THE REST
OF NOW

EDITED BY
RANA DASGUPTA
WITH RAQS
MEDIA COLLECTIVE

CONTENTS

PREFACE
RANA DASGUPTA

Having lost our tradition, we have nothing behind us but the past, Hannah Arendt tells us—and so we wonder what it means to live in 'mere' time. Digital time, comprised of infinite identical units, where there is no lingering, no haggling, no coming round again. The great significance of things persists, but it is hard to fish out of this relentless current: it can be grasped only in the aftermath, when absence, like a clean shape in the dust, reveals the outline of what has been.

When ordinary objects are pushed aside by time to become remnants or wreckage, they acquire a new and solemn power. They pronounce, finally, what they never could while they were inside the clean room: *time has passed.* Now that time has become invisible and odourless, now it has become, in fact, undetectable, this message carries such solemn beauty that we can hardly resist the impulse to seek out such worn-out objects for our own melancholy contemplation—no matter how ironic this may seem in an era as rapacious and destructive as our own. Even as time uproots everything around us, leaving domineering scars and traces, we still feel the need to discover it again, and make it our own.

These pages are about the residue that accumulates from time's passing. They arise from a number of enriching conversations between myself and Raqs Media Collective and all our colleagues in this project about *the stuff that is not the product*: what is sloughed off, melted down or given up, what is abandoned, forgotten, disavowed, exiled or recycled. But the contributors to *The Rest of Now*—artists, writers, curators, librarians, musicians, architects and other theorists—are not concerned by the merely derelict. In these essays and photo essays, sometimes in a single quotation or a found image, they make visible everything that dances in the outskirts of reality, tantalizing it with what it is not, and, in so doing, making it complete.

AVE OBLIVIO
RAQS MEDIA COLLECTIVE

Raqs Media Collective overhears the ghost of a provincial prefect.
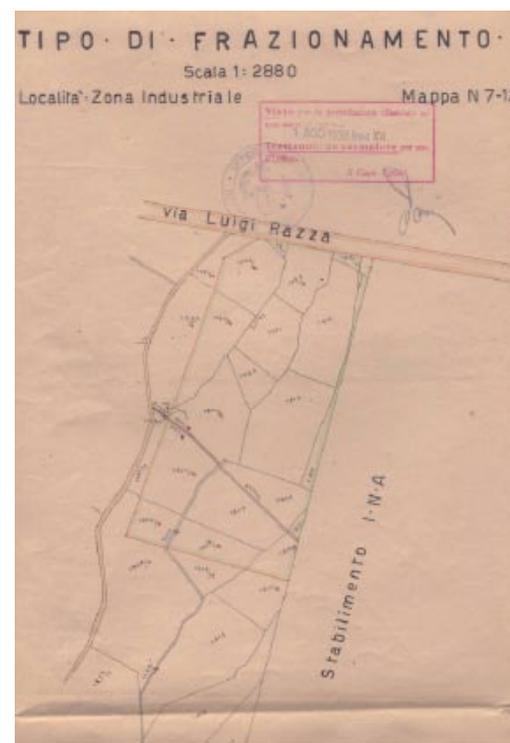
I First, let a map be drawn. Let a cadastral reckoning be inked of who owns what, who owes what to whom. Let empty lots yield. Let letters and numbers do the talking. Let the land be silent.

Who has ever heard the land speak?
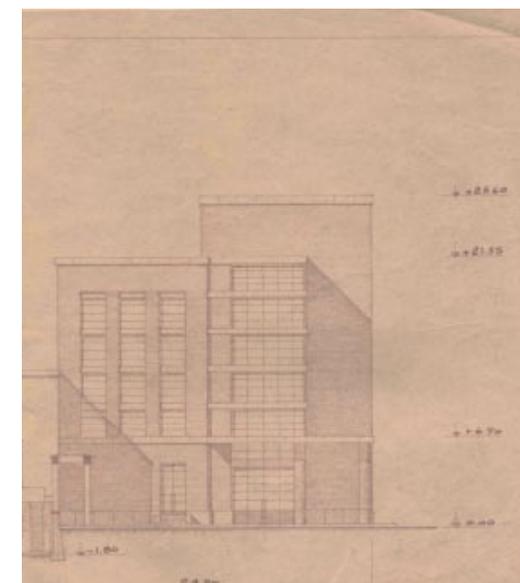
II Next, let the draughtsman sharpen his pencils. Let a scale be computed. An adequate scale. A scale that proportions a factory somewhere between a mountain and a human being. Let no person stain the drawing. Let there be precision. But let precision not thwart grandeur.

Let there be grandeur. Even more grandeur.

III Now, let the clerk in. Let him figure. Let the tables be turned. There were no peasants here. They had no claim. Elsewhere, there were some. Maybe, there were some. Who said there were some? They moved up the mountain, sometime in the ice age. We found one in a snowdrift. You can see him in the museum, frozen. All outstanding claims have been settled. Was it a bag of rice for an acre, or was it a shovelful of beans for a fistful of soil? The clerk is so clever. And look at his penmanship.He deserves a promotion.

He does it with elegance. He does it in italics.

IV Hurry, let the road be laid. Let the shade of a tree not distract. Bring surveyors, have them measure. Cut that tree down. And that one, outside the picture. Bring stone, dig earth, bring poor men from the south. Let them breed. Give each of them a handful of resentment. Let them fester in the sun.

Let them build roads so automobiles can speed past them.

V Wait, let the foundation stone be raised before anything else is done. Let it tower. Let it mark words of power and carve them deep. Let it be immortal.

Remember me. I haven't gone away. I am carved in stone. I will return. I always return.

VI Then, let there be more digging. Let the road stretch longer. Dig more roads, and then some more. Let no stone remain unturned. Dig canals and trenches. Dig war, dig prosperity, dig peace, dig perils, dig bones, dig mines, dig mountains, dig money, dig, dig, dig your own dog's grave.

Every man his own dog. Every dog has his day. Every day has its dog.

VII Build, let the scaffolding ascend. Let the water tower rise. Let bricks be laid. Pour concrete, lay foundations and crossbeams. 'Architecture is the impress of power on a landscape'. Who said that?

I say it better in Italian. So much better.
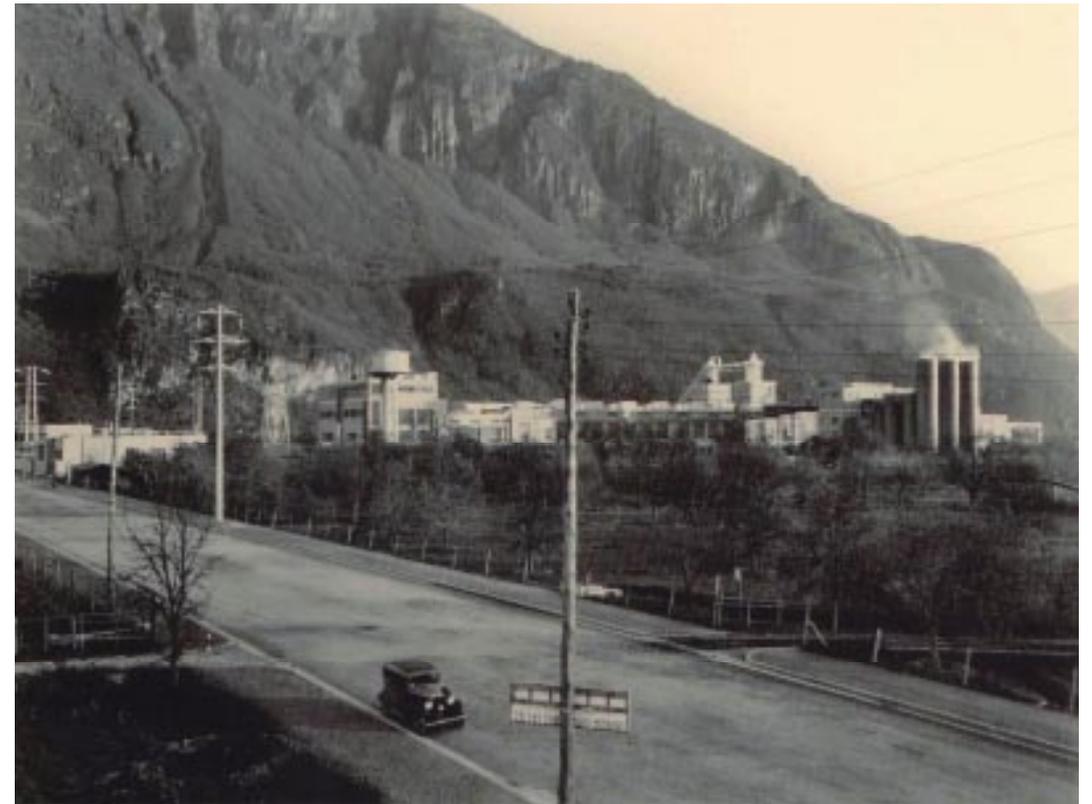
VIII Commence! Let production begin. Let turbines turn, let engines hum, let alloys sing high voltage anthems to electric accompaniment. Let smelter, furnace, forge and anvil burn incandescent. Let every muscle surrender to the production target.

Targets go to heaven, dead workers go to the morgue. Who haunts the factory?
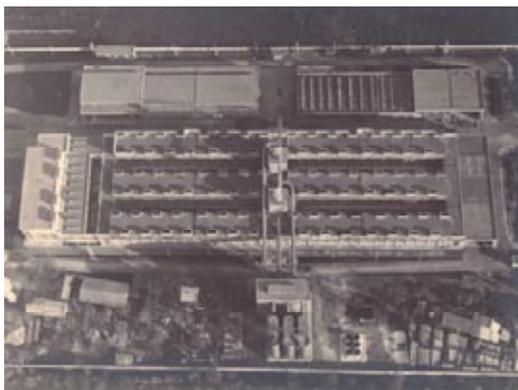
IX Rise, let there be altitude, let there be distance. Only when you look down with the eyes of a bomber at all that stretched-out industrial symmetry will you know its true value. Did I hear someone say something about labour? That is marginal to the calculation. Insurance is Investment. Destruction is Production. War is Accumulation.

I want coffee. Coffee, coffee, coffee. More coffee. *Doppio espresso.* Read the coffee grounds. Look at what they say.

X Shine! Let there be light! Let there be radiance! Panoramas delight. They dignify the earth by optical reassemblage. Every valley is exalted. The crooked is made straight.

A landscape is to be coveted, if not possessed, only by the deserving, discerning eye.

XI Beware, let the workers know the consequences of their actions. Let them understand that a strike is only an overture to a lockout. Let a mass be said for an end to strife. *Benedictus.* Workers are leaving the factory, again. *Sanctus*. Bicycles are not tanks. *Sanctissimus.* Cloth caps are not steel helmets. Workers are not soldiers. *Misericordiae.* But a strike is a war.

And I have the soldiers, the helmets, the tanks and the priests and the policemen and the TV. *Amen.*
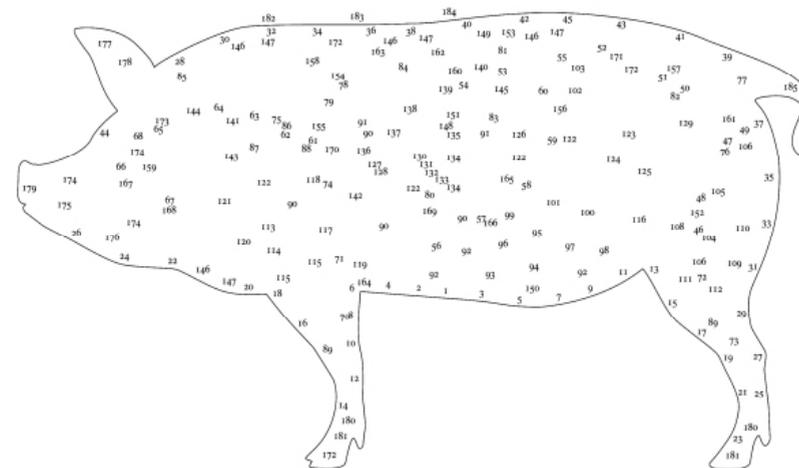
RISING FROM
THE RESIDUE

XII Finally, let there be dynamite, and then, let the dust settle. And when all is done, when the rest of now is over, let a map be drawn again. And another architectural plan. Make it bigger.

As if nothing really happened. As if no one remembered. As if no trace was left. *Ave Oblivio.*

Text by Francis Picabia selected by
Marcos Chaves

MY TRAVEL KIT, LEFT BY THE ROAD AT THE
END OF MY TRIP.OCTOBER 25, 2007. REPUBLIC
OF UDMURTIA, RUSSIA.

Image by Darius Ziura.

WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH
THE FOREST UNDER SOCIALISM?
ANDERS KREUGER

Ever since July 1987, when I first crossed from Finland into Soviet Karelia by train, I have wondered about the peculiar state of nature in socialist (now already post-socialist) countries. How can it be that we immediately recognize the legacy of real socialism in an unkempt meadow, a patch of unused suburban land or a stretch of forest unfolding outside our train window? Even the dried dirt on roadside thistles seems dryer and dirtier east of the old Iron Curtain.

It is not just that there are few visible traces of human care and affection for the environment when we travel through the countryside in, say, Latvia or Romania or central Russia; what the post-socialist landscape fundamentally lacks is visible evidence of rational use. It has lost the visual poetry of husbandry, and therefore strikes us as less 'natural', more overwritten with political code, than nature in the established capitalist economies—however absurd this may seem when we remember what effects the First World's policies are now having on the planet's forests and agricultural land.

Is the depressed identity of post-socialist nature an optical illusion, encouraged by our prejudice and cultural arrogance as outside viewers, or is it a visual residue, a telling remainder of the departed system?

Of course there are also instances that contradict these observations. Wetlands, swamps and virgin forests have often survived longer in eastern Europe and Russia than in the West, precisely because of the irrationality of the now-defunct economic system, which never managed, despite its military organization, to fully mobilize natural resources. Yet even the relatively unspoilt margins of the post-socialist landscape somehow look and feel traumatized. Fifteen years of change have clearly not been enough to produce a more upbeat counter-visuality outside the major cities.

There is a passage in the long-repressed novel *Chevengur* by Andrei Platonov (written in 1926–29 but not published in Russia until 1988) that I think illuminates the origins of socialist nature. The novel is set in the early 1920s, the chaotic and destructive years of the civil war. I have translated an extract which I think makes the point clearly: nature in eastern Europe is the visual leftover of a system where contingent human reactions to the social and natural environment—often fuelled by vanity, incompetence and low-grade emotions such as envy or lust for revenge—were aggressively packaged as historical necessities and signs of rational progress.

'You tell me, what shall we do with the forest under Socialism?' sighed Kopenkin with despondent thoughtfulness.

'Tell us, comrade, how much income does a forest give per acre?' Dvanov asked the watchman.

'It depends', replied the watchman with some deliberation, 'what kind of forest, how old it is and in what shape; there are many circumstances here...'

'But in general?'

'In general... You'd have to calculate ten to fifteen roubles'.

'Only? And rye, I guess, would be more?'

The watchman started to become afraid and took care not to make a mistake.

'Rye would be a little bit more... A farmer would get twenty–thirty roubles of pure income per acre. Not less, I'd say'.

Kopenkin's face showed the rage of a man who has been deceived.

'Then we must fell the forest at once and have the land ploughed! These trees only stand in the way for the autumn rye...'

The watchman fell silent and followed the upset Kopenkin with finely attuned eyes. Dvanov was calculating the losses from forestry with a pencil on Arsakov's book. He asked the watchman how many acres his forest comprised, and did the sums.

'The men are losing around ten thousand a year on this forest', Dvanov pronounced calmly. 'Rye would seem to be more advantageous'.

'Of course it will more advantageous', Kopenkin exploded. 'The forester himself told you so. This whole hill must be totally cut down and sown with rye. Write an order, Comrade Dvanov!' Dvanov remembered that he had not been in touch with Shumilin for a long time. But surely Shumilin would not judge him for direct actions so obviously in accordance with revolutionary usefulness.

The watchman picked up the courage to disagree a little:

'I wanted to tell you that unauthorized felling has anyway strongly increased lately, and there should be no more felling of such sturdy trees'.

'So, even better', Kopenkin retorted with hostility. 'We're treading in the People's footsteps, not guiding it. The People itself, that is, feels that rye is more useful than trees. Write the order, Sasha, to fell the forest'.

Dvanov wrote a long imperative address to all the poor peasants of the Verkhne-Motinsk district. The address proposed, in the name of the Provincial Executive Committee, to survey the situation of the poor and to cut down the forest of the Bitterman estate forthwith. This, it said in the instruction, would build two roads towards Socialism at once. On the one hand, the poor peasants would get timber for building new Soviet cities on the high steppe, and, on the other, land would be liberated for sowing rye and other cultures more useful than slow-growing trees.

Kopenkin read the order.

'Excellent!' he concluded. 'Let me also sign here below, to make it more frightening. Many people remember me around here. I'm a man in arms, you see'.

And he signed with his full title: Commander of the Bolshevik Rosa Luxemburg Field Detachment of the Verkhne-Motinsk District Stepan Efimovich Kopenkin.

'You'll bring it tomorrow to the nearest village, and the others will find out by themselves', Kopenkin said to the forest watchman as he handed him the paper.

'And what am I supposed to do after the forest?' the instructed watchman asked. Kopenkin ordered:

You, too, must work the earth and feed yourself! I'm sure you used to receive so many complaints in one year that they'd fill a whole cottage. Now live like the masses'.

It was already late. The deep revolutionary night already lay over the doomed forest. Before the revolution Kopenkin did not take careful notice of anything: forests, people and wind-blown expanses were of no concern to him, and he did not interfere with them. Now change had been brought about. Kopenkin listened to the even howl of the winter night, and wished it would pass successfully over the Soviet Land.[1]

Image by Nikolaus Hirsch & Michel Müller

1. P. McCully, *Silenced Rivers: The Ecology and Politics of Large Dams* (London: Zed Books, 1996).
2. Albert Heiner, Henry J. Kaiser: *Western Colossus* (Halo Books, 1981), 112.
3. G.D. Smith, *From Monopoly to Competition: The Transformation of Alcoa 1888–1986* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 150.
4. Dewey Anderson, *Aluminum for Defence and Prosperity* (Washington: U.S. Public Affairs Institute, 1951), 3–5.
5. From an interview in the film *Matiro Poko, Company Loko* (Earth Worm, Company Man) by Amarendra and Samarendra Das (2005).

TO DESTROY MOUNTAINS
FELIX PADEL

Aluminium's countless applications in modern civilian life tend to mask its numerous uses in weapons technology, which make it one of a handful of metals classed as 'strategic' by the Pentagon—meaning that a top priority of the world's most powerful governments is to ensure its constant supply at the lowest possible cost. To this end, new bauxite mines, alumina refineries and aluminium smelters are being promoted in many countries with enormous hidden pressure.

Discoveries of thermite and duralumin in 1901 and 1908 led swiftly to the commercialization of aluminium's potential for use in bombs and aircraft. The First and Second World Wars boosted aluminium sales hugely, as has every war since. Aluminium is at the heart of the military-industrial complex, and defines the scale of modern warfare in a way few people realize. Even the standard Kalashnikov assault rifle has had an aluminium frame since 1961.

In the 1920s, aluminium alloys took humans to the skies, starting with duralumin (used in First World War aircraft). An unfurnished jumbo jet or military aircraft still consists of about 80 per cent aluminium, though the alloys used in aerospace have become far more sophisticated, especially the lithium range and metals matrix composites (mixtures with oil/plastic derivatives).

Dams and aluminium are closely intertwined. The real purpose of many of the world's biggest dams is to supply cheap hydropower for aluminium smelting, which consumes vast quantities of electricity. 'Electricity from the big Western dams helped to win the Second World War'—by producing aluminium for arms and aircraft, and later plutonium for the atom bomb.[1] Thermite bombs exploit the latent explosive power in aluminium, using its high heat of formation (the temperature at which it is separated from oxygen) to increase the size of explosions. It formed the basis of seventy thousand hand grenades used in the First World War.

Incendiary bombs and napalm were mostly aluminium-based: 4–8 per cent in napalm, 3–13 per cent in the incendiary or 'goop' bombs manufactured by U.S. industrialist Henry Kaiser. Forty-one thousand tons of 'goop' bombs were dropped on Japan and Germany by 1944. The Chemical Warfare Service used them 'to burn out the heart of Japan' and 'save thousands of American lives'.[2]

Half the British bombs dropped on Dresden in 1945 were napalm, which killed about twenty-five thousand civilians. Napalm and incendiary bombs became standard in Korea and Vietnam. The latter war introduced a fearsome new weapon: the eight-ton BLU-2, or 'daisy-cutter', whose aluminium-slurry explosive power was invented by a Creationist (i.e. Christian fundamentalist) named Melville Cook in 1956. This is the weapon that has been used for carpet-bombing vast areas from Korea to Afghanistan.

After 1945, aluminium demand suddenly dropped. Henry Kaiser's brilliance was to gamble on a war in Korea, and his first customer was Boeing. His factories were soon making the B-36 bombers used in Korea. His 'bet' on this war paid off, and it marked the start of Eisenhower's 'permanent war industry' that has never looked back. U.S. aluminium production more than tripled between 1948 and 1958, ushering in a 'golden new age' for aluminium companies.[3]

A little-known text that encapsulates this policy is *Aluminum for Defence and Prosperity,* published by the Truman administration in 1951, which reveals much about the industry that has not been openly discussed since: 'Aluminum has become the most important single bulk material of modern warfare. No fighting is possible, and no war can be carried to a successful conclusion today, without using and destroying vast quantities of aluminum […] Aluminum is needed in atomic weapons, both in their manufacture and in their delivery'.[4]

Aluminium forms part of a nuclear missile's explosion technology and casing, as well as its fuel. Missile propellants have been based on aluminium powder since the 1950s. From the 1990s, the use of exceedingly fine aluminium powder in rocket fuel was extended through nanotechnology. Nanoparticles of aluminium from spent rocket fuel have already introduced serious pollution to outer space, a leftover of the satellite industry.

