

## **A Sensuous Pursuit of Justice: An Examination of the Erotically Pleasurable and Morally Formative Practice of Yoga**

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### **Abstract**

This paper explores the suggestion that what feels good to our bodies has the potential to function as moral/spiritual power for being and doing what we discern we ought. Advocates for an ‘ethical eroticism’ include Christian theo-ethicists Mary Elizabeth Hobgood, Carter Heyward, and Marvin Ellison, as well as civil rights activist Audre Lorde. After examining the conditions by which the erotic might be considered a morally formative and ethically potent resource for moral action, that which thwarts and distorts pleasure and sensuality towards unjust ends will be surveyed. In response to the disembodied and anti-erotic conditions that many of us have been formed through, the acute need for ethically oriented embodied practices is recognized. The practice of yoga is discussed as one such possibility, wherein practitioners are encouraged to attend and feel fully into the affective-knowledge of being a fleshy body alongside the fleshy bodies in the rest of the cosmos. Yogic breathing is presented as one inroad towards orienting disciples into their bodies so that they might feel their way pleasurably towards justice/love.

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### **Introduction**

In Mary Elizabeth Hobgood’s *Dismantling Privilege: An Ethics of Accountability*, the author advocates for an “ethical eroticism” as a response to the multiple and overlapping injustices that she wrestles with in this work.<sup>1</sup> An ethical eroticism

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1 Mary Elizabeth Hobgood, *Dismantling Privilege: An Ethics of Accountability* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2009), 134.

would nurture and trust in the embodied and sensuous experience of passion and regard this depth of connective feeling as a resource towards peace and justice. An ethical eroticism would be grounded in, considerate of and motivated by respectful touch, mutual pleasure, and the affirmation of the goodness of bodily life.<sup>2</sup> Hobgood suggests that moral agents who develop vibrant sensuous connections with self, human and non-human neighbors are more likely to be moved towards a sustainable engagement of seeking out and building the conditions for right-relations.<sup>3</sup> Being in touch with the affective-knowledge of one's own sensuousness and becoming sensitive to one's connections to the fleshiness of human and non-human neighbors, moral agents are emboldened to reject the abuse of any and all bodies.

Hobgood is certainly not alone in her proposal for an ethical eroticism as the foundation for the pursuit of justice. Christian theo-ethicists Marvin Ellison and Carter Heyward and civil rights activist and feminist Audre Lorde each suggest that erotic and sensual pleasure can be catalysts for justice.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, they each suggest that sensual pleasure can be a helpful guide in knowing what *is* just and can be experienced in and through the pursuit of justice.<sup>5</sup> Rather than being considered something frivolous in relation to the moral life, what feels good to our bodies can be "an important standard for judging what is worthwhile and useful for ethical living."<sup>6</sup> Ellison affirms that being in touch with what the body feels and alert to what the body experiences as pleasure, moral agents "are less likely to become numb to oppression or to ignore their own pain or the pain of others."<sup>7</sup>

What strikes me about Hobgood, Heyward, Lorde and Ellison's assertions is the notion that the shape of resistance to patriarchy, racism, ableism, sexism, heterosexism and capitalism—or the practice of contesting all those systems and behaviors that create conditions for unjust relations—might be sensuously pleasurable and guided by the sensuality of our bodies.<sup>8</sup> I will examine what it means to suggest that erotic sensual pleasure might be employed as a guideline and cri-

2 Ibid., 135.

3 Ibid.

4 Carter Heyward, *Touching our Strength: The Erotic as Power and the Love of God* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1989), 27. Marvin Ellison, *Erotic Justice: A Liberating Ethic of Sexuality* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 80. Audre Lorde, 'The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power', *Sister Outsider* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984), 53.

5 Ellison, *Erotic Justice*, 3. Heyward, *Touching our Strength*, 102. Lorde, 'The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power', 56.

