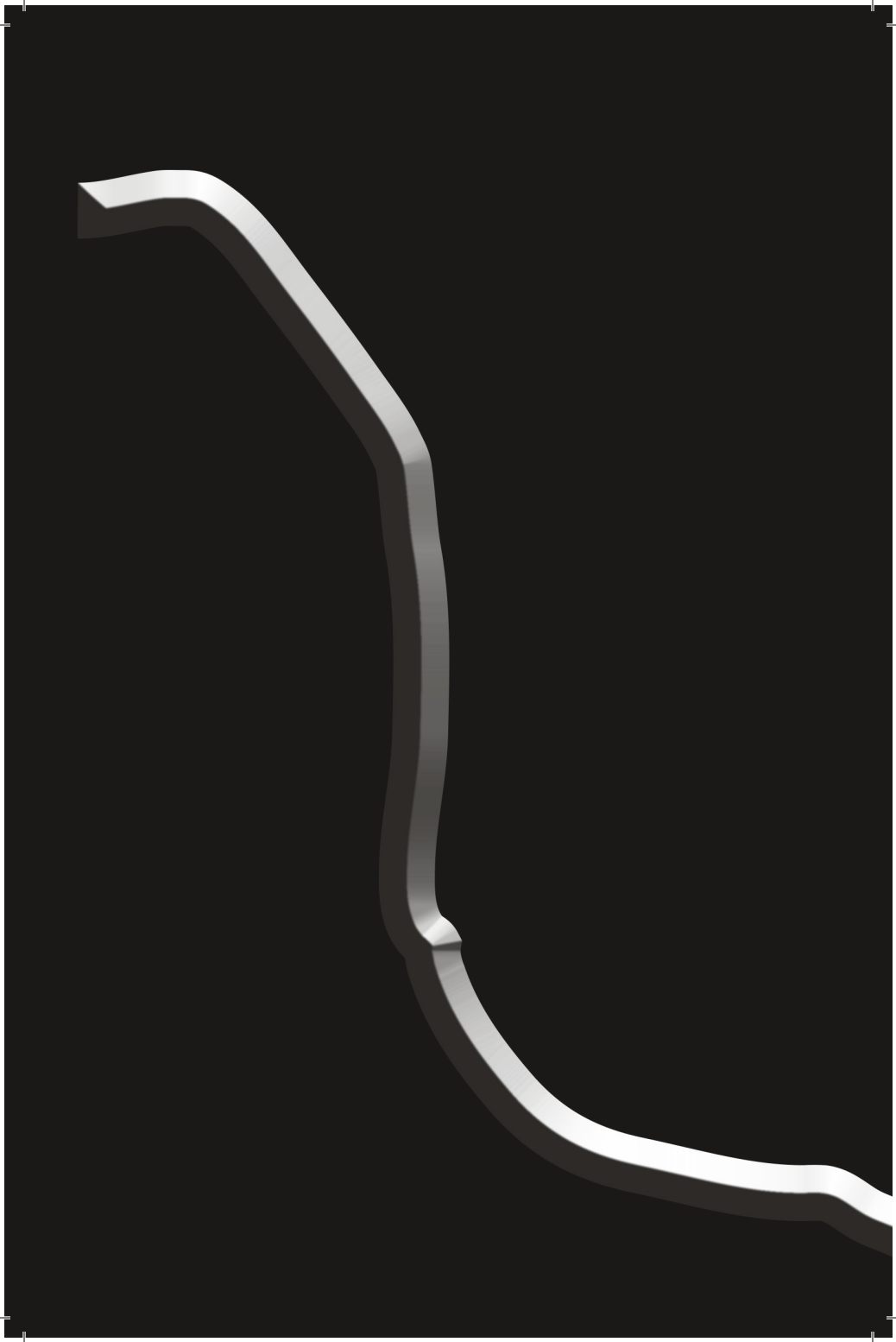
AT THE CENTER OF THE WORLD THERE IS A FICTION …



INTRODUCTION

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Null Island

At the center of the world there is a fiction; a fictional piece of land a meter wide by a meter long. It has not been thrown up from the depths; not from the violence of lava bursting up and cooling, though there is violence in its history. It is called Null Island, and you cannot travel there.

Null Island is where the planet expressed as nature and the world expressed as culture seem—however fleetingly—to be extricable into natural and artificial, given and made. It is where the equator meets the meridian. The equator: the middle of the planet, the line girthing the earth halfway between its magnetic poles; a line determined by probes and sensors, by investigation of a scientific kind. A line more found than made. The meridian: a line inscribed on the globe, centering that globe on the capital of a faded empire whose persistence is still felt, whose ghost ships still sail the commercial routes. It is a line stolen from another empire, equally faded, and equally haunted by its historical cruelties and its grandiose myths. It is a line on which we set our clocks—that noisiest and most draconian of devices through which a symbolic imposes itself—and through the ticking of its clocks, this line hides reams of stories of cultural violence.

The point where the lines meet, 0° North, 0° East, baffles the machines. Computers need a piece of land there on which to ground their calculations. So we feed them a fiction, throw an island out into the ocean, tell the machines a story about the land at the origin of the world; and in return they run the numbers for our GPS, guiding us home safely at night, leading us to shoals of fish to eat.[1] From this unreal center, the machines can tag our photos to

map our memories and images onto the material world, can align our satellites to coordinate and connect us across the planet. Whenever we perform one of these actions, we pass through this fiction. We are transported home via this fictional island; the missiles our governments launch in our names track abstract lines of their trajectories through it. From there, where the world begins.

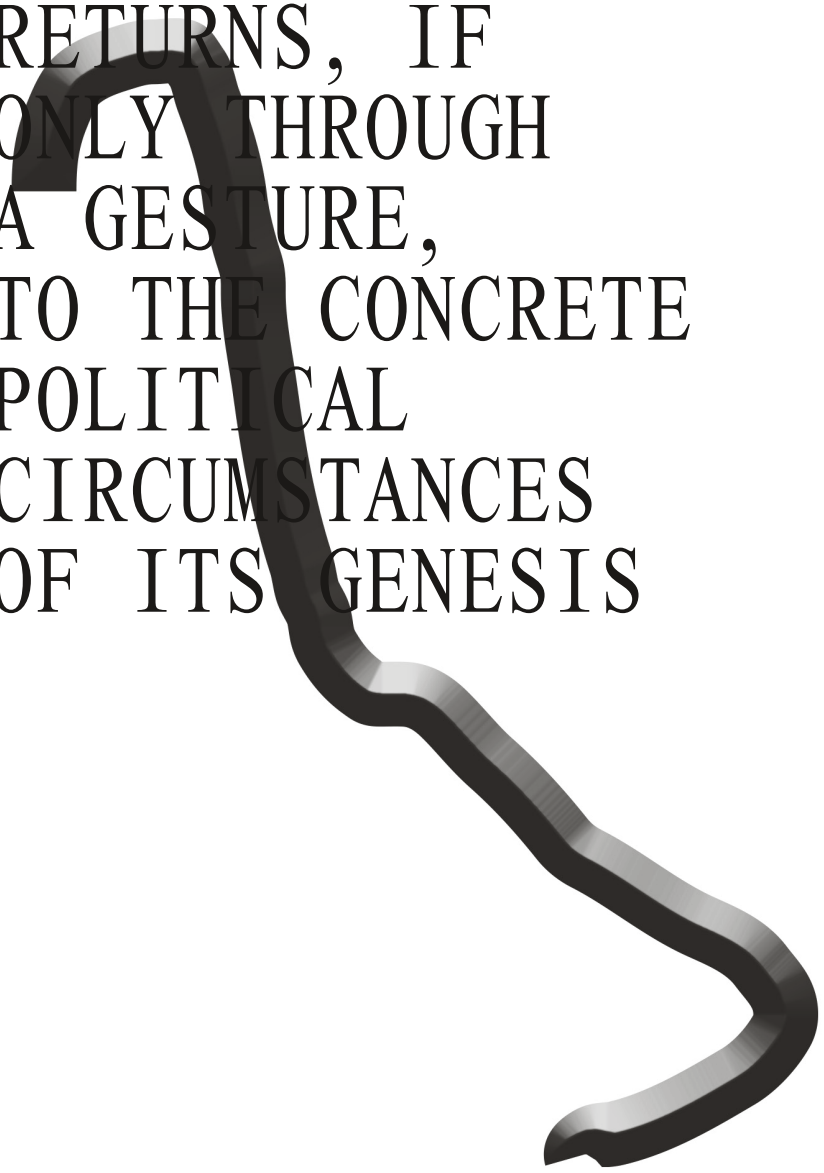
Through the stories and numbers of Null Island, this tiny piece of land without a sovereign, we see a fiction deployed as a method. The objectively untrue is brought into operation within the everyday. In several of the contributions to this book, theorists and artists look at how this "everyday" is constructed through the deployment of fictions to form and direct every part of our lives—from fictions in newsrooms and the twittersphere (David Garcia and Erica Scourti), to fictions backlit by the JCDecaux lightboxes that illuminate our streets (Tim Etchells), to fictions that maintain the happy face of the nuclear family (Dora García). In addressing the role fictions have in our everyday lives, these pieces show how fictions can be used as means of revealing the hidden workings of a state of affairs, and even of establishing a certain agency within it. Far from being an escape from the world, then, here fiction takes us to its symbolic center, and might allow us to establish some leverage within the tangled contingencies and hidden conventions that lie there.

To pass through Null Island again: it could be said that we find an inversion of sorts at work. Where it was once the unknown outside that was filled with fictions—those corners of the maps as yet uncharted, populated by chimeras and cautionary tales that "here there be monsters"—with Null Island it is the very center of the world that is fictionalized. Both the cartographer's

caution and the computational checksum are very functional uses of fictions, but they proceed by seemingly opposed routes: by ultraprecise calculations balanced on the objectively untrue, on the one hand, and on the other hand by stern warnings concerning the chimerical unknown. These latter can be deeply wise, if unscientific, modes of knowledge mapping an area's dangers, its bounties, or marking the boundaries of its unexplored territories. It is a knowledge that is marked on maps, that passes through word of mouth, through embodied practices like walking the terrain, and through modes of feeling that materialist-scientific objectivism struggles to deal with—or is disinclined to. Yet, as several of the essays in this collection demonstrate, there is a great deal at stake in finding ways to turn toward these unexplored, under-explored, and often denigrated territories of thinking and awareness. These stakes concern the role of fiction in moving us beyond the impasses of the present, in opening to the radically new, embracing or reinvigorating the incoming future, and of turning toward the abstract, even numinous, outside. In these cases, fiction names both a method and a destination, one associated variously with non-philosophy (Simon O'Sullivan), with the digital-virtual (Delphi Carstens and Mer Roberts/Orphan Drift), and with luminescence, dreaming, and the abstract (Justin Barton).

We have at least two strands of fictions as method here: those that reveal structures and gain agency in the construction of the everyday, and those that are deployed as holes to let in the "future" or "abstract-outside." But these two modalities of "fiction" are often inseparable. This is particularly true in the areas of the globe where the operations of the everyday lifeworld have not been given over in their entirety to materialism and the

THIS WANDERING NEVERTHELESS RETURNS, IF ONLY THROUGH A GESTURE, TO THE CONCRETE POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF ITS GENESIS



law of the market, those places still inhabited by chimeras and spirits whose presence have a real effect—whether one "believes" in them or not. If art can be thought of as tarrying in such an outside, it is equally embroiled with the other mode of fiction laid out above, that of hegemonic structures and operational contingencies to be exposed, critiqued, and counteracted.