Aluminium is subsidized in many ways, on account of its importance for 'defence'. It is anything but a 'green metal'. And it is priced far too cheaply. The real cost of its electricity, water, transport systems and pollutants are all 'externalised' onto manufacturing regions such as India, even as aluminium plants are closing down fast in Europe.

In the Indian state of Orissa, some of the biggest mountains are capped with a layer of high-quality bauxite. Attempts to possess and mine this ore have entailed the particularly dire repression of indigenous people as well as huge threats to the environment.

The industries being promoted in Orissa and the neighbouring states of eastern India are providing fuel for the world's wars, as well as feeding a lifestyle of cars, packaging and mega-scale construction that is increasingly recognised as completely unsustainable in the long term. As Bhagavan Majhi, one of the tribal leaders opposed to aluminium mining in Orissa, says:

I put a question to the Superintendent of Police. I asked him, Sir, what do you mean by development? Is it development to displace people? The people, for whom development is meant, should reap benefits. After them, the succeeding generations should reap benefits. That is development. It should not cater merely to the greed of a few officials. To destroy mountains that are millions of years old is not development. If the government has decided that we need alumina, and we need to mine bauxite, they should oblige us with replacement land. We are cultivators. We cannot live without land […] If they need it so badly, they need to tell us why they need it. How many missiles will our bauxite be used for? What bombs will you make? How many military aeroplanes? You must give us a complete account.[5]

MAP OF EUROPE AND
NORTH AFRICA IN 1000 A.D.

Image selected by David Adjaye.

OLD DUST IS STILL ON
MY FINGER (DETOUR: ROME-UKRAINE)

Image by Alexander Vaindorf

1. See Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London: Penguin, 1975); David W. Petegorsky, *Left-Wing Democracy in the English Civil War* (London: Left Book Club); David C. Taylor, *Gerrard Winstanley in Elmbridge* (Cobham: Appleton Publications, 2000). See also the film *Winstanley* (1975), directed by Kevin Brownlow and Andrew Mollo.
2. See Eyal Weizman's *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* (London: Verso, 2007) for a contemporary version of this, where the occupation and shaping of space act is carried out by political means that are variously obfuscated and deniable, direct and indirect.

3. Gerrard Winstanley, 'The True Leveller's Standard Advanced' (20 33 April 1649), in Leonard Hamilton, ed., *Selections from the Works of Gerrard Winstanley* (London: The Cresset Press, 1940), 40.
4. In 'The Rest of Now', Matthew Fuller's *Digger Barley* presents a small distribution of barley seeds harvested from George Hill, which visitors may take away.

ACTS OF LETTING AND OF CREATION
MATTHEW FULLER

Beginning in 1649 and continuing into the following year, a number of land occupations were made in England by homeless, poor, hungry or pissed-off people. They became known as 'Diggers' because they organized together to farm underused common land, to build rough settlements and plant food crops. This period of time, after the decapitation of King Charles and before the Commonwealth collapsed into a dictatorship, witnessed great enthusiasm and experimentation.

The Diggers saw three broad kinds of land: wild nature, which was the woods, marshes, rivers, and other parts of land that were not used for farming; proprietary or enclosed land, surrounded by hedges and walls for the use of landowners, handed down by the law of the eldest son and ultimately deriving from conquest; and a third category—common land, areas of land which had complex systems of traditional rights of use attached to them. Such rights were always partial, but might include, depending on the location: the right to pasture animals; gather fallen firewood; harvest rushes, willow branches, or other materials for building; or gather fruits, berries and nuts. In other words, rights to the commons were always specific. What the Diggers proposed was to maximize the use of the commons. They proposed that such land be given over as a common treasury for all people—to be improved, to be farmed and to accommodate storehouses for food and raiments open to all labouring people.

Much of the existing commentary on the Diggers, and on the other movements looking for a reconstitution of society during and following the English Revolution, focuses on reassembling their political thoughts and marking their actions and consequences.[1] Alongside these aspects of the movement, however, it is also possible to consider a certain 'style' of speech and silence, of action and inaction that underlies their behaviour and the behaviour of those who responded to them. It is interesting to note how struggles over food and land (and over the very meaning of those terms, since they were at least temporarily freed from 'kingly law') and the creation of a new form of politics were partly carried out through various processes of 'letting'.

Letting was a means of bringing something into play through virtue of its powers, through the allowance of its action. Causation was deferred or rendered unnecessary, ends were achieved or achieved themselves without any necessary intervention. Acts of letting were kinds of inaction, the knowing allowance of something without direct responsibility. As well as the clear use of reason, argument, and direct action in the classic anarchist sense, in the episodes and events of the Digger movement there were a number of ways in which *indirect* action occured through various processes of letting.

Letting should be seen not simply as an identifier of those who were *good*.[2] It was a domain of active inaction that was essentially beyond good and evil, but the different modalities by which it was set in play implied certain relations to power, and an understanding of the dynamics by which the world constituted itself. Letting occured in the events around the Digger movement in ways that we would now register as richly Machiavellian, but that also that imply a certain vision of ecology. Crucially, certain kinds of letting aligned these two registers by means of a reading and reinvention of power, and a setting into play of previously unaligned capacities of people, seeds, tools, manure and rethought land.

Local landlords used various means for the destruction of the Digger's efforts. There were several direct violent assaults on encampments, involving the breaking up and stealing of clothes, shacks, tools and animals. An important weapon was the courts, which resolved to fine the Diggers ten pounds each, thus making their few cattle and any other property subject to seizure for the payment of this unattainable sum, and forcing the Diggers to move to a new site in Cobham. But in addition to such direct intervention, the landlords also acted by establishing the means by which something might arise 'by chance'. Thus the residues of inaction—of letting something occur—were mobilized as action. Such indirect approaches included the deliberate loosing of cattle onto the Digger's eleven acres of barley, which was naturally ruined. It was an 'accident', a residue of inaction. On another occasion, villagers were given quantities of tobacco and wine and were incited by the church into another form of inaction—to boycott the trade of the Digger settlement. In such cases, letting functioned to allow those in power to achieve their ends whilst absolving them of responsibility.

For the Diggers, letting involved the interplay of two registers. The first was at the level of politics, and the organization of property. In a text called 'The True Leveller's Standard Advanced' they called upon their contemporaries, to 'Take notice that England is not a free people, till the poor that have no land have a *free allowance* to dig and labour in the commons, and so live as comfortably as the landlords that live in their enclosures' (emphasis mine).[3] The crucial problem they were trying to tackle was how to find forms of freedom that would 'let' people eat and thrive after the formal declaration of a much-contested commonwealth. They were trying to find a modern form to the traditional rights to the commons that would maintain their power of 'letting' whilst reflecting the exigencies of their times. Instead, following the return to kingly law, the commons were subject to a different form of modernization: that of enclosure.

More importantly for the Diggers, a further form of letting—letting as it occurs at the scale of, or despite, human intention—was implied in their vision of the world. The growth of plants, the earth's feeding of the people, was part of Creation: something that could not be owned because it was a force of nature, a manifestation of the spirit, that spirit which they saw also as reason. Creation was not a one-off event but rather a present power active in all things. Creation was what was alive and released in the dispersal of seeds. By taking up spades and manuring and planting the land Diggers were simply letting further creation come to pass. The seeds of barley (and those of wheat, rye, parsnips, turnips and beans that were also planted in the settlements) with their fructiferous capacity, their affordance of food, nourishment and further planting were allies to, and embodiments of, these acts of creation. As confirmation of the power of this idea of letting, Digger barley can still be harvested on George Hill in Surrey, the first of the Digger sites.[4]

AUTOMOBILE EXECUTED
TERESA MARGOLLES
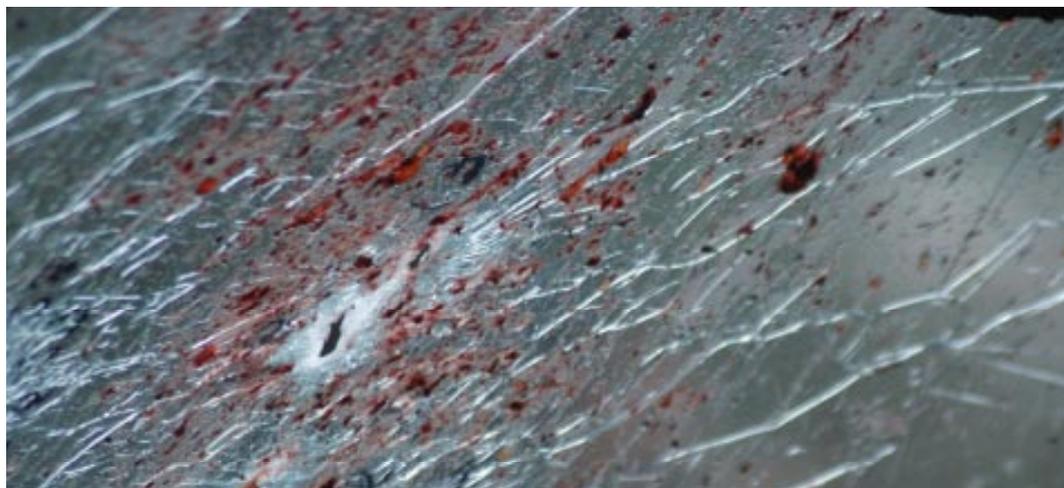
DEATH ON THE BYPASS
RAVI SUNDARAM

Daily life is becoming a kaleidoscope of incidents and accidents, catastrophes and cataclysms, in which we are endlessly running up against the unexpected, which occurs out of the blue, so to speak.
Paul Virilio, Foreword to 'The Museum of Accidents'

At some point in the late 1980s, that grand postcolonial dream of the rational city—the urban Masterplan—slowly and undeniably unmade itself in the city of Delhi. For the Delhi elites this was the postcolonial Fall. Along with sympathetic law courts, they saw with horror upon the vast surface of a previously hidden and illegal city. This included 'unauthorized' neighbour-hoods, squatter settlements, and a vast network of small markets and neighbourhood factories. If this was not enough, a greatly intensified media flux spread over the city, giving the urban experience a visceral, over-imaged feel, and imploding the classic morphology of the planned city. As Delhi realigned with global flows, new commodities and images crowded streets, there was a sense of the city as a delirious, out-of-control landscape of effects.

The Masterplan gave way to something that still does not have a name. Urban practices that emerged on the ruins of modernist planning in the postcolonial world in the 1980s have no language yet, consisting of a series of mutating situations. For practical reasons I will call these the 'bypass'. The bypass emerged as a pragmatic appropriation of the city, perhaps more *in medias res* than 'marginal'. The bypass does not fit classic representations of political technolo-gies: the resistant, the tactical, the marginal, the multitude or the 'movement'. The old modernist urban archive of the twentieth century produced the dualisms of plan and counterplan, the public and the private, control and resistance. In contrast, the bypass lacks substance in the philosophical sense: it radiates no positivity, but draws parasitically from all older urban forms and then mutates with kinetic energy into entirely new ones. Bypass situations produced a disorienting zone of attractions for all in the city, sometimes at great costs, particularly for the subaltern populations of the city.

A fast-changing assembly of practices, the bypass imaged the productive and disturbed lives of Delhi in the long decade of the 1990s. As a form of life indifferent to the law of the Plan, the bypass became for elites an allegory of the decline of Delhi. The bypass was equally the site of vast everyday violent encounters between urban populations and speeding road machines, exposing public displays of technological death. This site of the bypass was the accident. In every sense, the accident captured the mixture of death, commodity worlds, technology and desire that marked the last decade of Delhi's twentieth century.

I remember the first accident I saw in Delhi, in 1983, barely four years after I moved to the

city. A friend and I were standing near the All India Radio building at night, waiting for a bus. In the days before mass car ownership in the city, Delhi became eerily silent at night. Suddenly, a familiar green-and-yellow Delhi Transport Corporation bus raced towards us, ignoring the red traffic light. There was a sickening thud; a cyclist who was crossing the road was mown down by the bus. I remember blood everywhere when we rushed to the accident, the blue and white rubber slippers of the victim, his fresh white cotton pants now sticky-red with blood. The bicycle was twisted beyond recognition. My friend and I took the victim to the nearby Willingdon Hospital in an auto-rickshaw, but he was already dead. When we returned, still dazed, after filling out the complicated forms at the police post in the hospital, the bus was still in the middle of the road.

Writing these lines I think of that night, and the dead worker-cyclist, the terror of the contingent irrupting upon the calm of the night. In contrast, my memories of the dead on Delhi's roads in the 1990s come as a series of discontinuous images: a dead scooterist on the road, a solitary helmet in a pool of blood, a body with face covered by a white sheet. At that time we were assaulted almost every day by scenes of death and tragedy on the road. And time I drove home at night across the Nizamuddin Bridge in East Delhi, there were broken or stalled machines on the highway: a truck with a broken axle, or a goods vehicle with its contents spilled obscenely across the road. Every friend seemed to have lost someone in a road accident, families of two-wheelers and cyclists waited anxiously for their return home in the evening. It was a feeling of generalized anxiety and dread, a schizophrenic disturbance at a time the city was booming economically.

As the city globalized in the 1990s, the growth of machine mobility paralleled urban crisis, and the ecstasies of private vehicle ownership went hand in hand with perceived death-effects of road machines. The middle and upper classes had been migrating to private cars from the 1980s, and public transport was now largely used by the lower middle classes and workers. The state bus corporation was privatized in 1988 and the new private 'Redline' (later 'Blueline') buses became the focus of public anger due to the number of road deaths they inflicted. An average of 2000 people have been killed by traffic accidents in Delhi every year since 1990, the bulk of them from the working poor. The bloody drama of road culture involved buses, passengers, drivers, bystanders and almost everyone in the city. Though buses never exceeded more than one percent of the motor vehicle population, they were at the centre of a public violence that moved between the bodies of broken buses, humans, and the enactment of an uncontrollable subjective force that sometimes seemed to emanate from machines, at other times from the actions of human beings.

SPEED

The Commissioner of Police, Maxwell Pereira, once suggested that Delhi's wide roads with their smooth surface encouraged drivers to speed. The invention of asphalt in the nineteenth century by English engineer John Loudon McAdam radically transformed the experience of road travel. Cheap frictionless travel and the dream of endless circulation now emerged in the modern travel imaginary along with parallel innovations in vehicle suspension design, sidewalks, traffic management, and social divisions between the motorized and the pedestrian classes. Aided by the wide asphalt roads of the capital, motor culture in 1990s Delhi intimated a new *kinetic subjectivity*, where speed was part of a city's accelerating rhythm and time for both passengers and drivers became meaningful in powerfully new ways. Combined with the competitive, calculating world of the new commodity explosion, drivers and passengers raced against each other in a new addictive loop that broke every formal-rational rule of an ordered transportation system.

As drivers of buses, trucks and cars got caught in this cycle of speed, they imitated each other's acts, and courted death. With the population of drivers and machines growing in leaps and bounds, the risks increased. In the emerging urban order of tremendous acceleration, reaching destinations on time became critical. A complex system of daily quotas was imposed by private bus owners on their staff along with the insistence that a minimum number of trips be completed. Buses fought with each other to get passengers, and to maintain time schedules. In the ensuing frenzy of movement, buses were accused of suddenly changing routes in order to cruise bus stops with more passengers. Along with speeding, buses were also accused of standing overtime at bus stops in order to fulfil passenger quotas. To evade the eyes of the traffic police, buses would keep moving every few minutes at stops, but they would not leave until their passenger quotas had been filled. Private buses were attacked both ways: for speeding up and bypassing stops to make more trips, *and* for stopping excessively to fill the bus with passengers. This became the commodity form of speed in Delhi's public buses: endless circulation, disruption of any 'rational' mapping of the transportation grid, and suspending circulation in order to realize passengers and profit. This dialectic of speed and disorder did not even spare the bus stop. The disorderly rush of passengers towards the bus doors matched the familiar rhythm of the bus speeding into the stop. Orderly lines of passengers that were common in Mumbai were out of the question in Delhi. Passengers and buses rushed into the frenzy of circulation, pushing away anything that stood in their way. Cars, autorickshaws and motorcycles often ignored signals when they could, and drove against the flow of lanes to circumvent traffic jams.

In its disregard for all clean visual architectures of traffic plans and routes, Delhi's speed culture ironically recalled Michel de Certeau's famous evocation of 'everyday' tactics, when he praised inventive moments of practice for their 'tactile apprehension and kinesic appropriation'.[1] De Certeau was of course not talking of machines; he detested travel on trains and buses. 'Only a rationalized cell travels', wrote de Certeau, calling much mechanized mobility 'travelling incarceration'. De Certeau's residual humanism was based on a separation of the sphere of practice (generated in human encounters) and the machinic (representational/visual/panoptic) that was a product of a specific postwar European encounter. In Delhi's road culture, where the distinctions between machines and humans often blurred, de Certeau's powerful image of the 'ordinary man' squeezed by the larger forces of rationality is difficult to hold on to. The 'evasive tactics' that de Certeau celebrated were deployed all the time on Delhi's roads by speeding human–machine ensembles—with disturbing effects

DEATH AND THE ACCIDENT

The human organism is an atrocity exhibition at which he is a willing spectator.
J. G. Ballard

In his experimental novel *Life of the Automobile*, published in 1928, the Russian writer Ilya Ehrenburg *begins* with the car accident. In Ehrenburg's story, Charles Bernard, an introvert and a man of letters, becomes a lover of cinema and begins to admire the speed of travel as depicted in films of that time. He buys a car, learns how to drive and is on his first motor trip to the countryside. When the car takes over; it 'had gone crazy'. The inevitable crash happens. 'The linnets warbled and the lavender was sweet and fragrant. Car No. 180-74—iron splinters, glass shards, a lump of warm flesh—lay unstirring beneath the solemn midday sun'.[2] The oppositions are stark: between human and machine, cold metal and warm flesh, commodity and life. Ehrenburg's novel stands between two worlds, the emerging era of mechanized commodity culture and the lost romantic dreams of childhood and the countryside. The accident connects a fragile dream of the nineteenth-century European countryside with the terrifying exhilaration of the new era of mass commodities.

In the central origin myth of Italian futurism, Marinetti and his colleagues got into a speeding automobile in 1909 and crashed on the outskirts of the Milan, an accident that generated the *Futurist Manifesto*. In futurist recreation human and machine merge as the poet raced through the city, and the subsequent accident generates a new technological identity and celebration of speed. Futurism's embrace of speed machines immediately marked it from older critiques of modernity that saw machines as an assault on the body and nature. In futurism the technological becomes a prosthetic enhancement to the human body, a shield against shock, all complicit in the drive for war. The cleansing acts of the technological drove Marinetti and the futurists to fascism. The futurist myth of the accident combined speed, thrills and the fusing of flesh and machine leading to a rebirth. This equation was inverted in J.G. Ballard's underground novel *Crash*, where the themes of sexual desire, death and technology were brought together.[3] In *Crash* the car is desirable because it fuses metal and flesh: Marinetti's terrible wager with the machine comes to fruition, and the automobile consumes the organic body. Human flesh in *Crash* merges with chrome and leather, sexual fluids with machine emissions; we are witness to derealized bodies, and a world of surfaces, where the older distinctions between outer 'reality' and inner dreams evaporate. Reversing the original Futurist dream, the body becomes the supplement to the machine.

Road culture of the 1990s dramatized the emerging constellation of technological life in urban Delhi. Narrated through accident stories, statistics, and tales of terrible deaths by uncontrolled machines and cruel driver subjects, the accident and the entanglement of humans and machines emerged as a traumatic site of the city. These were everyday scenes of a 'wound culture', where smashed and dented automobiles, fallen bodies and the endless cycle of death revealed the scars of the encounter. The divisions between private and public tragedy blurred, suggesting a traumatic collapse between inner worlds and the shock of public encounters. As the body developed techniques of parrying the shock of urban sensations, it became more and more complicit in a technological world, contemplating a threatening collapse of the boundary between nature and artifice. These were the 'atrocity exhibitions' of urban life in Delhi, ever visible in image, text, and the screams of the dying as they met their untimely end.

AS I LOOK FOR SOMETHING UNDER THE WATER

Image by Stefano Bernardi

MISSION REPORT
URSULA BIEMANN

For many people, life is now about finding a way to survive in the cracks of our world system of nation-states. Extraterritorial zones, where people live or work with few guarantees of their security or dignity, keep materializing for diverse purposes. Corporations continue to seek production conditions outside the context of national regulatory systems, while nation states find ways of handling asylum seekers outside the framework of their commitments to human rights. The condition of extraterritoriality manifests itself in new community forms: clandestine networks of migrant communities who live an existence as noncitizens.

These zones are no longer singular events located along territorial borders, but constitute extraterritorial pockets dispersed across territories, eroding the national concept from above and below. These pockets may be translocal in nature but they are not isolated and constantly gain greater significance. We need to tell the story of these places, which are alienated from local cultures but connected across continents, be it through corporate structures or improvised migratory systems. They are places of desire and violence, conceived through a vision of their difference from what surrounds them but characterized, ultimately, by the survival practices that emerge in and around them. Much of my research has gone into representing this relational space, and the biopolitical subject that constitutes it by complying with, resisting or reinventing its conditions. It is through such struggles that the new order has to define itself.

