continent.

Letter from the Editors

As we mentioned in our letter for the seventh issue, there was a good deal of traveling for the *continent.* crew during the fall of 2012. This current issue presents materials collected from those excursions and closes out the second volume of our publication. Peter Burleigh of the University of Basel shares his thoughts on the art event during the *Aesthetics in the 21st Century* conference. From their panel discussion at the Biennial Meeting of the Babel Working Group, the editors present the text of their conversation. The absolutely crucial and unceasingly inspiring Eileen A. Joy shares her clarion call to create and foster new domains of thinking-together.

At the invitation of Publish and Be Damned, continent. found itself in Stockholm for their publishing fair hosted by the Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation. The timing of this event was propitious as we were preparing the final versions of our first printed volume (published by Punctum Books). With this in mind, our code editor created a stage for the luminaries of the Nordic independent book making scene to play with our signature red block.

Photography is prominent in this issue, as it would happen: Peter Burleigh discusses the photographs of Walter Derungs, there are the photos from Sweden, Timothy Morton and Paul Thomas share a photographic stroll through a Sydney neighborhood, and Alexander Galloway discusses François Laruelle's fiction-photography arriving at a utopian technique free from representation.

2013 is shaping up to be a remarkable one for the good ship *continent.* With the Department of Eagles we are hosting our first conference in Tirana, Albania. We will be sponsoring a series of events in Mexico City that will culminate in a special issue with figures from the so-called Slovenian School. The *drift* issue will be available this summer... just a host of activities.

We thank you for taking us with you and we welcome your collaborations.

continent.

Laruelle and Art

Alexander R. Galloway

In the early 1990s François Laruelle wrote an essay on James Turrell, the American artist known for his use of light and space.[1] While it briefly mentions Turrell's *Roden Crater* and is cognizant of his other work, the essay focuses on a series of twenty aquatint etchings made by Turrell called *First Light* (1989-1990). Designed to stand alone as prints, *First Light* nevertheless acts as a kind of backward glance revisiting and meditating on earlier corner light projections made by Turrell in the late 1960s, in particular works like *Afrum-Pronto* (1967).

For the exhibition of *First Light* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1990, "the aquatints [were] arranged in groups based on the white shape that hovers in the dense black field of each print. In the installation, with light projected onto the images, the shapes appear to glow and float; viewed in sequence, they seem to move. The effect, from print to print, is tracelike and mesmerizing."[2]

"I am dealing with no object," Turrell said in a lecture a few years after producing *First Light*. "I am dealing with no image, because I want to avoid associative, symbolic thought... I am dealing with no focus or particular place to look. With no object, no image and no focus, what are you looking at?"[3] Indeed the object of *First Light* is perception itself, as Turrell was the first to admit.

No object, no image, no focus—no wonder Laruelle was drawn to *First Light*. It represents the very core principles of the non-standard method. For Laruelle, Turrell's art work poses a basic problem. "Light makes manifest," he acknowledges. "But what will manifest the light?"[4] Systems of representation reveal aspects of the world to perceiving subjects; this is how light makes manifest. But is it possible to see light *in* itself, not in relation to a perceived object? Is it possible to manifest the rigorously immanent genericness of light itself?

Laruelle's essay on Turrell makes two essential claims, one about perception and the other about light. Regarding the former, Laruelle asserts that we must *think* perception not think

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1. François Laruelle, "A Light Odyssey: La découverte de la lumière comme problème théorique et esthétique" (Poitiers: le Confort Moderne, 1991), 1, this and other unattributed translations are my own. I thank Miguel Abreu for bringing this essay to my attention.
2. "First Light: Twenty Etchings by James Turrell," Museum of Modern Art (New York), July 1990.
3. Quoted in Amanda Boetzkes, *The Ethics of Earth Art* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 119.

about perception. Regarding the latter, Laruelle wishes to discover the *non-orientable* nature of light. As he admits, there is a light of orientation, a philosophical light. But there is also a light that does not seek to orient perception along a particular set of lines. It is this second kind of orientation that Laruelle seeks and that he sees evident in the work of Turrell. (Taking advantage of a play on words, Laruelle sometimes labels this kind of non-standard orientation "occidental" to differentiate it from what he sees as the endless orientalism of philosophy.)

Laruelle explores these two essential claims by way of three different themes stemming from Turrell's work: discovery, experimentation, and identity. Just as Deleuze did in his book on Francis Bacon, Laruelle assumes from the outset that Turrell and his art are performing theoretical work as such. Laruelle's is not a theoretical interpretation of a non-theoretical art work; the work itself is enacting the non-standard method. Turrell "has discovered a new aesthetic (and theoretical) object: light as such, the being-light of light."[5] Thus in Laruelle's view, Turrell himself discovered a non-phenomenological solution to the problem of light.

In an attempt to describe what he means by discovery, Laruelle draws attention to the subtle differences in meaning embedded in Turrell's title. "Turrell's title 'First Light' is ambiguous and can be interpreted in two ways. In the weakest sense it means just what it means, *first light*, the first among many, its own relative position in a continuous order in which it is included. In the strong sense it means *light first*, all the light given at once, without residual or supplement, without division or 'plays-of-light.'"[6]

This second sense, the strong sense, is most appealing to Laruelle, for it indicates the identity of light as a kind of first givenness, light as raw discovery or invention without supplement. Part of Laruelle's aim is to move away from the conventional way in which light appears in philosophical discourse, for example in phenomenology, which tends to think of light through a process of withdrawing and revealing. Laruelle's light is thus not white but black, absolutely black. "The black immanence of this light [...] lets it escape from all phenomenology stemming from the greco-philosophical type."[7]

In order to describe the radical nature of Turrell's non-standard art, Laruelle poses a hypothetical scenario:

> Imagine a photographer tired of using light to fix his "subject" or whatever other objects were before him. Imagine that this photographer was crazy enough to want to fix *the light as light*. If so, this would not be the light from distant stars, but a *light without stars, without source* no matter how distant or hidden, a light inaccessible to the camera. Should the photographer abandon his technique

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4. Laruelle, "A Light Odyssey," 1.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., 6.

7. Ibid., 8. On the topic of phenomenological revealing, Laruelle also notes that "when a subject is in a 'Turrellean' mode, its affect does not allow for a light that would be hidden and/or unveiled" (9). The key issue for Laruelle is that philosophy prohibits any kind of direct thought in light, in favor of reflections *on* light. "Light is the medium most favored by philosophy, and so philosophy—by way of ontology and phenomenology—must be understood as love of light more than light itself, just as philosophy is love of wisdom more than wisdom itself" (5).

and find another? Or should he generalize his technique across the various forms of the darkroom, the white cube, and the *camera obscura* in order to proliferate the angles, the frames, the perspectives, the openings and shutters used to capture (or perhaps to seduce) the light itself? Would he not be making, in essence, the kind of work that Turrell makes?[8]

Turrell's light is a light that doesn't come from the stars. Laruelle gives it an unusual label; he calls it a photic materiality.

Being both non-cosmic and non-ontological, Turrell's light does not orient the viewer. Instead, according to Laruelle, Turrell's light performs experiments on perception and retrains it according to alternative logics. This mode of experimentation produces what he calls an aesthetic generalization of perception in order to unilateralize the conventional prohibitions placed on perception by philosophy. Instead of philosophy or photography setting the agenda, "light acts instead...like a drive that has its own 'subjectivity,' or like an *a priori* force."[9] Turrell's experimental mandate, therefore, is to allow both the artist and the viewer to test perception, not to probe the limits of perception, not to mimic the way in which perception is normalized by philosophy, not to think about perception, but to think *according to* perception.

In this sense the artist and the viewer are *strictly identical*, allowing for an auto-testing of perception. It is not that one party—be it artist, viewer, or critic—is in a privileged position to arbitrate Turrell's aesthetic experiment. Instead, all parties are identical.

This brings us to the final theme in the essay, identity. The key question for Laruelle is how to see light itself, light's *identity*. For Laruelle the only way to answer the question is to break the vicious cycle of worldly self-manifestation. "There is a paradox at the heart of aesthetic sentiment," Laruelle remarks. "The paradox is the following: on the one hand light remains to a certain degree in itself. It does not lose its identity in an object [...] but on the other hand, light 'radiates.'"[10] There is no solution to the paradox, of course, since it belongs to the basic generative paradox fueling all of philosophy. Nevertheless the paradox provides Laruelle with raw material for non-standard intervention. Simply unilateralize the paradox and put both light and its radiation into immanent superposition. Such a move defangs the transcendental tendencies added to light by philosophy and reveals a purely immanent light.

Given the unusual and somewhat counter-intuitive nature of the non-standard universe, Laruelle is forced to speak in circumlocutions: light is a radiation-without-rays, or light is a reflecting-without-reflection. This might sound like jargon, yet Laruelle's "without" structures are necessary in order to designate the superimposition or unilateralization of the rivenness of the world. They aim to show "light discovered in its radical identity."[11]

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8. Ibid., 10.

9. Ibid., 14.

10. Ibid., 20. To be clear, Laruelle uses the term identity to mean something very particular, immanent sameness. His use of the term should not be confused with the way identity is used in discourses on identity politics or postmodern subject formation, particularly since these discourses typically use identity as a way to examine difference not sameness.

11. Ibid., 5.

Yet even with this brief gloss of Laruelle's Turrell essay, Laruelle's aesthetics remains elusive. So I want to expand the discussion of light by looking at Laruelle's writings on photography. By the end I hope to show that Laruelle is essentially a thinker of *utopia*, and that the best way to understand Laruelle's aesthetics, and indeed his larger non-standard method, is as a *theory of utopia*.

Laruelle's two books on photography, *The Concept of Non-Photography* and *Photo-Fiction: A Non-Standard Aesthetics*, include material written over a span of two decades.[12] Intended as companion pieces, the books pose a number of questions. What is seen in a photo? What is light? What is the photographic stance? And, perhaps most enigmatic of all, what does Laruelle mean by fiction?

"Aesthetics was always a case of tracing art within philosophy, and likewise of art understood as a lesser form of philosophy."[13] For Laruelle aesthetics involves a convoluted interaction between art that asks to be contemplated and contemplation that seeks its art. Art and philosophy co-constitute each other in terms of lack, for each completes the other: "without art, philosophy lacks sensitivity and without philosophy, art lacks thought."[14] This kind of mutual distinction is part and parcel of the philosophical process. Art and philosophy are *separated and reunited*, then policed as conjoined but distinct. A strange logic indeed, yet for Laruelle the logic is evident in everything from Plato's *Republic* to Deleuze and Guattari's *What is Philosophy?*

Photography is "a knowledge that doubles the World," he writes in the first book.[15] As an aesthetic process, photography is philosophical in that it instantiates a decision to correlate a world with an image taken of the world. When photography doubles the world, it acts philosophically on and through the world.

Laruelle does not discuss light much in *The Concept of Non-Photography*. But light appears in the second book, *Photo-Fiction*, particularly in the context of philosophical enlightenment and the flash of the photographic apparatus. Laruelle uses two terms, *éclair* and *flash*, to mark the subtle variations in different kinds of light. Laruelle associates *éclair* more with the tradition of Greek philosophy. "The flash [*éclair*] of Logos," he remarks, "is the Greek model of thought."[16] While he uses *flash* more commonly when discussing the physical apparatus of the photographic camera. Although it would be hasty to assume that Laruelle poses the two terms in normative opposition—*éclair* bad and *flash* good—for by the end he specifies that both kinds of light are philosophical, and that both need to be non-standardized.

As in his other writings, Laruelle accomplishes this by subjecting photography to the non-standard method. He proposes a Principle of Aesthetic Sufficiency and shows how art and aesthetics have traditionally been allied with philosophy. Likewise he describes a Principle of

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12. François Laruelle, *The Concept of Non-Photography / Le concept de non-photographie*, trans. Robin Mackay (Falmouth, UK and New York: Urbanomic and Sequence, 2011), and François Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction, a Non-Standard Aesthetics / Photo-fiction, une esthétique non-standard*, trans. Drew Burk (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2012).

13. Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction*, 4, translation modified.

14. Ibid.

15. Laruelle, *The Concept of Non-Photography*, 11.

16. Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction*, 37.

Photographic Sufficiency, indicating how photography is sufficient to accommodate all possible images, at least in principle. In an echo of how deconstructivists spoke of philosophy in terms of logocentrism, Laruelle labels photography's sufficiency a *photo-centrism*, and discusses how philosophy conceives of thought itself as a kind of photographic transcendental.

The process of non-standardization goes by several names and is defined in different ways. In recent writings Laruelle has begun to speak of the non-standard method in terms of *fiction*. Fiction means performance, invention, creativity, artifice, construction; for example, thought is fictive because it fabricates. (Although Laruelle always specifies that such fabrication only happens in an immanent and real sense).