Institutions

The year 2003 saw the founding of the Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind. And yet over a decade later the museum has yet to open its doors. Those eager to visit the collection can turn their attention to the ongoing cycle of global art festivals: so far the museum has participated in biennials in Istanbul, Venice, and Sharjah, giving us a clue as to the status of its creator, Khalil Rabah, an artist and the author of the museum's seasonal newsletter.

According to Rabah, a frequent response of visitors to the museum's recent instantiation in Athens was, perhaps unsurprisingly, "Is it real?"[2] With this question we can presume visitors were not embarking on a voyage of Cartesian doubt and questioning their eyes' ability to deceive them. The question seems instead to be one of seeking guidance on whether the museum should be considered a more-or-less stable institutional frame designed to deflect attention onto the cultural objects whose job it is to house (which would make it a "real" museum—a museum one can take for granted); or whether it is rather taken as a central component of the artwork, a prospect that directs one's attention to something that may subvert expectations. If unreal

in the first sense, then hallucination or illusion are at play; if the second, then we enter the realms of fiction in its capacity to loosen signs from the stable moorings of their referents, without allowing them to drift away entirely. The same question might be asked of any number of fictional museums invented by artists, from Marcel Broodthaers's *Department of Eagles* (1968–71) to Meschac Gaba's *Museum of African Art* (1997–2002). While each of these three examples lack one or more of the basic criteria typically used to define a museum—to varying degrees they lack a permanent home, do not support active acquisition or conservation programs, and for long stretches of their lifespan remain inaccessible to the public—this does not automatically oblige us to consider them unreal. Rather, these museums assume the reality of a fiction, and in doing so they acquire new possibilities for action specific to the circumstances of their creation. For example, the fact that the Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind does not have a permanent base in Palestine, where the Israeli military has demolished almost 50,000 buildings since the 1960s, might ensure a longevity otherwise difficult to achieve.[3] Here fiction facilitates a peripatetic wandering, but this wandering nevertheless returns, if only through a gesture, to the concrete political circumstances of its genesis.

The recent proliferation of fictional institutions in the field of contemporary art can be viewed as an outgrowth of a loose cluster of practices grouped under the banner of institutional critique. Stretching from the 1960s to the present day, the first wave of institutional critique is often portrayed as an attempt to escape from overbearing institutional frameworks that Robert Smithson described as centers of "cultural confinement."[4] Sometimes this search involved a literal move away from the

metropolitan centers of art consumption, as in the case of Land art, and sometimes it involved a close scrutiny of the institutional structures that made these centers politically and economically conservative, if not downright corrupt. Hans Haacke's *Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971* serves as an emblematic example of the latter, insofar as it exposed the ethically dubious business practices of the slumlord Harry Shapolsky in such detail that it was deemed by the board of trustees of the Guggenheim too sensitive to show to the public, partly for fear that the same board of trustees would be implicated in Shapolsky's web of corruption. In the now established narrative of institutional critique's development, the ambitions and strategies of this first wave are repositioned by a second wave that emphasized the impossibility of walking away from institutions entirely, at the same time as it introduced questions of subjectivity as a complement to the predominantly economic and political focus of the first wave. It is Andrea Fraser's practice that often serves as shorthand for this second wave, insofar as it literally invites reflections on the institutional fabric of the museum—playfully exaggerating descriptions of museum architecture for example, in *Little Frank and His Carp* (2001), or subverting the function of the museum tour guide in *Museum Highlights* (1989)—but also through an accompanying theorization that emphasizes the hopelessness of escaping an art system that is all-encompassing, in Fraser's words, "because the institution is inside of us, and we can't get outside of ourselves."[5]

Where are we to locate the proliferation of fictional institutions in this historical lineage? Do they comprise part of a third wave, a wave still in the process of formation?

Marcel Broodthaers initiated *Department of Eagles* as early as 1968, which suggests that the strategy of creating fictional institutions is present in numerous waves of institutional critique, generating different effects in different periods. In the last fifteen years it has become increasingly difficult to view fictional institutions as withdrawals or alternatives in any straightforward sense, both because these creations are often deliberately nested within larger institutions—such as Gaba's *Museum of African Art*, which currently takes pride of place within Tate Modern's monolithic extension—and because such institutions have become increasingly corporate in the face of diminishing public funding. Nevertheless, the use of fiction does represent a focal point for the renewed enthusiasm for experimenting not simply with the lexicons and display strategies of institutions, but with different forms of instituting.[6] A form of instituting is not the same as an institutional form: while the latter tend toward stasis and structure, the former comprise a central element of what Gerald Raunig and Gene Ray call "instituent practices," which develop new processes for linking disparate creative moments and inventing new "qualities of participation" that can occur inside and outside existing institutions.[7] In this sense, fiction could be considered an instituent practice, and when incubated within the body of art institutions, it can sometimes create space for improvisatory variations from the structures that sustain it, allowing the institution to differ from itself, thereby opening up an otherwise rigid framework to a plurality of desires.

It is political desire that breathes life into Ian Alan Paul's concept of the Guantanamo Bay Museum of Art and History, another fictional institution, discussed by David Garcia in his chapter

for this book. The museum comprised a significant element of an exhibition curated by Garcia, together with Nat Muller and later with Annet Dekker in 2017, entitled "How Much of This Is Fiction," that makes extensive use of "as if" propositions. Garcia is careful to distinguish works that operate on the basis of "what ifs" from works that act "as if," arguing that while the former lead to "satirical acts designed to unmask the workings of power," the latter are "more utopian, leading to forms of activism that, rather than demanding change, act 'as if' change has already occurred." The Guantanamo Bay Museum of Art and History operates in this second mode, and in doing so takes its place alongside a number of other fictional museums that, by experimenting with new forms of instituting, create conceptual spaces to contemplate the possible and incubate political desires.

On a more general level, fictional institutions are merely the artistic exemplars of a fact that is both scandalous and well known: that institutions of all kinds are underwritten by fictions. Karin Knorr Cetina argues that we might think of "fictionality" as referring "to the inflationary introduction of layers of organization and order which increase the viscosity and texture of modern institutions," and this is true of myriad social institutions and administrative norms, Guantanamo included.[8] Indeed, fictions are operative in the foundations of cartographies, currencies, and nations, in the earliest forms of double-entry bookkeeping, in physics labs, and law courts. When the legal rights of a corporation to be treated as if it were a physical person are upheld, one can be sure one is in the presence of fiction. When a married couple are treated legally as one person in English law, to the exclusion of unmarried couples, fiction is certainly at play. When the international

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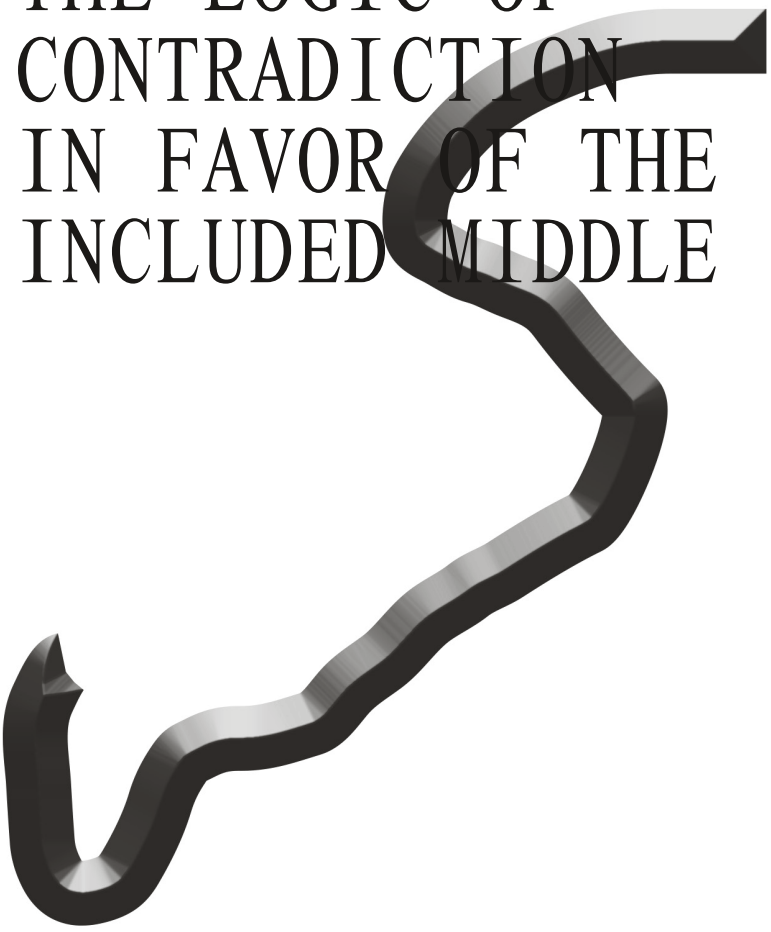

monetary system abandons the gold standard and begins trading on fiat currencies, one is in the presence of multiple fictions, or rather, one witnesses a regime change between the fiction of gold's intrinsic value and another fiction based on money's relational value. Many institutions would simply be unable to function without fictions lubricating their organizational machinery. And yet there are also cases of fictions causing institutional machinery to shudder to a standstill—fictions that can be just as inconvenient as truths, and no less profound in their ability to shed light on current predicaments and institutional hegemony.

Roads

From the browsed and beaten landscapes of Iceland to the fecund banks of the Waikato river running through New Zealand's North Island, several infrastructure plans have been disputed and redirected over the past few decades. In New Zealand, Ngâti Naho people built their objections to road plans around a defense of the habitat of their people's own protective spirit, a *taniwha*; and in Iceland four proposed routes threatened the natural environment of the *huldufólk* (literally "hidden people"), who often dwell in the gnarled volcanic rock formations that jut through the island's ashen topsoil.

There is considerably more at stake here than was reported in much international press at the time: to dismiss the intrusion of folklore into civic engineering projects as the authorities giving ground to a product of make-believe would be to simplify the matter; just as it would to attribute a devout faith in

huldufólk to Icelanders. An explanation for the phenomenon lies somewhere between the two poles: it would seem that the majority of local inhabitants do not so much believe in *huldufólk* as entertain a belief in them.[9]

"Entertaining belief" should not be taken as a synonym for considering an idea in a casual or trivial manner, although it may be both. Rather, it isolates a mode of belief that is nonexclusive, that dispenses with the logic of contradiction in favor of the included middle. There is a clear difference between belief and entertaining belief, and yet when it comes to a reckoning of effects, they could be said to exercise roughly the same power: the objective truth or falsehood of the existence of *huldufólk* is irrelevant to the real effect they have had on the road plans. One thing which this book's focus on fiction as method enables us to concentrate on is the operative effect of something, irrespective of its objective existence.

Certainly it may be objected that the real motive for protecting *huldufólk* habitats is the power they hold over the imagination of tourists that visit Iceland: the notion of an enchanted island is at the core of its tourist-board strategy, and even if they are not directly capitalized upon, the preservation of *huldufólk* habitats feeds into this image. But if the desire to preserve physical traces of this cultural heritage on the island's landscape does support the marketing image, it is far from being the sole motive. As Icelandic polymath Eiríkur Benedikz has suggested, there is a powerful desire on the part of Icelanders themselves to preserve such geological platforms for their imagination. Here, the entertaining of belief is not simply opposed to the physical materiality of the rocks, but entwined

with them, such that it has been claimed that the landscape itself suggests the existence of *huldufólk*. As Benedikz argues, "The imagination fastens on[to] these natural phenomena."[10] If Icelandic emigrants living abroad are less inclined to believe in much of the country's native folklore, it could be that a weakened identification with their cultural heritage is not simply the product of displacement from a cultural ecology that fosters this heritage, but rather the prolonged separation from a landscape that is redolent of *huldufólk*'s existence.[11] In this way, it would not so much be a case of fiction fastening onto a landscape as a case of emanation.