6 Ellison, *Erotic Justice*, 80.

7 Ibid., 81.

8 The focus of this paper is not on any of these systems or structures per se. Patriarchy, racism, ableism, sexism, heterosexism and capitalism are all subject to more thorough exploration than this paper offers. However, I write from the perspective that patriarchal, racist, ableist, sexist, and heterosexist relations demonstrate patterns of interaction and power, which prohibit the flourishing of right relationship between moral agents. I also write from the perspective that the capitalist economic order helps to create the systemic conditions for the flourishing of these unjust relations.



teria for the Christian disciples' practice of justice-seeking. Joining in creating a more moral world is what disciples of Jesus have been called towards; deconstructing and creatively resisting systems of privilege and oppression participates in what Hobgood suggests to be at the core of the Christian vocation.<sup>9</sup> This interpretation of justice-seeking as a cornerstone of faithful living is certainly not new; liberative Christian theo-ethicists and activists have over and over proclaimed that "to know God is to do justice."<sup>10</sup> If the sensuousness of the body has the capacity to enliven moral agents to their power for doing and being what they discern they ought, then Christian discipleship should be attentive to sensuousness and the pleasures of the body.

It is clear that not all pleasure leads to justice-seeking or is a sign that relations are just. People take pleasure in consuming materials that cause harm, and people experience pleasure relationally without that signifying that interactions are just. I will consider the conditions that thwart sensuous pleasure being employed as a norm towards justice, and as a response to these obstructions, I will propose and examine the practice of yoga as a means by which the foundations for an erotic justice might be cultivated. I am offering the tradition of yoga as a praxis in this direction because I have felt joyfully propelled towards right-relations through my practice and teaching.

## Erotic Justice

In order to determine how in fact pleasure, sensuality and the erotic might move individuals and communities of disciples towards justice-seeking and might be indicators for what is just, it will be helpful to first lay out some rudimentary statements and claims as they relate to terms like *justice*, *sensuality*, and the *erotic*. I will examine each of these terms briefly in order to be able to use them fluidly thereafter.

Carter Heyward defines *justice* as the sharing of power: in just relations, each moral agent is related to and relates to others in such a way so as to be encouraged into being more fully who they are.<sup>11</sup> Contexts are just when all agents are in right-relationship, which is to say, when all are empowered to experience themselves and one another as intrinsically valuable and irreplaceable earth creatures. In just mutual relations amongst individuals, the movement of the Holy is discernible; for Heyward, the nature of God is justice.<sup>12</sup> Marvin Ellison uses the term *justice* to refer to the "ongoing, never-ending journey to remake community by

9 Hobgood, *Dismantling Privilege*, 15.

10 Robert McAfee Brown, *Unexpected News: Reading the Bible with Third World Eyes* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1984), 68.

11 Heyward, *Touching our Strength*, 191.

12 Ibid.

strengthening relationship. . . . A commitment to justice means correcting whatever harms people, other earth creatures, and the earth itself.”<sup>13</sup> In line with these definitions, justice here will be conceived of in the following way: a context is just when people relate to one another and to all earth neighbors in respectful and life-honoring ways.

Heyward suggests that what connects us to one another and to the entire intertwined cosmos is our *sensuality*. Sensuality provides our relational grounding with the world, for it refers to the way we feel our aliveness as bodies with earth-neighbors. *Sensuality*, Heyward puts forth, “is the channel through which we feel, for example, either heat or pain. We are sensual persons: we touch and enjoy; taste and delight; hear and get angry; smell and are excited; see and fear.”<sup>14</sup> *Sensuality* refers to what happens in bodies, to bodies and through bodies in the “mingling of our senses and emotions.”<sup>15</sup> Sensuality has to do with the sensations of materiality as well as to the embodied emotional responses that arise in response to sensations.

Audre Lorde advocates that the *erotic* has to do with “how acutely and fully we can feel in the doing” rather than a question “only of what we do”.<sup>16</sup> *Eroticism* has to do with our body-selves’ capacity for living fully as sensual beings. It is our ability to recognize, pay attention to, and thrive in the movement of feeling occurring within our bodies, as we engage in any act.<sup>17</sup> For Lorde, the erotic is an experience of “life-force energy”, which enlivens moral agents towards what she terms, “our deepest knowledge”, or our sense of and appreciation for what it means to be fully alive.<sup>18</sup> This depth of feeling becomes the lens through which all aspects of life are evaluated; that which frustrates these feelings of being fully alive, or diminishes this erotic engagement with the world, is scrutinized and can be actively challenged via the energy of the erotic.<sup>19</sup> The experience of the erotic drives efforts towards justice insofar as moral agents become dissatisfied with all that works against the erotic in their own lives and in the lives of their neighbors.