Fiction might seem like a strange word choice for an anti-correlationist, yet Laruelle avoids the vicious circle of correlationism by devising a type of fiction that is non-expressive and non-representational. Laruelle's fiction is purely immanent to itself. It is not a fictionalized version of something else, nor does it try to fabricate a fictitious world or narrative based on real or fantastical events.

"Non-standard aesthetics is creative and inventive on its own terms and in its own way. Non-standard aesthetics is a fiction-philosophy [*philo-fiction*], a philosophico-artistic genre that tries to produce works using only pure and abstract thought. It does not create concepts in parallel to works of art--like that Spinozist Deleuze proposed, even though Deleuze himself was very close to embarking on a non-standard aesthetics."[17]

To subject philosophy to the non-standard method is to create a fiction philosophy. Likewise to subject photography to the same method produces a similar result. "The fiction-photo [*photo-fiction*] is a sort of generic extension or generalization of the 'simple' photo, the material photo."[18]

As he said previously in *The Concept of Non-Photography*, "the task of a rigorous thought is rather to found—at least in principle—an abstract theory of photography—but radically abstract, absolutely non-worldly and non-perceptual."[19]

This begins to reveal the way in which Laruelle's views on photography synchronize with his interest in utopia. Photography is not oriented toward a world, nor is it a question of perception. Rather, by remaining within itself, photography indicates a non-world of pure auto-

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17. Ibid., 6, translation modified.

18. Ibid., 55, translation modified. Given that photography indexes and orients itself reflexively in relation to a world Laruelle is intent on labeling all of photography, and indeed philosophy, as characteristically modern, modernist even. "Photography is the Modernist art par excellence," he remarks. But fiction-photography is different, "fiction-photography [*photo-fiction*] is precisely the passage from an exemplarily modern aesthetics to a contemporary and inventive aesthetics that conjugates the arts and unfolds them" (ibid., 38-39, translation modified). Thus by way of generic extension or generalization, fiction-photography avoids modernism's penchant for both meta reflection and narcissistic autonomy, encapsulated in that old chestnut "art for art's sake." In this way, Laruelle might be characterized not so much as modern or anti-modern but as "alter-modern," for he asserts a non-reflexive autonomous real that is not contrary to the modern but exists along side it.

19. Laruelle, *The Concept of Non-Photography*, 8.

impression. Bored by the peculiarities of particular photographic images, Laruelle fixates instead on the simple receptiveness to light generic to all photography. Yet receptiveness does not mean representability or indexicality. That would revert photography back to philosophy. Instead Laruelle radicalizes photic receptiveness as such, focusing on the non-standard or immanent nature of the photographic image.

Rather than a return to phenomenology's notion of being in the world, Laruelle proposes what he calls being-in-photo. By this he means the photo that remains radically immanent to itself. Such a photograph produces a kind of objectivity without representation, a radical objectivity, an "objectivity so radical that it is perhaps no longer an alienation; so horizontal that it loses all intentionality; this thought so blind that it sees perfectly clearly in itself; this semblance so extended that it is no longer an imitation, a tracing, an emanation, a 'representation' of what is photographed."[20]

But it is not simply the photograph that is recast as non-standard immanence. So too the photographer, the philosopher who thinks photographically about the world. Laruelle elaborates this aspect through what he calls the photographer's stance [*posture*]:

> "Stance"—this word means: to be rooted in oneself, to be held within one's own immanence, to be at one's station rather than in a position relative to the "motif." If there is a photographic thinking, it is first and foremost of the order of a test of one's naive self rather than of the decision, of auto-impression rather than of expression, of the self-inherence of the body rather than of being-in-the-World. A thinking that is rooted *in* rather than *upon* a corporeal base.[21]

Here is further demonstration of Laruelle's theory of utopia as immanence. He inverts the conventional wisdom on utopia as a non-place apart from this world. Laruelle's utopia is a non-world, yet it is a non-world that is entirely rooted in the present. Laruelle's non-world is, in fact, entirely real. Revealing his gnostic tendencies, Laruelle's non-standard real is rooted *in* matter, even if the standard world already lays claim to that same space. The non-standard method simply asserts the real in parallel with the world.

In Laruelle the aesthetic stance is the same as the utopian stance. In the most prosaic sense, non-philosophy describes a kind of non-place where conventional rules seem not to apply. To the layman, the non-philosopher appears to use complex hypotheses and counter-intuitive principles in order to journey to the shores of another universe. Yet that doesn't quite capture it. As Laruelle says, *insufficiency* is absolutely crucial to utopia: "We are not saying one has to live according to a well-formed utopia... Our solution lies within an insufficient or negative utopia."[22] The point is not to construct bigger and better castles in the sky, transcendental and sufficient for all. Rather, utopia is always finite, generic, immanent, and real.

But non-philosophy is utopian in a more rigorous sense as well, for the structure of the human stance itself is the structure of utopia. Utopia forms a unilateral duality with human imagination; our thinking is not correlated with the world but is a direct clone of the real. This

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20. Ibid., 94.

21. Ibid., 12.

22. François Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, trans. Drew S. Burk and Anthony Paul Smith (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2012), 12.

begins to resemble a kind of science fiction, a fiction philosophy in which the human stance is rethought in terms of rigorous scientific axioms. It makes sense, then, that Laruelle would call himself a science fiction philosopher, someone who thinks according to utopia.[23]

"There are no great utopian texts after the widespread introduction of computers," Fredric Jameson remarked recently, "the last being Ernest Callenbach's *Ecotopia* of 1975, where computers are not yet in service."[24]

> Today, instead of utopian texts,
> we have the free-market deliria of cyberpunk, which assumes that capitalism is
> itself a kind of utopia of difference and variety. I think this failure of imagination
> on the left can be attributed to the assumption that computers are enough to
> "take care" of totalization: that the well-nigh infinite complexities of production
> on a global scale, which the mind can scarcely accommodate, are
> mysteriously...resolvable inside the computer's black box and thus no longer
> need to be dealt with conceptually or representationally.[25]

The end of the utopian text thus signals for Jameson an end to representation. Or at the very least it indicates that representation—as complicated or flawed as it might be under otherwise normal conditions—has been interrupted and outsourced to another domain entirely.

Laruelle's work confirms a particular kind of historical periodization: if indeed utopia perished as narrative or world or image, it was reborn as method. Such is the key to Laruelle's utopianism. For him utopia is a technique, not a story or a world. Utopia is simply the refusal to participate in the Philosophical Decision, a refusal to create worlds. Counterintuitively, then, Laruelle's refusal to create alternative worlds is what makes him a utopian thinker, for his non-standard world is really a non-world, just as utopia is defined as "non-place." To refuse the philosophical decision is to refuse the world, and thus to discover the non-standard universe is to discover the non-place of utopia.

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23. See for example Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, 4, where he is explicit about the connection between non-philosophy and the utopia narratives common in science fiction.

24. Fredric Jameson, "In Soviet Arcadia," *New Left Review* 75 (May-June 2012): 119-127, p. 125.

25. Ibid.

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Aesthetics in the 21st Century:
Walter Derungs & Oliver Minder

Peter Burleigh

All images courtesy of Walter Derungs from the show Nonhuman (September 12–16, 2012 at Kaskadenkondensator, Basel, CH).

Located in Kleinbasel close to the Rhine, the Kaskadenkondensator is a place of mediation and experimental, research-and process-based art production with a focus on performance and performative expression. The gallery, founded in 1994, and located on the third floor of the former Sudhaus Warteck Brewery (hence cascade condenser), seeks to develop interactions between artists, theorists and audiences.

Eight, maybe, nine or ten 40 litre bags of potting compost lie strewn about the floor of a high-ceilinged white washed hall. Dumped, split open, the soil mixed with iridescent specks of green, blue and red glitter. On the walls hang large black and white photographic images—negative and positive prints barely clean, hardly sharp, scavenged from the world and presented half processed. On a third wall, hangs a framed golden and charcoal surface. Finally,

a huge stain of black dye runs down a wall that descends into a sunken quarter of the Kaskadenkondensator gallery space.

The results of a collaboration between Oliver Minder and Walter Derungs reflect on themes addressed in the recent *Aesthetics in the 21st Century* conference held by the department of English, University of Basel. In particular, the joint show questions how an aesthetic experience may be other than a human-world interaction, hinting at the withdrawal and veiling that objects perform, while demanding that different works engage with each other and play out this game under the non-supervisory eyes of a human audience. Things here are becoming—sometimes it's a movement towards a more complete ontic whole in a projection of finality, other times it's a dispersal, an atrophy to rather disarrayed entities. Yet, in the moment and place in which the objects are, we take them as here and now.

Let's get to the material of the stuff that Minder and Derungs have assembled. Oliver Minder employs organic materials—potting earth, cuttlefish ink secretion, rice, and insects; yet his works hardly seem natural in the sense of a harmonic relation between material and the form they are constrained into, the objects they are compelled to occupy. For the substrates on, through, or within which these natural materials are mediated are harshly inorganic substances: Plexiglas, safety glass, acrylic resin, boat varnish, spray paint. Minder, thus, generates a con-flict within the materiality of his work between two polar opposites—from the human per-spective—in the contiguity of materials engaging with each other in a thrown together formation that nonetheless appears to keep the materials and the objects they make in happy accidental relation to each other. Let me expand a little: on the one hand, the things Minder makes query our belief in substance as belonging in a particular domain, an environment suited to precisely that stuff. We are focused on thinking categorically where things belong, both in terms of natural place and natural relations they might extend to each other. Hence, we are driven to think of environment and order. On the other hand, while extracting things from their conventional place and arranging them within awkward constellations that we as observers feel isn't quite right, Minder manages to persuade the viewer that the materials are nonetheless "doing alright." So, simultaneous to our awareness of the appropriateness of the world according to our global notions of accord and uniformity, we are forced to accept the local discrepancies of dis-association, inappropriateness and misplacement. The tension between these two vectors generates a vacillation that intensifies Minder's work.

In the Kaskadenkondensator works, then, it is vital to first consider the material of Minder's works: potting compost—what is it doing here in the first place?—seems to enjoy being "polluted" by sparkly glitter. Glitter has a long history, used in cosmetics by the Egyptians, and in cave paintings, too, earlier made of beetle shells and mica, nowadays glitter is made of plastic cut to minute sizes down to 50 microns. So what's the point here? Well shiny bits of dust-like material are actually generated from ultra-thin plastic sheets and are normally cut into shapes that fit contiguously on a two-dimensional surface: squares, triangles, hexagons etc.

What then appears to be totally random, chaotic decoration, is actually an array of extremely regular identifiable objects.[1] Of course scale has a role to play here. The minuteness of the dimensions means the regularity is beyond our recognition—all we see are the twinkling surfaces of the multi-coloured grains of plastic. In contrast, potting compost, which appears to be unary in its dull unresponsive lumpen disposition, is in fact an amalgam of a variety of organic and inorganic materials: peat, bark, mushroom compost, and sand and perlite, and should perhaps be more proactively exciting to the viewer because of this complexity. Yes; we can (if we care to) identify different textures, different sizes in the mixture of the medium, but I claim that we tend to treat this organic/inorganic assemblage as just a simple substance.

Further and crucially important to our consideration here is that the medium is partially contained, but also partially spilling from the split plastic bags in which it is sold in garden centres. That the compost spills out gives it a movement suggesting life; that the bags are cast here and there in a random fashion by Oliver Minder, lying like discarded carcasses, hacked torsos, dismembered bodies, suggests a horrific murder scene, a Tatort.[2] The glitter flourishes in the medium, lies happy and decorative; that is simply what it does, how it is—always already broken, made-for-scattering, designed to be incomplete; the taken-to-be-natural compost, in contrast, cannot rest content but is forced to speak to us metaphorically in its abject overflowing of violence and rupture.

While Oliver Minder's elements in the installation direct our attention to material, Walter Derungs' works raise questions around seeing and making in photography. There is a simul-taneous flicker between the materials and their use in the production of a sense making re-

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1. In fact, glitter is used as associative forensic evidence: the 20,000 or so varieties are all uniquely identifiable.

2. Joel Sternfeld, *Tatorte: Bilder gegen das Vergessen* (München: Schirmer/Mosel, 1996).

presentation, on the one hand, and on the other the very notion of what is worthy of picturing, framing, representing. Derungs' images are of non-places. Ranging from archaic decaying monster buildings, buildings that have gone far beyond the ravages of a time that we can safely associate with the genteel preservation of a Bernd and Hilla Belcher post-industrial decline, to the background "noise" of an urban world that is falling apart, and to which we most of the time seem to pay little attention, and habitually just pass by. In this respect, their non-ness differs somewhat from the conventional association of the term with Marc Augé,[3] where emphasis is on the specifics (if we do care to examine them for their non-placedness) of the spatial or place containment in which movement between multimodal coordinates occurs in supermodern late capitalist post-urban spaces. In other words, we might be in an Augéian non-place and (not) experience—be impervious to—that environment, or we might in Derungs' manner look out from such a position at the "scenery" around us. I claim scenery, as this is what Derungs seems to do with his partial photography—construct a very purposefully articulated, symmetric, flat world of image. Mostly depopulated, his images construct a space in which the direction of time is uncertain: are these partial structures falling apart, or perhaps terminated in a never-to-be-completed state, or are they a few steps from final completion? Temporal and spatial dimensions figure large in Derungs' image-making: his world, and perhaps this is in fact the only way for it to be registered photographically, is already image before it is photographed.