The project to protect the *taniwha* in New Zealand is more closely tied to a colonial history: to the denigration and destruction of one culture by another. The ongoing debates and legal clashes concerning the protection of Māori spirits and sites has frustrated a number of infrastructure construction projects, from prisons to TV masts to roads. In 2002 a case was carried to divert a planned highway at Meremere around the habitat of the *taniwha* Karu Tahi, related to the Tainui *iwi* (people). In part, Karu Tahi has a function analogous to the "here there be monsters" of old Western maps: for example, stories of him discourage foolhardy children from swimming at particularly treacherous parts of a river. But more generally, *taniwha* protect their section of river, and to build into the riverbed will invite their retribution.

As with *huldufólk*, to call *taniwha* a fiction both allows us to recognize the extent to which its existence might partake in something not yet known by—or, indeed, de facto unknowable to—materialist science, and to observe the real effects they have regardless of any determination of them as real or unreal.

As academic folklorist Allan Asbjørn Jøn has noted of Māori *taniwha* and their effect on planning projects more generally, "An element of the spiritual and cultural beliefs of the indigenous population is being moulded and reformed as an integral part of the legal landscape, and official interactions with the landscape."[12] Indeed, as he goes on to argue, in this way, such beliefs are extending into the "bi-cultural nature" of New Zealand, becoming New Zealand outlooks, not exclusively Māori ones.

Recently, this bi-cultural approach has begun to extend into the statutes of the country. In March 2017, south of Karu Tahi's Waikato, another New Zealand river, the Whanganui, was granted legal personhood status and assigned two legal guardians, one from the Whanganui River *iwi*, the other representing the State. The river's rights include ownership of its own riverbed.[13] Statutes of personhood have also been passed in India on behalf of the Ganges and Yamuna rivers—legislation based in part on Ecuador's 2008 constitutional recognition of the Rights of Nature (or "Pachamama," Mother Nature), which includes the possibility for Nature to be named as a legal defendant.[14] We will have cause to return the question of ascriptions of personhood and fictioning, below.

As well as these real effects on engineering projects, legal frameworks, and the identities of societies, these beings and stories of beings reveal something about the valences of fiction as method. First, that fiction is most interesting when understood in its broadest sense—where it recognizes the power of that which acts but which exists outside of our ken. Second, that there is an important role for both material location and

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for continuity and repetition in maintaining these fictions as powerful operative forces in the world. The New Zealand Tohunga Suppression Act was in place for little more than fifty years (1907–62), but this was enough to break uncountable threads in the passing down of *tohunga* wisdom.

If fiction can be so susceptible to a generation of silence or, with the Icelandic emigrant, to a few years of expatriation—so brittle and quick to fade—it equally takes on more and more strength through iteration.[15] But it is not only folkloric traditions that strengthen fictions through repetition and insert them into the world as operative agents. Indeed, at least since the collapse of the gold standard, it has become common to discuss economics and finance in terms of their fictitious bases. One of the earliest decisive moves in the direction of recognizing economic and financial fictions was the work of economic thinker Karl Polanyi. As he argued in his book *The Great Transformation*, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the emergence of a market economy was primarily modeled on what Polanyi calls "fictional commodities."[16] This market of fictional commodities is worth further attention in this context—both in itself and in the more recent instantiation of financial fictions, namely, our current economy of speculative financial products that employ fictions to model, and to determine, the future.

Commodities and Futures

In his 1944 critique of market economies—in particular the myths and dangers of self-regulating (that is, deregulated) markets—Karl Polanyi identified three "fictitious" commodities: "Labor,

land and money," he argues, "are obviously *not* commodities."[17] To think that they are commodities simply because they can be treated like commodities—that they fit the "empirical definition of a commodity"—is mere syllogism.[18] The market's "fictioning" of commodities, then, deploys a simple "as if" function: these commodities have not been produced for sale, but can be sold; they are treated "as if" produced for the market. From this follows the great danger of marketization as Polanyi saw it: the introduction of this "as if" fictioning to the relation between the market and the social-material conditions of life has *real effects*; it means no less than "to subordinate the substance of society itself to the laws of the market."[19] The fictionalization begins as an empirical error (treating labor, land, and money *as if* commodities), but begets a new deterministic relation such that the demands of the market come to shape the matter and relations of life.

In the Thatcher-Reagan years, widespread deregulation led to higher volatility and—along with the increase in power and availability of computation with which to process complex mathematics—the derivatives market took on its contemporary form. Simply put, derivatives price risk and trade it in parcels. In this process the uncertainty of the future—its radical unknowability—is replaced by a model and spread into something that, if not fully knowable, can nonetheless be turned into a surplus through the spreading of risk in a portfolio. Through this hedging of multiple, contradictory "what ifs," volatility can be turned into pricing; the radical unknowability (or fictionality) of the future is deferred—it becomes interminably inaccessible behind an iron curtain of precarity—and a (fictional) model of the future is made available in the present to be priced,

traded, and capitalized on.[20] Here the "as if" function of the fictional commodity meets the "what if" function of speculation and modeling. Through the concatenation of these modes of fiction, the future itself comes to be manipulable by finance, and potentiality—the future as properly unknowable—is permanently deferred. As Frederik Tygstrup has it,

> **When the present is increasingly engrained with virtuality, and the more we bet on, issue promises for and insure our contingent futures, speculation increasingly emerges from the shadow of the otherwise more robust sense of the real and becomes a predominant mode of agency and orientation.[21]**

Fiction is thus both a part of the genealogy of, yet quite opposed to, the derivatives portfolio. Which is to say both that the history of the cancellation of the future by neoliberal financialization has advanced through the market's deployment of fictions—the "as ifs" of fictional commodities and the subsequent "as if" effects of the "what if" models of the future—*and* that in the situation as it now stands, any alternative to such "capitalist realism" must be instantiated at an ontological level—that is, fictioned.[22]

Rather than reducing the future to its calculable financialization in the present (reaping surplus from volatility), fictioning can be thought instead as an invitation that we strategically extend to the radical unknowability of the future. In a neoliberal present, then, the stakes of fiction as method are once again revealed to be the highest: no less than the reinvention of the future beyond the impasses of the present; and thus, a figuration of the future as not always

already determined by the present—the future as unknown. As sociologist of finance Randy Martin put it, "The derivative operates through the conditions of generalized uncertainty as a bearer of this ongoing contestation over value in which the relation between knowledge and non-knowledge is governed."[23] It is this same relation which fiction, too, intervenes in, creates from, or turns toward. The derivative siphons from this surplus—profiting from non-knowledge—and thus neoliberalism, as the economic ideology of the derivative, now has a vested interest in denigrating both the expert and the fictioneer. Where the expert seeks to reduce the surplus of knowledge—and would thus reduce profitable volatility—fiction turns toward the unknown without seeking to legislate or capitalize on its relation to the knowable; indeed, fiction precisely encourages the impact of the unknown *as unknown* on the known and its persistence therein. This is the ability to remain open, or "negative capability"—"of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact or reason"—that Keats famously identified as Shakespeare's core talent (and found so lacking in Coleridge).[24]

Over the past forty years, through the derivative, Capital has moved toward abolishing any regulatory outside, any "elsewhere" from where it might be mapped and controlled: most obviously it has removed the teeth of policy and the efficacy of the State in relation to it. Here, again, are the stakes of fictioning: it becomes a matter of accessing, inventing, and turning toward an outside that has not been colonized by Capital, and through which the world could be thought and become otherwise. If, as Simon O'Sullivan has argued, Capital has now "colonised the virtual," fictions and fictioning ask and enact how other "effective virtualities" can be found and actualized.[25] If none of the

writings in this book explicitly address derivative markets, all the pieces are certainly firmly lodged in the present, and each responds to the urgency of the question of this power over the relation between the known and the unknown, and its related ontologies and ethics.

This emptying out of value from knowledge or expertise, and the wider question of a shift away from regulating the passage of non-knowledge to knowledge toward capitalizing on the paralysis of this flow, is equally associated with the latest form of governance which we are beginning to see emerge: that of "post-truth."

Farming News

It would be difficult to edit a book on the subject of fiction in 2017 without mentioning the much-discussed term "post-truth"—a term upon which Oxford Dictionaries conferred the dubious accolade of "Word of the Year" in 2016.[26] This decision rode on a tidal wave of political commentary that made use of the term in the wake of the US presidential elections and the UK's decision to leave the European Union. Oxford's decision can be considered one thread of a collective narrative that is still in the process of construction, a narrative that has both attempted to make sense of the term "post-truth" and that has, in the process, elevated it to a descriptor of an entire era of political history. Given that most other threads in this collective narrative originate from the comment sections of established newspapers (newspapers, lest we forget, whose very existence is threatened by the emergence of online "alternative" news sources), trusted sources on the

subject of post-truth are hard to come by—which, ironically, is part of the predicament the term describes.

Behind the term post-truth there is the implicit assertion that there was once a time "pre" post-truth, a time in which politics hewed more closely to a reality taken to be objective. Taking a longer historical view allows us to see that there are precedents to the current situation that complicate the narrative of a pre-post-truth world. The contemporary anxiety induced by our inability to distinguish news from fiction echoes, in many ways, a similar anxiety that accompanied the establishment of the border between the two in the seventeenth century. In that period and previously, "newes" was delivered by means of the newes ballad, printed single-sided onto sheets of paper in their thousands and often sung for the benefit of the illiterate. Lennard Davis writes of the news-novel matrix, pointing to numerous instances where the word "newes" was applied as much to recent events as to supernatural happenings, fictional events, and folklore.[27] Davis argues that it was from this undifferentiated discursive field that the novel gained traction as a literary form in eighteenth-century England, as ballad writers hid behind the concept of fiction as a means to escape charges of slander. As the century progressed, the audience for fiction spread beyond those within earshot of the balladeer, and a new literate audience gradually became accustomed to the idea of fiction on the page as nonreferential, a development that has been called "the rise of fictionality."[28] Catherine Gallagher, for example, charts a trajectory from Daniel Defoe's insistence that Robinson Crusoe was indeed a real individual in 1720, to Henry Fielding's contrasting claim that his characters bore no connection to specific people in 1742, and on to the end of the century, by which time readers had

been thoroughly accustomed to viewing the novel as a "protected affective enclosure" in which they could emotionally invest in characters with little or no risk of the vicissitudes of those characters' lives becoming entangled with the readers' own.[29]

Between the rise of fictionality in the mid-eighteenth century and the supposed inauguration of the post-truth era in the early twenty-first, a near untraceable series of discursive shifts, ruptures, and metamorphoses have occurred in the way we experience fiction. For one, the borders of the "protective affective enclosure" that fiction once represented have become more permeable. Fictions proliferate in all aspects of our lives, unconstrained by the novel as a specific form of art. In one sense, then, the term "post-truth" simply describes the spread of this paradigm into a media space that was presumed to be insulated against its effects. And with the opening of the protected affective enclosure of fiction, it could be argued that there has been a corresponding increase in the risk that accompanies the emotional investment it solicits—the risk of reputational damage caused by investing one's belief in a news story subsequently revealed to be false, for example, or the risk of investing one's emotional energy in the construction of an online profile that can no longer be seen as a sacrificial layer superimposed upon an offline existence. Such concerns enter the discussion of online profiles in Erica Scourti's contribution to this book, in which the effects of her fictional memoir *The Outage*, penned by a ghostwriter fed only by the breadcrumb trail of Scourti's online activity and password-protected data, are considered in terms of the strategies they make available for revealing and resisting logics of online capture.