Heyward defines the *erotic* with similar emphasis on the moral dimension: the erotic is the deep yearning that exists for bodies to connect sensually with one another and with the world in mutual ways.<sup>20</sup> The erotic is “the flow of our senses, the movement of our sensuality, in which we experience our bodies’ power and desire to connect with others.”<sup>21</sup> The *erotic* is our most “fully embodied experience of the

13 Ellison, *Erotic Justice*, 2.

14 Ibid.

15 Heyward, *Touching our Strength*, 193.

16 Lorde, ‘Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power’, 77.

17 Hobgood, *Dismantling Privilege*, 117.

18 Lorde, ‘Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power’, 55.

19 Ibid., 57.

20 Heyward, *Touching our Strength*, 187.

21 Ibid.



love of God”;<sup>22</sup> the erotic, as an experience of God, propels us towards mutual and just relations.<sup>23</sup> The erotic moves us out of the cult of individualism and towards mutuality (which for Heyward, refers to respectful and responsible relation—where two or more individuals share power equitably).<sup>23</sup> At the same time, the erotic draws us more fully and deeply into ourselves. *Eroticism* as it will be used here includes sexual connection, but like Lorde and Heyward, I wish to use the term *erotic* to embrace all activities that are charged with an experience and awareness of sensuous fullness as we act and engage as body-selves with other and towards other earth-neighbors. The erotic is the feeling of being fully alive in one’s body alongside of and with earth neighbors. The erotic is the opposite of numbness and objectification; this affective energy empowers us to become subjects of our own lives, and enables us to respect the fleshy subjectivity of our neighbors.

### **Sensuous Disconnect and Body Disrespect**

While Ellison, Hobgood, Heyward and Lorde all turn to the sensuous and erotic as a vital source for moral affective-knowing, they also each recognize that the conditions of the patriarchal, racist, ableist, sexist, heterosexist and capitalist order in which we find ourselves make it difficult for individuals and communities to engage the erotic as an instructive ethical gauge. Two features characterize this difficulty: we have lost the capacity to be attentive to and thrive within our own bodies and with other’s bodies, and our body’s desires have been deployed towards unjust ends. That is, we are often suffering from a disconnect to our sensuous body-selves and the body-selves of our neighbors, and this disconnect has fostered conditions in which we have come to desire materials/relationships that work against right-relationship.

Disconnection from our sensuous body-selves occurs with the dulling and disavowal of sense-wisdom. Disconnection from our sensuous body-selves is discernible in all practices and systems that reify and distinguish reason, and hierarchize particular kinds of reason, over sensual experience and body-knowledge, as well as in systems and practices that idealize particular kinds of bodies rather than others. Whenever and wherever the sensuous experience of particular body-selves is disregarded for the sake of objective and reasonable truth or in relation to what the idealized body should look like and be able to do, pathways for unjust relations through disembodiment and alienation from the senses are created. The moral wisdom that is discerned through our bodies is a unique kind of knowing that cannot be substituted by other means; when what we learn through our senses is marginalized, oppressed or negated, Heyward suggests that the effect is a pull-

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 21.

ing “away from one another and hence from ourselves.”<sup>24</sup> If our sensuality is our capacity to connect with the world, the dulling or denial of sense-wisdom leads to alienation from our embodied experience and therein to disengagement with the world.

Heyward and Ellison each suggest that disconnection from our own sensuous body-selves and from the bodies of others leads to moral insensitivity and body-disrespect.<sup>25</sup> Disrespect for bodies is a primary quality of unjust configurations of social relating, and “at its worst, body disrespect becomes contemptuous and hateful toward the body and toward concrete, particular bodies.”<sup>26</sup> Heyward says that being alienated from our sensuous desires and feelings is attributable to, and creates the foundation for, the perpetuation of relationships that dominate, coerce and are marked by violence.<sup>27</sup>

Disconnection from the sensuous erotic experiences of being alive leads not only to moral insensitivity but also to the fostering of explicit and embedded pleasures in and desires for that which is unjust.<sup>28</sup> Explicit antierotic desire is manifested in the pleasure some bodyselves take in being cruelly, and non-consensually, controlling in relationships. Explicit antierotic desire is witnessed to in abusive interactions between body-selves—between those who have power to control other body-selves without their permission. Embedded antierotic human desire is observable in unintentional and oftentimes invisible abusive, over-consumptive and objectifying relations between earth neighbors. Embedded antierotic desire is witnessed to in many of the consumption cycles operative in the North American context; where one’s buying and desiring habits frequently have hidden and inadvertent consequences on human and non-human neighbors.