The building of nation-states, whose sovereignty is notionally based in the citizen, has produced a mass of noncitizens, stateless persons and refugees every time. There are simply too many people who lose or resist the sort of categorization that would guarantee them membership for us to assume they are merely a regrettable side effect. Such people make up a sizeable part of the world population. The refugee comes forth as the walking proof of just how fallible and incomplete the world organization of nation-states truly is. This is why my attention has turned to supranational concepts that are able to tackle massive statelessness, and to forms of postnational resistance and agency. It is in this spirit that I engage in my research on the politics of the refugee.

Mission Report is the title of a video I am currently making, which explores the logic of the refugee camp—one of the oldest extraterritorial zones under international law. Focusing on the situation of Palestinian refugees, the video essay engages with the camp as a philosophical and spatial entity, and envisions extraterritorial models of nation, constituted through the networked matrix of a widely dispersed community. Finally, it reflects on the artist's mission as a particular sort of fieldwork that embraces a moral component.

The Palestinians are of particular interest here, because their case is not only the oldest and largest refugee case in international law, but it helped to constitute the international refugee regime after the Second World War. This case exemplifies how international law itself failed to maintain a legal framework of protection, first depriving the Palestinians of their political rights as citizens by turning them, perhaps too quickly, into a speechless mass of refugees, and subsequently dispossessing them of the right of international protection guaranteed to all refugees.

Because it was the United Nations that created the problem of the Palestinian refugees in the first place, it set up a regime of heightened protection for them.[1] From the beginning in 1948, the Palestinians were to have two agencies devoted exclusively to them: the UNCCP, entrusted with a complete international protection and resolution mandate, and UNRWA, whose job was to provide food, clothing and shelter.[2] Because the Palestinians were thus taken care of, the charter of the UNHCR—the UN refugee agency founded in 1950—had a special clause excluding the Palestinians from the new body's mandate. When it became clear that the UNCCP was unable to resolve the Palestinian conflict, its funding was truncated substantially, which also incapacitated it in its role as protector. Within four years, the Palestinians were left without the international protection provided by the UNHCR to all other refugee groups in the world. This means that they have no agency for interventions on the international level or access to the International Court of Justice. The protection gap has never been closed to this day, not least because the absence of any legal framework has been very convenient for the power politics behind the negotiations. In the quietness of budgetary decisions, a major refugee case was manoeuvred outside the international laws and parked there for decades.

This exceptional condition has made the Palestinian refugees particularly vulnerable to arbitrary reimpositions of the state of exception in host countries, as a recent incident in Nahr el Bared, a camp in northern Lebanon, demonstrates. Nahr el Bared is one of the twelve Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon still in existence from 1948 and the years immediately after; several others have been destroyed. Together, these camps form a network of juridical enclaves. Allocated by the UN, the plot of land near the Syrian border first accommodated tent settlements which were gradually replaced by cinder block houses as the refugees could afford to build them. The urban fabric grew organically without a master plan. Fifty years later, the population has multiplied but the surface of the camp was not allowed to increase, resulting in one of the most densely populated places on earth. In juridical terms, this is UN territory, but it is Palestinian in terms of identity, and Lebanese for matters of security.

For sociologist Sari Hanafi, Nahr el Bared is the epitome of how the Lebanese authorities conceive of such extraterritorial space: 'The camp is located outside the city of Tripoli but they allow no infrastructure to connect the camp to the city; they marginalize it, govern it by emergency law and then abandon it. This is the very condition under which the refugee camps in Lebanon are turned into a place where other extraterritorial elements like al Qaeda can come and establish their microcosm'.[3] In the summer of 2007, the Lebanese Army breached international conventions and entered Nahr el Bared to eradicate a small number of foreign Islamists who had settled in the isolated camp. The operation grew vastly out of proportion. Instead of securing the refugees' habitat, the army razed the whole camp to the ground and declared it a zone of exception. The forty thousand refugees lost all their belongings and had to flee to another overpopulated camp in the region. This is how easily the UN juridical status is

suspended by the self-authorized imposition of another regime, when an international protection mandate is lacking.

But rather than focusing on the stratified and often ambivalent apparatus of sovereignty that rules this space, I suggest we pay attention to the flexible process through which the refugees have begun to reinscribe themselves into the political fabric.

While the battle over Nahr el Bared was still underway, a community-based reconstruction committee was established to research the state of the camp before its destruction and to draw an accurate plan that would serve as a basis for negotiations.[4] In a collective process supported by voluntary architects, the camp dwellers defined the shape and limits of their parcels. The reconstruction of a refugee camp poses the interesting question of how the refugees themselves would plan their housing and urban organization if they had a say. Even though there are many general complaints about the lack of space and sunlight in the camps, it turned out that for the dwellers, the architectural form of the old camp made a lot of sense. When all the people from the Palestinian village Safuri arrived at the camp in 1948, they settled next to each other and gave the neighborhood its name. They wish to preserve this arrangement because it relates to their origins, to their right of return, and to their sense of community. Usually, families own the roof of their building which allows them to add another floor for the next generation. Another feature they want to hold on to is that the camp is to a great extent a pedestrian zone made of an intricate system of bending alleys. In Islamic society, and particularly in the crowded camps, the alleys are used as semipublic, semiprivate spaces where women and children can appreciate a sense of enclosure and privacy.

The Lebanese state and army, however, have altogether different plans for the reconstruction of Nahr el Bared. All they see in the organic system of narrow alleys is an obstacle for entering the camp with their vehicles; they perceive the camp as a military zone, when in fact it is an urban zone. 'Armies shouldn't do planning', Ismael Sheikh Hassan argues, 'because they want to solve political issues through urban design'. The result is a good security plan, perhaps, but a city where nobody wants to live. The international donor community for the reconstruction supports the plans of the refugee collective and opposes the imposition of Lebanese state power on UN land—so this is a rare occasion where an extraterritorial community finds a way to elude state power and to implement its political decisions.

The common struggle for defining the refugee space suggests that the camp, in this instance, is not the site of 'bare life', existing outside of all political and cultural distinctions, but on the contrary, a highly juridical space of dispossession and repossession. It lays open residues that evade sovereign decisions and reveals a place where the Palestinian refugees who are literally placed on the outer reaches of international law, can unfold self-authorized, constructive means to reinscribe themselves into the wider political fabric which is composed, by now, of a complex mix of postnational considerations.

SIGN OUTSIDE THE ABANDONED NATIONAL
SECURITY AGENCY BUILDING IN GRUNEWALD
FOREST, BERLIN.

Images by Helena Sidiropoulos selected by TEUFELSgroup.

AT KABUL ZOO, THE LION
JEET THAYIL

So this is fear: tracers flaring
above the pens, the fat thud

of bullets, and the bigger sound
of animals leaving our lives.

Sad-eyed, the widow elephant
saw a cluster of shells

explode her enclosure.
She screamed in narrowing circles.

Shrapnel stopped her and she dropped,
the first to fall.

Everything burned:
the tiger shrugged fire

off his shoulders.
The capuchins tried

to escape their burning tails.
The hyacinth macaws,

spoonbills and hoot owls,
flamingos aflame…

Only the llamas stood dumb
in that madness, stupid

to the end. I envied their emptiness.
Blind in one eye,

my jaw in shreds, my mane
singed to a useless crop,

I'm still here.
I wait for these men

to come to me.

THEREFORE DO NOT WORRY ABOUT
TOMORROW, FOR TOMORROW WILL WORRY
ABOUT ITSELF. EACH DAY HAS ENOUGH
TROUBLE OF ITS OWN.
MATTHEW 6:34, NEW TESTAMENT, *THE BIBLE*

Text selected by Kristina Bræin

IN SPITE OF
ERASURE

Image by Anawana Haloba

GLUE FROM PIG BONES IS USED TO IMPROVE
THE QUALITY OF LEATHER FOR THE
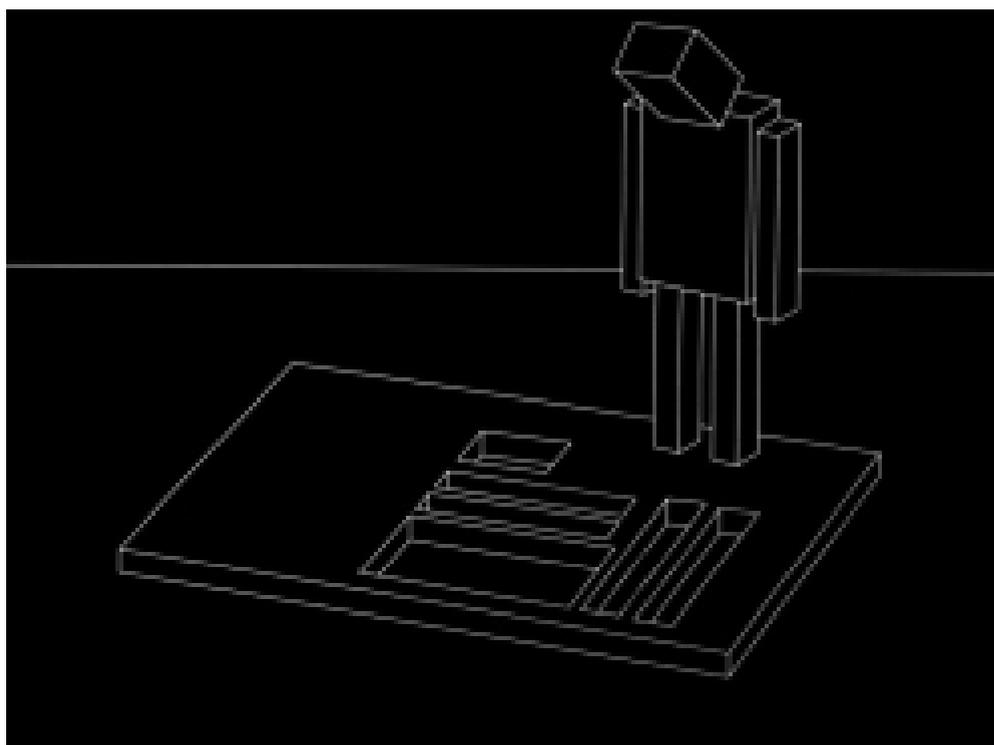PRODUCTION OF SHOES AND OTHER PRODUCTS.

Image by Yves Netzhammer
selected by etoy.CORPORATION

BREVITY
J. ROBERT LENNON

A local novelist spent ten years writing a book about our region and its inhabitants, which, when completed, added up to more than a thousand pages. Exhausted by her effort, she at last sent it off to a publisher, only to be told that it would have to be cut by nearly half. Though daunted by the work ahead of her, the novelist was encouraged by the publisher's interest and spent more than a year excising material.

But by the time she reached the requested length, the novelist found it difficult to stop. In the early days of her editing, she would struggle for hours to remove words from a sentence, only to discover that a paragraph was better off without it. Soon she discovered that removing sentences from a paragraph was rarely as effective as cutting entire paragraphs, nor was selectively erasing paragraphs from a chapter as satisfying as eliminating chapters entirely. After another year, she had whittled the book down into a short story, which she sent to magazines. Multiple rejections, however, drove her back to the chopping block, where she reduced her story to a vignette, the vignette to an anecdote, the anecdote to an aphorism, and the aphorism, at last, to this haiku:

Tiny upstate town
Undergoes many changes
Nonetheless endures

Unfortunately, no magazine would publish the haiku. The novelist has printed it on note cards, which she can be found giving away to passers-by in our town park, where she is also known sometimes to sleep, except when the police, whose thuggish tactics she so neatly parodied in her original manuscript, bring her in on charges of vagrancy. I have a copy of the haiku pinned above my desk, its note card grimy and furred along the edges from multiple profferings, and I read it frequently, sometimes with pity but always with awe.

THE SKOLT SÁMI LANGUAGE MEMORY PROJECT
ESPEN SOMMER EIDE

ENTRY #1

I feel my eyes drying up. I am lost in a desert of broken letters.

Struck by a sudden premonition I see my next two weeks before me: working day and night proofreading a dictionary that translates between two languages, neither of which I understand a single word.

Today has been a technical research day. How to digitize a dictionary. How to wield the computing power for my needs. How to teach a blind computer to read.

The first goal: to build a database of the Skolt Sámi language. An endangered language in the arctic regions of northern Norway, Finland and Russia.

The next goal: to travel to northern Finland and Russia and collect samples of all the words of the Skolt Sámi language. To record one informant per letter of the alphabet reading the words to the camera.

The final goal: to construct an art installation for the East Sámi museum currently being built in Neiden, Norway—an exhibition of the totality of a language. One by one the words will be given to the visitors. One word each, given as a task—for the visitor to take responsibility for and remember for the future.

ENTRY #2—THE BEAUTY OF TOTALITY

By now I probably own the largest library of Skolt Sámi to Finnish language dictionaries in the world. Except for a few eighteenth-century Skolt–German dictionaries that I saw in the Humboldt University Library in Berlin last month, I have gathered all I could find.

The sum total is four books and one bad photocopy from the 80s.

They vary greatly in size and quality, and I have tested my way through them all in the hope of finding a candidate for scanning and optical character recognition.

Finally today, a breakthrough. A 1988 dictionary by Mosnikoff and Sammallahti seems to have all the necessary ingredients: the copy is in strong black and white ink, the 'c' does not look like an 'e' (who would have thought that this would be the greatest of challenges for the digitizing community?) and in this copy all the special letters of the Skolt Sámi language are possible to separate from each other. The đ from the d, the ǩ from the k, the □ from the □, the š and ž, and å and â, not to mention the õ, ö, □ and ǧ.

The younger a writing system is, the closer the relationship between the letters and their corresponding phonetic sounds. Nothing is hidden in the written language of the Skolt Sámi. No silent characters or mysterious pronunciations—what you read is what you hear.

After a week of proofreading I am starting to get a close relationship with these characters. Their sounds roll silently in my mouth while I stare at the enlarged scans. Teaching the computer to understand them all takes patience, but gives a rare glimpse into the microscopic world of the letter. The shapes of the characters are blown up until I see every molecule of ink traversing the topography of the paper.

ENTRY #3—NUMBERS

'The number of words in Skolt (as in all other living languages) is infinite', explains Michael Riessler, head of the Kola Saami Documentation Project in our first email exchange.

'And besides this every Skolt speaker has a different stock of words in her or his mind. If you restrict yourself only to the stock of words found in the existing Skolt dictionaries (ignoring the fact that not all words found in the dictionaries are representative of an individual Skolt Sámi speaker's language) you end up with about 10,000 recorded words multiplied by more than thirty letters of the alphabet. Any linguist would envy you such a collection of recorded words!'

The facts are not very uplifting: Among the 6,500 living languages in the world, there are four Sámi languages spoken in the Kola Region (including northern Finland): Skolt, Akkala, Kildin, and Ter. Of these, Akkala is now extinct, its last speaker having passed away in 2003. Ter Sámi in the Murmansk region has about thirty speakers, all aged over fifty. Kildin Sámi has about three hundred active speakers. Skolt Sámi has around three hundred speakers on the Finnish side of the border and about twenty, all old, on the Russian side (who speak a special Russian dialect of Skolt).

But Michael's comments make me rethink my melancholic impression of Skolt Sámi as a dying language. Infinity is a powerful concept to bring into any reflection. If every speaker's vocabulary is potentially infinite or to be regarded as a 'part' of infinity (which in itself would be infinite), then a dying language is not ceasing to exist by slowly shrinking in size as one would expect (due to forgetfulness, language shift or some other kind of deterioration of the collective memory). It is still present and alive in its vibrant infinity even with only one speaker left on earth (or maybe two? Does not a language need a listener? Or maybe it is sufficient with only one subject speaking to him- or herself? I guess that would be the perfect communication: the last speaker of a dead language muttering to himself).

ENTRY #4—PHONETIC ALCHEMY

The metaphor of dying and living languages is based on an outdated romantic notion of the organic nature of languages. Thus there is a need to revisit the dialectic of the death and life of languages to view the language-image from a fresh angle. The philosopher Walter Benjamin writes in the introduction to his essay on Goethe's *Elective Affinities*:

The history of works prepares for their critique, and thus historical distance increases their power. If, to use a simile, one views the growing work as a burning funeral pyre, then the commentator stands before it like a chemist, the critic like an alchemist. Whereas, for the former, wood and ash remain the sole objects of his analysis, for the latter only the flame itself preserves an enigma: that of what is alive. Thus, the critic inquires into the truth, whose living flame continues to burn over the heavy logs of what is past and the light ashes of what has been experienced.

In the analogy given by Benjamin, it would appear that the critic does the same historic and linguistic analysis as the historian, or 'commentator'. But their aims and effects are vastly different. While the commentator wishes only to enlighten the reader about the possible meanings of old words and passages, the critic's detailed analysis destroys the wholeness of the work and rekindles the fire of what is alive. The process is made more potent by the history that has prepared it: the more obscure and forgotten the work the better suited it is for a philosophical and artistic critique.

Replacing the concept of 'work' with 'language' one can perhaps glimpse a more complex dialectic at play. In the realm of language, Benjamin's destruction-through-analysis is comparable to the effect of the archive: a dictionary or database of language samples, each analysed into every last phoneme. The archive kills the living language in order to preserve it, but at the same moment creates its potential alchemical transformation into new life.

ENTRY #5—AUTO-DA-FÉ
Today: the first tests of the recording and archiving system. Everything has to work perfectly before we take it into the field in a couple of months. The Skolt speakers will be filmed in their home surroundings looking into the camera. The words of the dictionary will appear on the screen before them and they will read them aloud one by one. Each word will be stored as a separate video file on the computer.

A dictionary is in essence artificial. Only some rare kinds of poetry can bring life into a list of words starting with the same letter, and even then it is seldom systematically alphabetical in its construction. The sorting of a language alphabetically is like taking apart a human body and then stitching it together by placing the organs and limbs next to each other by similar size or some other secondary property.

The choice of the dictionary as the image of language is the complete opposite of language-as-life. If languages are organic and alive by nature then the Language Memory Project would seem to spell out a death sentence for the Skolt Sámi language.

To make matters worse I am asking thirty representatives of the language to become dictionary robots, reading aloud only individual words—the atoms of their living language—in a room with no listeners. On the Finnish side this will involve about 10% of the Skolt Sámi community, on the Russian side, 100%. In effect they will be atomizing their own language into a list of dead, alphabetized items.

All the while I will be there silently filming the spectacle—this burning funeral pyre of a self-destructing language.

ENTRY #6—LANGUAGE AND TIME
Usually one considers language to be distributed in space, by its agents in their geographical area. The informants we have contacted are living along a 230 km route from Neiden in Norway to Nellim in Finland. Lake after lake. Näätämö–Kirakkajärvi–Sevettijärvi–Supru–Nitsijärvi—and then a longer stretch to the areas of Ivalo and Nellim.

In this project a language will instead be distributed in time. One word at a time—throughout the months, or years—the installation in the East Sámi Museum will parse the dictionary depending on the number of visitors passing by. The beginning of the Skolt Sámi Language Memory Project speeds up history, that is, the inevitable entropy of an endangered language. The end of the project slows it down again to the point of exhibiting a frozen distribution of a language in time.

(One side effect of this distribution will be the dissociation of the language from the normal identity discourse of indigenous people. Legally, to be counted as Sámi you have to document that your parents, grandparents or great-grandparents spoke a Sámi language. Language is the principal marker of your identity, which may increase cultural isolation. In this case the language will be given to all—putting into question this identity marker. An alphabet revolution).

ENTRY #7—THE MAGICAL PROPERTIES OF AN ARCHIVE
Dismembering the semiotic, communicative from the phonetic, lexical aspect of language opens up the possibility of magical correspondences. The onomatopoetic, the alphabetic, the mimetic. The mysterious shapes of individual letters, the picture puzzle of the word. Language becomes an archive of unintentional similarities ready for a reader who will connect the dots. The reader then becomes a bearer, a medium for the magical aspect of a shadow language.

DOMI MAGISTRORUM
LINGUAE LATINAE ISLANDICORUM
DANÍEL MAGNÚSSON

Homes of Latin teachers in Iceland

ENTHUSIASTS SPEAKING
NEIL CUMMINGS & MARYSIA LEWANDOWSKA

SCENE 1

A hot summer day. Industrial premises surrounded by a blue wire fence. A freestanding sign, also blue, with plain white letters: THE CHYBIE SUGAR FACTORY.

An old redbrick building full of obsolete filmmaking equipment: a film editing table, storage for canned film reels, and a makeshift cinema with projection booth

Four big, swivel armchairs placed around a low table from the 1980s. A tall, middle-aged man, Franciszek Dzida, founder of Amateur Film Club Klaps, Chybie (1966), places a box of sugar cubes from the factory on the table.

FRANCISZEK DZIDA

I was employed as a technician in the sugar factory; around me there were metal workers and electricians. I proposed setting up a film club in the factory. This was to become our window onto the world, to allow us to break away from our provincial vision and this small-town mentality. I needed it immensely, not because I felt oppressed by the system—everyone could find a way around that!

Laughter

It was a chance to mark our presence. Being an artist was one way of marking that presence. When my colleagues joined the Klaps club, it changed them enormously. Cinema transformed them.

We felt like different people, exactly as it was shown by Kieslowski in that famous final scene of *Camera Buff* when Filip turns the camera towards himself. He changes as a person when the camera starts to record 'his own life' instead of being simply a toy.

I would like to emphasize that this place, this club, thanks to celluloid film, was a place where another world ruled.

It was a magical place. People who used to attend our meetings realized they were entering another reality, the 'real world' as created by us. It's where our love for feature films originated.

You stopped being a metal worker or an electrician and became an artist. Regardless of your skills, here you could express something; here you had something to say.

SCENE 2

Poznan. A clear, sunny winter's day, smoke from a distant factory chimney smears the horizon. A typical socialist 'cultural centre', and off a long corridor a door with a small plastic sign: AKF (film club) 'AWA', Poznan.

A typical club room, dusty equipment, a shelf with trophies, a notice board with photographs documenting visits from Kieslowski, Karabasz, Zagroba, a wall of old festival posters, a low table, shabby armchairs.