A key combination of images in this show is a matrix of six black and white negative prints measuring 300 x 215 cm that form the image of a semi-derelict (or is it yet incomplete) church, and adjacent on a perpendicular wall, a single black and white positive print 150 x 250 cm of two bricked-up windows of a late-Victorian industrial building. What are we led to believe that we see here? In the negative print, the conditions of perception[4] are sufficiently reproduced for us to recognise the structure of the building, to distinguish ground and form, to relate some partial elements of narrative, and to recognize symbols such as the alter cross and figure of Christ, a looming crane, a traffic cone, and banks of tiered seating. We piece the image together both from the individual forms which we recognize despite the tonal reversal, and we piece the six prints together as a whole, the matrix of lines between them emphasizing our purview onto the world. While we recognise the forms at work in the image and might possibly relate the negative reversals to other figurations such as Vera Lutter's *camera obscura* exposures, we cannot but avoid seeing the partialness of the image in the sponge marks of the developer that was spread by hand across the prints.[5] Derungs' thus intervenes with our usual conception of photography as the mimetic realist vehicle *sine qua non*, by exposing the viewer

3. Marc Augé, *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* trans. John Howe (London: Verso, 2006).

4. An echo of the uneven paint strokes of light-sensitive chemicals in the paper preparations made by Henry Talbot some 170 years ago in the first sun drawings that also often pictured architectural forms. It was Talbot's surprising discovery that where a weaker chemical solution was more thinly spread, greater light sensitivity was actualized, yet this virtual image had then to be chemically developed in a second step. Thus, Derungs unevenly finished spongings suggestively trace back to this originary technology (although his sweeps are the stains of uneven development and not those of the initial preparation of light –sensitive material).

5. Umberto Eco, "Critique of the Image" in "Articulations of Cinematic Code" *Cinematics* 1, 1970.

to tonal reversal and incomplete or over-developed areas of the print. We thus confront both the idiom of such image making and its raw (chemical) materiality at once in the simultaneity of the recognition of what the image pictures and the recognition that it is in the act of picturing. The church image, taken from the series "BW Negativs 2011," thus orients us towards how we see things in the world via photographs.

The single image of the bricked-up wall presents us with a completely different visuality that relates to a faciality[6] which we cannot easily escape from. We look, or rather try to look with no success, through the face of the windows, through the classic Albertian screen[7] which has already been given to us in the church matrix beside. Yet although we should be able to make more of these concealed windows because they are a positive print, because they are complete, because they approach us on a more realistic scale, reproduced at life size, we cannot. The objects pictured here withdraw from us; furthermore, they merely mock our blindness at not seeing how we look. Blocked up with quite a hint of paned glass behind, one window is blanked out with a white blind, the other simply blankly dark. The apertures look like eyes with teeth in them, or a Dogon mask, or even Man Ray's *Noire et Blanche* (1926) if we want to get really perverse. The height of elegant modernist chauvinist beauty thrown against the vacuity of post-industrial decline. Derungs thus catapults us consciously into a world enfolded with and through images, but in such a way that the images themselves become objects that stand resistant to us, impervious to our gaze, indifferent. We—and indeed they—do not attempt to reach out to a real that is beyond, rather the images play in a world that is

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6. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

7. Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning With Desire: the Conception of Photography* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1999).

just theirs, and we can only enter that world if we too submit to their regime: tonal reversal, segmented, partial, inadequate, still, wrenched out of time. In contemplation, in the flood of the image "falling" off the wall, we too become image-object.

Derungs' work continues in a second space partially partitioned from this first room. Opposing three more "BW Negativs" which figure yet more quotidian aspects of the world is Minder's gold spray paint and cuttlefish secretion mix: things that just shouldn't work together do in the dialogue between stuff that Derungs and Minder have constructed. Minder makes things; Derungs makes images; together they make objects which inhabit their own world which we can approach and sensually engage with and come to grips with only on those objects' own terms. This is best summarised by a final work made by Oliver Minder which on a third wall faces these two semi-partitioned spaces.

A deep black stain about 100 X 200 cm with streak marks running down a further 2 metres hovers positioned to observe the whole work, and also to be part of this installation, too. This liminal flat suzerain lies in/out of the whole work. The stain of cuttlefish secretion resonates with Derungs' sponge strokes on the church image; it mirrors the iris of an all-seeing eye; it combines material *in situ* with the situation itself. It draws the viewer, who must otherwise look away attentively at the floor work, and imagine horror, or smile at the ironic play of glitter. Look away at the image constructions that suggest how it is we too look to our world.

See the play of thing and image in a third area. Or, finally return to the base of the pyramid that triangulates, to realise the stuff-image that unlocks it all for us. Black on white, organic on inorganic, material to substrate, that which in the falling out of one on the other, in its running down the wall simply gives form to both content and expression in one direction, and content and expression to form in another.

Stage Notes and/as/or Track Changes: Introductory remarks and magical thinking on printing: An election and a provocation.

Isaac Linder

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> "Of course most people don't think of editing/publishing as theatre but as something boring or parasitical (vis-à-vis a 'source' text), a textual backwater populated by people with glasses. But I think publishing a book today is theatre, socially networked theatre…. Facebook and Flickr are our era's administered and generic version of sixties happenings!"
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> —Tan Lin[1]

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1. "Writing as Metadata Container, An Interview with Tan Lin," Chris Alexander, Kristen Gallagher, Danny Snelson, Gordon Tapper, Tan Lin, *Jacket2*. January 20, 2012. http://jacket2.org/interviews/writing-metadata-container. To explore Lin's notion of ambient textuality, plagiarism, and parallel, cross-platform publication in the 21st century, also see Lin's sampled novel, "The Patio and the Index," *Triple Canopy* 14, October 24, 2011. (http://canopycanopycanopy.com/14/the_patio_and_the_index), as well as the *Edit* event, organized at the Kelly Writers House at the University of Pennsylvania, April, 2010 (http://aphasic-letters.com/edit/publications.html).

Electing a Mascot: The Barnacle Goose

After pitching the idea for this panel with the editorial help of my continental cohorts I became fascinated with the image of the goose—dead and roasted as it may be—and its relationship to the space of the printing press. For a long while after proposing this gathering I was seriously under the sway of delusions of grandeur, imagining that we might roast a goose (or goosefu) and, preparing a meal as one prepares a text for publication, feast in something approaching a warm and well-nourished revelry.

I should note, by way of introduction, that a substantial part of my undergraduate experience involved learning to typeset and work as a devil, as typesetters mischievously call it, in a letterpress studio. This accounts in part for my fascination and helps to explain the fact that, when I began to leaf around in medieval beastiaries in lieu of being able to procure a goose, I was almost immediately struck by a fantastic monster that I hereby elect to be the mascot for our so-called para-academic practice(s)—the relatively famed, but no less fabulous for it, barnacle goose.

The barnacle goose is a creature that first makes its way into 12th century manuscripts with Giraldus Cambrensis in 1186. Phenomenologically speaking the monster is a tree, a tree which, when approached closer is seen to be birthing geese budding from the buds that hang like ripe fruit from its branches. As the story goes these trees were found over water; the fledgling geese, once wrested from their pods would take off in flight or fall to their watery death, where they would be transformed into driftwood. In retrospect we presume the barnacle goose was posited as a consequence of the fact that geese born in more northern regions, migrating to Ireland and western Europe at large, were never seen to give birth. And I should note that this is far from the only other animal posited to be born from trees at around this time, my other favorite being medieval accounts of Moroccan tree-climbing goats.[2]

In particular I've thrown up the mascot of the barnacle goose and singled it out from the quires of its beastiaries because its thoroughly hybrid origins lead us to name two very real creatures we can find point to in abundance; discrete materialities of the world cobbled together in textual fancy: on the one hand, the modern day *barnacle goose*, a common species of goose and, on the other, *goose barnacles*, a particular type of crustacean with incredible feathery tendrils and—I can't help but mention—one of the largest body mass to penis size ratios of all of the animals in the kingdom. Why is this bit of genital trivia relevant? Because they're all hermaphroditic and in rare cases have been found to reproduce just with themselves—to inseminate themselves and give birth to their kin. So I think it must be stressed, as a symbol for what we're really here to talk about, it's not a boy's club thing so much as a very queer thing and, I contend, *para-* in every perfect sense of the word...

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2. For a fascinating and fecund exploration of medieval plant-animal hybrids in relation to media ecology, see Whitney Trettien, "Becoming Plant: Magnifying a Microhistory of Media Circuits in Nehemiah Grew's Anatomy of Plants (1682)" *postmedieval* 3.1 (2012):97. See also the crowd-review version of the essay: http://postmedievalcrowdreview.wordpress.com/papers/trettien/

Alongside the natural world, a monstrous imaginary concatenation;
Alongside the hulls of so many institutional structures, funding sources and resources, Serresian parasites in all manner of mutualist, symbiotic, or properly parasitic positions; migratory and adrift;
The tree, center stage in the 21st century adaptation of *Waiting for Godot* that is unraveling in ateliers across the world, is a barnacle goose birthing a flurry of miscegenous texts beyond medium and genre.

Provocation 1: Chaosmosis

"Genre is obsolete."
— Ray Brassier[3]

And so, here I was getting carried away in daydreams about this generative and genealogical symbol under which to think all of the diverse projects we are all involved in as architects of the dressed word, (well dressed, bespoke, mansy, butch, careless, or roguishly punk attired as those words may be), when it also dawned on me, mid-flight here from Denver, that we are, even in lieu of being able to roast geese together, very much so literalizing what was never just the metaphor of the wayzgoose—a tradition, as you know, celebrated to mark the crepuscular turn into fall—as we are poised here, tomorrow being the first official day of fall on our calendars in the US marking the seasonal change from at which point it will no longer be possible to print without the aid of candlelight. A beautiful thought, that tipped into magical thinking on account of a little quick math I was able to do to come to the conclusion that we can all be delighted to know that as we proceed into the autumn with our printing projects always ahead of us and still to be set, we will tonight be bathed not only by the artificial candlelight of our screens, but also in part by photons raining down on us at 186,282 miles per second—photons from an aspect of 9 cyg, a stereoscopic binary deep within Cygnus, the swan but not-so-distant-relative of the goose, with a distance of 572 Light years away; photons that are raining down on us, will rain down on us all winter, have been raining down on us all year, and which had their origin in the combustion cores at a center of 9 cyg 572 years ago, in 1440, the year which we point to today as the common year in which, as we all know, Gutenberg is said to have brought the movable type to the western world, inaugurating an era that stretches farther into the past and future than McLuhan could justify; the proliferation of so much ambient text; insurrectionary coups on (and re-crystallizations of) genre—perceived amidst so much ambient light—enveloping this campus, just now.

So, with that thought, and perhaps a new mascot, Nico Jenkins...

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3. "Genre Is Obsolete," Compléments de *Multitudes* 28 (2007) http://multitudes.samizdat.net/Genre-is-Obsolete

A Continuous Act...

Nico Jenkins

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In Phillipe Hadot's extraordinary essay, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, the practices of philosophy—that is the exercise of what we can term pre-institionalized love of wisdom, what Philo of Alexandria described as a training towards wisdom—are described as, following the Stoics, "a continuous act, permanent and identical with life itself, which had to be renewed at each instant." This renewal of thinking, this coming to be of being itself—meeting itself on its *own* ground, concerns the way philosophy is practiced, and more often, taught, or rather not taught.

Hadot continues his thinking with a description of what happens to the structure of thought in the medieval ages as it becomes adopted—co-opted—by the church, and by extension, by the institution of the university. Philosophy becomes no longer a *way* of living, no longer a praxis as such but becomes a condition that is locked in a theoretical construct, one which was literally removed from life (and in life we read then love, wisdom, being etc, also the home, the market, the field, the street) and secured behind the high walls of the monastery (which were shortly replaced by the high walls of the Academy) where thinking unfortunately rests for the most part today.

Hadot writes further that this dangerous movement of removal reduces thinking to a theoretical practice akin to the mythical Ouroborous; "education was thus no longer directed toward people who were to be educated with a view to becoming fully developed human beings, but to specialists, in order that they might learn how to train other specialists." Thought then is trapped behind the walls of the academy, and with the exception of such thinkers as Spinoza, Descartes, and Liebniz as well as others who think from an *outside* in, thought remains, in the form of Kant, Fichte, Hegel, a practice reduced or removed from life and restricted to what Schopenhauer will call "mere fencing in front of the mirror." This is of course

the tendency today and philosophy remains, for the most part, a discourse produced and *thought* inside the academy and *de*seminated, *in*seminated through the apparatus of university presses and of course the academic journal.