In light of this context of disconnection and anti-erotic desire, the invitation to respond to sensuous pleasure as a way to discern living ethically is not a *carte blanche* claim that whatever feels good and right is in fact good and right. The sensuous erotic pleasure that might lead to justice is not the same as the anti-erotic desire for material and monetary accumulation, nor is it an explicit pleasure in harming neighbors. Marvin Ellison suggests that real “soul-satisfying pleasure” is “found in pursuing justice as right-relatedness in all our connections, from the most intimate to the most public.”<sup>29</sup> In consideration of the ways that this real “soul-satisfying pleasure” has been subverted through disconnection and anti-erotic desires, practices or behaviors that might help nurture an ethical eroticism must be pursued if sensuous pleasure is to be understood as a guide towards justice. We

24 Heyward, *Touching our Strength*, 95.

25 Ibid., 106-108. Ellison, *Erotic Justice*, 40-43.

26 Ellison, *Erotic Justice*, 41.

27 Heyward, *Touching our Strength*, 95.

28 Ellison, *Erotic Justice*, 30-58.

29 Ibid., 3.



will have to engage in practices that bring us into our fleshy bodies if we are to feel our way towards just relations with the fleshy-bodies of our neighbors.

### **Yoga as an Erotically Ethical Moral Praxis**

The practice of yoga is one distinct avenue that may assist in re-orienting moral agents away from body-disconnection and the desire for cruel and non-consensual control and towards an erotic justice.

In turning to yoga as a means towards getting back in touch with our senses so that we might feel our way pleurably towards right-relations, a few caveats must be named. First, I will not be providing a fulsome history of the development of yoga; as a 5000-year-old tradition, this is clearly beyond my scope. Second, this is not a work of comparative theology, and so I will not be examining and mining distinct worldviews for parallels or conflicts. Rather, I turn to yoga as a praxis through which disembodiment and moral insensitivity might be sensuously destabilized. Third, the practice of yoga in the North American context is certainly not always just. The eruption of yoga in Canada and the United States has oftentimes been culturally imperialistic. The use of Indian and Hindu (which is itself a problematic and indiscriminate religious category) identities and concepts, or the disassociation of these from the practice of yoga in studios, gyms, and businesses across the continent, is very often appropriative and insensitive to the rich and ongoing history of this tradition. Additionally, the accessibility of yoga within the North American context is problematic. Because it exists within a patriarchal, racist, ableist, sexist, heterorosexist and capitalist context, there are certainly instances and trends within the practice and business of yoga that betray and participate in these hierarchies of access and privilege. Yoga is not a neutral phenomenon, nor is it always used towards the seeking of justice. In recognition of all of the aforementioned, my treatment and exploration of yoga will inevitably be wanting. Nevertheless, I will proceed in turning to yoga as a physical and philosophical tradition as interpreted from my position of practicing and having been trained in the lineage of Krishnamacharya—one of the most prominent teachers of modern yoga. I do so because it is clear to me through my own practice and teaching that yoga has something to offer to our disembodied and anti-erotic condition. The practice of yoga has the potential to guide practitioners into their flesh—into the sensuous breathy experience of being embodied alongside other bodies.