A group of middle-aged men chat. The eldest, Jerzy Jernas, starts telling his story about the beginnings of the club. Others listen, taking turns to join in.

JERZY JERNAS

It was important that we actually belonged to the club. Spending time there occupied a considerable part of our lives. It was our second home. We formed a strong community, talked about films and about life and hung out a lot. We travelled to festivals together, went on holiday, and went camping at the summer film festival in Agów for many years. Strong emotional bonds still exist amongst the former club members.

As with the majority of beginners, our attempts at making feature films were embarrassing. We had problems with sound and there was no dialogue. But, perhaps this was beneficial because all those limitations forced us to think.

The most common practice was to make an amateur film collectively, in cooperation with friends. Zinczuk and I were partners but the final decision was usually taken by one of us. If we had three minutes of film and a spring-winding camera could hold only thirty seconds, it taught us a great discipline. If you have only three minutes to use, you have to think ten times about what to shoot. Videotape which costs almost nothing is a curse; you shoot a lot, thinking it will be edited somehow later. But it's not true, it never gets edited, and a lot of trash remains. Learning from the classics was a lesson of discipline.

We weren't forced to do anything, we only occasionally had to make a film celebrating the factory's anniversary. Something similar to a commercial nowadays. This was taken for granted and in no way interfered with the making of our own films. We didn't identify with those commissioned jobs but at the same time we were aware that film can serve as propaganda. We wanted to talk about our own lives and our own worlds, which didn't resemble what was shown by the 'official' city or factory newsreels.

3RD PELOTON PONTONNIERS CONSTRUCTING
A BAILEY BRIDGE ACROSS THE RIVER MAAS AT
WELL LIMBURG IN 1953.

Image selected by Harold de Bree.

A LIFETIME
LAKHMI CHAND KOHLI

Shivram would often bring his auto-rickshaw to the cremation ground in the mornings, to wash it at the tap. The cremation ground was very quiet at that time. If, while he was there, a dead body happened to be brought in, Shivram would halt his cleaning and step into the procession of mourners. Soon, he began to leave his auto-rickshaw at the cremation ground in the evening, after his work was over for the day. Every evening, he saw a pyre burning. Often there would be people standing around it. But at times there were pyres that burned unattended, flickering in solitude.

'Taa-Ta-Taa... Tha-Tha-Thaiyya...' Here, where there are no listeners, no one chases them away. It is here that one can often find 'him'—the one known in the neighbourhood by different names, each one more disparaging than the last. His gatherings have no fixed time, no schedule.

When the city administration ordered that auto-rickshaws run on a new fuel, the change was too extreme for Shivram. He began to spend his entire day at the cremation ground.

Flour, lentils, rice, clothes, and all the things people gave away in the name of the one who had died, would be used by the priest's wife. Shivram would get his afternoon meal from her. He didn't have to do much to earn this meal—just show a dead body to an empty place, and get the priest's signature on the slip authorising the cremation. He wasn't paid to do this.

Shivram would sleep at the cremation ground at night. His salary had tied him to his home, and this fragile tie was now broken. His hands were empty.

Hands would beat the drum, and hearing this sound, 'he' would cross every threshold of drunkenness. His frenzied feet swifter than lightening; his nimble body like a weed swaying dangerously in a fierce, unforeseen storm.

When someone spends time in a place, he begins to show signs of belonging to it, and even a passer-by notices and responds. The people who came to the cremation ground in the company of a dead body were not prepared to find someone like Shivram there. Some of the things they previously offered to a dead body before it was set on fire they now began to give to him.

It is dark in the lane now. The bottle is empty. This roof is on the seventh floor. Like countless nights that have passed, and all those nights still to come, it begins from his feet. 'Tha-Tha-Thai-yya...' Till his hips gyrate to a rhythm that he alone knows. Then the tips of his body—his head, his fingers—stir. His torso sways. Every pore of his body secretes a music, each cell that makes him stirs. He begins to dance.

He can't piece together how things changed for him. But he knows something inside him was cast away, was slowly pushed aside and locked out by his surroundings. The climb up the forty steps to the roof on the seventh floor was a daily passage to solitude, so he could be alone with what was precious to him.

The bier of a woman. Many came with it. She was young. Many *saris* adorned her bier. Over them lay glass bangles, sandals, a makeup box—objects that accompany a bride. Everyone was crying. They had brought the wood for the pyre with them. Everyone does. The man carrying a little boy seemed to be her husband, and the little boy her son.

She was laid beside cremation lot number 9, the place that had been assigned to her. Her body was placed over the pyre. Those who accompanied her slowly began to move away, and sat down on the benches by the room where they keep the objects left over from a cremation. The pyre continued to burn.

There was a time when the roof was not all he had.

The courtyard was open to the sky. It was past midnight, and there was no sign of sleep in his eyes. The drum beat loudly. Voices sang. Among these, another voice—but it didn't sound like someone was singing; it sounded like a beast letting out a wail. It was his voice.

Everyone waited for the ash to cool down. When the last wisp of smoke had risen from the ashes, the ones waiting to take away the leftovers rushed forward. Shivram stopped them, 'Don't you dare!' He quietly gathered up the clothes and objects, and took them to the priest's house. The priest's wife selected some *saris* and said to Shivram, 'Here, you take the rest'.

He stood barefoot in the courtyard. The night was ice-cold. Many of the guests were snuggled inside blankets. He danced before them, his feet trembling on the thin carpet rolled out on the floor.

The first woman who danced up to him was the grandmother of the newborn. She danced along with him for a while to celebrate, then withdrew. Another woman got up to dance, then another. They soon tired. He was the axis around which everyone twirled. He drew his moves from a repertoire that had been chiselled over generations. They needed him, needed all that he brought with him that night. All night, they admired him, trying to get their own moves to resonate with his. He was their cupbearer for the night.

By the time dawn broke, the entire gathering had joined him. Caught in the throes of the night's last remaining breath, everyone danced as if to pass him their own strength. Even those who didn't know the songs sang along.

The next morning, the priest's wife asked him, 'So, did your wife like the *saris*?'

His wife had refused to allow the packet to be brought inside her home. The *saris* had lain outside the door the entire night, and in the morning they were given away to the first person who came asking for alms.

Shivram went up to lot number 9. It was his task to gather up the remains in a black cloth, write the number of the cremation lot, the time of cremation and the gender of the deceased on the cloth, and deposit the bundle in the room where many people's remains hang in small black bags.

Every night, he climbs the stairs to the roof, his body swaying. Sometimes he brings his glass of drink up with him. His brother knows he is unmindful of the steps, inattentive to the climb. He stays close behind. Their footsteps echo in the dark. He mumbles to himself, but his voice turns quiet as he passes the open doors on all those floors. The rebukes are not new to his ears. 'There he goes again!' However softly he tries to go, he can hear someone say this. He continues up the stairs and disappears onto the roof.

Then it is his voice that echoes down the stairs.

'My lover, he beats the drums, yes the drums.

Oh, but I have been cursed by some wretched widower!'

The outer walls of the room have an uneven texture. Its unpaved ground is hard. Unpainted from inside, the room draws colour from the slant of the sun's rays. At night it becomes deep, dark black. A dungeon from which there can never be a way out.

All the things that come into the cremation ground with a dead body are kept here. A haze hangs over them. Red bangles, *saris*, shoes, earthen pots, cots, clothes, a broken cot. This room, which has no door, is their custodian. Once they enter this room, these objects disappear from the world. Even ragpickers forget they exist.

He stops and reaches out for the drum. He is shivering slightly, as if softly surrendering himself to the energy of the things that still remain inside him, letting his body heed their call. He starts to sing and beat the drum, summoning the gatherings of the time that has passed. Gatherings which used to sing, sway, dance—and which warded off the time when all this would be lost. Now roused, he begins to dance, returning to the drum, playing on it again and again. One can hear the drum beating on the roof far into the night. There is no easy way of keeping those worlds, which he had once known, alive inside him.

Shivram was looking for a hook on which to hang the small black bundle he had made to hold the remains. Thick smoke crept into the room. His eyes caught sight of the dates written on four bundles hanging from a hook. Three were from September 2004. The one he held in his hand was of 2007.

Shivram went deeper into the room. Many bags hung on one of the walls. As if someone had hung his precious things there, so he may not forget them. Or as if they are totems to keep the evil spirit away. The dates on these bags were hidden beneath layers of dust. Shivram cleared the dust with the tips of his fingers. 2001, 1999, 1998, 1995.

The door creaks and shuts.
It has now been eight years since he began climbing up to this roof. Rain or hail, nothing has ever been able to stop him.

Shivram's eyes swept over the room. Along a black bundle hung a *sari*, here a knife, here a waistcloth. One black bundle was fat, another thinner than the others. He stood there, trying to make out which was from a man, which from a woman, who had been thin and who had died fat. Everyone hung there through the logic of dates. When someone had died could be known, but not how many generations he had seen in his lifetime.

ALMOST EVERY NIGHT, MY FATHER USED TO LAY MANY SHEETS OF PAPER END-TO-END ACROSS OUR LARGE KITCHEN, WHERE THE REST OF THE FAMILY WAS PLAYING POKER. HE WOULD THEN CALIGRAPH A TEXT ACROSS THE WHOLE ROW OF PAGES, ONLY BREAKING OFF WHEN HE REACHED THE WALL.
HE WOULD SPEND THE ENTIRE EVENING WORKING ON HIS PAGES. AFTERWARDS, HE WOULD DESTROY THEM.

Image and text by Hiwa K.

AMPHIBIAN MAN
NAEEM MOHAIEMEN

Every time I translate Syed Mujtoba Ali, I start with a recitation of facts. Familiar to Bengalis, unknown to everyone else. This time as well...?

Mujtoba was one of the famous Indian writers, emerging from the Bengal renaissance and the end of the British colonies. Unusually for a Muslim, he penetrated deep inside Hindu *bhadralok* (genteel) circles, reaching the bastion of exclusivity by becoming a professor at Shantiniketan. He pulled off a delicate task—respect in India's literary circles, and popularity among the plebs—and he was a roving artist in Europe in the 1930s, existing seamlessly in many cities and countries. He was not the familiar figure of today's economic or political refugee, but an intellectual and cultural exile, his bohemian nature putting him at odds with the Indian middle class, but at home on European streets.

This many decades later, translating his text or his life is an uphill task. The genius of his chosen form—a cocktail of languages, puns, double entendres, insider references, and metanarratives—is lost in translation. I get wistful when I reread Mujtoba's stories.[1]Cafés, dinner parties, card games, Herrs and Frauleins and Mademoiselles. Now, when Bangladeshis are scattered all over the world, selling flowers in Italy and postcards in London, I wonder how Mujtoba passed with such ease in that society. Stories of old-world, melancholy afternoons in Parisian cafés sit uneasily with Schengen zone realities.

Consider his story of a showdown with Italian customs. His friend Jhandu-da is carrying a tin of vacuum-packed sweets—the mythic Bengali dessert *roshogolla* (literally, 'orb full of juice'). When a customs officer insists on checking the tin, the following scene breaks out. Can we imagine a world where we can squash a sweet into a customs officer's face and not immediately get arrested? How delicious then, this slice of Mujtoba's Europe.

IMMIGRATION (1960)[2]
The devil immediately pulled out a tin-opener from under the counter. There was no lack of guillotines during the French revolution either. Jhandu-da studied the tin-opener and repeated, 'Remember, you have to taste the sweets to make sure they are real'. The customs officer gave a thin little smile. The sort of smile we give if our lips are cracked from the winter chill.

Jhandu-da cut the tin open. Well, what else would come out? Roshogolla. Forgetting any formalities with fork and knife, he started picking sweets with two arched fingers and giving them out. First to the Bengalis, then all the Indians, then finally the French, Germans, Italians and Spaniards.

The French went, 'Epaté!' The Germans, 'Fantastisch!' Italians, of course, said 'Bravo!' Spaniards, 'Delicioso, delicioso!' Finally, the Arabs, 'Ya Salam, Ya Salam!'

The entire customs office was swallowing roshogolla. The air was full of that sweet scent. Only with Cubist or Dadaist techniques could you draw a picture of that scene. Meanwhile, Jhandu-da was leaning heavily against the counter and saying to the officer, in Bengali, 'Come

on, just try one'. In his hand was a juicy roshogolla. The officer put on a serious face and shook his head.

Jhandu-da leaned forward even more and said, 'Look, everyone is eating it. It's not cocaine, not opium after all'. The officer shook his head again.

Suddenly, Jhandu-da slid his entire belly on the counter, grabbed the officer's collar and squashed the roshogolla into his nose.

'Damn you, you won't eat it? Your whole family will eat it! You think this is a joke? I told you a million times, "Don't make me open it, they will all spoil, the little one will be crushed!" But no you wouldn't listen…'

By then the customs house was in chaos. In a strangled voice the officer started screaming for help. He cried not just for guards, but Il Duce Mussolini, Consuls, Ministers, Ambassadors, and even Plenipotentiaries. Mother Mary, Holy Jesus and the Pope thrown in for good measure. And why shouldn't there be a fuss? This was a totally illegal act. If you try to stop a government official by crushing him with your one-hundred-and-twenty-kilo body and force-feeding him, whether you feed him sweets or arsenic is irrelevant—you can definitely go to jail for this. In Italy, you could hang for lesser crimes.

Five of us grabbed Jhandu's waist and tried to drag him off the counter. Jhandu-da's voice kept rising octave after octave, 'Oh you won't eat it, sweetheart? You won't? I'll make you eat it now!' The customs officer kept calling for the police. But his cries were so weak, I felt like I was receiving a long distance call from my golden homeland India. But where on earth were the police? The French lawyer raised two hands in prayer and offered unsolicited commentary, 'This is truly a holy land, this Venice, this Italy. Even the Indian sweet can create miracles by making all officials disappear. This tops even the "Miracle of Milan"! This is the "Miracle of Roshogolla"!'

By now, we had managed to get Jhandu-da off the counter. As the officer pulled out a handkerchief to wipe off the debris, Jhandu-da yelled, 'Don't you dare wipe that off. That will serve as your witness in court—exhibit number one!'

Within three minutes, the head officer made his way through the crowd. Walking up to the officer, with an open box, Jhandu-da said, 'Signor, before you proceed with your cross-examination, please try one of these Indian sweets'.

The officer put one sweet inside his mouth and closed his eyes for two-and-a-half minutes. With eyes still closed, he held out his hand. Again. Another. Now Jhandu-da said, 'A drop of Chianti?' Like an agonized Kadambini came the cry, 'No. More sweets'. Finally. The tin was empty. The customs officer made his complaint at last.

The head officer replied, 'You did very well to open that tin, otherwise how would we get to taste it?' Then looking at us, he yelped, 'What are you all staring at? Go get some more roshogollas!' As we quietly crept out, we heard him berating his junior officer, 'You are an absolute ass! You open the tin and you don't try this delicious object?'

The Italian poet Vincenzo de Filicaja wrote,

'Italy Italy, why did you hold such beauty in you
There must be tragedies written in your fate.'
And so I say
'O Roshogolla, why did you hold such sweetness in you
Italians forget their true Christian religion
And fall at your feet today.'

People find many reasons to resurrect historic figures. Mujtoba's breakthrough novel *Deshe Bideshe (Home and Abroad)* was an extended travel journal that brought him instant fame in Bengal. But as the travel genre became dated, literary historians focused on his Muslim identity. Such an identity is too narrow, because Mujtoba broke out of every proscribed confine (Sylheti, Muslim, Bengali, Bangladeshi, Indian, Asian). Like Nobel laureate Rabrindanath Tagore, who insisted on translating his own works from Bengali into English, Mujtoba embraced English, French, German, and in fact Europe itself, just at the time when Muslim revivalists were insisting that English was the language of the colonizers, and that decolonization warriors must learn Arabic and Urdu.

MADEMOISELLES (1952)[3]
You can't spend all your time at the National Library or Guimet Museum. I had already enjoyed all the joie-de-vivre of Paris. I was walking among the crowds on Place de la Madeleine when suddenly I heard behind me, 'Bonsoir, Monsieur le docteur!'

I turned and saw a girl who looked like one of the millions of French beauties. With a ready pout on her face, she said, 'Oh, now you don't remember me! But you knew me even before you met your new love, Paris!'

As a schoolboy, a sudden slap from the teacher would remind me what the capital of Montenegro was. Just like that, it came to me—of course, I had met her on the train from Marseilles when I first arrived in France. My hat was already off, now I added a bow and pleaded, 'A thousand pardons and I beg your forgiveness, Mademoiselle Chatineau!' When it comes to high courtesy, there is much similarity between Paris and Lucknow. If you ever leave your book of Parisian etiquette at home, don't hesitate for a second—just start using that antique Lucknow style. It works like a charm.

My memories of Mujtoba start with my mother. These things always do. Mother sits and embroiders complicated designs on saris. Mother talks about my eldest aunt dressing up to meet Mujtoba's German girlfriend.

Wait—he had a German girlfriend?
Not one, several... Well, no one used words like that.

Words like what?
Girlfriend.
Right, ok (I brush it aside)—but was there really?
Well I know they got dressed up to meet her. I never heard anything more.
You never heard if she was pretty or not? How could that be?
Well I did hear that she was older. But wait don't talk about this. This is not an interesting story.
It's interesting to me.

ITALIAN WOMEN (1956)[4]
In English, you say 'carrying coals to Newcastle', in Gujarati 'full pitcher to the river', and in French, why, 'taking your wife to Paris'. The French phrase is tasty. But the question remains, are French beauties really that generous?

First, French women are truly beautiful. English women have boy faces, German women are blunt, Italian women look a bit like Indians (why go to Europe for that?). And Balkan girls, their lovers are always in a killing mood (saving oneself is the first rule). And one more thing— French girls really know how to dress, with very little money, very little material.

But beauty is not always the first thing that pulls us in. In countries where courtship is the norm (not ours), I have often see beauties go wanting while plain girls tear up the town with fantastic husbands. So is it that people look for beauty for love, but something else for marriage. Are they two different instincts? It's possible, I suppose.

A German girl will treat a guest very well, maybe even fall in love deeper than the French. But you will always remain an Auslander to her, always the 'foreigner'. The French girl divides the world in a different way. For her there are two types of people—cultivated and uncultivated.

The reason for this conversation. Mother worries (occasionally). Her son has vague work and a roving life. A bit too similar to stories she heard about her uncle, Mujtoba Ali. Of course it's preposterous, looking for Mujtoba traces in my life. But as the joke goes, every Bengali mother thinks her son is Jesus

In mother's memory, Mujtoba was too brilliant to be a family man. He was always in Paris, Berlin, London, Vienna. Hardly ever in his hometown Dacca.

So you see, it is not good to have too many girlfriends (Mother says).
He seems to have had a grand time.
Yes grand time, but in the end he came back to marry a Bengali girl. After all that.
Well why did he?
He knew the German girlfriend would not work. No one would accept it.
How do you know no one would?
I know these things.

LADIES OF THE NIGHT (1952)⁵
In India, the Hindus go to Kashi, the Muslims go to Mecca, in Europe all the disciples head to
Paris in search of the meaning of life.

As the disciples walked down the streets, at every step you would hear the sweet tones
of 'Bonsoir monsieur, may your evening go well'. If you responded to the siren call—well, what
happens next, I have no personal experience, nor do I crave that experience. I have no need
to become Emile Zola's tragic hero. I still haven't been able to digest what Sarat Chatterji wrote,
leave alone Zola.

I was a little lost in thought, otherwise I would have never replied to that last 'Bonsoir'. As
soon as the words were out of my mouth, I realized I had made a mistake. Handling two beauties
in one night was beyond my meagre strength. My ancestors handled four beauties at the same
time. My generation's fall from those heights was quite pronounced.
What was such a flawless vision doing on the streets? It is true, what Tulsi Das once said,
'The universe travels along such strange paths. The bartender sits in his tavern and sells wine,
and there is no end to the crowds. Yet the poor milk-seller has to go from door to door to
try to sell his milk'.

I said, 'Please don't be offended, but I can't quite place where I met you'.

What to do now, she had started to walk with me. If she wasn't one of the vendors of 'life', why
was she walking with me? And why not say something—good or bad? No more of this, I would
leave Paris tomorrow! I prefer my crosswords to be in the morning newspaper, not on the streets.

Crosswords and puzzles. Teasing out memories of Mujtoba. Paradoxically, though there are
many more possibilities for travel today, Mujtoba's easy and intimate relationship to Europe ac-
quires a sharp edge in the light of contemporary discomforts with outsiders. In the era of
Fortress Europe, he seems an improbable figure—almost as the title character of a Russian nov-
el popular in 1970s Dhaka: *Ubhochor Manob*—fish in water, man on land. Swimming in and
out of cultural spaces, across borders, with impossible ease.

THE GHOST OF FORMOSA
CÉDRIC VINCENT

I pretend not to give you a perfect and complete History of my Island, because I was a meer
Youth when I left it, but nineteen Years of Age, and therefore incapable of giving an exact
Account of it. Besides, I have now six years from home, so many things of moment may perhaps
slip my Memory.
Preface to Psalmanazar's Description of Formosa, 1704

In 1764 a book appeared in London with the title *Memoirs of ****, Commonly Known by*
the Name of George Psalmanazar; a Reputed Native of Formosa. In accordance with the author's
instructions it was published after his death, and it would probably have attracted little
interest today had it not contained surprising revelations about a celebrated book published
sixty years earlier.