It seems necessary to me that we have to have a place, a return, to a thinking which is closer to the Stoics, closer to the pre-Socratics, to a thinking which is a practice of becoming, a training to think, to live, to die. This movement is not so much romantic than *imperative*. This thinking is one of a deep irresponsibility because it is not known, it is not figured out. It requires a risk and what Heidegger calls a leap (for there is no bridge to it). I call it *irresponsible* because for too long sanctioned thought has had as its premise the idea that thinking has a goal, a direction, a *telos*; that it is not an activity but a process which gives a product; that the responsibility of thinking in turn demands an answer. In my mind, only freed from that goal can thinking, in contrast, bask in its own thinking, bask in a state in which the unknown can remain unknown, that mystery can rest as mystery. This is not to say that the world needs no answers, or to promote a Whitmanesque "leaning and loafing" as the only valid practice. It is only to say that for too long, thinking has been validated by the academy, by the answerable, by the already decided. To me, this requires—as an answer— the *ir*responsibility of thought, what Nancy calls, "a world for which all is not already done (played out, finished, enshrined in a destiny), nor entirely still to do (in the future for always future tomorrows)." This is a thinking not sanctified by the academy's myriad committees, made sacred by the church or the palace but rather it takes place on the *périphérie*, beyond the ring road, in alleyways behind the marketplace, in cafes stained with the syphilitic patina of irresponsible talk, of loose talk, the kind of talk made loose not only by the tankard and the goblet by the practice and training of attuned thinking.

continent. was formed as a collective of thinkers coming out of the European Graduate School (also known as the University of Disaster) three years ago, in an effort to combat, or challenge, the dominant paradigm which isolates thinking from the street, from life, from the true nodes of being where perhaps wisdom tends to emerge. We feel that not only is the university herself no longer the privileged site of where true thinking takes place—and where only official thought can take place—but that the very artificiality of the academy denies thinking—at times—authentic, thought. Our goal at *continent.* is to create a media agnostic publication which is rigorous in its intellectual underpinnings but which will remain permanently beyond and out of reach of the academy. Though many of us butter our bread with academic paychecks, we attempt to keep *continent.* as a refuge—and a refugee—from the University in ruins, from a previously determined, artificially ordained site of preformed and institutionalized dialogues. In concert with other publications-both cyber and print-as well as various blogs we are attempting to *re*dialogize the dialogue of thinking. We are attempting both to speak to—*as well as with and against*—the university as a site of accreted knowledge. We have not been utterly successful and continue to attempt to define what that role of being perpetually beyond is (while still trying to maintain rigorous intellectual standards) but it is just that, a goal, which is perpetually opening, perpetually unanswered, perhaps even by design, perpetually unanswerable.

continent.

Fuck Peer Review

Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei

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Good afternoon. My name is Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei and I'm here as one of the co-editors of the online open access journal *continent.* Since this panel is mainly concerned with the possible future of academic publishing within the humanities, both online and offline, I would like to keep my remarks short, so that we have some discussion time at the end.

My point is very basic and slightly polemical, and derives directly from my experience as contributing editor for *continent.* and running a small independent print-on-demand publishing house called Uitgeverij. I must immediately add that this experience relates to the fields of philosophy, philology, critical theory, and adjacent areas, and I do not claim to have knowledge of academic publishing in the humanities at large, especially not in the areas infected with statistics and other pseudo-empirical data.

Within the field that I work, both as author and as editor, there exists something that we're familiar with called peer review. This is a system that seems to work very well in the fields of for example physics and mathematics, where all publishable papers are uploaded to an open access, free, pre-print server and are submitted to the collective vetting of the scientific community. When my brother, a theoretical physicist, tells me about the latest work that has appeared on this server, and the enthusiastic and collective reading the community engages in, I sometimes experience slight feelings of jealousy. In my field, the peer review system is opaque to its core. Somebody sends in an article to me, I am supposed to remove any personal data, and forward it to a few "peers" that I think capable of critically reviewing it. These peers in their turn remain anonymous to the author, who will have to rewrite (or trash) the article based upon a one-way and therefore non-existing conversation. Moreover, the article mostly does not appear online, freely available at a globally accessible server, but inside locked and pay-per-view systems that are out of reach for most people that I know. I live in Albania. There is no library

with JSTOR access. There are no student accounts. This is how anonymous peer review in the humanities is supposed to work and this is how I refuse to work.

There are, of course, many alternatives, often trying to approach or simulate the "ideal" system of the world of theoretical physics. Open peer review, wiki-style comment functions, but all of these do not address the fundamental problem for which peer review *within the humanities* was supposed to give a solution, a problem that is predicated on the fact that, contrary to the exact sciences, humanities hardly ever have *certainty* as their main goal. This problem, and it persists until today, is the continuing erosion and deterioration of a community of thought by the current academic and university system, a system that aims for the economic equivalent of certainty, efficiency. Peer review assumes mistakenly that in the humanities we are de facto all "peers," that is, etymologically speaking, "equals." But being equals means to share a minimal sense of community, which, as far as I am concerned, implies a constant exchange of ideas. Peer review in the humanities has instead become a system that is supposed to compensate for the destructive forces of the university on the community of thought itself. The abolition of the master-student bond. The desire for quantifiability. The fear for another "revealing" Sokal hoax, a *so-called hoax*.

We, philosophers, critical theorists, philologists, humanists at large, should embrace this hoax, this *hocus*, this *hoc est*, this "that is," the factual risk that *our entire thought is a scam*. A thinking that is essentially without safeguards, whether internal or external, a thinking that is driven by the desire to be debunked, pulled down, proven worthless. And peer review is not going to do that for us. It will always come down to a small turn of phrase, an extra paragraph, a reference that you missed, a footnote that should be included, an acknowledgment that should be made, claims that cannot be empirically validated, blah blah blah. A *review*: anything but a traumatic *reading*.

As far as I'm concerned, peer review is a symptom and not a solution. The symptom of a university system that is falling apart, desperately trying to link up incompatible academics to kill each other off in anonymous free-form fights. Peer review is a *waste of time*, because each thought demands *its own time*, and its destruction will be the first step in reconstituting a possible community of thought.

Thank you.

continent.

What are Experts For?

A. Staley Groves

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"What are experts for?" Taking cues from my mentors I simply modified the phrase "what are poets for?" Judith Balso's challenge to the motive of the philosophical "expert" falls on the use of poets in philosophical systems. In this case Hölderlin "imprisoned" for the convenience of Heidegger's paternal legacy.[1] Given another mentor takes a different path, I hesitate to exploit this further. Yet thinking this expert/nonexpert limus is clearly a matter of privilege. And privilege has much to do with the University of Disaster, what I see at stake in our proper name game: Para-Academia and its possible publishing franchise.

To set the stage I call in Wallace Stevens on the view of being. Namely "official" or "unofficial" views some may be familiar with. Stevens begins the second chapter of his well known prose *The Necessary Angel* as follows: "It appears that what is central to philosophy is its least valuable part." Stevens recalls correspondence between Henry Bradley and Robert Bridges; quoting Bradley:

> My own attitude toward all philosophies old and new, is very sceptical [....] I feel that the universe of being is too vast to be comprehended [....] We do get [...] glimpses of the real problems, perhaps even real solutions; but when we have formulated our questions, I fear we have always substituted illusory problems for the real ones.[2]

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1. The phrase "what are poets for?" as a challenge to Heidegger. See Judith Balso, *Pessoa the Metaphysical Courier*, trans. Drew Burk (New York: Atropos Press, 2011). Regarding Hölderlin and Heidegger, I am referencing her presentation at the University of Aberdeen, Centre of Modern Thought, Spring 2011. I also call in Avital Ronell on paternal authority. See Avital Ronell, *Loser Sons: Politics and Authority* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), discussed further in this essay.

2. See Wallace Stevens, "The Figure of Youth as Virile Poet" from *The Necessary Angel: Essays on Reality and the Imagination* (New York: Vintage Books, 1951), 66.

One might call for a counteroffensive. A new self-assumed, official view. Speculative philosophers today may brand the poetic call as correlationist hindcasting. Indeed we live in a time of great illusions, one must watch their back. From my view the speculative project is driven by an asymmetrical dominance of grapheme over phoneme. Left alone we only repeat this expert game. Its extreme realization is the dispensation of the "fact of language." A posture of being-right enacts "the reasoning of the religious," a Laruellian, heretical triumph. Poetry however is not religion, literature, or philosophy. Stevens addressed "expressions" or skeptical attitudes forthright:

> If these expressions speak for any considerable number of people and [...] if any considerable number of people feel this way about the truth and about what may be called the official view of being (since philosophic truth may be said to be the official view), we cannot expect much in respect to poetry, assuming we define poetry as an unofficial view of being.[3]

Poetics is put to use for the father of thought, philosophy. Yet poetics retains an undetected supremacy, continues Stevens on poetic authority, "This a much larger definition of poetry than it is usual to make [...] the nature of the truth changes, perhaps for no more significant reason than that philosophers live and die, so the nature of poetry changes, perhaps for no more significant reason than that poets come and go."[4] Poets come and go. Philosophers die. Dedication to "the reason" is a matter of paternal legacy. Therefore as supposition the source for "the reason" dovetails with "writing is a cut at origin." Failure to penetrate poetic origination results in despair and destruction of philosophical expertise.

Stevens's maneuver between poetry and philosophy lays groundwork for the non-expert. Challenges para-academia faces are similarly "imagination" and "the reason" as a work for "truth."[5] A similar expert fate was expressed by Jean-Luc Nancy, that the automation of metaphysics through the Enlightenment meant philosophy was reduced to technological sense.[6] Nancy's "techno-logy" means the capture and presentation of nature as "metaphysical technology."[7] An authoritarian crisis indeed. Christopher Fynsk noted a hyper-disciplinarianism accelerated by the defunding and dismantling of the Humanities. Thus Stevens's poetic change and possibility insubordinate to "the reason." A sentiment Fynsk iterates criticizing the rise of corporatized University banishing relation between disciplines by imperial demands: publishing empty gestures by empty experts for proof of intellectual emptiness. This instrumental achievement, "the reason" displaces imagination toward functionarian mental anemia.[8] Here a pirouette to the original theme: para-academia and a publishing franchise. What are experts for? To re-en-franchise the non- or in stride with capitalism's bottom line? What are we pub-

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3. Ibid., 67.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., 68.

6. What I call the difference of the calling as ab-sense, or ad-sense: the problematic of axiomatic sentencing.

7. See Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Creation of the World or Globalization* (New York: SUNY Press, 2007).

8. See Christopher Fynsk, *The Claim of Language: A Case for the Humanities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

lishing, for whom, for what? Following the speculative movement seems ideologically burdened toward an anti-humanism, akin to school-shooting revelation. Regarding a larger definition of poetry, the task of the non- may be found in Stevens:

> It seems elementary [...] that the poet, in order to fulfill himself, must accomplish a poetry that satisfies both the reason and the imagination. It does not follow that in the long run the poet will find himself in the position in which the philosopher now finds himself. On the contrary, if the end of the philosopher is despair, the end of the poet is fulfillment, since the poet finds a sanction for life in poetry that satisfies the imagination. Thus, poetry, which we have been thinking of as at least the equal of philosophy, may be its superior [...] The look of it may change a little if we consider not that the definition has not yet been found but that there is none.[9]

There is none, was not; wont be. Stevens curiously intuits a reply to this "Platonism" dispute of the day, noting "as extraordinary [was] the language of Plato" both Plato and Aristotle had not a Greek word for literature. Literature too grasps at poetry as an instrument of "the reason." If philosophy is literature you may grasp my point regarding expertise, for surely if philosophy is not literature then poetics have been found in reading thus thinking it.[10] It is this engagement that concerns me most, that para-academes ditch relation for the sake of necessary commerce and putative trendiness. In turn a poetics without practice.

In Stevens's name I am revoking poetic licenses, specifically to affirm poetic authority. And that's not necessarily good news. Yet the lack of definition was the point; remains the pointlessness of the best anti-philosophies of the postwar era. If "the reason" has arrived effectively displacing the human this illusory ground between "great persons" and the Flusserian, cybernetic "functionary" is upon us.[11] What else explains the faith-based merits of anti-humanism if not technological salvation? Impressing the authoritarian father of philosophy to what end? Indeed, one should counter Enlightenment values and its electro-mechanical governmentality. Clearly in an age of "terror," "best practices" remain to be seen. How we imagine a new praxis, order, and organization is a matter of answering a call, a matter of vocation.