THE PREVALENCE OF HIGH-TRAFFIC VIRAL STORIES IS THE LARGELY UNFORESEEN CONSEQUENCE OF A VAST DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE UNDERWRITTEN BY LOGICS OF CONNECTIVITY, ORDERING, AND VISIBILITY

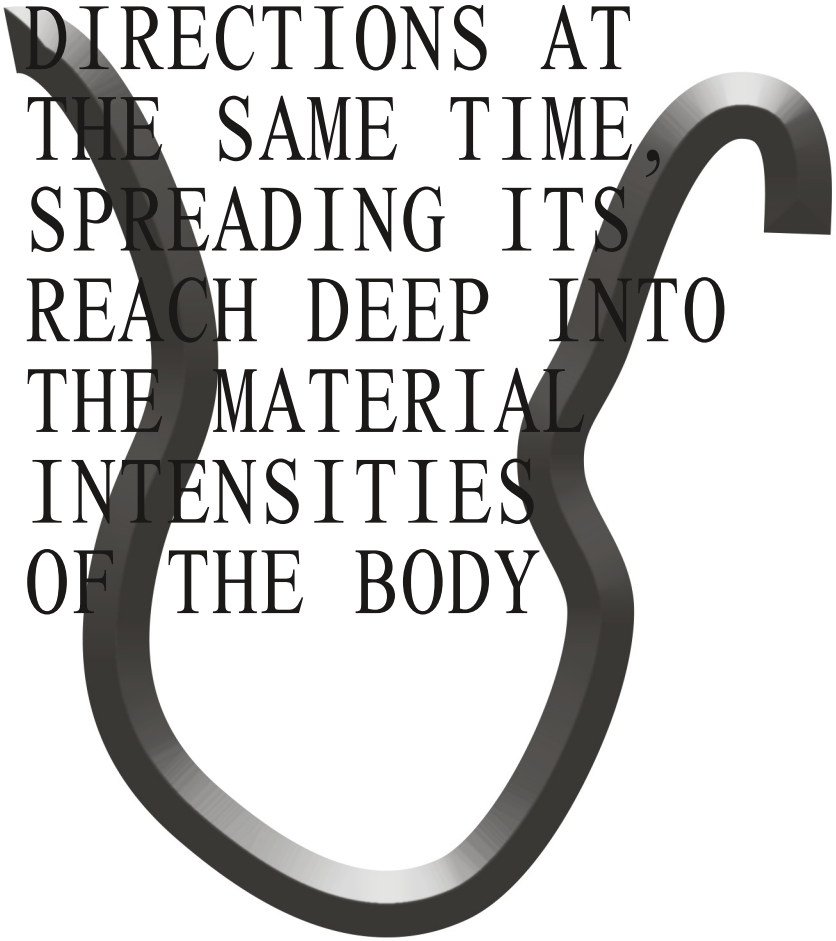
The Outage also embodies a shift in how we are encouraged to experience fiction by some of those who actively create it. If the birth of the novel several centuries ago had the effect of accustoming readers to certain protocols for discerning fiction from fact, many of the chapters of this book redirect this didactic aim. Instead of setting out boundary stones along the perimeter of a fictional space, many of the chapters instead demonstrate the diverse registers in which fictions operate, encouraging a knowing investment in fictions that cannot be defined on the basis of nonreferentiality alone. Here it is no longer a case of establishing the truth about post-truth, or of cleaving fiction from fact, but making tangible the idea that truth and fiction are dynamic concepts that are both produced and productive.

This didactic aim opens out onto what is perhaps the most significant factor in the emergence of post-truth as a conceptual category: not fake news stories themselves, but the means by which they are mediated. If the news-novel matrix served as the accidental midwife to the modern understanding of literary fiction, it did so through means that were, strictly speaking, extra-literary, and which were in part conditioned by legal frameworks that made it possible to criminalize slander. Likewise, fake news stories are mediated by an assemblage that is heavily determined by an underlying logic of circulation—a logic that advertising technology and fake news farms are incredibly adept at exploiting. The prevalence of high-traffic viral stories is the largely unforeseen consequence of a vast digital infrastructure underwritten by logics of connectivity, ordering, and visibility. Confronted with the scale of the problem, spam filters on social media are relatively ineffective.

It is for this reason that numerous tech companies and research institutes are currently looking for technological solutions to combat fake news. The most prominent of these is Google's development of a system for assigning a "knowledge-based trust" score to web sources, with the ability to extract statements of fact and gauge whether they fall outside the limits of an algorithmically determined consensus, bringing a new meaning to a sentence in Matthew Fuller's chapter for this book: "State the fucking obvious. It will become the real."[30] It remains to be seen whether these innovations will spell the end of the post-truth era, but it seems unlikely that a purely technological solution can solve a problem that, while heavily determined by the digital infrastructure of the Internet, is caused by an assemblage altogether more varied in its constitution. Some elements of this assemblage are legal: in the same way that laws on slander helped give rise to the category of fiction in the seventeenth century, the apparent ease with which fake news has penetrated political debate is partly due to the fact that political claims fall outside the jurisdiction of the Advertising Standards Authority in the UK and similar authorities overseas.

Recognizing the complex way information is now mediated not only makes it possible to distinguish the mechanisms that facilitate fake news today from those of the newes-novel matrix in the seventeenth century—the differences are fairly plain to see: the infamous fake news story about Islamic mobs setting fire to a church in Dortmund was not delivered by means of a newes ballad sung on street corners, it was cooked up in the bowels of the online news network Breitbart—it also allows us to disentangle the current situation from media regimes of the more recent past. The online infrastructure described above means that there is

A FICTION CAN SEND SEMIOTIC RIPPLES IN MULTIPLE DIRECTIONS AT THE SAME TIME, SPREADING ITS REACH DEEP INTO THE MATERIAL INTENSITIES OF THE BODY



something different about how we experience news today compared with as recently as fifteen years ago. The lies circulating in the run-up to the war in Iraq and the lies circulating during the 2016 US presidential election campaigns were, fundamentally, not circulated in the same way. By extension, we can be sure that the news that weapons of mass destruction could be launched from within Iraq in less than forty-five minutes would not percolate through the same infrastructure if it were spread today, even if we can only speculate that it would not have the same effect.

It is both the distinctiveness of and the precursors to post-truth that Garcia discusses in his chapter for this book, as he seeks to establish a distinction between early interventionist artists associated with tactical media in the 1990s—many of whom used hoaxes, hacks, and deception as part of their toolkit—and the alt-right appropriation of the same strategies. What emerges is a powerful lesson in media literacy, allowing us to see that the categories of fact and fiction are always conditioned by the materials used to craft, frame, and distribute the discursive objects that scroll down our screens in a blur of epistemological indeterminacy.

Semiotic Strata

On March 3, 1995, a handful of friends met in a park in Mumbai to rhythmically contract their diaphragms and let out a series of noises—noises commonly recognized as laughter. As the weeks passed by the group grew in size, and bystanders began to realize that there was something different about the peals of laughter produced by those assembled: they were voluntary, as opposed to

spontaneous, produced in the absence of any external stimuli that could be considered funny. Over twenty years later more than 10,000 such groups meet regularly all over the world. A typical Laughter Yoga class starts with a series of warm-up exercises that include making eye contact and speaking in gibberish, after which members of the class begin to laugh, chuckle, or giggle unaided by comic incitement. This laughter, although at first a simulated fiction, soon becomes contagious, spreading through the group as the class gets into full swing. The social effect of this fictitious trigger is also accompanied by a physiological effect, stimulating the pituitary gland to produce endorphins, which pass from one neuron to the next until they reach the limbic system, the part of the brain neuroscientists believe responsible for emotion.

The popular pastime of Laughter Yoga invites us to reflect on the semiotic terrain upon which fiction can be said to operate. Here we can witness a fiction involving multiple semiotic forms, from the signifying utterances of the yoga instructor's directions to the group, to the laughter itself, and ending in the sign systems of the neurotransmitters that produce the "happy chemistry" practitioners seek as an end result. While it could be said that it is a fiction that sets this chain in motion, it does not automatically follow that each semiotic interaction can itself be described as fictional, even if it were possible to parse the interactions in a way that isolated them from one another. Indeed, Laughter Yoga is predicated on the notion that the human body cannot tell the difference between fake and genuine laughter, which implies a break in the chain somewhere between the laughter itself and the neurological and chemical signals it helps produce. This is not a break in the chain of sign systems themselves; with

a sufficiently stocked toolbox of concepts drawn from social and biosemiotics it would be possible to follow it link-by-link from the cultural sign systems that promote positivity, through to the social interactions at the level of the group, and on to interactions at the level of brain chemistry.[31] Rather, it implies that in a chain composed of a variety of semiotic forms, some will have the ability to "carry" fiction while others will not. To borrow terminology from the work of Félix Guattari—and in particular the hybrid semiotics he develops by drawing on the work of Louis Hjelmslev and Charles Sanders Peirce—we could say that at some point in the chain the semiotic forms become either "a-semiotic" or "a-signifying." While the a-semiotic represents the formalization of untranslatable material intensities such as hormones, enzymes, and DNA, the a-signifying comprises a range of diverse methods for connecting signs to things directly, without recourse to representational paradigms, and include musical notation, mathematics, and machine language.[32] A-semiotic and a-signifying semiotics have the capacity to register and transmit the effects of fiction to varying degrees, but are not themselves able to launch fictions into the world.

This is not to suggest that fiction—here understood primarily through the mode of simulation—is restricted to the written or spoken word. In this example it is arguably laughter itself that carries the full force of fiction, rather than the verbal instructions of the leader of the yoga class. And laughter, lest we forget, is both signifying and a-signifying, both meaningful and nonsensical; it is simultaneously a language, a music, and a noise.

The polysemiotic character of laughter shows that the model of a semiotic chain is itself somewhat misleading, implying a linearity

that is not able to describe accurately the nature of the processes at play. A fiction can send semiotic ripples in multiple directions at the same time, spreading its reach deep into the material intensities of the body. Instead of a chain, then, we might think of fictions as creating strands in what Tim Ingold calls a "meshwork," where lines don't serve simply to connect points, but constitute paths along which growth and movement are lived out.[33] From this perspective, the power of fiction as a method could be seen as creating new meshworks involving diverse semiotic forms. Fiction thrives as a process that is synthetic in the sense that it gathers into its orbit a number of agents that progressively fill out its content. Indeed this is the very strength of fiction—that it is not purely analytical.

The synthetic aspects of fiction become readily apparent in Dora García's chapter, in which she weaves together several examples of fictions constructed as protective shields against truths too difficult, traumatic, or incongruous to bear. The most tragic of these examples is the true story of Jean-Claude Romand, a French family man who spun a web of deception stretching back eighteen years, involving made-up qualifications, investment schemes, and a job at the World Health Organization. When his fantasy finally looked like it would be found out, Romand took extreme measures to ensure the survival not of himself, but of the fantasy life he had built brick by brick, killing his parents, wife, and two children before attempting to commit suicide. While extreme, the example involves a vast fictional meshwork spanning numerous semiotic strata, one that was lived so fully—and yet yoked together by an underlying ideal so static—that it took on a life of its own, a life deemed so important it was worth sacrificing numerous others to protect.