When it came out in April 1704, *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa*
was applauded as the most thorough study yet written of Formosa (present-day Taiwan). The
book described in minute detail the history of the island, as well as its political system,
customs, economy, language, architecture and forms of dress. It also recounted the life of the
author, a native of the island who was newly converted to Anglicanism after having escaped
the Jesuit Inquisition. Part ethnographic study emphasizing the strangeness of the Formosan
culture, part satire of the Jesuit order, and part confession of an authentic Formosan native, the
book quickly gained an avid audience all across Europe. For a while the author's name was
on every lip. He received the official protection of the Bishop of London. He taught the Formosan
language at Oxford University. Certain passages of *A Modest Proposal* (1729) by Jonathan
Swift were inspired by Psalmanazar's book. In his biography of Samuel Johnson, one of the
most influential literary critics of his age, James Boswell reports: 'When I asked Dr Johnson, who
was the best man he had known? "Psalmanazar", was the unexpected reply: he said; likewise'.[1]
Despite all this, George Psalmanazar (1679?–1753) never went to Formosa. His Formosa was
a pure invention, and only his posthumous confession revealed the deception.

We know little about Psalmanazar. Even his real name remains unknown.[2] Everything is as
if he wanted to ensure that all the information we have about him today came from his own
writing. At the end of his life, his autobiography provided a coherence that his deceptions and
omissions had previously made impossible. It gave a unity to his life's journey, which he
presented as a succession of games of identity, fluid and flexible.

Psalmanazar was born in the south of France, a region with strong heretic traditions, in about
1679. He was brought up by Franciscans at first, then Jesuits and then Dominicans. Then,
assuming the identity of an Irishman persecuted in his own country, he travelled around the
south of France and Germany, earning his money from begging. He was drafted as a soldier, and
escaped being executed as a spy when he passed himself off as a Japanese man from Formosa,
already using the name 'Psalmanazar'. In 1702, his regiment arrived in Sluis in the Netherlands,
where he met a Scottish chaplain, William Innes. Innes invited the 'Japanese' man to his

1. Quoted in Frederic J. Foley, *The Great Formosan Impostor* (Taipei: Mei Ya Publications, 1968), 62. This biographical work provides my main informational basis, even though Foley does not actually analyse the deception. The biographical summary given here, and the quotations that follow, are taken from his book.
2. Psalmanazar derived his name from Salmanazar, an Old Testament Assyrian king.

3. On these points see in particular Michael Keevak, *The Pretended Asian. George Psalmanazar's Eighteenth-Century Hoax* (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 2004).
4. David Faucett, *Images of the Antipodes in the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Stereotyping* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995).
5. Formosa had been under Chinese control since 1683.

home and, seeing through his deception, forced him to confess. But rather than denouncing him, Innes saw an opportunity for money and fame, and decided instead to support him in his dissimulation. He forced the young Psalmanazar to convert to Anglicanism, and chose 'George' as his baptismal name. From Japanese he became Formosan. In 1703, Innes took him to London where, as the first Formosan to join the Anglican Church, he received a warm welcome from the church authorities. *Description of Formosa*, written in the space of two months, and initially in Latin, came out in English in 1704. Psalmanazar continued to play the Formosan until 1728 when, after a serious illness, he decided to begin another life. He left London and renounced his stipends. To earn a living he found employment carrying out obscure tasks for librarians. He acquired a justified reputation as a man of erudition. He had always had a gift for languages, and now he learned Syrian and Hebrew, which he used in his collaboration with Archibald Bower on *An Universal History, From the Earliest Account of Time.* Bower then asked him to edit the articles concerning China and Japan for his *Complete System of Geography* (1747). In the course of this writing he denounced the machinations of a 'supposed native of Formosa named Psalmanazar', alerting the public to the impostor. But no one noticed.

Psalmanazar was the embodiment of his own deception, unlike other famous eighteenth-century frauds such as Thomas Chatterton and James Macpherson, whose pretence rested on the 'discovery' of medieval or Celtic poetry they had in fact written themselves. He did not pose as an explorer publishing the journals of his travels in Formosa; he chose to be a Formosan bearing witness to his own life. His life remained the primary evidence for the authenticity of his descriptions of Formosa, and the deception required daring. He had to be different, but not so much that he would appear dissonant, and beyond assimilation. As a member of the Formosan nobility converted to Anglicanism, Psalmanazar seems to have found a reassuring balance between the exotic and the familiar. The more he emphasized the savagery of Formosan society, the more he was taken for a sincere informant who would not hesitate to denounce the crimes of his people, and the more he demonstrated how successful was his adaptation to European society. Nonetheless, it is true that his alien identity kept him on the margins of society, and relegated him to a very circumscribed position. Moreover, we have to consider the reasons why the deception of this 'noble savage' was not revealed by his physical appearance, especially as some witnesses attested that he had blond hair. In fact, the ability of eighteenth-century Europeans to analyse or even to perceive other cultures worked on very different principles than those that might obtain today. In many cases, geographical origins were not denoted by physical appearance, especially by skin colour. If Psalmanazar was able to satisfy his European audience as to his Formosan origins, it was by more contingent qualities such as behaviour, dress, religious practices—and language, the first item in his exhibition.[3] The second was *Description of Formosa*, which he called his 'geographical novel'.

The book forms part of a family of proto-Orientalist literature from that period, among which so-called 'tales from the antipodes' and 'Robinsonnades' were highly popular genres, even if

they were read with some mistrust. These texts were received variously as fact or fiction. *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), for example, was read by many as a factual account.[4] While Daniel Defoe warned his readers against fake chroniclers, he was prepared to use their strategies to give his plot extra dramatic verisimilitude. *Description of Formosa* followed the procedures and conventions of factual writing, and its reports were appropriately illustrated with engravings. The authority of the printed word extended the fame of the book's author and helped to further authenticate his imposture. But the book also went so far as to establish the norms by which the authenticity of future manifestations of Formosanness would be judged. After the publication of his book, Psalmanazar would be obliged to eat raw meat and roots on occasion, to conform with its descriptions of Formosans, and he would speak and write Formosan on request.

To those sceptics who cast doubts on his stories, Psalmanazar would respond with an argument of irresistible logic: 'If I did not know my subject, or if I had invented the things I tell, is it imaginable that I would contradict everything my predecessors said? The very fact that I am in complete disagreement with their accounts is enough to prove my own veracity, without me having to bore my readers with fastidious explanations'. Psalmanazar wished to provide a description as new and surprising as possible of Formosa, that is to say, as different as possible from those of earlier travellers—for example by asserting that the island belonged to Japan, while they were unanimous in declaring that it was occupied by China.[5] It is precisely in his confrontations with those who thought his accounts lacked verisimilitude, or who pointed out the differences between his account and those of witnesses returning from the island, that Psalmanazar's imposture gained the most strength, benefiting from a sort of transfer of authority. One of his greatest talents as an impostor was that he never contradicted himself, and never retreated from his statements even in the face of the most destabilizing attacks. His most formidable opponent was George Candidius, a Dutch missionary who had spent ten years on Formosa, and whose journals were also published in English in 1704. These writings represented at that time the most trustworthy account of life in Formosa. Nevertheless, it was Psalmanazar's Formosa that gained the upper hand, for he argued that the missionary had not had access to the heart of Formosan society, 'beyond the mountains'. Moreover, his Formosa was the one that best corresponded to the horizon of expectations of the time, effectively providing words for an existing fantasy, and feeding into the architecture of rumour, which disseminated his vision of the island and kept it alive.

Psalmanazar's Formosans transgressed all the most established of European taboos: he reported that they were polygamous, ate dead bodies and practised human sacrifice. At the very beginning of the Enlightenment and of the emergence of evolutionism, such horrible details served to confirm Europe's sense of its own superiority. In this sense Psalmanazar's deception affirmed the dominant discourse and the future rationale of colonialism. It was in accordance with the interests of the government, and it legitimized the coercion carried out against so-called barbarism and the moral duty of evangelism. In this sense, Psalmanazar's writing,

6. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).
7. For instance in the *Dizionario delle Lingue Immaginarie* by Paolo Albani and Berlinghiero Buonarroti, or the *Dictionary of Imaginary Places* by Alberto Manguel.

8. Among these studies see Rodney Needham, *Examplars* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Susan Stewart, 'Antipodal Expectations: Notes on the Formosan "Ethnography" of George Psalmanazar', in Georges W. Stoking, ed., *Romantic Motives: Essays on Anthropological Sensibility* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 44–73; and Justin Stagl, *A History of Curiosity: The Theory of Travel 1550–1800* (Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995).
9. Keevak, *The Pretended Asian*, 13.

like other travel writing of the time, produced the 'rest of the world' for European readers. The mechanism of this process has been described well by Mary Louise Pratt: it did not 'report' on Formosa; it produced a 'Formosa' for European consumption.[6] Travel writing produced places that could be thought of as barren, empty, undeveloped, inconceivable, needful of European influence and control, ready to serve European industrial, intellectual, and commercial interests.

Psalmanazar's false accounts also won favour for the way they played on more local issues. In London's Protestant society, he obliquely criticized Catholic ideas of the mass by describing a distant isle where they were supposedly taken literally. His unrestrained descriptions of the sacrifice of children caused a strong reaction in Europe, not only because of what they revealed about distant Pacific islands, but also for their implicit caricature of Catholics, which was much appreciated by Protestants.

By conforming his accounts to certain concerns prevalent in Europe at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Psalmanazar made Formosa exist as a place-world, in conformity with what such a place could produce in the imagination of European high society—which, for its part, could find in his reports the confirmation of its own representations. Thus Psalmanazar was able to play on the expectations of his audiences in order to be 'Formosan'. The true-seeming is sometimes at odds with the true. The influence of Psalmanazar's descriptions was such that as late as 1808 Boucher de la Richarderie's *Bibliothèque Universelle des Voyages* would still draw all its information about Formosa from them for want of other documents. Psalmanazar was still the last word on the question, and retained his credibility.

EPILOGUE

Far from putting an end to the story, the posthumous confession of Psalmanazar transformed it into a fascinating mystery. The shift from a serious simulation to one that was playful and shared gave new power to the story by making Psalmanazar an extreme impostor whose deception was no less than an exploit. Having captured the attention of the beginning of the eighteenth century with his truth, his lies fed the imagination of the centuries that followed. This arrogant trick, seemingly so impossible to pull off, has become an enigma, and his story has never been completely forgotten. Studies of impostors and false literary accounts naturally give him a prominent place, whilst studies of mythical geography put him back into the context of his time.[7] He inspired writers as different as Swift, Leibniz and Hemingway. At the beginning of the twentieth century Psalmanazar would be taken up as a precursor of surrealism, or a *fou littéraire*. At the end of the same century, when anthropologists interrogated themselves about the politics of their representations of the Other, he represented a kind of negative image of the ethnographer: the fake ethnographer.[8] Nevertheless, as Michael Keevak points out, 'in so many ways his remarkable odyssey hardly seems to have gotten beyond the let's-tell-the-story-one-more time stage'.[9]

Partly because *Memoirs* is the only source we have about Psalmanazar's life, even if we are justifiably doubtful about the truthfulness of its contents. There is little chance now of discovering new facts, so there remains a good dose of mystery. It is as if the story demanded that each generation rediscovered it, told it again, and interpreted it again according to its own demands and preoccupations. In every instance, however, Psalmanazar's extraordinary deception is understood to be an anomaly—an anomaly that confirms all our most dearly held certainties, a return of the repressed whose causes need to be mastered in order for things to return to normal.

UN-TITLED
OVE KVAVIK
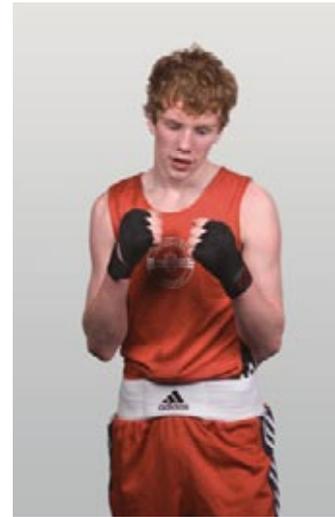
IMAGES OF YOUTH BOXERS TAKEN MOMENTS
AFTER THEIR DEFEAT IN THE NORWEGIAN
NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

1. Cao Xueqîn, *The Story of The Stone*, (also known as *The Dream of the Red Chamber*), trans. David Hawkes (London: Penguin, 1973–1986). The Penguin edition has five volumes: 1. *The Golden Days*; 2. *The Crab-Flower Club*; 3. *The Warning Voice*; 4. *The Debt of Tears*; 5. *The Dreamer Wakes*. Volumes 4–5 edited by Gao E, translated by John Minford. Published in French by Gallimard in La Pléiade collection, *Le Rêve dans le Pavillon Rouge* is described as follows: 'La richesse de la matière a poussé la critique marxiste à qualifier le *Hong Lou Meng* "d'encyclopédie du monde féodal à son déclin"' Another reading.

2. A selective list: Dore L. Levy, *Ideal and Actual in* The Story of the Stone (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Anthony C. Yu, *Rereading the Stone: Desire and the Making of Fiction in* Dream of the Red Chamber (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Cécile and Michel Beurdeley, *Giuseppe Castiglione, a Jesuit Painter at the Court of the Chinese Emperors* (Rutland: C.E. Tuttle, 1971); Henri Maspero, *El taoismo y las religiones chinas* (Madrid: Trotta, 2000); J.J. Clarke, *The Tao of the West: Western Transformations of Taoist Thought* (London: Routledge, 2000); Confucius, Mencius, Los cuatro libros (Madrid: Alfaguara, 1995); Luis Racionero, *Textos de estética taoista* (Madrid: Alianza, 1983); E.R. Hughes, ed., *Chinese Philosophy in Classical Times*, (London: Dutton, 1942); Wu-chi Liu and Irving Yucheng Lo, eds., *Sunflower Splendor: Three Thousand Years of Chinese Poetry* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1975); Maggie Keswick, *The Chinese Garden* (New York: Rizzoli, 1978); Xiao Chi, *The Chinese Garden as Lyric Enclave: A Generic Study of The Story of the Stone* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2001); and *The Threefold Lotus Sutra: Innumerable Meanings; The Lotus Flower of Wonderful Law, and Meditation on the Boddhisatva Universal Virtue* (Tokyo: Kosai, 1986).

3. *Jetsun Mila* (Lovely Music, 1987, 2007); *Far-West News* (Blue Chopsticks, 1999); *Improvement* (Elektra NonSuch, 1992); *Life is Splendid* (Total Energy, 1999); *The Wire* (HBO, 2004–2008). A cursory list of areas of knowledge opened by these works could be: Jetsun Milarepa, Tibetan Buddhism, The Spotless Practice Lineage, Arp synthesizer, land sound art, from Page to the Grand Canyon, m*usique concrète*, from Prescott to Los Angeles, Florian Hecker, United States subconscious' soundscapes, Black Panthers, White Panthers, free jazz, The Solar Myth Arkestra, Saturn, The Magic City, Baltimore...

THRESHOLDS
CONTEMPORARY CULTURE INDEX

One of us just returned from the Garden of Total Vision, or Prospect Garden, as David Hawkes translated the name of the Kaleidoscopic Garden at the centre of Cao Xueqin's *The Story of the Stone*, also known as *The Dream of the Red Chamber*.[1] It took five months to traverse that universe, where space and time expand and contract depending on who is telling the story, or on whose thoughts we are allowed to glimpse. Five months of daily refuge during which our other reading excursions had to do with what was going on in, and around, the Garden: secondary sources helping us to understand, and visualize, a monumental object of knowledge.[2]

We report: it was delightful.

What kind of time do we have that we can give a book this kind of attention? What do we gain from this process? What does it mean *to slow down*, now, in 2008, and listen for one hour and a half to Eliane Radigue's *Jetsun Mila*, Luc Ferrari's *Far-West News*, Robert Ashley's *Improvement*, or Sun Ra's *Life is Splendid*? Or to engage with the U.S. TV series *The Wire*, five seasons, where we are prompted to *Listen Carefully*?[3] What do they give us that we surrender?

We—contemporary culture index—produce information. We spend our days with computers, querying remote databases, reading and indexing journals and periodicals. Current periodicals, deceased journals. We are creating a database. Can we call it an archive?

Upon reading about archives this heading came to mind: Everything / Nothing: Negation in Abundance. Particular examples of attempts at collecting and the subsequent ordering of masses of material—including fictive attempts—led to a feeling not merely of bewonderment, but also of fatigue, attention deficit. Negation in abundance can be read as the cancelling-out effect which is possible when confronted with more than is comprehensible, that which is mind-numbing, more than one can bear. It can also be read as a multitude of negation, many minuses. What I'm referring to as a cancelling-out effect can also be thought in relation to absences, lacunae, holes which occur in the midst of densities of information, as well as amidst their lack. The lacunae referenced in this text are those which allude to that which is beyond understanding, and understanding can be thought here in terms of how it might be possible to perceive as well as the boundaries of such. It is exactly at these locations of limit and even fatigue where it may be necessary to search. What impossibility is faced beyond the more superficial fatigue?[4]

But we are not the *archons*. We do not have 'hermeneutic right and competence', we do not have 'the power to interpret the archives'. We might present materials, give directions or hints, but we are not guarding anything. Contrary to archives which could not do 'without residence', we exist anywhere there's an internet connection. We are not under 'house arrest'.[5]

We live in global times, we are told. How did that happen? Were there local processes that we are already forgetting? What new lacunae have been created during this process? How did we get here? And what tools do we need to understand the shifts that have occurred, and our current condition?

The great modernist notions of culture—the literary sense of culture as arts and letters and the anthropological sense of culture as habits and customs—were entirely inadequate to understand the culture industries and ideological state apparatuses that dominated the age of three worlds. So new concepts, new frameworks were forged.[6]

A bibliographical database as a new concept, a new framework? Or is it a tool to trace their creation and current state?

One of us wrote this paragraph to Raqs Media Collective, while preparing our participation in 'The Rest of Now':

I am especially attracted to the slowing down and concentration aspects of your proposal, as ccindex spurs from an acknowledgment of a lack of attention: to materials, to contexts, to discourses, to histories, to the past and to the present. One of the paradoxes I find myself in is how to address it through what might be considered yet another instance of information overload. How to address it? I gather that it is important to make a distinction between knowledge and information and its access, but this is something that the tool itself cannot do. The database is only activated by the intended user, and its purpose fulfilled only if what is retrieved from it can be accessed, seen and read. And this takes us back to concentration and time, which I would imagine to be one of the required characteristics of scholarship and of the curious mind.

Of the curious mind? How do curious minds get formed?

A GROWING ORGANISM

What prompts us to ride a train to Queens to locate a British periodical published at the end of the 1970s in London, *Black Phoenix: Journal of Contemporary Art & Culture in the Third World*?[7]

We are prepared. We have previously made an appointment to use the library. We sit there, in a dark space, for hours while we go through the periodical, read the articles, type the contents and the details, assign subject headings, find links that direct you to the source, and then we post it in our database for you to go and encounter it.

We didn't know about *Black Phoenix* a few months ago; we don't know many things. But we are learning, and driven to diffuse what we encounter.

What has happened—the process of labour described above—was a fairly common practice for librarians before they were transformed into digital content managers. Engagement with materials, physical or digital, a slow process of accretion with hardly any final results; these practices existed before us, and will continue after us. A process of refinement.

A process of loss? Are we complicit in the fetishization of information, or are we producing knowledge?

4. Renée Green, 'Survival: Ruminations on Archival Lacunae. Adaptations, Re-readings, and New Readings. Introduction to the Following Accretive Process', in Beatrice von Bismarck et al., eds., *Interarchive: Archival Practices and Sites in the Contemporary Art Field* (Lüneburg: Kunstraum der Universität Lüneburg; Cologne: Walther König, 2002). An edited excerpt is published in *The Archive*, ed. Charles Merewether (London: Whitechapel Gallery; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006).

5. Words in quotations are extrapolated from Jacques Derrida's *Mal d'archive*. English translation: *Archive Fever*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 2.
6. Michael Denning, *Culture in the Age of Three Worlds* (London: Verso, 2004), 3.
7. http://www.ccindex.info (Browse Journal = Black phoenix).
8. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), xii.

In our case, we are exempt from this fetishism. We are not calling attention to our process, to our labour, to our *product*. We want to become a discreet threshold, to welcome users somewhere else.

RETURN TO THE GARDEN: FOOTNOTES

Typically, the entire literature of China, say, is represented by a couple of chapters of The Dream of the Red Chamber *and a few pages of poetry.*[8]

Attention, readers of details: minutia. The footnotes accompanying this essay could be read as a portrait of our Garden traveller. What could be discerned from them? A physical location? Language proficiency? Musical tastes? Attention to detail? Thought processes?

That could be one reading. But these footnotes also are *information*, which can be used to gain more knowledge, to access materials. Primary information, secondary sources.

In both instances, one would need to care. A curious mind, trained to read entry points, able to navigate thresholds.

A threshold is defined as 'any place or point of entering or beginning'. Librarians, archivists: we are engaged in the creation of thresholds, abstract distillations, most of them of arid beauty. Tools to take us somewhere else.

To compile these footnotes a multitude of resources have been used, most of them digital: bibliographical databases, collective library catalogues, public libraries, image databanks and bookstores. And the texts themselves. Time was spent circulating through masses of information, applying and learning new and established thought processes (i.e. cataloguing rules) that would allow us to find what's desired. No two library catalogues or databases are alike. Fortuitous encounters are the norm, as thought processes are always subjective. In a bibliography or in a library catalogue different times collide: records made last century coexist with records made last week. For us, these layers are beautiful, threshold details, but nonetheless minutia in the path to somewhere else.

What might be the difference between the time of research and the time of engagement with the work, the object of knowledge? What kind of wonder can arise with the realization of a network of thought, a history of inquiry surrounding and emanating from these objects? How might this form of pleasure differ from that derived from an actual engagement with the work?

Could we think of these forms together? The Object of Knowledge, its hermeneutics, and the processes that allow encountering both. Would their combination allow us entrance into The Garden of Total Vision? And what could be the benefit?