We could consider compensation if to ward-off a supplementary mask otherwise donned. I speak about a lack of capital valorization. The real despair of philosophy is the ruination of the teaching profession. The majority para-academes ride this rift between expert and the non-, excluded from our privileged debates by pressures of intellectual disciplinarianism and aca-nemia. As prostheses of an ethereal institution, mere activity allocating capital to human-students: all amass debt, migrating between electromechanical and

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9. Stevens, 68-69.

10. ibid., 69.

11. See Vilém Flusser, *Does Writing Have a Future?* trans. Nancy Ann Roth (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

digital States, between imagination and "the reason."

    To be clear the dignity of engagement diminishes daily; what otherwise professionalizes experts forged in pathological career despair. This cuts across our worthless politics whose media engines are metaphysical dynamos; all these social movements filling my virtual junk mail. I speak about subjectification between States, analogical and digital. I speak about the rapid depletion of the resource of language requisite to community. I speak personally about my crisis with authority; against a compensatory prostheses, not to be confused as speculative "necessity." Life as a para-professor adjunct is called, after all "contingent faculty." Rethinking contingency means to engage authoritarian despair with poetic affirmation, to dominate the arrogance of "the reason"—this mask of institutional allegiance concealing a new form of production we witness and give testimony to. This dispensation congealing into a new body of thought.

    Could it be answered by Stevens, this authority, by his insistence of emotional and imaginative "security?"[12] Perhaps, given we are "bound to consider a language" that had "no word for literature." Returning to Stevens we may understand problems of such egoism.[13] If language is a "singly" type, as he notes, a "mediation" of imagination calling in father Hegel; it is a poetics fused with "the reason." Yet are we to confuse poetic superiority with Stevens's "idea of God?"[14] No, that is my academic point, certainly not. Poets appear, they come and go as the call itself: impossible possibility follows.

    Stevens illustrates another possibility. The poetic mind as the center of labor. Conversely automation introduces poetics to the "ideas of order" to the ordinary, but first as ordinance, that eventually ordains itself Augustan. Clearly the "exponential" production of grapheme meant a new "individuality"[15] intuiting contemporary "immaterial" or "affect labor." Does Stevens's poet-manager work this name game, for a contract with reason many seem willing to "occupy?" No. This is yet a spectral game.[16] And I have often felt the paralysis of that day in every other. Nonetheless the emergency of the online classroom, and "hybrid" "face-to-face" varieties loom. All remaining relation to be graphically defined. Posturing as philosophers behind the letters PhD we only forward the reason. Conversely if we follow our poet we become a threat all too sudden, writes Stevens:

> in spite of an absence of a definition and in spite of the impressions and
> approximations we are never at a loss to recognize poetry [....] in the absence of
> a definition all the variations of the definition are peripheral [...] we think that a
> psychology of a poet has found its way to the center [...] if the philosopher

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12. I am referencing "Imagination as Value" from *The Necessary Angel*, where Stevens discusses imagination as security from political programs, it comes from the unreal thus the thinking of pathology in its exhibition.

13. It seems Avital Ronell addresses this forthright in *Loser Sons*.

14. Stevens, 68.

15. I am referencing Stevens's comments about "Ideas of Order at Key West," circa 1937, specifically about this "new individually."

16. See Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, viz. "Apparition of the Inapperant," specifically his differentiation between spirit and soul, the dominant and dominated.

comes to nothing it is because he fails [...] the poet comes to nothing because he succeeds. The philosopher fails to discover.[17]

If reality were solely our poet's call, the poet could, writes Stevens "destroy us" supposing "the poet discovered and had the power [...] at will and by intelligence to reconstruct us by [...] transformations." A problematic of ordinance. When the "double call" comes and goes. Mass killings as sudden contingent revelation and absence of a second, self-inflicted gunshot reply: Jared Loughner's grammatical infatuation becomes direct-action-packed political assassination; James Holmes aka Joker as vanguard of the hyperreal state of mind; Breivik's slaughter about pointless right-nostalgia. A triumph of "the reasoned" will, or the incompetence of handling poetic ordinance? A divine psychosis, or a returning phoneme counterattacking graphical repression? The problematics of authority means I call Avital Ronell's "loser sons" to the stand. I ask about this graphic authorization of the call. A paternalization of imagination, the religious, indeed divisionary, duplicity of the call that comes and goes. Where do we go from here? Mr. Holmes is staring off into space, he's looking through the judge.

The insubordinate "oxymoronic" truth of "exposed existence" is a poetic moment. A metabolic appetite consuming our imaginative input destined as shallow "exponential" distributions, exhibited imagination, cultic bravado. Who then do we call hero, authority? Responds Stevens, "[I]f we believed that there was, a center, it would be absurd to fear or avoid its discovery." Technology exposes the insubstantial "vital node" Stevens continues:

> The mind of the poet describes itself as constantly in his poems [...] something a good deal more comprehensive than the temperament of the artist [....] We are concerned with the whole personality and, in effect, we are saying that the poet who writes the heroic poem that will satisfy all there is of us, and all of us in time to come, will accomplish it by the power of his reason, the force of his imagination and, in addition, the effortless and inescapable process of his own individuality.[18]

The age of self-sufficient, neoliberal go-a–loners is here. We're among the endless blossoms chasing auratic specters, what Walter Benjamin called the inescapable "conditions of capitalism." Yet as we will never become Gods, for whom or what do we serve? What are experts for? Partial-extinction, techno-pathologies, or imaginative timing this technological age?

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17. Stevens, 70.
18. Stevens, 70-71.

continent.

Disturbing the Wednesday-ish Business-as-Usual of the University *Studium*: A Wayzgoose Manifest

Eileen A. Joy

> This time it is not I who seek it out [...] it is the element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me. A Latin word exists to designate this wound, this prick, this mark made by a pointed instrument [....] This element which will disturb the *studium* I [...] call *punctum*; for *punctum* is also: sting, speck, cut, little hole—and also a cast of the dice.
>
> —Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*

> What enables us to risk change is the feeling that we are understood and (therefore) accompanied.
>
> —L.O. Aranye Fradenburg, "Living Chaucer"

> Professional Challenges. Amateur Solutions.
>
> —Motto of the Bruce High Quality Foundation

In a short piece in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, "Ditch the Monograph," Jennifer Howard surveys some recent experiments by university presses to cultivate and produce shorter-form e-books (i.e., Princeton Shorts and Stanford Briefs),[1] and wonders if these books might not "pull in new readers for serious scholarship," and at a time, moreover, when "academic libraries have ever-smaller amounts of money and space to lavish on [longer] books, which often have more

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1. See *Princeton Shorts: Short Takes, Big Ideas*, http://press.princeton.edu/PrincetonShorts/, and "'Bite-sized' Reading from SUP," *Stanford University: The Dish*, May 17, 2012, http://news.stanford.edu/thedish/?p=19315. There is something delightfully silly in how the titles of both these book series conjure up images of men's underwear, and it also reminds me that not many university presses are run by women. Palgrave Macmillan also recently announced a shorter-form e-book series, Palgrave Pivot (http://www.palgrave.com/pivot/).

pages than they have readers."[2] Paul Harvey, the new director of Stanford University Press, explains that these books will be "accessible but not simplified, and should be digestible in one or two sessions—bite-sized—and not require a month of reading."[3] At the same time, we are witnessing the launching of new academic publishing initiatives, such as Anvil Academic, a platform for "born-digital" and "born-again-digital" "post-monograph" (non-book) research that is pinning its hopes for the future of academic publishing on networked and "digital-only" environments that would "free scholarly argument from the limitations of the printed monograph and allow authors to bring the full force of technology to the presentation of their work."[4] It appears important to the academic collective at Anvil to continue to maintain and ensure certain protocols of peer review, but in ways that are "better suited to networked environments." Conversely, Zero Books (an imprint of John Hunt Publishing, Ltd.), one of the more radical and exciting academic imprints out there today, is offering shorter-form books that are very much *still books* in print as well as available in e-book formats. In their mission statement, Zero inveighs (in somewhat hysterical tones) that a "cretinous anti-intellectualism presides" over a contemporary culture, "cheerled by hacks in the pay of multinational corporations," and thus the time is ripe for a different set of discourses—"intellectual without being academic, popular without being populist"—and while Zero Books, indeed, offers a particularly electric and eclectic list of reasonably-priced, shorter-form books (*Slime Dynamics*, *Nuclear Futurism*, and *Levitate the Primate* are just a few samples of their bracing titles), they do not offer any of their publications in open-access form. Thus, their desire for a reinvigorated and non-bland, non-

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2. Jennifer Howard, "Ditch the Monograph," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 14, 2012, http://chronicle.com/ article/What-If-Tenure-Didnt-Require/135108/.

3. "'Bite-sized' Reading from SUP."

4. "About Anvil Academic," *Anvil Academic*, http://anvilacademic.org/about-anvil-academic/. See also Adeline Koh's interview with the head editor of Anvil, Fred Moody: "A Digital Solution to Academic Publishing? Introducing Anvil Academic," *ProfHacker* [*Chronicle of Higher Education* weblog], September 24, 2012, http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/a-digital-solution-to-academic-publishing-introducing-anvil-academic/42828. I will note here that Anvil was conceptualized and is managed by a consortium of institutions (such as the Council on Library and Information Resources [CLIR], the National Institute for Technology in Library Education [NITLE], and University of Michigan Library's MPublishing office, which is also partnered with Open Humanities Press), university scholars, and academic librarians, and is partly funded by various universities with an intensive interest in the digital humanities (such as the University of Virginia, Washington University in Saint Louis, and Stanford University, among others). Anvil appears to not have fully made up its mind whether or not it would offer services to those who might want to publish monographs (whether longer or shorter), edited collections, and journals in digital form (at times, in their various statements, they seem to be saying analog-style digital publishing is passé and not their focus, and at others, that they would welcome helping academics with digital platforms for e-versions of academic monographs, etc.). What *does* appear clear is that one of their chief motivating impetuses and concerns seems to be ensuring the maintenance of traditional forms of expert peer review, albeit within newly innovative digital publishing environments, and yet, at the same time, what is not clear from their website or published pieces on their project is exactly how (or *what*) they plan to offer in the way of technical infrastructures, platforms, and ongoing support for those new (and increasingly networked) environments.

consensual sphere of public intellectual debate is still somewhat in the shadow of the multinational corporations (such as Amazon.com, to which all of their book pages link) that their mission statement scorns.[5]

While watching the fat of our wayzgoose congeal in the wood-grains of the table in our communal vagabond printer's workshop, and while bathed in the autumnal light of the raining Gutenberg-era photons to which Isaac Linder has called our attention,[6] I share this admittedly woefully brief and selective overview of current trends in academic publishing initiatives simply to highlight their austerity (or, perhaps, their pragmatism) of imagination as well as their "heavy" managerial structures.[7] For even while I applaud the *initiative* of these initiatives (and I plan to support them with my voice and wallet, being a pluralist, after all), I also despair a little at the ways in which they are each, in their own way, also locked into institutional structures (whether corporate, academic, or even ideological) that determine in advance what is and isn't (supposedly) possible and what is (supposedly) necessary *now*—such that, for example, the monograph is now "out" and shorter books (or serialized e-extracts from longer works) are "in," e-texts are more desirable (and supposedly cheaper to produce and disseminate) than traditional print media, it is necessary to shift (and even dispense with) certain publishing modes to meet the demands of currently popular text-delivery technologies (such as iPads, Kindles,

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5. "About Us," *Zero Books*, http://www.zero-books.net/about-us.html?i=9. Zero Books is a subsidiary of John Hunt Publishing, Ltd., a trade publisher based in the UK, known especially for the books it has published in the genres of spirituality or "New Age" studies (through its O-Books, Dodona, Mantra Books, Moon Books, Soul Rocks, and Circle Books imprints) and also in the genres of parapsychology, esoteric and mystic knowledges, holistic health, juvenile fiction, and erotica, among other subjects. While Zero Books is a welcome imprint in the multiverse of what might be called "radicalized" para-academic publishing, it appears to offer practically no close editorial support to its authors. Why I bother to mention this at all will be more apparent as my little wayzgoose diatribe here gathers more steam. Let it be said, however, that I have regularly purchased titles from this imprint because they are publishing authors whose work I admire (Rob Coley and Dean Lockwood, Mark Fisher, Graham Harman, Steven Shaviro, Eugene Thacker, Ben Woodard, to name some but not all), even while I find Zer0's editorial oversight, such as it is, appallingly uneven.

6. "'Bite-sized' Reading from SUP."