Yoga is often translated as the act of union, or yoking, but as Michael Stone—a well-known yoga teacher and writer living in Toronto—suggests, rather than a set of *practices* or *actions* as such, wherein we are actively joining two seemingly disparate things, yoga is primarily a state of being in which one is able to occupy the present moment unremittingly, and in this state, come to the felt knowledge of

the deep continuity of all life.<sup>30</sup> The state of yoga is one in which past and future are not at the forefront of consciousness; yoga is the experience of stillness within the subtleties and intricacies of the present moment. Awake to the present moment, Stone suggests that the basic unity and interconnectedness of all of life is exposed.<sup>31</sup> The techniques of yoga—including physical postures and breath work—are means by which practitioners might sensuously and mindfully orient themselves through present moment awareness to this very deep knowing of the continuity and interconnectivity of all life.<sup>32</sup> What is significant to note here is that while yoga offers means towards inhabiting the present moment for the individual practitioner, this embodied sense of being here now is in fact a being here now together, as a particular moving and breathing corner within the whole wide web of the cosmos. Coming more fully into one's experience of the present moment through the tools that yogic practice offers, the practitioner drops into their own fleshy body, and in so doing, into the felt knowing that all bodies are related.

This state of fully inhabiting the present and interconnected moment of experience can happen on the yoga mat, but it can also happen at the dinner table, on the way to work, and while stuck in traffic. The practices that we call yogic are ways of making the state of yoga—or union in the present moment—more readily at hand for the practitioner in all arenas of their life. Yogic practice is a rehearsal for life off of the yoga mat.

There are many aspects, various interpretations and eight limbs of yoga, but the piece that I will focus on here is *prāṇāyāma*, or the practice of conscious breathing. The word *prāṇāyāma* is comprised of two Sanskrit roots: '*prāṇa*', meaning 'vital energy' or 'life force' is the first. *Prāṇa* is "the energy that animates life, and in human form it is most perceptible as the breath."<sup>33</sup> '*Ayāma*', the second root, means to expand or draw out. *Prāṇāyāma* is the practice of engaging in techniques whereby the movement of life force energy in the present moment within a person's body is drawn out and made conscious.<sup>34</sup> Various methods and breath ratios are suggested in the practices of *prāṇāyāma*, all with the goal that the mind might be drawn into the activities of the breath. The objective of *prāṇāyāma* is precisely this consciousness of the flowing of life; when we follow the breath, the mind is invited to rest into the sensations and specificities of the present moment of being alive.<sup>35</sup> Inhabiting the present moment with awareness

30 Michael Stone, *The Inner Tradition of Yoga: A Guide to Yoga Philosophy for the Contemporary Practitioner* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2008), 7-8.

31 Michael Stone, *Yoga for a World out of Balance: Teachings on Ethics and Social Action* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2009), 2.

32 Stone, *The Inner Tradition of Yoga*, 8.

33 Ibid., 123.

34 Ibid., 125.

35 Ibid.



is deeply challenging; consciousness of the breath is a means by which the mind might begin to anchor and sink in to the instant at hand, even if just briefly. With the mind entwined into the present moment through the breath, what becomes apparent is that our breath exists with specificity and uniqueness in each instant, we do not cause our own breath, and we do not breathe in isolation. Our breath, as we notice it rise and fall, is a constant reminder of our relationship in this very instant to all our earth neighbors. We simply cannot breathe in seclusion; it is a biological impossibility. When attention is paid to the breath as a method of occupying the present moment, the practitioner is drawn in to that entirely mystical feeling that we are sensuously bound up with the rest of the cosmos.

This sensual connection through breath to the rest of the cosmos might be a perspective on embodied reality that the yoga teacher or instructor names, or the practitioner might come to this awareness on their own. In many if not most yoga classes in the North American context, however, this deep sensuous and breathy connection may not be emphasized. Nevertheless, even when it is not named or encouraged, the physiological effects of conscious breathing have the potential to effect the practitioner in remarkably erotically ethical ways. When deep breathing is practiced, the autonomic nervous system—which is connected to physical processes such as digestion, respiration, heart rate, and immune function, and which regulates the mindbody's stress response in all of these areas—is being engaged.<sup>36</sup> There are three branches of our autonomic nervous system: the sympathetic, the parasympathetic and the enteric. When the body senses stress, the sympathetic nervous system—which is our fight-or-flight response—mobilizes. Trauma survivors, people with anxiety disorders and many with ongoing low to high-grade stress in their lives have sympathetic nervous systems that are chronically over-extended.<sup>37</sup> The functioning of the parasympathetic nervous system—often called the 'rest and digest' or calm and connect system—is what allows our mindbodies to recuperate from the stressors of life. For those with overworked sympathetic nervous systems, this parasympathetic response of resting and calming is often impaired. Yogic breathing triggers the parasympathetic nervous system into action for physiological reasons that are the subject of ongoing scientific research. By engaging in deep conscious breathing, what is essentially being communicated to the whole mindbody is that it is safe, and that it is okay to be at peace with one's surroundings. With the mindbody at peace, practitioners are readied for sensuous connection to self and perhaps even for a renewed openness to neighbor in the present moment.