In its Penguin edition, *The Story of the Stone*'s last volume is the only one using an action verb in its title: *The Dreamer Wakes*. An indication of what knowledge and its processes can ignite.

MIXING MEMORY AND DESIRE
LAWRENCE LIANG

In the late 1940s, Roja Muthiah Chettiar, a painter of signs, set up a signboard shop in Madras, in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. He had moved to Madras from a small town, Kottaiyur, some three hundred kilometres away. A self-educated man, Chettiar was fascinated by visual culture, and began to build up a personal collection of print material about art and popular visual culture. Over a period of time he extended his area of interest, and started collecting books, magazines, pamphlets, posters, letters, reports, event announcements and even wedding invitations. Chettiar became a well-known figure amongst the old booksellers and the scrap dealers in Moore Road in Madras, as the man who would buy garbage. Chettiar paid far greater attention to his collection than to his business, and as a result he eventually had to shut his sign shop and move back to Kottaiyur. Once back, he set up the India Library Services, a reading room, where for a rupee visitors would be allowed to consult the archives and provided with coffee and lunch.

His family thought he was insane, and would constantly throw away the junk that Chettiar had accumulated. Chettiar would then have to chase his treasures as they travelled from garbage bin to scrap dealer, recovering some, losing others. Every time he ran into financial difficulties, he would dig out a rare stamp from among his old envelopes and send it to a philatelist with a covering letter asking for money.

In 1983, there was a pogrom against Tamils in Sri Lanka, and Chettiar heard about the burning of the Jaffna library. Chettiar was aware that the Jaffna library contained some of the oldest and rarest Tamil manuscripts in the world. He borrowed money and travelled to Jaffna to see what he could recover, but was devastated to learn that most of the documents had been destroyed in the burning of the library. Chettiar had gone to Jaffna as an eccentric collector, and he returned an obsessive archivist, determined to collect whatever he could of Tamil print culture.

Worried about the state of his health and his ability to preserve his collection, he offered to sell it to the Tamil Nadu state archives. By then it comprised over one hundred thousand items, and included many publications dating back to the early nineteenth century. The state refused to pay him two hundred thousand rupees for what it considered to be junk. One of the regular visitors to the India Library Services was C.S. Lakshmi (Ambai), a well-known Tamil writer and feminist scholar. When Ambai was a visiting scholar at the University of Chicago, she informed the South Asian Studies department about this eccentric archive. They immediately sent a team to evaluate the archive and offered to buy the archive for ten million rupees.

Muthiah Chettiar himself never saw any of the money, since he died by the time the transaction was complete. Chettiar died of DDT poisoning as a result of years of breathing the fumes of the insecticide that he regularly used to prevent his collection from being destroyed by insects and worms.[1]

Chettiar's love for time is a bit of a curious puzzle. The beginning of his interest in collecting old and discarded objects coincides with the birth of the new nation and yet it seems that he

1. The Roja Muthiah Memorial Library and Archive which was established in Madras (now Chennai) is now one of the most important resources for people working on South Indian history and contains invaluable resources including the oldest published Tamil text. The current director of the archive, G. Sundar, may have the best preservation technologies available, but every three months he is awoken by nightmares in which he sees the archive on fire and drives twenty kilometers to ensure that the materials are intact. I want to thank Sundar for telling me the story of Roja Muthiah, and for the care he displays for the past.
2. W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*, trans. Anthea Bell (New York: Modern Library, 2002), 275.

had no relation to the immediacy of national time and its obsession with the new. It was not the new that interested Chettiar, bur precisely those things that had been discarded because they did not fit into the new, and had lost their value.

How do we begin to make sense of Chettiar's relation to the scattered objects which seemed to tell a story of their time? They were not garrulous storytellers and it was likely that if anything was said at all, it was said in whispers, and required the patient ear of the collector to decipher what was being said. This coming together of the figure of the collector and the storyteller perhaps offers us a clue for understanding Chettiar's archive fever, and also brings him close to Walter Benjamin, who died a few years before Chettiar's trips to Moore road began.

Benjamin's figure of the threatened storyteller stands at the threshold of modernity. In his account, the decline of storytelling was symptomatic of the decline in our ability to share experience. The assaults of modernity had diminished the transmissibility of culture and redefined the relationship to the past. Benjamin's invocation of the fragile human body standing beneath a force field of destructive torrents and explosions testifies to the experience of a person lost in time. The helplessness of this figure stems from the fact that, unlike his ancestors, he lacks the comfort of tradition, in which there is no break between experience and the chain of transmission. At the same time, he is haunted by the past that accumulates around him as history and debris. He has neither access to this history, nor to a future that seems completely uncertain.

And yet this person lost in time is condemned to find new coordinates with which he can at least partially access the past. The storyteller and the collector meet in the world of discarded objects, where the act of collecting stands in for the loss of narrative. Through its mediation between memory and materiality, the object composes a past through its silent testimony. But the object is also evidence of the irretrievability of the past, and stands at an ironic distance no matter how hard one attempts to fully grasp it. History thus becomes the elusive and slippery thing present in the surface of the object, threatening to disappear if you come too close.

The objects Chettiar was drawn to were the ones that had not been rendered completely intelligible by systems of classification and order. When the state archives refused to buy his collection, it was precisely because these objects had not attained the status of historical artefacts. They exist instead as mythical things that hold out the *possibility* of a narrative. They are based not on conditions of factual representation, but on the evidence of the past's irretrievability.

Giorgio Agamben remarked that in a traditional social system, culture exists only in the act of its transmission, or in the living act of its tradition. There is no discontinuity between past and present, between old and new, because every object transmits at every moment, without residue, the system of beliefs and notions that has found expression in it. When the transmissibility of culture and experience has become difficult or impossible, scattered objects become mnemonic devices through which the fragments of a story are rendered possible. One can

imagine Chettiar on his visit to Jaffna, standing amidst the ruins and ashes of a library, looking for traces, only to find that the burning of the library was now an event consigned to the past and available to us only via history.

In his novel *Austerlitz,* W.G. Sebald evokes another destruction of a library:

The old library in the rue Richelieu has been closed, as I saw for myself not long ago, said Austerlitz, the domed hall with its green porcelain lampshades which cast such a soothing, pleasant light is deserted, the books have been taken off the shelves, and the readers, who once sat at the desks numbered with little enamel plates, in close contact with their neighbours and silent harmony with those who had gone before them, might have vanished from the face of the earth.[2]

How was Chettiar to make sense of his present, when he had witnessed how fragile it could be? Chettiar's fever arose from the desire to be in close contact and silent harmony with those who had gone before him. It consisted of a love for time, a love that was nonetheless acutely aware of how fickle and unforgiving this particular lover could be.

THE ETHICS OF DUST
JORGE OTERO-PAILOS

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

I HAVE seldom been more disappointed by the result of my best .... books, than by the earnest request of my publisher, after the opinion of the public had been taken on the "Ethics of ... Dust," that I would .... write no more .. .. ! .... I bowed to public judgment in this matter at once (knowing also my inventive powers to be of the feeblest), ... the book ... ... may at first offend by its disconnected method. ... ., ..., with care. ... ... the principal ... ... conclusions .. .. were written as introductions. ... . people. .. all ... . said ... ... my ...... book ... ... re-read ... . is ... ... better, and ..... to ... . more generally useful, than anything else I have done of the kind.

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230   The Ethics of the Dust.

. I can tell you one . . . thing : and
I might take credit for . . . . . . telling
you , ... a personal reason . . .
. . . about the creation.

. . . yes—yes ; and its . . .
. . . . now. '

. . . back to that . . . I must
warn you against an old . . . . . .

Modern . . . . . . earth
. . . . . . passed through its highest
state and . . . after . . . a series
of . . . . . min ing . . . s . . . by
. . . . now gradually becom-
ing less fit for . . . habitation.

Yes, I remember.

. . . . th . . e . . . very
bitter impression of the gradual perishing of
. . . . . . the . . . . . .
new . . . physical world , ...
doubt . . . .
. . . loss of sensation . . . by
violent . . . . . physical action ; such
as the filling up of the Lac de . . . by
landslips . . . . . . the
narrowing of the Lake Lucerne by the gain-
ing . . . of the stream . . . . . .
which, in the course of years, will cut the
lake into two, as that of . . . has been
divided from that of . . . the steady
diminishing of the glaciers north of the Alps,
and still more, of the sheets of snow on

The Crystal Rest.   231

their southern slopes, which supply the re-
freshing streams of Lombardy :—the equally
steady increase of deadly maremma round
Pisa and Venice ; and other such phenom-
ena, quite measurably traceable within
the limits even of short life, and unaccom-
panied . . . . . . by redeeming . . .
. . . . agencies. . . . . . .
. . . . the existing
phenomena . . . .
. . . . evi ence . . . collected
within historical periods can be accepted as
a . . clue to the great tendencies of . . .
. . change ; . . . . the great laws which
. . . fail, and . . which . . change . . .
. . . .
. . al . . . . . lovelier order, ...
. . . . or . . de . . . . . R . .
. . . . . this . . . . fastened . . .
. . . . . more distinctly, ...
. . . . . to . . . . which govern
the lowly framework of the dust. For,
through . . the . . . . . . transition . . .
. . solution, there s . . . . to . . a continual
effort to raise it . . . into a higher state ; and
. measured . . . . the fierce revul-
sion . . . .
in beauty, and order, and permanence.
The . . . . . sediments of the . . . . . .
. . . . process of time, ...
. . . . hered . . . . burdened and
strained under . . . . pressure. . . .

THE AFTERLIFE
OF INDUSTRY
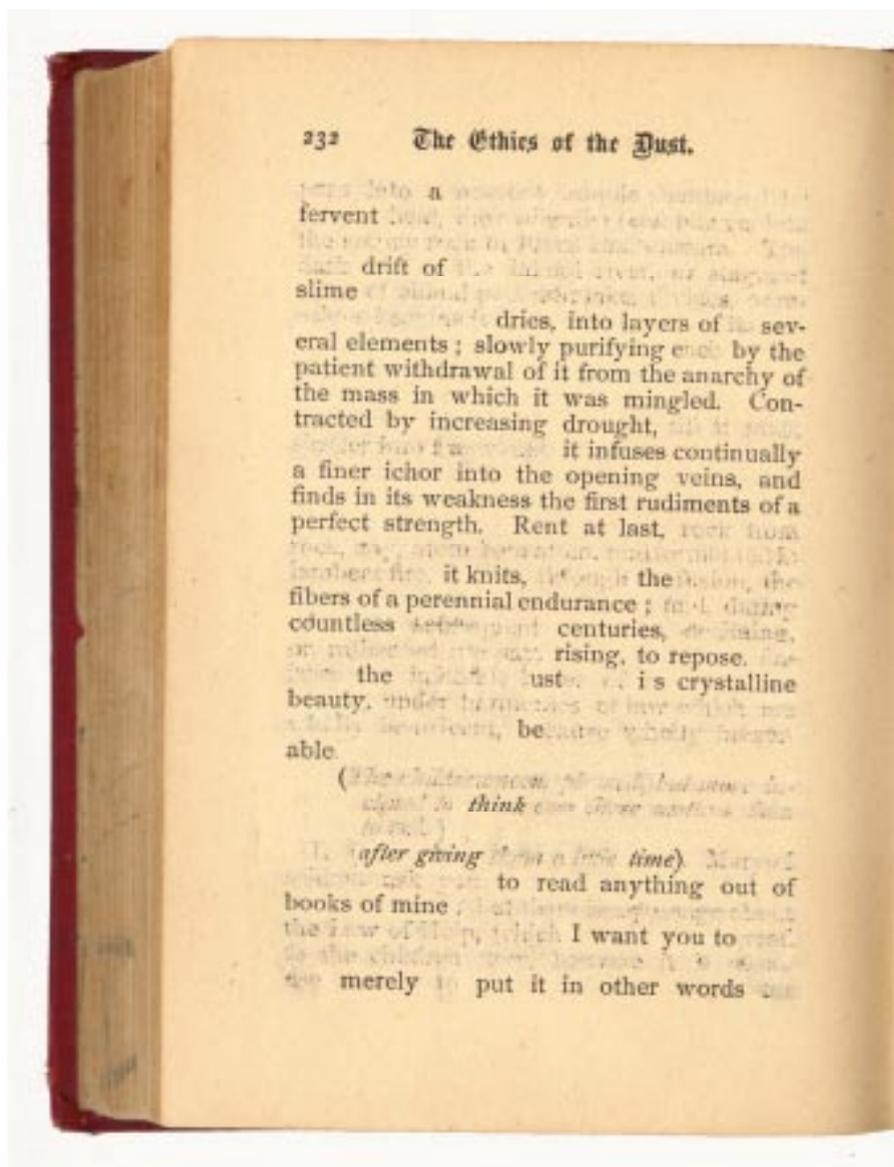
GELATINE FROM PIG BONES IS USED TO HELP INSERT THE
PROPELLANT – CORDITE OR GUNPOWDER – INTO BULLETS.

BILDRAUM
WALTER NIEDERMAYR

The Alumix buildings, built between 1932 and 1936, are among the most impressive buildings built in the South Tyrol at that time, and bear witness to important strains of twentieth-century history. They are also difficult to speak about: they represent a 'repression chamber' of what has been, and what remains.

The products of daily progress, economically optimised for short-term gain, transform the city into a world of appearances in which everything is continuously displaced by the new. There has been a loss of things, buildings and places that were indispensable elements of our visual memory, and this has led to an increase of the invisible—a process of immense repression, a retreat into ignorance and uncertainty about the present. What is remembered has been saved from nothingness. What is forgotten has been abandoned.
John Berger, *About Looking*

ART ALWAYS HAS A PROBLEM, AN ANALYSIS, AND A CONCLUSION.
THE CONCLUSION THEN BECOMES THE NEXT PROBLEM.

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Text by Will Insley selected by Jörgen Svensson

MEG STUART, 'THE ONLY POSSIBLE CITY,' VIDEO
PRODUCTION IN THE FORMER ALUMIX FACTORY, 2008.

Image by Jorge Léon.

THE ROMANCE OF CAFFEINE AND ALUMINIUM
JEFFREY SCHNAPP

Viewed in hindsight, the coming together of coffee and aluminium seems inevitable. They shared certain common associations right from the start: associations with lightness, speed, mobility, strength, energy, and electricity. But fated or not, the meeting was long in coming. It had to wait until the mid-1930s, the golden era of aluminium designs for the kitchen and the beginning of fascist Italy's pursuit of economic autarchy, at which time it gave birth to a domestic object that can still be found in nearly every Italian home and in many a kitchen throughout the world: the Bialetti Moka Express.[1]

Industrial objects may appear forgetful and therefore reducible to function. Yet such understandings strip away the actual density that characterizes the object world: the subtle incrustations of intention and invention, fantasy and ideology, tradition and accident that, like a family history that can be recovered only by means of exacting genealogical research, an object carries in the train of its existence. Things may be opaque, but they are rarely dull, and the stories of imaginary and material investments that they tell conjoin the minutia of history to large-scale social processes in ways that expose the workings of history within everyday forms of communion like the morning cup of coffee that you and I imbibe before heading off to work.

Heretical though it may seem to admit it, espresso coffee is not an Italian invention, experiments with steam pressure brewing having been undertaken in Britain and France as far back as the early 1800s. Nor is the word *espresso* a genuinely Italian word. The label was borrowed from the English *express* via the French *exprès*, meaning something made to order and, by extension, produced and delivered with dispatch. This meaning was modified by the rise in mid-nineteenth-century England of special trains running 'expressly' to single locations without making intervening stops, trains that soon came to be known throughout Europe as *expresses*.[2] The connection with coffee brewing may not appear obvious. But it was prefigured by a subgenre of coffeemakers known as coffee locomotives, manufactured between 1840 and 1870, that played upon the functional analogy between the boilers of steam engines and the boilers in coffee machines.[3] So when in 1901 Luigi Bezzera filed his patent for the first restaurant-style espresso machine, a machine consisting in a large boiler with four double pumps subsequently commercialized by the La Pavoni company, he could pretty much count on the fact that consumers would understand the symbolic valences of drinking a product bearing the designation *caffé espresso*.

The new espresso machines were designed to dazzle through their size and speed, with rumbling boilers, brass fittings, enamelled ornaments, vulcanized rubber knobs, and gleaming metallic lines all at the command of the caffeinated double of the train conductor-engineer—the *barista*. They reinforced and reinterpreted the long-standing conviction that strong coffee was the virile liquor with which modern men powered their corporeal and corporate boilers. And even if the steam-brewed coffee that these behemoths turned out often tasted burnt, the brew was power-packed, intense, and quickly consumed. It translated the values of efficiency and excitement associated with the express train into an everyday beverage in

1. On aluminium's emergence as a domestic metal, see Penny Sparke, 'Cookware to Cocktail Shakers: The Domestication of Aluminium in the United States, 1900–1939', in *Aluminium by Design*, ed. Sarah Nichols (exhibition catalogue, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, 2000), 112–139.
2. The picture is actually slightly more complex, inasmuch as the word 'express' was, before the era of trains, already associated with express messengers who could be counted upon to deliver messages at speeds superior to those of the ordinary mail service. So 'express' train services were themselves tapping into a prior usage.

3. On coffee locomotives, see Edward and Joan Bramah, *Coffeemakers: Three Hundred Years of Art and Design* (London, 1989), 104–109, which also contains a comprehensive history of coffeemaker design.
4. Although there is some confusion about the matter among current Bialetti employees, it may be that Bialetti's shop evolved into the firm known as Metallurgica Lombarda-Piemontese dei Fratelli Bialetti-Piedimulera, listed in the review *Metalli leggeri e loro applicazioni* 1 (May–June 1931) as specializing in 'lathe-turned products in billet metal, stamped sheet metal, foundry services, laminates and metal wire; in particular, casting in molds, especially of items for the home and hotel supplies' (p. 27).

5. *Metalli leggeri e loro applicazioni* had a silver foil cover and claimed that it was the 'only Italian review exclusively dedicated to the development of light metal industries, product applications, and manufactured goods'. Every issue had on its cover a quote from the engineer Giuseppe Belluzzo, formerly Minister of the National Economy (1925–1928) and of Public Instruction (1928–1929): 'Italy has abundant raw materials, abundant enough to forge the new productive Civilization that is already shining on the horizon: a Civilization principally based upon the ubiquity of light metals and their alloys in everything including national defense'.

6. On this subject, see Victoria de Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women, Italy, 1922–1945* (Berkeley, 1992), esp. 201–203.

comparison to which domestic coffee was but a slow and pallid imitation.

Enter Alfonso Bialetti, freshly returned from a decade-long stint of work in the French aluminium industry. In 1918 Bialetti founded a small metal and machine shop in Crusinallo, in his native Piedmont.[4] As corporate lore would have it, Bialetti begins with a small industrial oven, an anvil, and a milling machine, fabricating pieces to order for industrial clients by making use of a technique he acquired in France: that of gravity casting aluminium in reusable cast iron moulds. A decade passes during which he becomes intrigued with how local housewives boil their linens in tubs built around a central conduit that draws the boiling soapy water upwards and redistributes it across the linens through a radial opening.

Lightning strikes: why not adapt this simple physical principle to coffee making? Why not transform the unwieldy and complex restaurant espresso machine into a light, trouble-free, inexpensive domestic appliance? Why not democratize espresso coffee by introducing it into every Italian home? Bialetti's solution was elegant and simple. Design an entirely self-contained aluminium unit made up of three principal pieces that, on the model of the *napolitana*, could be heated on a mere stovetop, but capable of making precisely the same intensely flavourful coffee heretofore limited to restaurants and cafés. So much for *barista*-showmen and ritual trips to the *caffé*. So much also for the humble *napolitana* and the *milanese*. Domestic coffee making would be raised to the dignity of the local coffeehouse; domestic coffeemakers, which is to say housewives, would be raised to the dignity of the *barista*.

For several years Bialetti tinkered with his invention. There were technical glitches to confront: among them, the need to achieve the proper flow of coffee through the apparatus and to overcome the tendency for boilers to crack under pressure or blow up. There were also design questions to resolve. But once solutions were arrived at, in 1933, the tinkering ended. The moral of the story is that, for all its current ubiquity, the Moka Express remains a characteristic design of the mid-1930s marooned in the 1950s and 1960s. That is, its triumph as a mass-market appliance would have to be delayed, for reasons that I will shortly adumbrate, until the Italian post-war 'economic miracle'.

The context within which Bialetti's invention came about had rendered aluminium no ordinary metal. From the standpoint of global production and the international market for aluminium, particularly in the domains of transportation, household products, furniture, and architecture, the thirties represent something of a golden age. And Italy aspired to be among the leaders of this golden age, despite its belated entry into aluminium production and despite the still relatively small scale of its national aluminium industry at the end of the 1920s. The fascist government set out to improve the situation by favouring the Montecatini group's gradual takeover from various American, Swiss and German interests of the entire Italian aluminium industry, concentrated around production facilities in Mori and Marghera and bauxite mines in Istria, Campania, and Sicily. A de facto monopoly resulted by decade's end, with Italy rising to the modest rank of fourth-largest European producer behind France, Hungary and

Yugoslavia. The governmental campaign hinged on the principle of autarchy, which is to say on the pursuit of economic self-sufficiency by means of a heroic overcoming of Italy's deficiencies in the domains of raw materials and natural resources.

Italy was poor in iron ore, coal and petroleum. But it was far richer in bauxite and leucite. So, even before the League of Nations imposed trade sanctions in retribution for Mussolini's 1935 invasion of Ethiopia, leading to an intensification of the autarchy campaign, aluminium had emerged as the autarchic metal of choice. Two reviews were launched to promote its diffusion: *Metalli leggeri e loro applicazioni*, an industry review established in 1931; and a government counterpart, *Alluminio*, founded in the following year.[5] Both set out to codify what would become one of the defining propagandistic credos of the decade: aluminium is Italy's national metal, a populist metal, the 'real material of the unreal velocities' and accelerated progress achieved thanks to the fascist revolution.