7. I would note here that I am in deep admiration of the work of Open Humanities Press (http://openhumanitiespress.org/), and am especially keen on their experimental writing + publishing modes as evidenced in their Living Books About Life series (http://www.livingbooks aboutlife.org/) and Liquid Books imprint (http://liquidbooks.pbworks.com/w/page/11135951/FrontPage), edited by Clare Birchall and Gary Hall, as well as in some of their journals, such as *Vectors* (http://www.vectorsjournal.org/issues/index.php?issue=6). From my vantage point, OHP has been consistent in thinking "outside the box" of traditional university and commercial academic publishing and they have published some of the most radical new thinking in the humanities (albeit somewhat *slowly*), but they cannot be viewed as completely "independent" of the university milieu from which all of their Editorial and Open-Access Board members, as well as the members of their Steering Group and Partners, hail. I simply seek a more radical, even anti-peer departure *out of the academy* for so-called "academic" publishing, while at the same time I support the idea of the university as one place among others where more radical publishing modes might be cultivated (as is the case with Anvil, OHP, Stanford Shorts, etc.), more on which below.

and smart-phones), expert and specialist peer review is still necessary for "legitimacy," multiple layers of hierarchical and bureaucratic academic-managerial oversight still obtain while at the same time certain layers of important editorial care and curatorship drop away (due to lack of time, money, staff, readers' attention spans, space, etc.), the material archive (the dream of Borges's Babelasian library or even Richard Fenyman's 24 million library volumes etched on the head of a pin[8]) should simply be abandoned, and so on. Being among friends in the glow of the para-academic Outside, I will dispense with the posture of academic politesse, and attempt to say what I really feel: if a radically innovative and public cultural-intellectual milieu is to flourish, and if we are to imagine and hope for future Walter Benjamins who will still attempt to cross borders with manuscripts in briefcases that are more important to them than their very own persons,[9] then what we need now is more (more papers, briefcases, Kindles, iPads, filing cabinets, shelves, teletype machines, Linux code, microchips, mimeographs, lithium batteries, candles, pens, javascripts, and so on) and not less of everything (we need print books as well as e-texts, yellow legal pads as well as the mystic writing pads of our Evernote apps, baroquely lengthy multi-volume works as well as broadsides and post-it note scholarship, close and loving and even co-dependent editorial curatorship of others' work, and so on). We need to multiply and also invent new trade routes and modes of exchange for disseminating intellectual work—going for baroque, or broke— and we also need the courage (or foolishness) to depart to extra-territories not bathed in the harsh fluorescent lighting of the academy "proper."

The university will continue to be an important site for keeping open the *question* of thought[10] and for fostering various modes of thought dissemination, but I also think it's time for a subter-fugitive, vagabond, gypsy para-humanities, especially at a time when so many of us are barely hanging on to the university by the skin of our teeth (or hands or minds).[11] Let's "get lost" now, taking the humanities with us like so many suitcases, portable libraries, and sacks of contraband diamonds. Let's figure out inventive ways to radicalize (and thus sustain) the humanities by absconding with them to the streets, alleys, market squares, ateliers, lounges, coffee shops, bookstores, sofas, wine bars, clubs, kitchens, bedrooms, galleries, dive bars, park benches, garages, living rooms, deserted urban zones, and crumbling basements.[12] In

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8. See Richard Fenyman, "There's Plenty of Room at the Bottom," *Engineering and Science* 23.5 (February 1960): 22–36; also available at http://www.zyvex.com/nanotech/feynman.html.

9. See Julian Yates, "The Briefcase of Walter Benjamin/Benjamin Walter's Briefcase: An Invent/ Story," *rhizomes* 20 (Summer 2010): http://www.rhizomes.net/issue20/yates/index.html.

10. Here, as always, I defer to Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996). An important, more recent companion to Readings' book is Christopher Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

11. I'm thinking here especially of all the post-grads with no, or contingent, jobs, the adjunct teaching staff, but also those who, for various reasons (including economic constraints), have been cut off or distanced from university life, who hope that they can play a role in intellectual "life," but who feel increasingly unable to participate.

12. And here I would also pause to praise para-academic educational initiatives and organizations, such as The Public School New York (http://thepublicschool.org/nyc), The Saxifrage School (http://saxifrageschool.org/), The Vancouver Institute for Social Research (http://www.facebook. com/events/495903313795700/), The Art School in

short, let's re-boot, let's situate ourselves, like Diogenes on the outskirts of Athens, on the edges of our cities and towns, never losing sight of the places (and institutions) we care about, while also saying, *fuck this*. Let's embrace a radical, polyglot cosmopolitanism that enunciates a "shaggy heart," where we will have "no fixed abode" and be "nowhere a foreigner."[13] Like practitioners of Hakim Bey's *amour fou*, we should strive to be "illegal" now, "saturating" ourselves with our own aesthetic, engaging in publishing ventures that would fill themselves "to the borders" with "the trajectories of [their] own gestures," running "on angels' clocks," our only goal the "ingestion of the Galaxy," and never tilting at fates fit only for "commissars & shopkeepers."[14] One of the things we have lost sight of in the university, and especially in our publishing practices, is the importance of *play*—now is the time, again cadging from Hakim Bey, to "share the mischievous destiny" of runaways, "to meet only as wild children might, locking gazes across a dinner table while adults gibber from behind their masks."[15] Without non-utilitarian play, and without the right to flail, flounder, and *fail* while playing, we risk the frigid stasis of the status quo, of always being trapped in what has already been said, what has already been *played out*. How did we get here? How did the creative arts get so thoroughly de-cathected from the "liberal" arts? How will we give birth to heretic-misfit love-child thoughts without unbridled play?[16]

So much for ontologically anarchic poetics and Bey's wild children and crazy love: what about practicalities? Fuck practicality; this ain't *practical*. For me, the most exciting publishing and dissemination ventures going are those such as *continent.*, *Speculations*, *Itineration*, *Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies*, the Organism for Poetic Research (OPR) and its publication *PELT*, Uitgeverij Press, eth press: postmedieval poetries, the Hollow Earth Society, the Bruce High Quality Foundation, the Confraternity of Neoflagellants, and so on[17]—journals, presses, and alternative research-cultural organizations entirely run and managed by graduate

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The Art School (http://www.theasintheas.org/), and The Brooklyn Institute for Social Research (http://thebrooklyninstitute.com/), to name just a few, no matter how long- or short-lived, that take advantage of non-traditional, non-institutional, and anti-hierarchical spaces in which to craft new teaching and learning environments that still value embodied social-pedagogical practices.

13. Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 140.

14. Hakim Bey, "Amour Fou," in Hakim Bey, *T.A.Z.: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism* (Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 1991); http://hermetic. com/bey/taz_cont.html.

15. Bey, "Wild Children," in *T.A.Z.*

16. On the importance of artful play to the humanities as well as to well-being, see L.O. Aranye Fradenburg, "Living Chaucer," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 33 (2011): 41–64, where she writes that, "Playing and pretending are crucial to the becomings of living creatures, to adaptation and behavioral flexibility; . . . it is transformative and transforming. We can neither thrive nor survive without it" (57). See also Aranye Fradenburg, "Frontline: The Liberal Arts of Psychoanalysis," *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis and Dynamic Psychiatry* 39.4 (Winter 2011): 589–609.

17. See *Speculations: A Journal of Speculative Realism* (http://www.speculations-journal.org/), *Itineration: Cross-Disciplinary Studies in Rhetoric, Media, and Culture* (http://itineration.org/), *Anarchist Developments in Cultural*

students and post-graduates (and some faculty collaborators) with no financial support to speak of and only tenuous footholds in the university (our academic precariat) and who are publishing or fostering some of the most exciting work in the humanities and arts right now, work that eschews and also troubles the waters of disciplinary genre, "review," privilege, and status.[18] It is one of the aims of punctum books to assist these and other new (extra- but also para-institutional) publishing initiatives with various forms of regular and longer-term support (economic, editorial, aesthetic, technical, promotional, etc.), but who is paying for this? No one; at least, no one "official." We've simply scraped together what we have; we're running on the steam of an international all-volunteer staff and gift-share economies, also martinis, WD-40, loose change, old Talking Heads albums, matches, a glitter ball, and chewing gum. And yet, we actually believe that an open-access and print-on-demand model (in which all of our publications are both free *and* available for purchase) may actually lead to something like financial solvency and even jobs, but we're not making that a condition of our future plans. We aim to grow through a vast network of talented persons (some situated in universities and cultural institutions with paying jobs, some not) dedicated to a radically independent publishing ventures that would not be beholden to any specific university or commercial academic interest, and to fostering the broadest possible range of open-access print- and e-based platforms for the sustenance of what we are calling a "whimsical para-humanities assemblage"—an assemblage, moreover, that refuses to relinquish any possible form of public-ation (the making of cultural-intellectual stealth "publics" that would seep in and out of institutional and non-institutional spaces, hopefully blurring the boundaries between "inside" and "outside": an ultimate fog machine), and we are also intent on resuscitating what we are calling postmedieval and pastmodern forms of publication (from breviary and commentary and *florilegium* to telegram and liner notes and inter-office memo, from the Book of Hours to the cassette mixtape).

The term "para-academic" was devised by Nicola Masciandaro, one of punctum's founders, to capture

> the multivalent sense of something that fulfills and/or frustrates the academic from a position of intimate exteriority. Para-academia is that which is beside academia, a place whose logic encompasses many reasons and no reason at all (*para-*, "alongside, beyond, altered, contrary," from Greek *para-*, "beside,

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Studies (http://anarchist-developments.org/index.php/ adcs/about), Organism for Poetic Research and *PELT* (http://organismforpoeticresearch.org/), Uitgeverij Press (http://www.uitgeverij.cc/), eth press: postmedieval poetries (http://ethpress.com/), Hollow Earth Society (http://hollowearthsociety.com/), Bruce High Quality Foundation (http://www.thebrucehighqualityfoundation.com/Site/home.html), and the Confraternity of Neoflagellants (http://nmulholland.wix.com/confraternityofneoflagellants).

18. Or as Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei put it during our BABEL Waygoose session, "Fuck peer review." And as Vincent also puts it in one of the five maxims for his press, Uitgeverij (meaning simply, "Publisher"), "Only experiment can present the present. We only care about the new, whether past, present, or future. We enjoy publishing anything that's between categories, obscure, or witnessing the edges of language. For us, all audience is potential" (see footnote 17 for Uitgeverij's website address, where you will find all five maxims in a variety of different languages).

near, from, against, contrary to," cognate with Sanskrit *para-*, "beyond"). The *para* is the domain of: shadow, paradigm, daemon, parasite, supplement, amateur, elite. The para-academic embodies an unofficial excess or extension of the academic that helps, threatens, supports, mocks (par-ody), perfects and/or calls it into question simply by existing next to it.[19]

This accords well, I think, with some of the sentiments expressed by the editors of *continent.* and *Speculations* during an online conversation they conducted with each other on the "aesthetics of (para)academic practice," where Michael Austin wanted to distinguish between academia and the university—"I take academia to be the culture of knowledge-communication, while the university happens to be the most notable site of such communication in present society. There is no necessary connection between the two, nor should we assume academia requires the university in order to exist"—and Paul Boshears added this important exemplification of Austin's comments: "Both Academia and the University are imagined communities, to borrow Benedict Anderson's phrase. However, the University is an institution that accredits, controls, and stamps the passports of those that would enter its territory. It is a striated space as opposed to Academia's [more] fluid space."[20]

It is punctum's aim to occupy this more fluid space but to also de-territorialize the University itself, disturbing and disrupting the Wednesday-ish, business-as-usual protocols of both the generic university *studium* and its individual cells and holding tanks, while also extending the very important work of the University into new and often untended spaces. Because our press was founded and is directed by premodernists (medievalists and early modernists),[21] we have some serious love of the book as a material art object, we believe in material scriptoriums and libraries, and we also embrace the idea of the itinerant and also the cloistered scholar. We also imagine that printed matter might be of some use during and after our own pre- and post-apocalyptic "Age(s) of Simplification," while we are also intent on making use of whatever "generators of electrical essences" we can get our hands on.[22] We want it all, and we're not inclined to ask for permission to "pretty, please" let us publish whatever it is we want to publish. In this sense, we are also impatiently presentist: we want things now, as opposed to later and if we make mistakes, if we speak (or publish) too soon, too hastily, we'll depend on what Kathleen Fitzpatrick has termed post-publication review[23] to sort that out. What we need now is more,

19. Nicola Masciandaro, quoted in Eileen Joy, "PARTY! Or is it a Panel Discussion on Para-Academic Publishing, or BOTH?" *punctum books* [weblog], February 20, 2012, http://punctumbooks.com/blog/party-or-is-it-a-panel-discussion-on-para-academic-publishing-or-both/.

20. Jamie Allen et alia, "Discussions Before an Encounter," *continent.* 2.2 (2012): 136–147; http://continentcontinent.cc/index.php/continent/article/viewArticle/92.

21. But is it important to note here that punctum books aims to publish books and other types of texts across a wide range of fields and disciplines, and our Advisory Board is made up of scholars and artists who work on diverse subjects, from political science to architecture to feminist philosophy to metal theory to new media studies to art history and beyond.

