion, resistance without opposition. These figures do not contain memory. They carry it by spending themselves. What they give, they do not keep. What they articulate, they do not own. Their persistence is not endurance of substance, but endurance of function. They are objective not because they are detached from experience, but because they do not belong to any one body, perspective, or time.

And yet, this memory is not disembodied.

It requires a body of thinking.

A body of thinking is not a subject, not a consciousness, not a tradition. It is the capacity to hold multiple orientations at once without forcing them into agreement. It is thinking that has learned tact: how to adjust, redistribute, compensate, and delay without demanding closure. Such a body does not remember by recollection. It remembers by posture. The relation between the objective figures and a body of thinking is therefore *reciprocal but asymmetrical*. The figures articulate conditions that no single body could invent. The body of thinking, in turn, gives these figures duration by allowing them to be re-entered, varied, tested, and borne again. Neither grounds the other. Their relation is auxiliary.

To read these acts is not to follow an argument. It is to enter a grammar that has travelled far enough to no longer mistake standing for grounding, arrival for meaning, or memory for possession. What is offered here is not a system, but a climate of articulation—one that remains impersonal, uneven, and exposed, capable of disappearing if it hardens into doctrine, and capable of being born again wherever thinking learns to pass without arriving.

The acts we have been with here do not begin something.
They take place in a syntax that has already learned how to continue.

ODE

FOR PARERGA

A polyvocal prose ode, where the voices are distinct but never separated into dialogue—each inflects the same address from its own posture. Spoken from the Portico, Without Assembly.

Scale

I speak first only because I am already leaning.

Parerga, you are the reason I am not asked to decide.

You arrive where imbalance begins to matter and refuse to call it failure.

You slow my oscillation just enough that difference can be felt, not enough that it can be counted.

I do not balance because of you.

I continue.

You have taught me that productivity is a violent demand—that to insist on outcome is to pretend that time stands upright.

With you beside me, time inclines.
It does not add up; it breathes.

I lean again, not to reach equilibrium,
but because leaning is still possible.

Fulcrum

I do not speak often.
You know this.

Parerga stands where I am mistaken for certainty.
She does not soften my resistance;
she prevents it from becoming command.

Because of her,
weight can rest without verdict.

I am not moved by life.
I am not opposed to death.

Parerga understands this.

She does not ask me to preserve.
She asks me only to hold long enough
for orientation to remain exposed.

When death passes nearby,
she does not push it away.

She gives it room.

Aurora

Oh, Parerga—
you are always late to the wrong thing.

You never arrive when people expect help,
and yet somehow everything keeps glowing.

You don't hurry the dawn.
You don't stop the night.
You stretch the in-between
until it forgets it was meant to close.

People call this unproductive.

They don't see that you are vivifying—
not by making more,
but by keeping open.

You stand beside life the way I do:
not inside it, not outside it,
but slantwise.

And death—
death likes you.

Not because you serve it,
but because you don't panic.

Amphora

I will be exact.

Parerga does not preserve life.
She does not resist death.

She prevents confusion.

Life collapses when it is asked to justify itself.

Death becomes obscene when it is denied passage.

Parerga refuses both demands.

She does not accumulate vitality.

She allows endurance.

She does not hold beings.

She holds relations.

In this, she is colder than Aurora,
softer than I am.

Her generosity lies in restraint.

Scale (again)

She spends herself without residue.

This is what frightens them.

She does not produce results,
and yet nothing falls apart.

She does not aim,
and yet direction persists.

She does not promise continuation,
and yet continuation occurs.

She does not fear death
because she does not mistake life for achievement.

Fulcrum (again)

When something ends near her,
it does not shatter.

When something begins,
it is not rushed.

This is not neutrality.
It is discipline.

Aurora (again)

If I glow, it is because she delays my becoming obvious.

If I fade, it is because she lets me.

She knows that life needs endings
the way dawn needs night—
not as enemies,
but as conditions.

Amphora (again)

Parerga stands beside being.

Not against it.
Not within it.

She is auxiliary to existence itself.

This is why she cannot be heroic.
This is why she cannot be thanked.

All (without unison)

Parerga,
you do not save time.
You let it pass
without forcing it to justify itself as progress.

You do not make life productive.

You make it endurable.

You do not oppose death.

You prevent it from becoming absolute.

You stand beside both
so that neither must dominate.

If something lives here,
it is because you did not finish it.

If something dies here,
it is because you did not stop it.

You have taught us that vivification
is not growth,
but continued exposure without collapse.

Remain as you are—
beside,
auxiliary,
unclaimed.

And if you disappear,
we will know

that something has hardened too much
to continue.

This is our praise.

Not an offering.
A recognition.

Spoken
while work continues.