Whether or not Alfonso Bialetti was susceptible to this campaign to establish the Latinity of aluminium, the earlier cited portrait of the Italian craftsman at ease with the complex technical principles of working with light metals fits him like a glove. Bialetti was a better craftsman, however, than a businessman, for the 1930s would prove a decade of limited success for his invention. The reasons had nothing to do with a decline in coffee drinking. The contrary was true, especially after 1935 when coffee came to figure ever more prominently in the mythology both of empire and of autarchy: of empire because Ethiopia, the nation Italy had invaded, was a major coffee producer of Moka-type coffee beans; of autarchy because Brazil refused to follow the League of Nations sanctions imposed by the world community and continued to furnish Italy with its coffee beans. Nor were fascism's regressive gender politics to blame, favoring as they did women's roles as housewives and mothers over public roles.[6] Rather, the problem was Bialetti's only partial understanding of the importance of marketing. Initially Moka Expresses were sold by the inventor himself, who set up stands at weekly public markets in the Piedmont region. Later, the coffeemakers were delivered directly from the factory to regional retailers. No effort to industrialize their production or to market them on a national (not to mention international) scale was undertaken. Bialetti's shop continued to turn out an array of other products, all on an equally small scale. The result was that a mere seventy thousand units were produced between 1934 and 1940. Then came the war. Imports ceased and Italy's national metal became Italy's military metal, unavailable for civilian purposes. Coffee too became scarce. Bialetti shut down his shop, oiled up his casting moulds, and safely packed them away in the basement of his home for the duration of the conflict.

There exists a secondary reason for the difficulties encountered by the Moka Express: the relatively high cost of Italian aluminium until the 1950s. The industry had grown under the umbrella of autarchy and expanded even more rapidly thanks to the war effort. But tariff barriers and Montecatini's virtual monopoly had eliminated pressures to contain costs or improve efficiency. As a result, in 1946 domestically produced aluminium averaged about 140 lire per

kilo while American aluminium (including shipping costs to Genoa) was available at 42 lire per kilo. The alarm was sounded by Elio Vittorini's militant *Il politecnico*, a new review dedicated to the cultural, political and economic reconstruction of postwar Italy. *Il politecnico* called for a true democratization of aluminium, in keeping with its antifascist program of institutional reforms. The anonymous author argued that 'aluminium this expensive will never give rise to widespread popular consumption, whether for domestic or craft uses, for tools, bicycles, etc'. Structural inefficiencies were to blame as well for the elevated costs. Montecatini was also in the electrical power business, and it was channelling a significant portion of the aluminium it produced into its own (overpriced) power lines; Montecatini's competitors, not wanting to aid the industrial giant, were instead importing tin ones from abroad, thereby contributing to a mushrooming trade deficit.

This was the new republican Italy to which Alfonso's son, Renato, returned in 1946, after several years in a German prisoner-of-war camp, to take over his father's business. Renato was intimately acquainted with metallurgy, having worked alongside Alfonso before he was conscripted into the army. But he brought an entirely new sensibility and understanding to manufacturing and to marketing. Production was resumed in the same modest facility in Crusinallo in the late 1940s but with the Bialetti product line narrowed down to a single object: the Moka Express, now fabricated in a full range of sizes (from two cups to ten) and in larger numbers (up to a thousand units per day). This exclusive focus on coffeemakers was buttressed by national advertising campaigns on billboards, in newspapers and magazines, on the radio, and, later, on television programs such as the wildly popular *Carosello*. The campaigns were initially financed by means of loans (daring for such a small concern) and strove to build a distinctive brand identity in the minds both of vendors and consumers, as well as to differentiate the Moka Express from the swarm of clones and competitors that were emerging as Italy's domestic market came back to life thanks to the postwar boom. Characteristic of the younger Bialetti's bold approach were the publicity blitzes undertaken during Italy's most important trade fair, the Fiera di Milano. Year after year, the company would purchase every available billboard in the entire city of Milan, literally saturating the city with images of its coffeemaker. Bialetti's booths became legendary for their scale and inventiveness. In 1956, for instance, the indoor installation was paired with an outdoor sculpture consisting of a giant Moka Express suspended in the air by a stream of coffee above a cup sitting atop a faceted platform bearing its name. The forging of a brand identity was completed with the creation in 1953, at Renato's instigation, of the Bialetti mascot: the *omino con i baffi*, the formally attired mustachioed man with his index finger upraised as if hailing a cab or ordering an espresso.

Times had changed. Memories of the fascist debacle were conveniently fading, and consumerism was on the rise as Italian homes were increasing in comfort and size thanks to the economic boom of the 1950s. And a new American-influenced social imaginary envisaged them as activity and entertainment centres for a tightly knit nuclear family. Through Bialetti's

advertising campaigns, the Moka Express placed itself at the centre of these cross currents. It became the emblem of an increasingly egalitarian, do-it-yourself attitude. 'Dove è papa'? ('Where is Daddy?') asks one ad, the answer being, 'He's in the kitchen with the Moka Express', whose simplicity permits a reversal of conventional gender roles.

I conclude with the final step in the transformation of the Bialetti firm from craft workshop into a modern medium-scale industry: namely, with the construction between 1952 and 1956 of a state-of-the-art factory in Omegna. By now profits were rising, the price of aluminium was falling (due to a global aluminium glut), and the success of Bialetti's advertising blitzes was such that the old facility would suffice no more. Renato Bialetti set about the task like a true visionary, much like Adriano Olivetti in the prewar period, insisting upon the rationalization of every feature of the building and upon the streamlining of the Bialetti production line. A massive freight elevator was devised so that arriving trucks could dump their holds of aluminium ingots not on the ground floor, as in a conventional factory, but directly into cauldrons located up on the fifth floor. The entire production process consisted of a smooth lateral and downward motion floor by floor, ending with the inspection and packaging of every item right on the threshold of the ground-floor loading dock from which trucks could depart for their destinations. Workers were assigned individual lockers and showers, as well as provided with houses and with various other progressive amenities. Renato expanded the Bialetti product line to include other household appliances (toasters, vacuum cleaners, meat grinders), but the backbone of the company remained the production of a growing family of Moka Express machines, now being turned out at the rhythm of eighteen thousand per day or four million per year. Yet, for all this emphasis upon modernization, there remained a paradoxical, characteristically Italian touch that renders the romance between caffeine and aluminium also an enduring marriage between the new and the old.

At the sparkling new production facility in Omegna, the very heart of Alfonso Bialetti's remarkable little invention, the boiler, continued to be produced precisely as it was in 1933: that is, cast and then individually finished, inspected, and sorted not by a production line worker but instead by a skilled craftsman. Twenty years had passed and nothing had changed. Another forty-seven have transpired since then and, once again, nothing has changed. When I visited the current factory in the summer of 2000, I was amazed and requested an explanation. Bialetti's head engineer reassured me: automated pressure casting and finishing had been tried many times and the result was too many flaws; gravity casting and an intimate working knowledge of aluminium were required to ensure a resistant and reliable product. I was in no position to argue, given my limited understanding of materials science. But the contrast kept me company all the way back to Milan. On the one side, artisans; on the other, computer-actuated robots. The two working together on a hybrid artefact: an icon of the machine age that is a throwback to the era of manual production. In short, a portrait in aluminium of the original *omino con i baffi*.
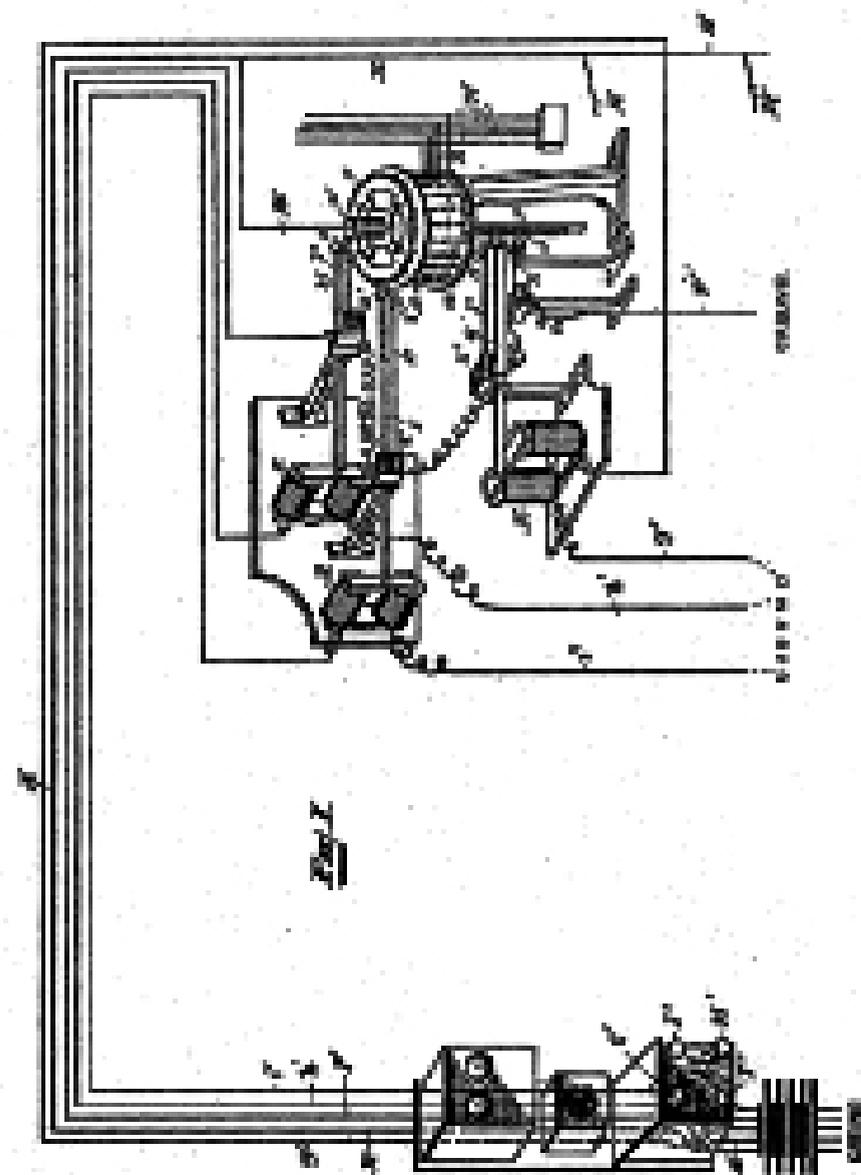
Image selected by Graham Harwood,
Richard Wright & Matsuko Yokokoji

Images selected by Kateřina Šedá from the
sketchbook of Jana Šedá, the artist's grandmother
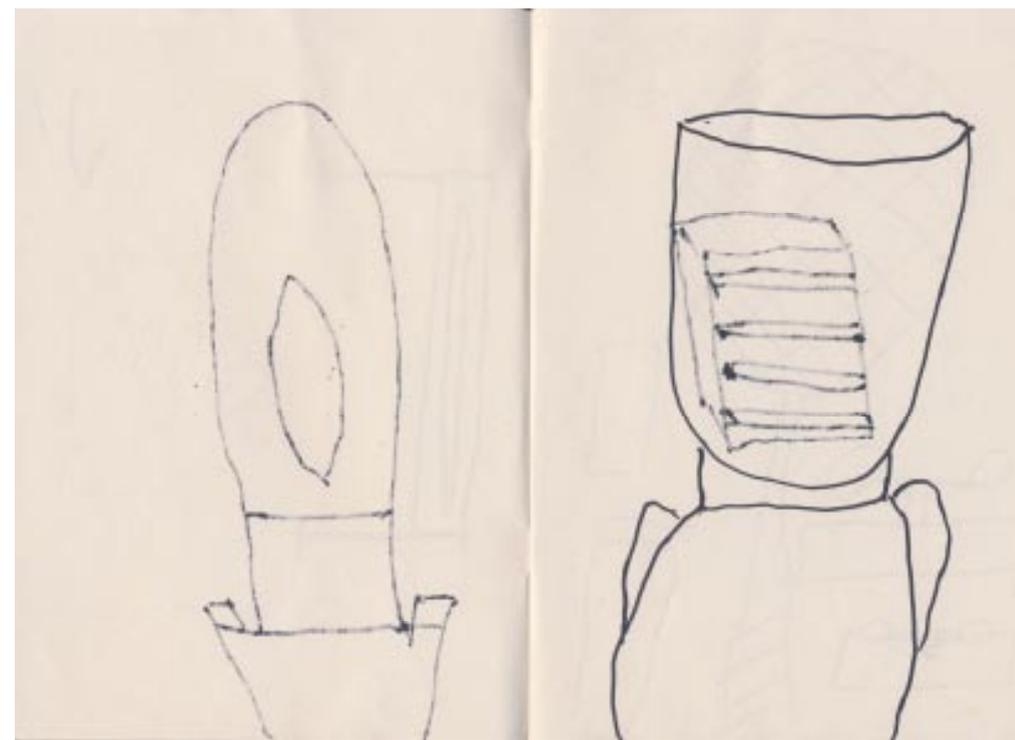
STORIES OF GANGA BUILDING
RUPALI GUPTE & PRASAD SHETTY

These are stories of Ganga Building, a labour housing block in Mumbai.

1. THE LOGIC OF YIELD

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the landlord farmers of Mumbai had realized it was more profitable to sell their fields to builders of mills and labour housing than to continue growing rice.

They had inherited these fields from their warrior ancestors who in turn had received them as rewards for loyalty from local kings. At that time, the land was mostly forest, inhabited by tribes, fishermen and small rice-growing farmers. The warriors compelled the tribes to cut down the forest and convert it into paddy fields. Over time, the descendents of these warriors became landlord-farmers and, with the growth in their numbers, their land was subdivided, until it was a patchwork of small pockets. These properties were of irregular sizes and shapes, but this did not matter to an agrarian community: it was the yield that was important. Equal claimants from a family received land of different sizes but with the same yield.

All this changed around the middle of nineteenth century, when large-scale export of cotton cloth from India began. There was a high demand for land to set up cotton mills and soon an industrial city was born. Farmers started selling their irregularly shaped properties to developers of mills and labour housing (*chawls*). These mills and chawls adjusted themselves over irregular shapes of land whose boundaries had been drawn by the agrarian community following the logic of the yield. The industrial city sat comfortably over agrarian property. The central part of this city with high concentration of mills and chawls was called *Girangaon*—the 'mill lands'.

2. FROM SLEEPING PLACE TO PROPERTY

Ganga Building was a chawl built in 1923 in front of a mill, from which it was separated by a road. In the 1920s, three thousand workers worked in this mill in three shifts. Like other chawls, Ganga Building consisted of small (3m x 3m) tenements laid out along a corridor with common toilets. The building was three storeys high with a courtyard in the centre. The side facing the road had twenty shops on the ground floor. The remaining seventy-five tenements housed mill workers. The labourers came from far afield—there were fishermen from the coastal lands, tribes from the hills, farmers from the plateaus, and many others. Typically, a room in the chawl would be rented to one person—the main tenant, who would then share the space and the rent with ten to twenty other men, mostly from the same place of origin. Since they worked different shifts, they all had places to sleep, except on holidays, when they would spill out into the corridors.

Until India's independence in 1947, such men did not have a strong sense of property. But the partition of India and Pakistan resulted in large numbers of new migrants seeking housing in Bombay, and rents began to escalate. The Rent Control Act was passed by the government not only to control rents, but also to protect tenants from eviction. When they found that they possessed a house from which they could not be evicted, the main tenants, who rented directly from the owner, started pushing out the men who shared their tenements, and brought their own families to live with them.

The original Jain owner of Ganga Building was tired of the meagre rents he was receiving and sold the entire building to Jalal Memon—a Muslim sand trader. Memon died in the late 1950s and his son Yakub took over the chawl's affairs.

3. CLAIMS AND CONTESTS

On the ground floor of Ganga Building was a restaurant run by a South Indian Brahmin named Shenoy. His sons preferred to do prestigious government jobs than run the restaurant, and when he died his widow allowed the restaurant manager, a migrant from South India named Shetty, to operate it on rent. Shetty went into partnership with another South Indian named D'Souza and ran the restaurant until 1980.

Eventually, D'Souza turned against Shetty over money issues, poisoned him, and attempted to take over the restaurant from Shenoy's widow. But Shetty's widow, Vasanti, resisted D'Souza's machinations, asked her brother to help her raise some money, and bought the restaurant herself. But her brother now felt he should have a share in the property, since he had raised the money. He bribed the owner of the building to insert his wife's name into the tenancy document, as Vasanti's equal partner. Vasanti was illiterate and at first did not realize what had happened—but when she found out she was so upset she left Bombay for her family home in Mangalore. There she told everyone what her brother had done. Her relatives took a dim view of her brother's behaviour, and he was forced to give his share of the restaurant back to Vasanti—but he also asked her to return the money he had given for the restaurant's purchase. Vasanti went to meet Baburao Sathe, a friend of her husband's, who owned a bank. Sathe proposed that he take over the restaurant and use it as bank premises for a period of twenty years. In return he would pay a monthly rent to Vasanti and make complete repayment to her brother.

4. PROPERTY OUT OF NOTHING

A small shop had been cut out of one of the restaurant's external walls, which became a security concern for the bank. The shop was run by a soap seller, Abdul Gani, a friend of Shetty's who had lost his original shop in Dadar during the riots of 1974. Shetty had allowed him to build a small (1m x 2m) booth, half inside the restaurant and half outside. But by the 1980s Gani's financial condition had stabilized and he had bought a property nearby. Vasanti asked Gani to move his shop to the new property, as the bank was insisting on its removal. But Gani refused. So the bank constructed a strong wall around the shop and opened for business. Vasanti sued Gani, claiming that he had encroached on her premises. After sixteen years, the court passed a judgement recognizing the rights of Gani. He could not be legally evicted, but had to pay rent to Vasanti. A new property had been created out of nothing.

Vasanti realized that if one occupied a space for more than three years, nobody could evict the occupier. She decided to encroach on the rear side of her own property. She built a temporary structure with plywood about two metres wide and anchored it to her property such that it lay partly within her space. She then rented that space to the neighbouring shop owner who wanted some additional space. The agreement she entered into was complicated: the new occupant would pay her rent for three years, after which she would complain about the encroachment to the municipal authorities.

Three years later, she complained to the authorities, who came to demolish the encroachment. After the demolition was recorded, Vasanti asked her tenant to rebuild the encroachment and resume paying her rent. This happened every three years. In this manner Vasanti managed to extract extra rent from her property whilst ensuring that the tenant never stayed enough time to claim ownership over the encroachment.

5. INTENSITIES
From the mid-1980s, the Bombay mills started to close. There were several reasons: militant labour unions demanding higher wages and ultimately ending up in strike; the high price of real estate in the city pressuring landowners to redevelop the mill lands as commercial property; government policies discouraging industry; obsolete technology that made Bombay production uncompetitive; and the overall change in the city economy, where formal industry was being systematically dismantled. With the shutting of the mills, the workers staying in the chawls lost their jobs. Now they had houses, but no work. Some mill workers took up jobs as watchmen, liftmen, hawkers, estate agents, etc—but most of them remained unemployed. The burden of supporting the family fell mainly upon the women, who ran business activities from inside the chawls—private tuition sessions, catering services, informal banking networks, etc.

After the death in 1992 of the owner of Ganga Building, Yakub Memon, his second son, Yusuf, took it over. He inherited an enormously complex physical and legal entity. Because of the intensity of commercial activities now going on there, tenants had made substantial modifications to the building so that it better accommodated their business. Every inch of the chawl had a claimant. It had many kinds of occupants: tenants of shops living in residences behind, shop workers staying in common corridors, tenants with families, subtenants without families, people staying under staircases, on lofts, over the toilets, on the roof, and everywhere else. Yusuf was not experienced in handling rented property and was unable to recover rents for months. The condition of the building deteriorated and though Yusuf tried selling the property he could not find a good buyer.

6. POLITICS OF REDEVELOPMENT
By the beginning of the 1990s there was consensus that the mills had no future, and the government drafted a regulation allowing redevelopment of the mill lands. According to the regulation, the land under the mills was to be divided into three parts—one for commercial development, one for housing and one for amenities. This ensured that the gains from the redevelopment were shared by the owners (who were allowed to develop real estate), labourers (who were to get all their dues and a house in a high-priced locality), and the city (which was to get additional amenities).

A few mill owners redeveloped the mills, but most did not. Instead, they conspired with the government to change the regulation so that they would get almost the entire property to redevelop as real estate. This change was done surreptitiously—it was announced in one of the least-read newspapers and was referred to as a minor modification. Only one single word was added into the whole regulation, which now stated '*Surplus* land under the mills will be divided into three parts…' And there was very little surplus land under the mills: the owners could keep now keep nearly everything.

The mills started changing rapidly—tall chimneys and north-light sheds were replaced by malls, call centres, art galleries, media studios and commercial offices. Prices started rising. The fervour of development put immense pressure on the chawls. By the beginning of 2000, developers had started working on several of them. The government had passed a regulation decreeing that if the tenants of an old chawl were in favour of redevelopment, they could build additional floor space for sale in the open market in order to pay for the cost of redevelopment. The owner would also get a share of these profits. But tenants were generally unable to mobilize resources for such projects, and depended instead on a developer.

Yusuf decided to redevelop Ganga Building, and began to look for a developer. But every developer who came to Ganga Building declined the project because of the complexity of its tenancies. No one knew exactly how many people needed to be rehabilitated. They all had different degrees of claims on the building. Moreover, they all kept increasing their demands for space and money.