22. References to Walter M. Miller, Jr., *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1959).

23. See Kathleen Fitzpatrick, "Peer Review," in Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 15–49.

and not less, thought, with more words, ruly and unruly, jostling with each other across the pages and liquid retina displays of our dispersed yet still ex/timate "commons." This is not to say that punctum books does not care about the quality of the work it publishes (we wouldn't publish just *anything* but we would certainly publish *almost* anything if it were interesting enough and well-written and if it appears to take seriously what we say we are looking to "pimp": "writing as risk, adventure, a going-forth without 'papers' or guarantees: falling through the hole/*punctum*, a falling down, freefall [....] quixotic, sagely mad engagements that generate and satisfy noetic-erotic need, textual thought-bodies that give pleasures only to be possessed in their presence").[24] Nor is this to say that we do not lavish close and creative attention upon the editing, formatting, and creative design of our publications (indeed, we want to distinguish ourselves in this manner from university and commercial academic presses that increasingly either outsource this work or defer upon authors more and more the responsibility for editing and proofing and sometimes even formatting the layout of their own manuscripts). We are not interested in the maintenance of specific genres or disciplines (is it literary theory? poetry? philosophy? art history? memoir? sociology? cybernetics? speculative fiction? code? who can tell?), and thus we take seriously Derrida's belief in a university "without condition" which has the task, especially by way of the humanities, of ensuring "the principal right to say everything, whether it be under the heading of fiction and the experimentation of knowledge, and the right to say it publicly, to publish it."[25] We want a radical Open of thought. This is thus also about freedom, something in very short supply in the university these days, and which also has something to do with well-being, with *eudaimonia*, or flourishing.

But we do not scorn the University-at-large, or even specific institutions (Harvard, University of Chicago, Brooklyn College, Eastern Carolina University, Berkeley, whatever), which is to note (again) that *para-* is also the space of the "beside" and the "near," and more than wanting to go *against* or *beyond* the university, we seek a more supplementary (even inter- or co-dependent) relationship,[26] if also an occasionally antagonistic one. And I am not sure I would draw the same distinctions that some of the editors of *continent.* and *Speculations* might want to draw between "academia" and the "university/University." For me, the university (similar to how both Michael and Paul described academia/Academia) is everywhere and anywhere I am at any given moment, and this also extends to all who think and write alongside me, in whatever "location," virtual, material, or otherwise. The university is not just the buildings and lawns

24. All manuscripts that arrive at punctum are subjected to so-called expert review (although often not "blind" and we believe in sending manuscripts to readers who will have some sort of pre-determined "sympathy" with the projects of the authors they are asked to read); at the same time, we have three basic questions for what we will and want to publish: Is it smart? Is it well-written? Is it weird?

25. Jacques Derrida, "The Future of the Profession or the University without Condition (thanks to the 'Humanities,' what could take place tomorrow)," in *Jacques Derrida and the Humanities: A Critical Reader*, ed. Tom Cohen (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 26 [24–57].

26. On the important possibilities of newly imagined co-dependent co-disciplinarities and radically open confraternities as one way of moving the work of the para-"University" forward, see Jonathan Hsy, "Let's FAIL Together, yeah yeah YEAH!" *In The Middle*, October 5, 2012, http://www.inthemedievalmiddle.com/2012/10/lets-fail-together-yeah-yeah-yeah.html.

demarcated by specific geographical coordinates (42° 22' 25" N, 71° 6' 38" W = Harvard), but anywhere we gather to *disseminate*: I define this as a practice of, quite literally (following the *Oxford English Dictionary*), "scattering [knowledge] abroad" and "sowing" things and "spreading [knowledge] here and there," and "dispersing (things) so as to deposit them in all parts." Obviously, in some cases, specific locations matter a great deal, and the very hard work of the faculty and student activists to preserve the formerly free system of public higher education in California or to maintain the disciplines of philosophy or paleography at certain universities in the UK are extremely worthwhile and important political-pedagogical causes that we should all support however we can. Wherever persons gather to pro-fess and learn, there is something of value worth protecting, while at the same time, the university proper is increasingly becoming less "liveable" for increasing numbers of teaching faculty and actual and potential learners, and we need to pay attention to that.[27] While some people fight the good fight on the inside of specific campuses and even across specific campuses, some of us will have to be willing to create and foster new domains of thinking-together (which is not the same as thinking alike). This will require risk, and a willingness to fall and tumble into holes.

Speaking of holes: *punctum*, in the idioms of the Middle Ages *and* Roland Barthes (refer to my first epigraph above), is simultaneously the *moment* (Augustine's *punctum*; writing as always *momentary*), the *pricks* and *punctures* and *perforations* made by awls punching holes in vellum (what makes writing, but even more so, *books*, possible, opening-to-writing/writing-as-opening), and also the "pointed instrument" that disturbs the *studium*, the *sting*, the *speck*, and the *cut*, into and out of which anything might fall or emerge, and by which we feel ourselves *pierced* (writing as shock to the system—ours, our minds, our bodies, but also systems more largely). *punctum* is also the cast of the dice: we're taking chances out here. It's a form of play, but it's also work, perhaps the best precarious job at present in the humanities-at-large.

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27. As Thomas Gokey, one of *Speculation*'s editors, has put it, "In the United States at least, universities have been turned into shell corporations for Sallie Mae. That might sound overly dramatic or overly cynical but I think it is the most accurate way to think about our current situation. Right now the community of questioning, learning, researching and teaching has been captured by a system whose primary function is to extract as much value out of academics as possible. The main thing that universities produce is precarious, indebted, docile workers. Universities are one of the primary tools used to produce and maintain class difference. For the most part the poorest get excluded outright, the richest pass "Go" and collect $200, everyone else gets buried in decades worth of crushing debt for the privilege of receiving an education that will be recognized. An academic is a battery that gets plugged into this dying machine" (Allen et alia, "Discussions Before an Encounter" *continent.* 2.2, 2012: 136-147).

Publish and Be Damned?
continent. visits independent publishers fair.

Bernhard Garnicnig

I love books for many things, but I despise them for introducing a physical limit to the free circulation of knowledge (compared to the Internet). At least, that's what I had always thought.

continent. is an online journal aiming at, among other things, breaking with the established paradigms of how academic work has to be published in order to be respected among relevant peers. I'm the engineer behind the current version of continent., making it work and keeping it running since began in 2010. We provide an online platform for knowledge to circulate, beyond the limitations of institutional attachment or distribution of physical volumes. And regardless of not having a physical publication ourselves, and being a trans-national endeavour with core members spread across three continents, we had the honour to join the Publish Or Be Damned fair and conference of Northern European independent book publishers at Index Art Foundation in Stockholm, Sweden. The place was bursting with exceptional volumes made by some of the most interesting publishers in the European north. The encounter changed the way I think about such books: these editions are designed, engineered and crafted to a level of sophistication that they begin to hold more than just their informational value printed. They convey and communicate a form of tactile knowledge and pleasure, and this completely changed my perspective on the matter.

Because *continent.* had not materialised yet and only appeared in the form of social events (such as those in Basel, Boston, New York, or Zürich), we could not offer any such tactile pleasures to those visiting our booth. Given this, my solution was to turn *continent.*'s participation into a spectacle of simulation. With so many important figures of the independent publishing world present, we staged a series of imaginary book-launch moments for the camera. Presenting a first quasi-materialisation of *continent.* in the form of a book, or rather, the hypothetical extrapolation of our red square shape from our logo into a red 30x30 cm slate.

Thanks to all those that participated. Your presences enabled *continent.* to visualise what it would be like if we had a book, and had been published within the honorable circle of these fine publishers. Soon the day will come where this will become reality. Thanks to all who joined the fun and didn't mind me showing these to the rest of the world. I'll publish them here, for them not to perish, even if I shall be damned.