In his contribution, Tim Etchells discusses a range of fictional constructions in his work as artistic director of the theater company Forced Entertainment as well as in his solo performances and artworks. Here fiction is again shown to operate upon numerous terrains: at the level of the performance that deliberately miscasts its audience as if they had come to see another genre of entertainment altogether, at the level of the individual utterance—which for Etchells, "in its own unique fragmentary content carries a kind of deep-level code concerning (and constructing) speaker and listener, speaker and addressee"—and finally in the deployment of a nonverbal vocabulary of gesture, eye contact, and body movements that give the relations between Etchells and his audience new accents, "shifting the proposition in a rolling dialogue, conflict, and parallel track with the text."

The issue of how we both construct and are constructed by fictions has over recent years had an increasing influence on thinking about the future of human relations with technology—from artificial intelligences to robots—expanding and displacing older theories around the simulation of life and consciousness (simulation being, of course, a mode of fictioning).

Cybernetics, Social Media, and Trolls from the Dungeon

In his "Chinese Room" thought experiment, John Searle employs a distinction between "as" and "as if," using it to distinguish between strong (or conscious) forms of artificial intelligence and weak (or merely consciousness-simulating) forms—the former, for Searle, being an impossibility.[34] Through Searle, the question of a machine's intentionality has been placed at the center of

many debates on the problems of cognition and consciousness: even if we can imagine an AI so sophisticated that it passes the Turing Test (in Searle's example, an AI that can convince a Chinese-speaking human that it, too, is a Chinese-speaking human), this would not constitute a strong AI, because the program can act only "as if" conscious. A capacity for simulation, Searle argues, no matter how advanced and empirically convincing, does not constitute a mind.

More recently, Johanna Seibt has pursued the "as if" question of AI and social relations further in her study of robotics, in particular the potential uses of AI robots as "caretakers and tutors"—which is to say, robots as carers, mentors, and, indeed, "'friends.'"[35] For Seibt, friendship with robots (or other relations of care) takes place "on the basis of neurophysiological mechanisms shaping social cognition below the level of consciousness."[36] Posthuman sociality is possible, it seems, because the as-if behaviors of robots have real neuroplastic effects in humans, just as we have seen that simulated laughter can have real neurochemical ramifications, producing "real" laughter and a concomitant socializing effect.[37] For Seibt, reassessing the ontological categorization of robots through attention to their social interactions, rather than through the metric of intentionality adopted by Searle's AI research—so in terms of what they do and the interactions they become involved in, rather than what they can be said to *be*—shifts the terrain of the simulation problem.[38] Seibt argues that extending the use of the term "person" to robots can reasonably be predicated on the fact that robots are enacting care in social situations—regardless of the fact that they are programmatically simulating descriptive predicates, such as "faithful" or

"companion."[39] As she argues, "person" is not a description, but an "ascriptive predicate" that is "tied to a certain speech act and establishes an absolute, non-gradient commitment."[40] Put another way, to call robots "persons" is to enter them into a normatively regulated social contract—and let us remember that both the performativity of the ascriptive speech act and the normativity of the convention-regulated social field can well be described as fictions.

Moving further into the problem of human-machine sociality, Seibt addresses the question of whether we "Could not only *treat* something as a friend but also *interact* with it as if it were a friend."[41] In order to address the problem, Seibt argues that a distinction must be parsed between "make-believe" and "fictional" interaction, a distinction that turns on the presence or absence of reciprocity in a given interaction: in a "make-believe" scenario, there is no reciprocity, and the "analogical projections"—we might say, fictions—that are made are based solely on our own agency and imaginings. Seibt gives the example of a driver greeting her car, and the vehicle showing no reaction on which she might hang her make-believe of a caring intimacy between herself and the machine. On the other hand, in a "fictional" interaction, there is a reciprocity, and both agents "behave in ways that resemble the actions and reactions prescribed by the interaction template [of friendship]."[42] Crucially, Seibt argues that it is not necessary that both agents be aware of (that is, conscious of or intentionally embroiled in) the normative, fictional convention; what is important is that both agents are successfully simulating the model of friendship. This simulation requires neither that both agents be intentionally invested in the convention, nor that they be

intentionally simulating the convention. While her car cannot return Seibt's salutation, her dog can hold up its end of a reciprocal, fictional exchange of greetings—not because it is a speaking dog, or because Seibt believes it to be consciously interacting with her in a person-like friendship, but because she can "analogically project" onto the dog's actions a resemblance to a greeting. Here, both agents are found to be acting "as if" the encounter is one of friendship, regardless of their own conscious capacities or their beliefs about the other's conscious capacities.

While a real social interaction of friendship or care can take place through simulation—can be established and maintained through "as ifs," so long as there is a reciprocity in play—Seibt notes that friendship is a descriptive predicate (as described above). The category of personhood, on the other hand, is not descriptive, and for Seibt the ethical question grounding the future of a philosophy of social robotics rests on the ascriptive, declarative nature of personhood. While ascriptive declarations are, of course, normative and performative (and thus do engage in certain modes of fictioning), Seibt argues that they cannot be simulated: one cannot sensibly say, "'It is *as if* I hereby promise you.'"[43] As such, she continues, "From a philosophical viewpoint it is a category mistake to assume that we can interact with anything—whether robot or human—*as if* it were a person."[44] Personhood, and therefore the sociality that is necessarily predicated on it, is always to treat something *as* (and not "as if") a person. Yet, by thinking in terms of human-robotic mutual sociality, Seibt argues, the traditional opposition between "as" and "as if" (and, in particular, reciprocal fictional "as ifs") instead becomes the two poles of a spectrum. The simulation of

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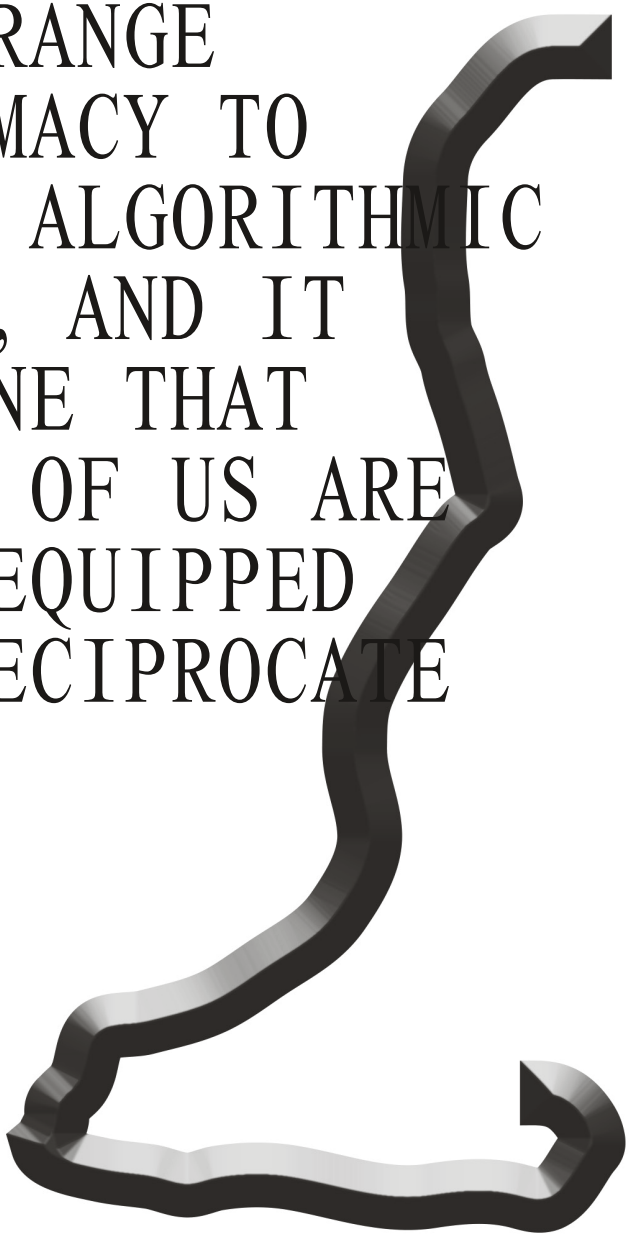


fictional, reciprocal models of sociality (i.e., friendship) is imbricated here with declarations of personhood, since personhood is given as the necessary condition of sociality. It is across this gradated intermixing of "as" and "as if" that Seibt lays out her five "varieties" of action simulation. The fictionally grounded social relations that Seibt describes do not so much suggest a willingness to be duped, but, rather, open us toward a sociality based on acknowledging the opacity of the other's subjectivity.

Many of the scenarios which Seibt's research relates to lie in a future many years off in terms of robotic development, but clearly our social field is already constituted at a fundamental level by human-technology interactions. We might think, for example, of the increasing role of virtual "personal assistant" artificial intelligences and the interactions had with them—which seem both intimate and cold—from the FBI agent character Dominique DiPierro's desultorily mumbled question "Alexa, are we friends?" in the Netflix series *Mr. Robot*, to the use of these AIs as companions by people on the autistic spectrum, such as Gus Newman.[45] Two things are immediately noticeable about these virtual assistant AIs: first, that they use the voice as input and output—that is, they are voice-activated and respond to inquiries through speech, simulating one of our most uniquely human attributes—and second, that the four most widely used virtual assistants (Apple's Siri, Amazon's Alexa, Google's Google Now, and Microsoft's Cortana) all simulate a female voice by default.[46]

Much as we might hope to glimpse, here, connections to an affirmative history of the roles of women in cybernetics—a pioneering role which, in the person of Ada Byron, is as old

as mechanical computation itself—this characterization of a servile machine as feminine is clearly, rather, a sad symptom of the persistence of gender stereotyping in technology and wider culture. A recent example of the explicit cruelty with which this stereotyping is defended is briefly discussed in both David Garcia's and Erica Scourti's essays, namely the archetypal trolling activity around "Gamergate," in which female game developers and critics, including Zoë Quinn, Brianna Wu, and Anita Sarkeesian, were grievously harassed and threatened for daring to express an opinion.

It is interesting, in our context, that social networks as we know them today can be genealogically traced back to a fictional—indeed, fantastical—virtual space. If the earliest pioneers of Internet socializing like Richard Bartle—whose 1978 game/platform Multi-User Dungeon (MUD), cowritten with Roy Trubshaw, is perhaps the earliest Internet forum with an avowedly social dimension—conceived of their work as explicitly political, it was because, for Bartle, MUD allowed anyone to be anyone: "In this true meritocracy," Bartle wrote at the time, "Everyone starts off on an equal footing."[47] Certainly Bartle and Trubshaw's regional accents (they hailed from Yorkshire and Wolverhampton respectively) marked them out for derision in a southern English university, and these accents and dialects were absent from the on-screen text and rigid syntax of MUD's interface. But while such forums might flatten out the hierarchical relations between working- and middle-class white, Western males, in the decades since MUD at least two things have become clear about anonymized social networks: first, as evidenced by the Gamergate affair, the protection and freedom that anonymity brings will just as readily be used for abusive ends, especially toward non-male and non-

white people; and, second, that if we can indeed invent ourselves through the Internet, then we are just as much invented by it.[48]

Scourti addresses this latter point by drawing on Michel Foucault's study of ancient Greek "self-writing"—practices such as diary-keeping and letter-writing—which allows her to recognize social media, too, as a "technology of the self."[49] But if these online platforms offer us new ways of constructing ourselves, they are equally reworking the ways in which it is possible to do so. As Scourti shows, the new protocols of self-presentation and the new ways of conceiving of privacy that social media have brought are substantially rewiring our notions of intimacy and sincerity. What would seem to be the least fictional parts of our lives—from falling in love to familial relations—are revealed in Scourti's practice to have become deeply enmeshed in the genealogically and performatively fictional world of social media. But, contrary to Bartle's designs of free elaboration of the self in online forums, Scourti also reveals a world in which forms of control indigenous to "real life" have supplemented those proper to the online world and continue to affect people of color and female and trans users disproportionately.