I'm focusing on *prāṇāyāma*, or the conscious breathing aspect of yoga, for a

36 David Emerson and Elizabeth Hopper, *Overcoming Trauma through Yoga: Reclaiming Your Body* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2011), 108-109.

37 Emerson and Hopper, *Overcoming Trauma Through Yoga*, xv.

few reasons. First, because the physical aspects of yoga are those that have come to be conceived of in the North American context as the whole of yoga, it is helpful to stay with the physical aspects to examine how they might intersect with the disembodied and anti-erotic state that I've briefly outlined. Second, by focusing on *prāṇāyāma*, and not on *āsana*, or the physical postures and movements of yoga, I'm pointing to the fact that the breath is really at the heart of all physical yoga practices. Krishnamacharya is quoted as telling his students "if you can breathe, you can practice yoga!" To practice yoga, students do not have to be able to contort their bodies or look a certain way; they need to be able to breathe, and they are invited to do so with increased awareness. Third, in the tradition that I'm trained in, it is said that the quality of our breath influences the state of our minds, and vice versa. By attending to the breath and bringing in directions and patterns into its waves, we have the capacity to influence the thoughts of the mind. If the breath is agitated, Krishnamacharya suggests that the same goes for the mind. By bringing steadiness and softness to the breath, we introduce these qualities into the mindbody. In so doing, we make the mindbody a fertile ground for new thought and sensation patterns, breaking with antierotic affective-perception cycles. The stories of the mind and the body, and the codes of disconnection and anti-eroticism that are heaped upon our body-selves, are halted, even if for just a moment.

I'm convinced that this embodied experience can have direct ethical implications that are pertinent for the Christian disciple; if we sensuously awaken to our own erotic life force energy and come to feel this erotic charge as permeating the bodies of all our earth neighbors, we will, as the suggestion for an ethical eroticism goes, be more likely to make decisions and cultivate relations that reflect this fleshy discovery. The commitment to justice as right-relationship that disciples of Jesus are invited towards can partner fruitfully with the practice of yoga, as well as with any other embodied practice that guides moral agents into their interconnected fleshiness. Yoga's capacity to instill a passion for pursuing right-relationships is borne not out of the ideological assertion that we *should* care for the bodies of our neighbors because it is logically, ideologically or objectively the right way to be in the world, but rather from the felt experience of being connected to the rest of reality through the rhythms of body and breath.

## Conclusion

If one of the foremost obstructions to the experience of an erotic pursuit of justice is the disconnection that we experience as body-selves and in relation to the body-selves of our neighbors, then we are in need of seeking practices that might situate us into our interconnected fleshiness. The disconnection and anti-eroticism that



we have been formed into is carried somatically, and so it is to our fleshiness that we must turn in order to disentangle. We will have to challenge and transform the explicit and embedded anti-erotic desires that the conditions of inequality have instilled into our bones. This is undoubtedly a tall order. However, there are certainly many erotically pleasurable inroads in this direction; you might hike in the woods and absorb the sounds of the birds, you might dance and find remarkably synchronous rhythms with your neighbors, or you might take great erotic pleasure in the feeling of the ingredients in your hands while preparing a meal. I am suggesting that yoga, and *prāṇāyāma* specifically, is one way to awaken the erotic sensations of our own bodies and to the felt knowing that we are radically and sensuously allied with all of our neighbors, because this has been my experience. With a deep, conscious breath, the pursuit of just relations as an act of discipleship might begin. In noticing how the air enters through our nostrils, travels down our windpipes, and finds its way into our lungs and belly, we have the potential to connect to the truly erotic experience of present moment interrelation. As we are mindful of the air that travels through our system each and every moment of our lives, we might begin to sensuously experience and become inspired by the profundity of what it means to be a being that breathes alongside of and with the rest of the cosmos. That potential is there so long as we are alive, taking in this deeply shared-air.

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