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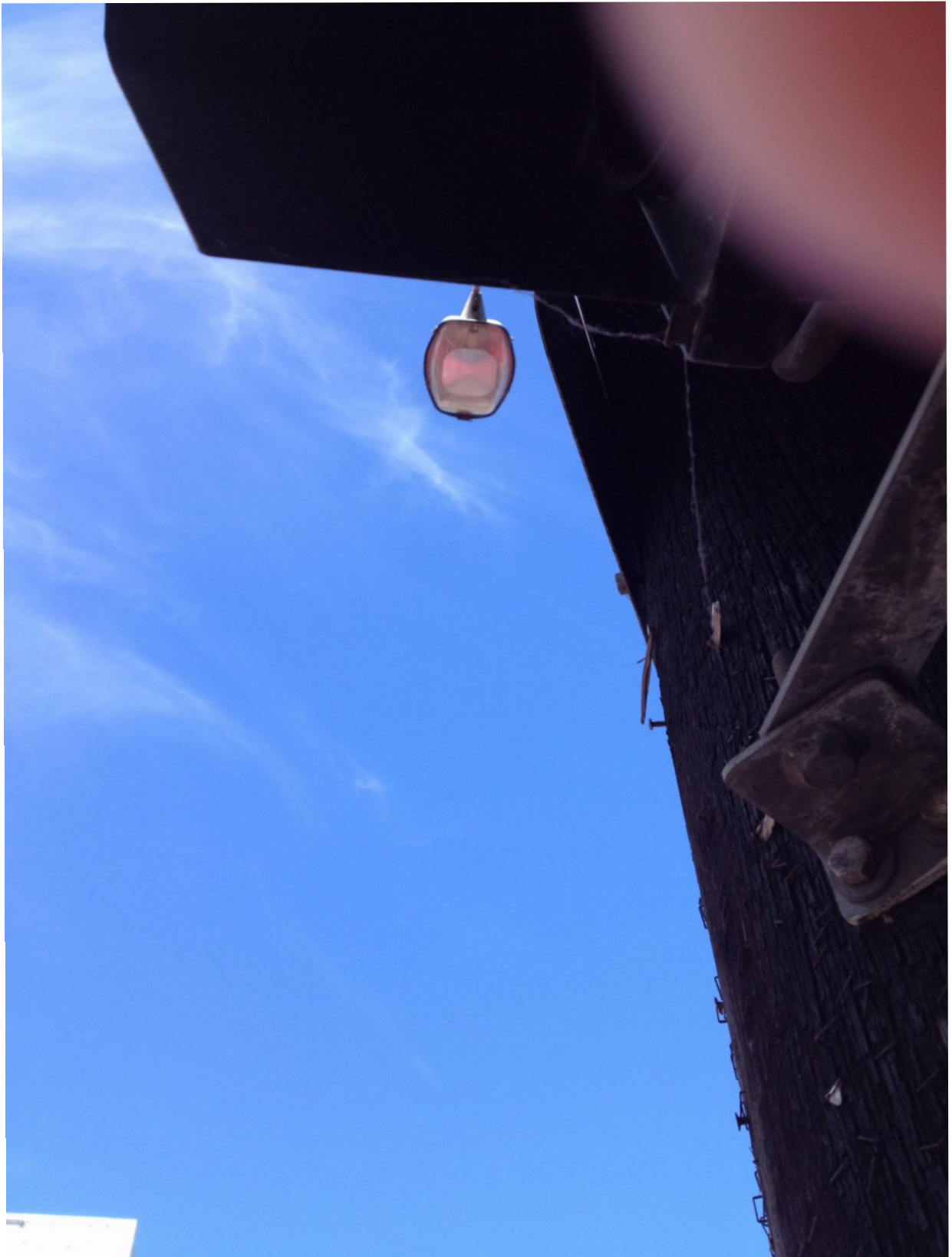
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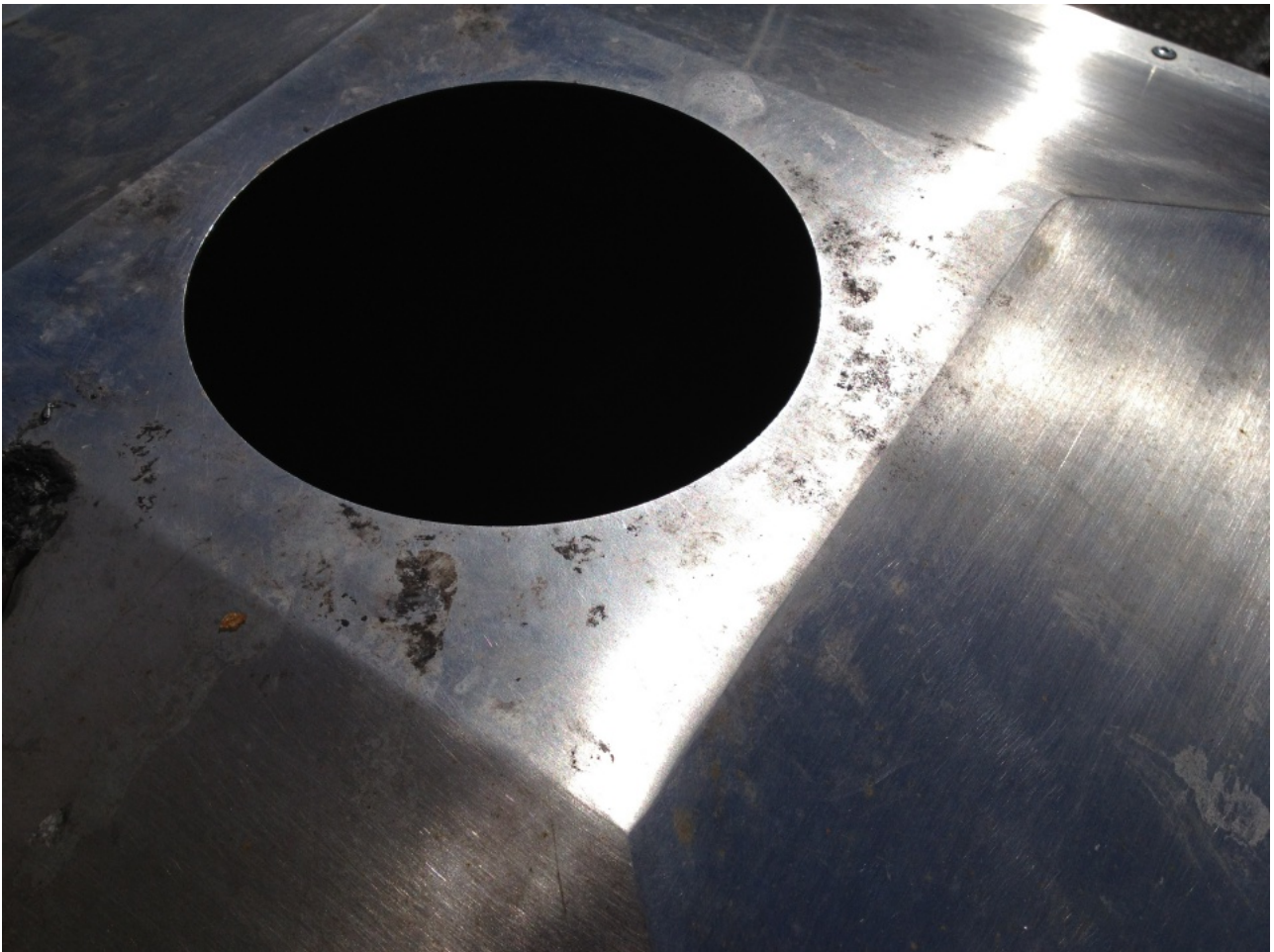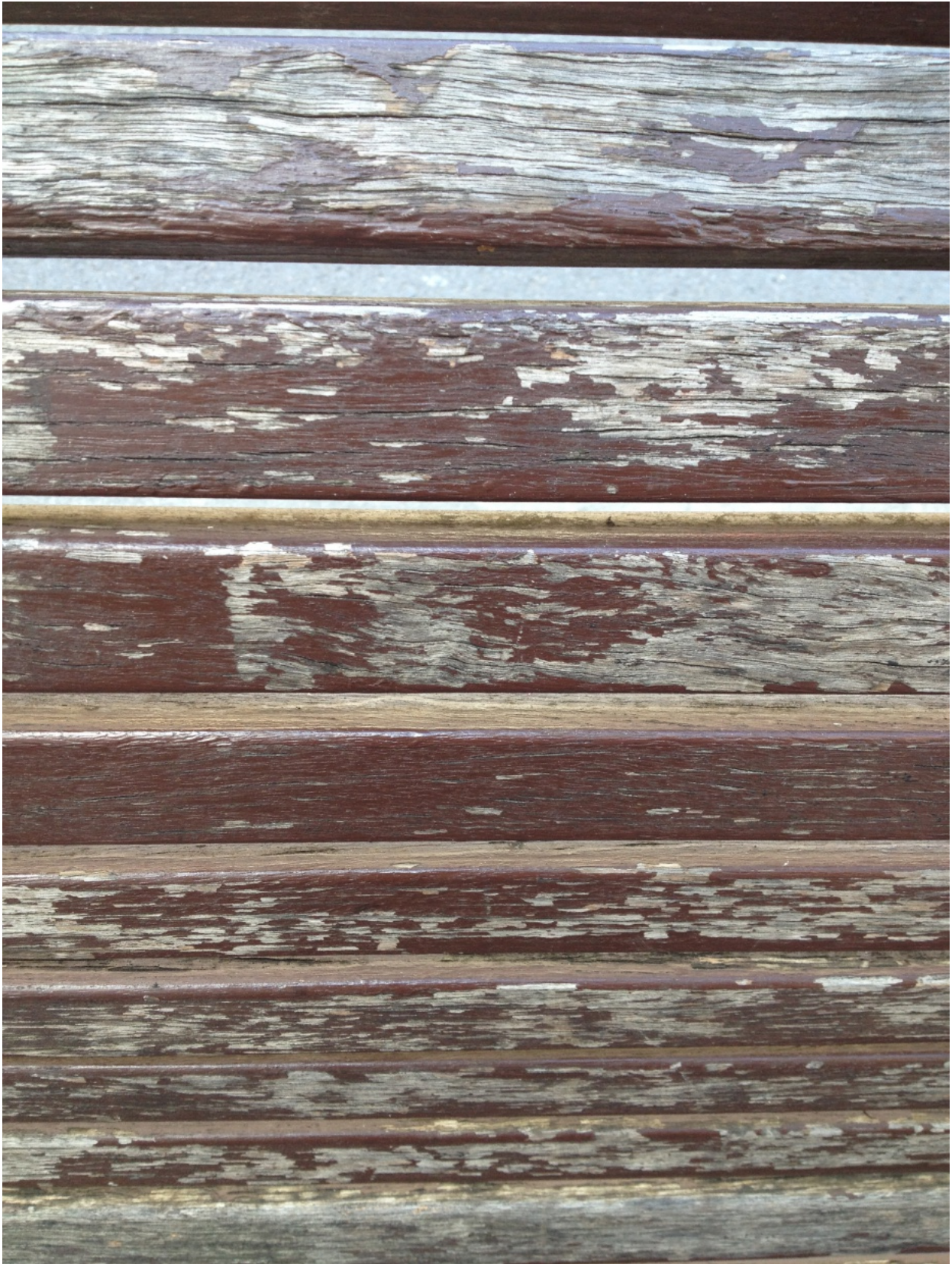
If you walk too slowly down the street, you find yourself caught in the honey of aesthetic zones emitted by thousands and thousands of beings. If you want to get from A to B, you had better hurry up.

Is there any space between anything? Do we not, when we look for such a space, encounter a plenitude of other things—a slice of plaster, an old vinyl record, a flattened piece of aluminum, painted metal surfaces, nameless interstitial powder, the reflection of sky, some letters of the alphabet, roughened concrete. Between what we take to be things there exist other things, as if the universe were jammed with entities like clowns in a crowded Expressionist painting. An abyss of things that emanates from them, not a yawning void that threatens to engulf them, but a sunlit nothingness filled with dust that seems to spray out of them like dry mist sparkling with firefly swarms.

In these so-called spaces, we encounter the work of causality. Look: someone painted over this crack, some sunlight rippled in a mirage, a hole appeared.

When we look for causes and effects, we don't encounter a basement of efficiently whirring machinery. Rather, we encounter these in-between spaces, where we had not thought to look. What we see are stage hands moving the scenery about—they are doing it in plain sight, the best place to hide, right in front of you, in the place we call the aesthetic dimension.

In Tibetan Buddhism these spaces are called *bardo*, which just means the between. There is no such thing as a moment of your life that is not a between, according to this view. There is the between of living. There is the between of dying. There is the between of the transition between lives. There is the between of dreaming. There is the between of meditation. There is the between of two humans holding cameras walking down a street in Sydney. The between of two buildings, a space bursting with objects as if a billion jack in the boxes had exploded at once. Some of the lids are stuck, sometimes a nose bursts out and the hinge won't open any further; at other times, the jack in the box flies right out and pulps against the wall on the opposite side of the room.

Time opens up. Each surface is a poem about the past. A myriad stories begin to proliferate, as if a thing were a crisscrossing of books, a whole library of them, each page whispering parts of paragraphs and broken pieces of word. The stories tell us things—they are quite literal, look, this guy painted part of this wall, then they came and stripped off the panel and touched up the holes. Form is the past. When you look at appearance, you are looking at the past. Where is the present?

And essence is the future. The hints of unknown, unseen things, the absolute impossibility of grasping everything about this plastic pipe, the way photons entering the camera lens obey a speed limit and splash onto receptors, going into and out of coherence. At the electronic level, it's quite clear that causality is aesthetic. I can't see an electron without deflecting it. Everything is a refrigerator with a light on—or off—inside. For me, for you, for this arrangement of tiles sandwiched between a door and a slab of marble. To a photon, an electron is a refrigerator with a closed door, and a light that might be on—or off—inside. How can you know whether the light is on inside? Why, you open the door of course. But then you are looking at the past. You never see the light in the refrigerator before you open the door.

This future is not a predictable future that is a specific number of now-points away. You will never reach it. You will never be able to sneak up from the side and see through the refrigerator. Nor can a photon see through the refrigerator of an electron. Nor can paint see through the refrigerator of this plastic pipe. You take a photo—click—the past appears, another open refrigerator. But the thing you have just made, the photograph, the graphing of the photons—it is another thing, another story. You can read the words, but the meaning always eludes you. It always lurks just off the edge of the sentence, just at the very edge of this ragged slice of paint, just at the edge of this building, between this one and that one. Thousands of secrets, everywhere. Masks that lie and tell the truth at the same time: this pink paint is not blue paint, that's true. But the thing, the thing in itself, that paint sliding off a brush onto that pipe—it is nowhere to be seen, like a light behind a closed door.

When you walk too slowly down the street, you start walking into millions of levels of pastness, levels emitted not just by the humans or the dogs and cats, but also by this garbage can, this mottled pink surface pockmarked with nail holes. You walk surrounded by as many futures as there are things. You walk, or rather you occupy a peculiar shifting ground of nowness, created by the relative motion of the past sliding against the future, not touching. You begin to realize that the present does not exist. A thing is a train station where one train is always arriving and one train is always leaving. Hundreds of train stations everywhere, hundreds of relative motions. The idea of a universal, regular, atomic sequence of instants that contains everything is absolutely ludicrous, the philosophers have known this for thousands of years, and to hide the absurdity, to get from A to B, Houston to Sydney, crossing the International Date Line without too much laughter, you have embedded piezoelectric devices in as many pieces of hardware as possible, devices in which quartz talks to electrons, making train stations where the trains seem to run on time.

When you walk too slowly down the street, you begin to realize that Zeno had a point. You can seemingly divide each moment, each step, infinitesimally. So perhaps there are no moments, no steps. Or perhaps time is not a box that everything goes in. Perhaps time is, as Einstein argued after all, a way that things send out ripples.

Where one house touches another house, there arise hundreds of things, hundreds of meeting places (Old English thing, meeting place). Hundreds of times. I have a thing for you. Come over here, let's do a thing. Stay in the sunlight and shadow between worlds, in the sunlit canyon between this building and that building. See how paint touches this pipe, caressing then leaving, no one will notice if a surface is left exposed, not quite filled in. See how shadows are reflected in pale cream glass—see the luminous abyss of causality spreading out before your very eyes, right in front of security. All kinds of beautiful crimes are committed right here, and as American cars keep telling you, and you never notice, OBJECTS IN MIRROR ARE CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR. They are here, or rather, here is them, and now is them. Kissing in the shadow.

Paul Thomas and Tim Morton met on the 26/08/2012 in a café in Newtown, Sydney for a coffee after catching up with him the previous day at a conference called Sense of Planet: The Arts and Ecology at Earth Magnitude*. The conference convened by the National Institute for Experimental Arts had Tim as one of the keynote speakers and Paul invited him to catch up the next day.*

The catch up on Sunday was spent in a very fluid state of discussion of a multitude of topics from art, perception, philosophy, vision, probabilities, physics, and so on, and on the table with our coffees were two iPhones. As the iPhone's have cameras as default appendages Paul suggested that we use them for a photo shot to continue our discussion but through a different means of engagement with the world. The proposal was to walk down King Street starting from Mary Street to Queens Street and back to see what came from our combined discussion and observations of things noted.

Timothy Morton is Rita Shea Guffey Chair of English at Rice University. He is the author of *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (University of Minnesota Press, 2013), *Realist Magic: Objects, Ontology, Causality* (Open Humanities Press, 2013), *The Ecological Thought* (Harvard University Press, 2010), *Ecology without Nature* (Harvard University Press, 2007), seven other books and eighty essays on philosophy, ecology, literature, food and music. He blogs regularly at http://ecologywithoutnature.blogspot.com.

Paul Thomas is Associate Professor, Head of Painting at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales. Paul is currently researching photons, visulising parallel universes in the work 'Atomism'. His pervious nanoart work 'Nanoessence' explored the space between life and death and 'Midas' explored what is transferred when skin touched gold. His book Nanoart; the immateriality of art, will be published shortly.
www.visiblespace.com