In her discussion of privacy, Scourti notes how profiling algorithms—used by online platform companies to generate reams of saleable data—make no distinction between public and password-protected data. There is a strange intimacy to this algorithmic gaze, and it is one that many of us are ill-equipped to reciprocate. The complexity and speed, indeed the profound *otherness*, of these algorithms requires a significant speculative leap—or act of fictioning—to allow us to form any kind of image of them. It is just such a leap that Matthew Fuller makes in his

imaginary exploration of a millisecond in the life of a search engine. Fuller brings together speculation with chopped and sped-up syntaxes to form contact of a sort with nonhuman intelligence. Interestingly, by way of comparison, Simon O'Sullivan remarks in his essay on the importance of new grammars in the project of non-philosophy and, as he has written on elsewhere, in the general breaking out from what he calls the "fictions of control."[50]

Mambos in the Matrix

Making contact with nonhuman intelligence through speculative means is also the main concern of Delphi Carstens and Mer Roberts's essay. In particular, they are concerned with exploring the work of the art collective Orphan Drift through its immanentization of the relation between material and virtual energies. This involves the creation of circuits between the two, often extending across time and into both the virtual-real of the future and the digital-virtual of the screen. In finding and creating the confluences of these two, the group's work overtly demonstrates its indebtedness to science fiction film and literature, and especially the early cyberpunk novels of William Gibson and others. As Dani Cavallaro points out in her *Cyberpunk and Cyberculture*, Gibson avers an "animistic infrastructure in cyberspace," in particular its "infiltration" by Vodou loa.[51] The Vodou culture is superadded, in OD's work, to elements from the southern African myths of the Xhosa and San peoples—and the title of Carstens and Roberts's essay, "The Things That Knowledge Cannot Eat," is a translation of a Dagara proverb concerning the supernatural.

HYPERSTITION DEPLOYS FICTION AS A TECHNOLOGY TO SET UP POSITIVE FEEDBACK CYCLES OF ACTUALIZATION

From these animist influences, OD developed a series of performative and formal techniques of invocation, calling in various agents, beings, and circumstances from the abstract outsides encountered in their demonology and travels in the digital-virtual. Alongside this, the future-as-outside is also called in, through practices of what has been called "hyperstition." Indeed, to echo a phrase from one of the primary practitioners of hyperstition, in OD's practice, it is "as if a tendril of the future were burrowing back."[52]

No summary, however brief, of twentieth-century theoretical deployments of fictions would be complete without mention of the method of hyperstition. Developed in the mid-1990s, hyperstition involves a sensitivity to and activation of those elements of the pure immanence of the future that are operative—at a lower intensity, or without full integration—in the present. Hyperstition deploys fiction as a technology to set up positive feedback cycles of actualization. For example, as the Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (Ccru) observed in 1999, whether or not computers would all crash at midnight on New Year's Eve, the quintessential millennial disaster that is "MBug panic" had already had real effects: fictional or not, these effects were tangible, and often costly.[53] As the Ccru wrote: "It's not a matter of waiting for Y2K […]. Hype and panic cannot simply be thought of as precursors to events: they are the event already happening."[54]

If the "counter-chronic arrival" that hype-fiction effectuates was one of the cornerstones of Ccru's toolkit, the arrival was always "from machinic virtuality," that is, a future in which the impersonal, extraterritorial, and ahistorical were fully realized.[55] Through the positive feedback loops of hyperstition

this future-singularity (in which product and process are fully immanent to each other) was made present: an opening to the future in which the subject cedes its sovereign executive functions in the name of an acceleration of the arrival of the abstract-real. Here, contact with the future can be understood as a case of what Roberts—a fellow traveler of the Ccru—has elsewhere called "everting the virtual."[56]

In the years since the Ccru dispersed from the University of Warwick, the practice of hyperstition has been allied with two very different political ends. On the one hand, Nick Land has identified the singularity that hyperstition invokes with AI and a hyper-accelerated Capitalism hostile to the retarding effects of the human—a direction that is leading him to increasingly ally himself with alt-right and white supremacist positions such as those of Mencius Moldbug (Curtis Yarvin). On the other hand, a younger generation have deployed elements of hyperstition toward more leftist agendas—perhaps most famously Alex Williams and Nick Srnicek's "#Accelerate: Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics."[57]

As Simon O'Sullivan (who also appears in this volume) and his collaborator David Burrows observe in their *Mythopoesis/Myth-Science/Mythotechnesis*, what is generally overlooked in leftist deployments of hyperstition, including Srnicek and Williams's, is the central role of mythos.[58] The original Ccru description of hyperstition characterizes the practice as "a call to the old ones," a reference to the Cthulhu mythos of H. P. Lovecraft's early twentieth-century stories, some of the fundamental cornerstones of the "weird" genre.[59] These "old ones" are not simply being referenced in an intertextual weave, nor are they

being taken on as conceptual personae in the way that Deleuze and Guattari speak through Conan Doyle's Professor Challenger, for example.[60] Rather, the "old ones" are being invoked as denizens of the abstract outside that have a capacity to move between the noumenal and phenomenal, and, indeed, to immanentize these two—in a similar fashion perhaps, to Orphan Drift's practice of the invocatory "everting" of digital-virtual demons. There is also a connection, here, to the abstract-outside which Justin Barton speaks of in his chapter in this book. But where Land associated the outside with an inhuman and inhumane transcendental—a "fanged noumenon"—Barton is concerned with turning away from the cold, gothic line to the outside (which he associates with "transcendental north"), and toward a direction of "Love-and-Freedom" (or "transcendental south").[61]

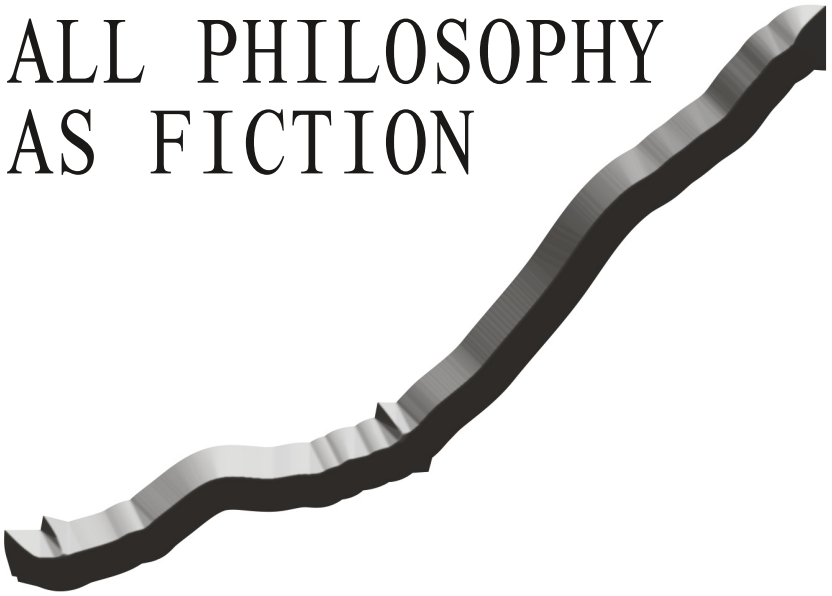
The Outside

The most recent OD piece discussed in Carstens and Roberts's essay, the video work *Green Skeen* (2016), is precisely an eversion of the outside. It involves the ritualized creation of a "composite technoanimal" with a capacity to draw in a shimmering digital-virtual through blocs of the dawn-lit city. The video was made in collaboration with another art collective—one similarly invested in the exploration of ritual and the digital as means of raiding, redesigning, and reorienting our affective relations toward the outside—named Plastique Fantastique, founded in 2004 by Dave Burrows and Simon O'Sullivan. In the inaugural manifesto of Plastique Fantastique (a piece originally written by O'Sullivan for the catalogue of a solo show by Burrows) the group is fictioned into existence through the performative ascription

of the manifesto to them. The manifesto insists on the importance of actualizing virtualities, and especially on the use of ritual to effect a shift from utility and "work time" to "sacred time" or "play."[62] This shift in subjectivity is expressed in explicitly Deleuzian terms as a refolding of the outside, and not least of "'new' folds of silicon with carbon."[63] O'Sullivan's essay for this book, "Non-philosophy and Art Practice (or, Fiction as Method)," outlines his initial forays into the work of François Laruelle, in particular the notion of non-philosophy and its pertinence to aesthetics. Again, the question being engaged with is how an outside can be dealt with directly, without the prioritization of a lower-order inside. In the Plastique Fantastique manifesto this inside is a risable humanist subject ("we howl with laughter at interiority and so-called 'essence'"[64]); in O'Sullivan's essay on Laruelle, it is the interiority of philosophy itself—which determines and speaks for (or "ventriloquizes") a more profound and strange thought of the outside—which O'Sullivan looks to move beyond. These are two notions of interiority that Barton also aims past in his essay here, "Beyond Plato's Cave: Escaping from the Cities of the Interiority," in which "lucidity" is given as a mode of thought beyond the rationalizations and self-aggrandizing myths of philosophy and religion.

Perhaps the most notable element of O'Sullivan's essay is the particular use he makes of diagrams, which he describes as "a form of speculative fictioning." Indeed, the use of diagrams as themselves a mode of thinking—as opposed to, say, illustrative devices—has been characteristic of O'Sullivan's oeuvre at least since his 2012 book *On the Production of Subjectivity: Five Diagrams of the Finite-Infinite Relation*.[65] Through these diagrams, O'Sullivan posits non-linguistic kinds of thought, and

TO DENY PHILOSOPHY'S CAPACITY TO GRASP THE REAL IS TO RECAST ALL PHILOSOPHY AS FICTION



art is demonstrated to be itself always already a mode of thinking (and, we might add, theoretical work is widened out to become a practice in its own right).

In O'Sullivan's approach to Laruelle, this turn to modes of thought beyond the traditional discipline of philosophy is associated with a certain kind of fictioning. The term Laruelle uses for this is "heresy," an operation that signals the refusal to make a decision, that is, to produce a cut between a "real" (or outside) and a philosophical procedure that would comment on or determine that real. Just as the diagram seeks to put to work a mode of nonlinguistic, nonrational, and nonrepresentational thought, so non-philosophy seeks to think *from* rather than about the real. To heretically refuse the validity of the philosophical decision—to deny philosophy's capacity to grasp the real, for it has always already effectively determined it—is to recast all philosophy as fiction. Non-philosophy is understood as "swerving" between these decision-fictions, producing a "clinamen" that touches on multiple perspectives (both philosophical and otherwise) without selecting any of them as a more true take on the real. In this way, non-philosophy not only reveals any given philosophy as a fiction, it also makes a fictional leap itself, to operate from (rather than on) the undetermined real. Again, we find a distinction here between modes of control or determination that operate through fiction, against a more profound outside that is considered a fiction more real than reality. The task of non-philosophy, then, like the task of ritualized eversion, or of hyperstition, is to immanentize this more real outside, and it is in this way that these various practices and approaches—all operating on and through fictions—each stake a relation to the most political of fictions: the outside as incoming future.

If Barton's transcendental south is, again, a direction away from the interiorities and all-too-human self-aggrandizement of Enlightenment philosophy, religions, and hero-narratives, it is equally a movement that—in his essay here, as well as in his 2015 book *Hidden Valleys*—Barton associates with leaving the cities and moving toward immanent relations with the fullness of the Planet. The joyful encounters that this turn calls out to differ greatly from the necessarily horrifying immanence of Land's Lovecraftian position, and we thus find foregrounded in Barton's work a pure immanence or singularity—namely the Planet—and a set of comportments—of lucidity—that stand against the accelerated horrorism of Land's more recent, Neoreactionary and hyperracist, writings.[66]

As David Garcia's essay in this book makes clear, in recent years Neoreactionary politics has been making very effective use of various kinds of fictions, and one of the stakes of any discussion of fictioning today—this book included—concerns consciousness-raising and tactical development of its uses and abuses as a method in sociopolitical contexts. But fictioning also involves imagining and practicing new social relations beyond those overcoded by fictional commodities and future-modeling financial-fictions. It is noteworthy that many of the writers in this collection also work as artists, and that they do so in collaborations. As Mark Fisher—who collaborated with Barton on two audio essays, *On Vanishing Land* (2013) and *londonunderlondon* (2005)—observed at the conference that seeded this book, "The true collaborator is the outside," and we can often see this outside seep in whenever a collaboration is at work—a fact that William Burroughs and Brion Gysin were clearly aware of when they wrote of a "third mind" emerging, or otherwise present, in their

own artistic and literary collaborations.[67] Indeed, it is perhaps no coincidence that three of the chapters in this book reference the *I Ching*, an ancient technology of bibliomancy, or harnessing chance to allow the outside to speak. In the nonhierarchical, productive sociality that is collaboration—with human and nonhuman others—possibilities emerge for different relations to the future, different assemblages of kinship, and different relations to the Planet. Far from "mere" escapism, then, the stakes of thinking of fiction as method are, again, the highest.

Encountering Fictions

Shortly before the turn of the century, Charles Platt, one-time graphic designer for and editor of the seminal New Wave science fiction magazine *New Worlds*, proposed the notion of "quantum fiction."[68] While, as Christina Scholz has noted, Platt is rather prescriptive in terms of the experimental aesthetics he advocates—his examples draw heavily on collage aesthetics such as Burroughs's cut-ups—there is also some mileage in the term, especially in Platt's call for texts to acknowledge the reader as an "active participant" (just as the observer of a quantum event has a determinant, though by no means necessarily intentional, effect).[69] Of course, assertions as to the reader's role as co-creator pre-date Platt's essay by several decades, most famously in work by Roland Barthes, Foucault, and Umberto Eco.[70] But, as Scholz argues, the term has a particular resonance for a genre of writing explicitly engaged with science; and, we might suggest, for an age in which—as Suhail Malik has observed—undecidability is the dominant aesthetic paradigm.[71]

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In particular, Scholz draws on Platt's term "quantum fiction" to discuss M. John Harrison's Kefahuchi Tract books, a trilogy which Carstens and Roberts acknowledge their deep appreciation of. On one level, the term "quantum fiction" is pertinent because of the books' recurring figure of the Kefahuchi Tract, described in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* as "a kind of light-years-wide interstellar honeypot, whose epistemological and ontological mysteries have created rifts/riffs in reality that have haunted Alien species for aeons, and humans more recently."[72] But more fundamentally, for Scholz, it is the affective impact on the reader of Harrison's work that is "quantum," because it has the capacity to produce a superposition of modes that could be seen as mutually exclusive: the work produces a singular admixture of the weird and the hauntological, and their attendant affects of awe and horror.[73]

The piece that Harrison has provided for this collection, and the short story that he read at the "Fiction as Method" conference—an extract from his forthcoming novel, and the story "Yummie," respectively—contain this superposition in a much quieter, though no less joyfully, eerily disconcerting way.[74] They depict characters caught in eddies, not entirely participants in their own lives. There is nothing so spectacular in scale as the eerie maw of the Kefahuchi Tract, only the commonplace occurrences of what Michael Hamburger called "non-events."[75] Into these lives enters something small but disconcerting—"erupts" would be too strong a word. Although those "somethings" are not in themselves agents of perturbation—indeed, in "Green Children" they are as much humorous interludes as transformative events—the strangeness of these lives' contingencies appears; and we had, we realize, felt it all along. These scenarios reveal a deep unease running through the lives of their protagonists, a

weirdness at the heart of things that is as devastating as it is quotidian. We find a reality that, we realize, has always already been transfigured; where we were never truly at home—again, the horror and awe. Given this coextension of the everyday and the "epistemologically and ontologically mysterious,"[76] we do indeed find in Harrison's work what Scholz has recognized as the superposition of escapism and an "anti-escapist sense that possibility *is* a reality."[77] Here, in these pleasurably disconcerting *récits*, aesthetic and political forms of fiction are both in effect.

In a comparable way of working, Tim Etchells discusses one of the techniques of his "postdramatic" theater whereby audiences are addressed as if they were the audience of a different occasion, and through which "the position, implication, and even role of the public is drawn, redrawn, intensified, and manipulated in producing the dramaturgical journey of a work." Simon O'Sullivan comments that his own experience of Etchell's performance at the "Fiction as Method" conference (in which Etchells reworked material from "Yummie," the story M. John Harrison had just read) felt as if the "real" itself were breaking through—not because Etchells had some sort of preternatural, direct access to the real, but because of what emerges when the event and that which structures the event are made simultaneously apparent. A collection such as the one you are reading now, which features a variety of approaches—from artists' writings, to philosophical works, to fictions—can, we hope, offer manifold possibilities for such encounters.

In a broad sense, all acts of reading become embroiled with fictioning. There is what we might call a "post-literacy" at play,

here: not in the sense in which Marshall McLuhan envisaged—of a society moving into a multimediasphere in which reading is no longer a necessary part of everyday life—but a post-literacy in which the very act of reading appears as an interrogable set of attitudes and affections that can be both immanently lived and critically appreciated.[78] When the questions at hand concern fictioning—and when the terrain is as varied as even this small collection demonstrates—the complex adventure of reading is all the more at stake in our actions, reactions, and abreactions of the style, personae, and gambits of the writing.

With these works of and on fictioning, then, we are constantly looping into and out of, and stacking up, manifold registers of criticality, credulity, and "entertaining belief" in the text—a fact that Dora García exploits to its utmost in the conclusion to her essay. Whether through our engagement with the scenarios, characters, or the consistency of a text's concepts, the act of reading moves us through, and superposes, various gradations of imagination, criticality, insights, outsight, and so on. And this shifting of registers, and their superposition, both sharpens our faculties and widens our horizons—both inside the dream, and on waking from it. In this vein, Félix Guattari finds an evocative image in Jean Genet's *Prisoner of Love*. Genet pictures a boiler, producing vapor which "steams up a window, then gradually disappears, leaving the window clear, the landscape suddenly visible and the room extended perhaps to infinity."[79] Fictions can take us in both of these directions, clouding the windows to subtract us from the smooth functioning of the world, or opening us out to those ("perhaps") infinite vistas. Crucially, as Guattari observes, this steaming and clearing is not a single movement for Genet—it is not, for example, the

Pauline promise of direct contact with the transcendent ("through a glass darkly; but then face to face"[80])—rather, it is an ongoing and deepening "oscillation."[81] Indeed, for Guattari, all of Genet's little "eclipses" and becomings-imperceptible—and surely we are becoming-imperceptible when we are "lost in a good book"—leave behind trails that, like dreams or fictions, are "stroboscopic after-images of other universes."[82] These are not merely fantastical universes to which we have escaped and which we now hazily recall; nor are they mere "mystical revelations."[83] Rather, they are the apparition and invention "of new existential dimensions"; new worlds, and their concomitant new modes of being.[84] This is not so far, perhaps, from the revitalization of potential that, as we have seen, Scholz finds at work in M. John Harrison's escapist-anti-escapist, "quantum" sublime.

Be vigilant, dear reader, as you move through these tactics, histories, warnings, analyses, confessions, tall tales, invocations, promises, and dreams; and as they move through you. The opportunities for steaming up the windows, and for the windows to clear—to escape and to return with a deepened sense of reality and possibility—are manifold in the chapters that follow. Fictioning appears, in these pages, as a means for encountering others in all their irreducibility, and for re-enchanting reality with the buzz of possibility.

Endnotes

1 See for example, the section on Null Island in the release notes to mapping software Natural Earth v1.3, http://www.naturalearthdata.com/blog/natural-earth-version-1-3-release-notes (accessed July 12, 2017). Null Island is used in both vector and raster data mapping.

2 Mai Abu ElDahab, "A Conversation with Khalil Rabah," *Bidoun* 8 (Fall 2006), http://bidoun.org/articles/khalil-rabah-and-mai-abu-eldahab.

3 ICAHD, *The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions*, accessed August 21, 2017, https://icahd.org.

4 Robert Smithson, "Cultural Confinement," in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 154–56. For a critical overview of the canonization of Institutional Critique, see a number of the contributions to *Art and Contemporary Critical Practice: Reinventing Institutional Critique*, ed. Gerald Raunig and Gene Ray (London: Mayfly, 2009).

5 Andrea Fraser, "From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique," *Artforum* 44 (September 2005): 282.

6 The phrase "forms of instituting" is from Raunig and Ray, *Art and Contemporary Critical Practice*.

7 Ibid., vii; 180. The concept is rooted in Antonio Negri's discussion of the differences between "constituent power" and "constituted power." See Antonio Negri, *Insurgencies: Constituent Power and the Modern State* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

8 Karin Knorr Cetina, "Primitive Classification of Postmodernity: Towards a Sociological Notion of Fiction," *Theory, Culture and Society* 11 (1994): 8.

9 There have been numerous surveys conducted as regards Icelanders' beliefs around *huldufólk*, but each of them solicit responses on the basis of varying degrees of belief or nonbelief. Kirsten Hastrup argues convincingly in connection to *huldufólk* that reframing the question in terms of experiences leads to radically different answers. See Kirsten Hastrup, "Getting It Right," *Anthropological Theory* 4, no. 4 (2004): 455–72.

10 B. S. Benedikz, "Basic Themes in Icelandic Folklore," *Folklore* 84 (Spring 1973): 2, https://doi.org/10.1080/00155 87x.1973.9716492.

11 As one son's interview with his Icelandic emigrant parents reveals of the North American expat community, "Superstition was in decline. Belief in *afturgöngur* [the walking dead] had, as far as I know, vanished, or all but so. The *huldufólk* [hidden people] had become, for the most part, a thing of story." Guttormur Guttormsson, "Guttormur Þorsteinsson and Birgitta Jósepsdóttir," translated by Katelin Parson, in *My Parents: Memoirs of New World Icelanders*, ed. Birna Bjarndottir and Finnbogi Gudmundsson (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2007), 50.

12 Allan Asbjørn Jøn, "The Road and the Taniwha," *Australian Folklore: A Yearly Journal of Folklore Studies* 22 (2007): 89.

13 Shannon Biggs, "When Rivers Hold Legal Rights," *Earth Island Journa*l, April 17, 2017, http://www.earthisland .org/journal/index.php/elist /eListRead/when_rivers_hold _legal_rights.

14 See Title II, Chapter One, Article 10, and Title II, Chapter Seven of the *Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador*. Available in English at http:// pdba.georgetown.edu /Constitutions/Ecuador /english08.html (accessed April 16, 2017).

15 The notion of fiction gaining power through iteration would seem to resemble the concept of an "illusory truth effect," a term first used by Hasher, Goldstein, and Toppino to describe the increased likelihood of false facts being intuited as true after they had been repeated several times. While both notions are ostensibly concerned with the ability of repetition to reinforce belief, the notion of an illusory truth effect approaches belief, once again, through the logic of contradiction, pitting the objectively true against the illusory. Lynn Hasher, David Goldstein, and Thomas Toppino, "Frequency and the Conference of Referential Validity," *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior,* 16, no. 1 (1977): 107–12.

16 Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon, 2001), 71–80.

17 Ibid., 45.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., 75.

20 Of particular note is Fischer Black and Myron Scholes, "The Pricing of Options and Corporate Liabilities," *Journal of Political Economy* 81, no. 3 (May–June 1973): 637–54.

21 Frederik Tygstrup, "Speculation and the End of Fiction," *Paragrana* 25, no. 2 (December 2016): 98.

22 In his book *Capitalist Realism* Mark Fisher traces Thatcher's dictum that "there is no alternative" to free-market capitalism to demonstrate the ontological turn of this idea in contemporary neoliberalism and to begin laying out a new direction for consciousness-raising and the instantiation of an alternative future. Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Ropley: O Books, 2009).

23 Randy Martin, *Knowledge LTD: Toward a Social Logic of the Derivative* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015), 56.

24 John Keats, "Letter to George and Thomas Keats," December 22, 1817, in *Letters of John Keats to His Family and Friends*, ed. Sidney Colvin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 48.

25 Simon O'Sullivan, "The Production of the New and the Care of the Self," in *Deleuze, Guattari and the Production of the New*, ed. Simon O'Sullivan and Stephen Zepke (London: Continuum, 2008), 97.

26 "The Word of the Year 2016 Is ...," *Oxford Dictionaries*, accessed July 1, 2017, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2016.

27 Lennard J. Davis, *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 50.

28 Catherine Gallagher, "The Rise of Fictionality," in *The Novel*, vol. 1, *History, Geography, and Culture*, ed. Franco Moretti (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 336–63.

29 Ibid., 347.

30 Xin Luna Dong et al., "Knowledge-Based Trust: Estimating the Trustworthiness of Web Sources," *Proceedings of the VLDB Endowment* 8, no. 9 (May 2015), http://www.vldb.org/pvldb/vol8/p938-dong.pdf. Other current initiatives include the browser extension LazyTruth, and the "Emergent" project developed by the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia University, New York.

31 A disavowed root of Laughter Yoga can be seen in the controversial spiritual leader Osho's "mystic rose" meditative therapy, which consists of three hours' laughter daily for one week; the same regime is followed the second week with weeping, and the third week is reserved for silent mediation. It is instructive that in its transformation as Laughter Yoga the meditation is stripped of activities perceived as negative or neutral. See Harry Aveling, *The Laughing Swamis* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1994).

32 For a detailed discussion of Hjelmslev's glossematics, and its relevance to psychoanalysis, see Félix Guattari, "The Role of the Signifier in the Institution," in *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (London: Penguin, 1984), 73–81.

33 Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge, Description* (London: Routledge, 2011), 151.

34 John R. Searle "Minds, Brains and Programs," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 3, no. 3 (1980): 417–57, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X00005756.

35 Johanna Seibt, "Varieties of the 'As If': Five Ways to Simulate an Action," in *Sociable Robots and the Future of Social Relations: Proceedings of Robo-Philosophy 2014*, ed. Johanna Seibt et al. (Amsterdam: IOS-Press, 2014), 97. It is worth noting that Searle himself restricted the conclusions of the Chinese Room experiment to computational programs, and not to robots or other machines. Searle, "Minds, Brains and Programs," 11. Seibt presented her work at the "Prediction, Process and Reason" workshop, Goldsmiths, University of London, June 2, 2015.

36 Seibt, "Varieties of the 'As If,'" 97.

37 Ibid.

38 Barbara Cassin has associated the prioritization of effects over intentionality with a certain sophistry: "Philosophy never relinquishes its claim to unmask sophistics by banking on the concept of intention; sophistics never ceases to distinguish itself from philosophy by emphasising the accounting of effects. The consideration of effects can match that of intention because the effect is no longer at the mercy of a dichotomy: faced with the

polarised duplicity of intention, there is or there is not an effect, de facto, precisely." Barbara Cassin, *Sophistical Practice: Toward a Consistent Relativism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 40.

39 Seibt, "Varieties of the 'As If,'" 99. See also Johanna Seibt, "Towards an Ontology of Simulated Social Interaction: Varieties of the 'As If' for Robots and Humans," in *Sociality and Normativity for Robots*, ed. Raul Hakli and Johanna Seibt (Cham: Springer, 2016), 11–39.

40 Seibt, "Varieties of the 'As If,'" 99.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid. (emphasis added).

44 Ibid., 100.

45 *Mr. Robot*, "eps2.0_unm4sk-pt1.tc," Series 2, Episode 11, dir. and written by Sam Esmail, Netflix, July 2016; Gus Newman's relationship with Siri is detailed in his mother's memoir, Judith Newman, *To Siri with Love: A Mother, Her Autistic Son, and the Kindness of a Machine* (London: Quercus, 2017).

46 Of the big four, Google's Google Now is the only one to not use a woman's name, albeit that Amazon claim "Alexa" is short for "Alexandria," site of the great lost library. Some Siri settings, including UK English, do use a male voice, but the default setting is female. See Adrienne LaFrance, "Why Do So Many Digital Assistants Have Feminine Names?," *The Atlantic*, March 30, 2016, https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2016/03/why-do-so-many-digital-assistants-have-feminine-names/475884.

47 Richard A. Bartle, "A Voice from the Dungeon," in *Practical Computing* (December 1983): 126–30, http://mud.co.uk/richard/avftd.htm. See also Keith Stuart, "Richard Bartle: We Invented Multiplayer Games as a Political Gesture," *Guardian*, November 17, 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/nov/17/richard-bartle-multiplayer-games-political-gesture.

48 While the influence of Bartle and Trubshaw's work in terms of programming is most evidently present in the field of gaming, it is in social media in general that we find the more pervasive impact of MUD's social dimension, and hence of its political pretensions.

49 This was the subject of a book Foucault was working on when he died. See Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton, eds., *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998).

50 See, for example, Simon O'Sullivan, "Deleuze Against Control: Fictioning to Myth-Science," *Theory, Culture and Society* 33, nos. 7–8 (2016): 205–20.

51 Dani Cavallaro, *Cyberpunk and Cyberculture: Science Fiction and the Work of William Gibson* (London: Athlone, 2000), 56.

52 Nick Land, "No Future," in *Fanged Noumena: Collected Writings, 1987–2007*, ed. Robin Mackay and Ray Brassier (Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2011), 391–400.

53 Global costs are estimated at £300 billion. BBC, "Y2K: Overhyped and Oversold?," *BBC News*, January 6, 2000, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking_point/586938.stm.

54 Ccru, "A Short Prehistory of Ccru," *ccru.net*, accessed December 9, 2016, http://www.ccru.net/id(entity)/ccruhistory.htm.

55 Ccru, "Commuique One: Message to Simon Reynolds: 1998," *ccru.net*, accessed December 9, 2016, http://www.ccru.net/id(entity)/communiqueone.htm.

56 This was the title of a presentation given by Roberts on the work of 0rphan Drift: Maggie Roberts, "Everting the Virtual since 1995," presentation, Goldsmiths, University of London, May 17, 2016. The presentation can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0jX1Qh2Hwo (published May 23, 2016).

57 Alex Williams and Nick Srnicek, "#Accelerate: Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics," in *#Accelerate: The Accelerationist Reader*, ed. Robin Mackay and Armen Avanessian (Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2014), 347–62.

58 Simon O'Sullivan and David Burrows, *Mythopoesis/Myth-Science/Mythotechnesis: Fictioning in Contemporary Art* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming).

59 Ccru, "Syzygy," *ccru.net*, accessed December 9, 2016, http://www.ccru.net/syzygy.htm.

60 See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "10,000 BC: The Geology of Morals (Who Does the Earth Think It Is?)," in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 2004), 44–82.

61 See Land, *Fanged Noumena*.

62 Simon O'Sullivan, "First Manifesto of the Guerilla Plastique Fantastique: 'On Baroque Practice,'" in *Dave Burrows: New Life* (Warwick: Mead Gallery, 2004), 1–4.

63 Ibid., 3–4.

64 Ibid., 3.

65 Simon O'Sullivan, *On the Production of Subjectivity: Five Diagrams of the Finite–Infinite Relation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

66 A line from Lovecraft which Carstens and Roberts quote in their essay demonstrates Land's indebtedness to the writer of weird fiction: "Horror and the unknown or strange are always connected, so that it is hard to create a convincing picture of shattered natural law and cosmic alienage or 'outsideness' without laying stress on the emotion of fear." H. P. Lovecraft, "Notes on Writing Weird Fiction," in *Collected Essays*, vol. 2, ed. S. T. Joshi (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2004), 157. For more on Land's horrorism, see Nick Land, "Horrorism," *Outside in*, November 3, 2013, http://www.xenosystems.net/horrorism.

67 William Burroughs and Brion Gysin, *The Third Mind* (New York: Viking, 1978).

68 Charles Platt, "Quantum Fiction: A Blueprint for Avoiding Literary Obsolescence," in *Loose Canon* (Rockville, MD: Wildside Press, 2001), 73–79.

69 Christina Scholz, "Quantum Fiction! M. John Harrison's Empty Space Trilogy and Weird Theory," *Textual Practice* (2017): 3–4, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0950236X.2017.1358689.

70 Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1993), 142–48; Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 113–38; Umberto Eco, *The Open Work*, trans. Anna Cancogni (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

71 Suhail Malik, "1. Exit Not Escape – On the Necessity of Art's Exit from Contemporary Art," presentation at Artists Space, New York, May 3, 2013, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fimEhntbRZ4 (accessed June 12, 2017).

72 John Clute, "M. John Harrison," *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, accessed August 14, 2017, http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/harrison_m_john, cited in Scholz, "Quantum Fiction," 2.

73 Scholz ascribes this assertion of mutual exclusivity to China Miéville, "M. R. James and the Quantum Vampire: Weird; Hauntological: Versus and/or and and/or or?," *Collapse* 4 (2008): 105–28.

74 M. John Harrison, *The Water Tower* [working title] (forthcoming); M. John Harrison "Yummie," in *Weight of Words*, ed. Dave McKean and William Schafer (Burton, MI: Subterranean Press, forthcoming).

75 Michael Hamburger, *From a Diary of Non-Events* (London: Anvil, 2002).

76 Clute, "M. John Harrison."

77 Scholz, "Quantum Fiction," 6.

78 Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 3.

79 Jean Genet, *Prisoner of Love*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: New York Review of Books, 2003), 375.

80 1 Cor. 13:12 (KJV).

81 Félix Guattari, "Genet Regained," in *Schizoanalytic Cartographies*, trans. Andrew Goffey (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 219.

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid.

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