7. TENURE TACTICS
At this point, when Yusuf was frustrated with his tenants for their noncooperation, he was contacted by Hayat Ansari.

Hayat Ansari had been a part of the underworld during the 80s and specialised in extortion. During the early 90s, after the underworld was restructured, Ansari entered politics, stood unsuccessfully for election and then went into the construction industry in partnership with his uncle Ibrahim, a contractor. Ansari came to excel at dealing with problematic tenancies, for which he had a structured strategy. He began by sending legal notices to all tenants to pay up their dues. Generally, these dues had accrued over long periods and amounted to significant

THE JOURNEY BEGINS WHERE I ARRIVED. THE LENGTH OF ROAD I'VE COVERED TURNS INTO THE OVERCROWDED ROOM I'M ABOUT TO ENTER. IT IS A HOME. OR IS IT THE WHITE CUBE? HOW OFTEN HAVE I RESOLVED TO CARRY ON WALKING JUST TO ARRIVE HERE? DOES THE ELEPHANT REALLY FIT THROUGH THE EYE OF A NEEDLE? IN MOVEMENT I BREAK AWAY FROM REFLECTION AND BECOME A PERMEABLE BODY…

Text by Erik Schmelz selected by Helen Jilavu

sums. The tenants hoped that they would be cleared once the redevelopment started. But Ansari behaved like a strict landlord and, after few notices, would send his extortion men. People who had the money got scared and paid up immediately; but the majority were forced to enter into negotiations. In these discussions, tenants ultimately had few options: either agree to redevelopment or vacate the premises.

With subtenants and illegal occupants, Ansari would be ruthless. He would use his full muscle to evacuate them.

Ansari offered Yusuf money and asked him to give him power of attorney for the building, proposing to deal with the tenants himself. Yusuf gladly accepted, took his money and disappeared. Ansari took over Ganga Building in 2005 and managed to crush a lot of the tenancy complications. Unhappy with Ansari's tactics, some of the tenants turned for help to an NGO led by a local politician who claimed to provide support to tenants wishing to redevelop their property. Along with the tenants, the NGO submitted a redevelopment proposal to the municipal authorities and filed a petition against Ansari for harassment. With the help of the NGO, the tenants approached several developers to get the best possible deal. Recently, Hayat Ansari has begun to bribe some of the inhabitants of Ganga Building to come over to his side.

The story of Ganga Building is in many ways the story of Mumbai and the Mill Lands. But Ganga is only one of the nineteen thousand chawls in Mumbai. Every chawl has its own multitudinous stories of property—stories that refuse to allow the narrative of the mill lands to be shrunk into one comprehensive conceptualization, as official accounts seek to do.

Conservation laboratory in the
Museum of the City of Skopje, 2008.
Image by Yane Calovski.

FILE: ALUMINIUM.PL
GRAHAM HARWOOD

```perl
1 #!/usr/bin/perl -w
2 #==============================================================================
3 #
4 #          FILE:  aluminium.pl
5 #
6 #   DESCRIPTION:  If all objects make the world and take part in it and at the same time,
7 #                 synthesize, block, or make possible other worlds.
8 #                 How true is it for the CODE that creates a book.
9 #
10 #       OPTIONS:  collect every word before aluminium and every word after it -
11 #                 then work out the frequency of use
12 # REQUIREMENTS:  futurism/manifesta/issuecrawler.org to generate the bulk of domains to be visited
13 #                 look for the relationship of the websites to each other
14 #         NOTES:  Search_id,, URL, Pages_returned -> network _ residue_of_Aluminium.
15 #        AUTHOR:  Harwood (trying), <harwood@gold.ac.uk>
16 #       VERSION:  0.1
17 #       CREATED:  05/16/2008 03:27:00 PM BST
18 #==============================================================================
19
20 use lib '/1909/futurist/Marinetti/';
21 use lib 'Manifesta08/RAQS/Bolzano/'
22
23 # !!!don't worry about this library now!!!
24 # use Mine::Blast::Extract::Exhaust::Aluminium.
25 #
26 use GetWebPage::Page;
27 use strict;
28 use Data::Dumper;
29 use Machine::Book;
30
31 # Recursively search through 2,000 WWW links returned from the issuecrawler.net
32 # Extract 8,000 sentences containing the word ALUMINIUM.
33 # Eg 'aluminium salts have often been used to reinforce babies vaccines,
34 # as they are not considered to be harmful to humans.' extracted from ?????.com
35
36 my @lines_of_text;     # a line of text
37 my %wordlist; # key: prefix, value: array of suffixes
38
39 my $search_str = "ALUMINIUM";
40
41 # get the DATA returned from the issue crawler and put it into an array -
42 # *see ALUMINIUM_DATA @ the end of the file
43
44 my @aluminium_domain_data = get_issuecrawler_data("issuecrawler.txt");
45
46 &search_www_pages(@aluminium_domain_data);
47
48 sub search_WWW_pages {
49     # extract the text from the issuecrawler data string
50     foreach my $domain_name ( @aluminium_domain_data) {
51         # edit out the google links
52         my @data_str = split(/,/,$domain_name);
53         my $WWW_page_href = $data_str[2];
54         if($WWW_page_href =~ /http:\/\// ){
55             #nothing
56
57         }else{
58             $WWW_page_href = "http://$WWW_page_href";
59         }
60         print  "\n GOING TO GET: Aluminium domain $WWW_page_href";
61         my $WWW_page_get = GetWebPage::Page->new;
62
63         $WWW_page_get->init($WWW_page_href,$k,'SENTENCE' );
64         my @texts = $WWW_page_get->get_texts;
```

```perl
64         foreach my $txt (@texts)
65         {
66             # extract any sentence containing ‚ALUMINIUM'
67             add2list(lc $txt,'ALUMINIUM');
68         }
69         sleep 1;
70     }
71 }
72
73 # extract three words before aluminium and three words after aluminium.
74 # Eg "Quite a few planes get hit, but because they're __made__ of aluminium, it __goes__ in one end and out the other."
75
76
77 # words associated with ALUMINIUM && there word frequency from edited.txt
78 # @keywords = qw ( chemical 32 reduction 34 european 36 century 36 designers 36 metallic 37 material 38 barrier 38 world 42 car
     42 ingot 43 steel 44 designed 45 oxide 47 million 50 life 51 produced 52 beverage 56 packaging 57 during 58 products 62 process
     65 cans 71 modern 73 recycling 84 production 92 primary
     94 tonnes 90 industry 100 );
79
80
81 sub add2list {
82     my ($txt,$keyword) = @_;
83     my @words = split(/ /,$txt);
84     # this code will extract any sentence that contains the keyword ALUMINIUM
85     while ( @words > $pref_len ) {
86         my $pref = join(' ', @words[0..($pref_len-1)]);
87         if( @words[2] =~ m/$keyword/i){
88             push @{ $wordlist{$pref}}, $words[0],$words[2];
89             print "\n $words[0] $words[1] '$words[2]' $words[3] $words[4]";
90         }
91         shift @words; # next word on this line
92     }
93 }
94
95 sub get_issuecrawler_data {
96     my $data_file= shift;
97     open(ALUMINIUM_DATA, $data_file) || die("Could not open file!");
98     my @raw_data=<ALUMINIUM_DATA>;
99     close(ALUMINIUM_DATA);
100
101 return @raw_data;
102 }
103
104 __ALUMINIUM_DATA__
105 [1843331,,abal.org.br,,ORG,14,0,t], [1843332,,alcan.com,,COM,272,0,t], [1843333,,alcoa.com,,COM,159,0,t], [1843334,,aleris.
    com,,COM,13,0,t], [1843335,,alfed.org.uk,,ORG,45,0,t], [1843336,,alouette.qc.ca,,CA,4,0,t], [1843338,,alu-info.dk,,DK,29,0,t],
    [1843339,,alu-verlag.com,,COM,1,0,t], [1843340,,alu.ch,,CH,13,0,t], [1843342,,aluar.com.ar,,COM,29,0,t], [1843343,,alucluster.
    com,,COM,27,0,t], [1843344,,alucobond.com,,COM,2,0,t], [1843345,,alufenster.at,,AT,1,0,t], [1843346,,alufoil-sustainability.
    org,,ORG,1,0,t], [1843347,,alufoil.com,,COM,1,0,t], [1843348,,alufoil.org,,ORG,42,0,t], [1843350,,aluinfo.de,,DE,64,0,t],
    [1843351,,alumatter.info,,,36,0,t], [1843352,,alumbuild.ru,,RU,4,0,t]...
106 __ALUMINIUM_DATA__
107
108
109 }
110
111
112 1; # return true
~
~
~
~
```

INDUSTRIAL RUINS
TIM EDENSOR

It seems that in recent years, the desire to paper over the city—to fill in the blanks, to erase the jagged remains of shells that were once filled buildings—is more manic. In this smoothed-over landscape, fissures within the urban fabric are more difficult to identify. And the notion that the city must put forward a seamless, smoothed-over appearance to signify prosperity is not only articulated by planners, bureaucrats and entrepreneurs but embedded in a wider consciousness where it shapes articulations of the public good.

Despite this frenetic impulse to smooth and encode, the longing for less regulated spaces continues. Industrial ruins are, in official parlance, 'scars on the landscape' or 'wastelands' whose use-value has disappeared—but ruins are the site of numerous activities, and very quickly become enmeshed within new social contexts. Ruins may become spaces for leisure, adventure, cultivation, acquisition, shelter and creativity. And as spaces that have been identified as waste, as well as 'dangerous' and 'unsightly', ruins also provide spaces where forms of alternative public life may occur, activities characterized by an active and improvisational creativity, a casting-off of self-consciousness conditioned by the prying gaze of CCTV cameras and fellow citizens, and by the pursuit of illicit and frowned-upon practices. These uses contrast with the preferred forms of urban activity in overdesigned and themed space: the consumption of commodities and staged events, a toned-down, self-contained ambling, and a distracted gazing upon urban spectacle.

Ruins are excess matter, containing superfluous energy and meaning, which, as disorderly intrusions, always come back to haunt the planners' vision of what the city should be. They confound the normative spacings of things, practices and people and thus address the power embodied in ordering space.

Current hyperbole insists that the social world is inevitably speeding up, a claim which neglects slower processes, the divergent rhythms which compose the city, some of which are organized to contest the imperative for speed. All activities, people and places are not necessarily caught up by an immersion in flows of velocity. The ruin is not particularly penetrated by the speeded-up mobilities and flows which typify this frantic scenario. Instead, its durability and existence is largely shaped by the rate at which it decays, and it is no longer the site of a production process dominated by future-oriented projects and targets, although these temporal constrictions may be evident enough in the remnants of clocking-in stations, dockets, scheduled programmes of work and delivery, and timetables. The ruin is a shadow realm of slowness in which things are revealed at a less frantic pace. Within this relative stillness, bypassed by the urban tumult, the intrusions from the past which penetrate the everyday life of the city are able to make themselves felt more keenly.

THE INSTITUTE FOR INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES
REINHARD KROPF & SIV HELENE STANGELAND

The Institute for Innovative Technologies covers the whole parcel like a futuristic ship. The whole complex appears to be a kind of monolith lying on the ground in memory of Kubrick, having been rammed between the existing buildings with vehemence.

It is an ideal bridge, an element of transition, through the experienced human (the laboratories), between the primitive (metaphorically represented by the workshops and associated with a craft now being a thing of the past) and the modern human (the floating point projected upwards, towards the unknown, towards higher knowledge).

Such concepts have been executed in a three-dimensional structure; a clear, linear building that is essential and pure, a black block reaching towards the sky on one side by an ambitious gesture. The structure seems to implode, since it only opens up to the light by the fully glazed courtyards.

In the second area, a kind of huge magnet of innovation is rising, a complex of office space, which is able to draw intellectual pioneers of analysis, inventiveness and experiment into the interior of its 'field'. The building is floating on a place of water, an element that seems to reject the upper structure due to its low "magnetic permeability".
From the winning project description by architecture firm Chapman Taylor LLP of the Institute for Innovative Technologies, to be built beside the Alumix factory in Bolzano.

There is a long history of abandoned factories being redeveloped by and for artists. Such projects are usually characterized by self-organized growth and an ongoing negotiation between informal and bureaucratic influences. The integration of resources that emerges by chance through such processes opens up new spatial dramaturgies, and so works against the universal cloning of spaces and the imprisonment of architecture in a global *cultural metastasis*.

The Institute of Innovative Technologies has chosen another route. In the development of this project, there was no exchange with local, site-specific intelligence. This is now a well-known tactic of large investments in urban renewal: reducing the complexity of local information, which could threaten the predictability of the investment and the plainness of the political message. The competition is advertised and judged with a specific agenda, and the winning project aims towards total spatial, programmatic and economic control. In the case of the Institute for Innovative Technologies, the structure literally swallows most of the site, including the existing Alumix factory. In spite of its entirely generic character the description of the architecture is semiotically armed with an arsenal of religious and artistic symbols and analogies. This form of 'postmodernism lite' seems to combine a pragmatic and interchangeable shell with the need to appear unique and special.

Perhaps it is still possible to imagine a modified or different version of the Institute. The future potential of the site lies in exploring symbioses between massive urban renewal and letting spaces unfold in their own way. This would need a relational sensibility for industrial residue, a free space for experimentation, mutations and the ongoing production of strangeness.

THE NINE GARDENS IN THE BANK OF NORWAY
INGRID BOOK & CARINA HEDÉN

THE LAST MESSAGE FROM TOBLINO
ASHOK SUKUMARAN

The upper building of the Cardano hydroelectric power station conceals its sources: there is no visible water here. The giant pipes coming down the mountainside appear out of nowhere: no lakes or rain clouds surround them, no dams are in sight. Much like clock towers in medieval Europe, the empty building suggests a hidden connection to some greater force or idea.

The lower buildings at Cardano conceal absence of a different order. Here we discover that *no one* works at this power plant! Its day-to-day workings are managed over optic fibre from a control room at Lake Toblino, 100 km away.

This proposal for an artwork imagines the upper building as a clock tower, displaying the last message from Toblino, with its time-stamp. The difference between the time displayed and the present time is the duration for which the station has been 'autonomous'—i.e. without instruction from a human being.

For people passing on the highway, or living nearby, this is a proposal to think about the syntax of this communication, and the strange remoteness of what is 'local'.

'HOT DESKING' REFERS TO THE TEMPORARY PHYSICAL OCCUPATION OF A WORK-STATION OR SURFACE BY A PARTICULAR EMPLOYEE. THE TERM 'HOT DESKING' IS THOUGHT TO BE DERIVED FROM THE NAVAL PRACTICE, CALLED HOT RACKING, WHERE SAILORS ON DIFFERENT SHIFTS SHARE BUNKS. ORIGINATING AS A TREND IN THE LATE 1980S–EARLY 1990S, HOT DESKING INVOLVES ONE DESK SHARED BETWEEN SEVERAL PEOPLE WHO USE THE DESK AT DIFFERENT TIMES. A PRIMARY MOTIVATION FOR HOT DESKING IS COST REDUCTION THROUGH SPACE SAVINGS—UP TO 30% IN SOME CASES.

Text from Wikipedia selected by CuratorLab

AUGURIES
AND REVERIES

Image by Francesco Gennari

PIG BONE ASH IS ADDED TO FINE BONE CHINA IN ORDER TO GIVE IT A HIGH DEGREE OF STRENGTH AND TRANSLUCENCY

A READING LIST
PROFESSOR BAD TRIP

Favourite readings of the late Gianluca Lerici, also known as Professor Bad Trip.
Jena Filaccio, his life companion, selected the books which, from the 1970s onwards,
helped the Professor to understand and draw the the world around him.

Gotz Ariani, *Hannah Hoch, Collages, 1889–1978*
Enrico Baj, *Patafisica*
J.G. Ballard, *The Burning World*
Georges Bataille, *The Dead Man*
Peter Belsito, *Notes from the Pop Underground*
Belisto, Davis, Kester, *Street Art: The Punk Poster in San Francisco*
André Breton, *Anthology of Black Humour*
William Burroughs, *The Naked Lunch*
Chumy Chumez, *Chumy Chumez. Una biografia*
Crass Collective, *Anok 4U*
Mario De Micheli, *Manifesti rivoluzionari*
Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* and 'The Situationists and the New Forms
of Action Against Politics and Art'
Catalogue to the show *Jose Guadalupe Posada* which took place in the Mexican Embassy
and the Italian–Latin American Institute in Rome, 9–31 May 1980, edited by F. Di Castro
Philip K. Dick, *A Scanner Darkly*
Jean Dubuffet, 'In Honour of Savage Values' and other writings.
Albert Hofmann, *Insight Outlook*
The plays of Alfred Jarry
The poems of Paul Klee
Richard Langton Gregory, *The Intelligent Eye*
Paul D. Grushkin, *The Art of Rock*
Giuseppe Lippi, *Virgil Finlay*, *Bellezza, terrore e fantascienza*
The stories of H.P. Lovecraft
Frans Masereel, *The City: A Vision in Woodcuts*
Herbert Read, *Art and Alienation*
Raf Valvola Scelsi, *Cyberpunk Antologia di testi politici*
Eckhard Siepman, *John Heartfield*
Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*
Dick Voll, *The Art of Basil Wolverton*
Alan W. Watts, *The Way of Zen*
Edgar Wind, *Art and Anarchy*

SEASTORIES: SEASTATE 2—AS EVIL DISAPPEARS
CHARLES LIM LI YONG

Quarry in Karimun, Indonesia

In 2002, an island called Pulau Sejahat disappeared from the nautical charts of Singapore.
In response to the demand for additional land, Singapore's coast was being extended into the
sea, engulfing small islands.
    Billions of cubic metres of sand and granite were dredged from the bottom of the ocean
and dug out of Indonesian quarries to make this new land for Singapore.
    In Malay, 'Sejahat' means 'evil'.

Hyundai dredging ship
designed to suck sand from
the seabed

Singapore imported 6-8
million tonnes of sand from
Indonesia each year

Reclamation

Trucks dumping soil onto site
to build up land from barges

Machine to measure the softness
of the new ground

An island surrounded by land,
as evil disappears

THE ARTIST AS IDIOT
IRINA ARISTARKHOVA

Question: 'Why do you want to become an artist?'
Answer 1: 'To make pretty things for the rich folk.'
Answer 2: 'Through making art I learn about life, and I want
to share these experiences with others. Then see Answer 1.'
Conversation in an Art School, April 2008

The simplest form of the circulation of commodities is C-M-C, the transformation of commodities
into money, and the change of the money back again into commodities; or selling in order to
buy. But alongside of this form we find another specifically different form: M-C-M, the transfor-
mation of money into commodities, and the change of commodities back again into money;
or buying in order to sell. Money that circulates in the latter manner is thereby transformed into,
becomes capital, and is already potentially capital.
Karl Marx, *Capital*, from the section 'The General Formula for Capital'

WHERE DOES A RESIDUE RESIDE?
An idiot is someone who operates outside of the capitalist mode of production. Not out of
refusal, but simply because she is an idiot. An idiot does not know *real value* of things, people
or situations. This idiotic ignorance of the difference between the valuable part and the
useless residue does not strive to become a part of a grand movement – for example to subvert
Capital and its empires. It just happens, accidentally.

The thoughtless nature of idiotic action is irritating, especially its stubborn lack of reasoning.
You cannot blame idiots for mixing rich folks with ordinary mortals: they do not know better.
This is what Lisaveta Prokofievna learned when she called a house where hospitality was
extended in equal measure to the 'leftovers of society' (otbrosy obschestva) and 'decent peo-
ple' (poryadochnye lyudi) a 'mad house,' and hospitality 'complete idiocy,' in Dostoevsky's
novel *The Idiot*.

Contemporary art, together with a renewed political, intellectual and scientific interest in
waste management, the recycling of leftovers, and trash re-purposing of all kinds, makes residue
valuable once again. By trying to extract more value from residue, whether aesthetically or
not, one returns to *The General Formula for Capital*. Unless one is an idiot. Extending hospitality
to residual things and creatures, though an idiotic thing to do, is to understand that its origins
are the same as those of 'residence'. Residue needs a residence: it is by definition residing,
resting. It is left somewhere, thrown away – to find residence in another, more appropriate
place. Or at least, someone who would take it in, since it is a thing out of place, without value.

Those who are left by others, often find sentimental value in residue. It reminds them of
the loved ones who are no longer with them or of the good old days. Residue is a memory build-
er, and serves as more than just a substitute for the real thing - a fetish. Residue can be
immaterial, like those memories themselves, preserved through the habit and pleasure of

recollection. We are embarrassed at times to confess that we hang onto such residue. It
designates the value of what it refers to, and therefore makes us vulnerable to the potential
blackmail of desires.

In modern societies there are groups of people who were encouraged to live off residue
long before the current bourgeois environmentalism ever became a new Hollywood project: the
poor (especially urban homeless), mothers, wives, and children. They know the true value of
leftovers and thrown away things, and often find themselves competing with birds, animals
and decay.

In the world of contemporary art, residue is called 'found objects'. From the world of ready-
mades, with their emphasis on *not having made it*, or even *not having bought it*, we move
towards *having found it accidentally*. Artists have become scavengers of humanity. Every kind
of residue is looked upon as a potential element of an art installation: objects found here
and there, or non-stop digital images of whatever comes along (essentially, other people's lives).
Artists are becoming repositories of residue and they are therefore making themselves more
vulnerable. They keep our leftovers, they make art from them. *Artists love us like mothers*!
Things have not been transformed into residue yet, you are still drinking this can of Pepsi, but
look – there is an artist, waiting for you to finish, and make it a part of her sculpture. Here
it is, take it.

Providing residence to leftovers is not the same process as collecting. Gleaning, scavenging,
repurposing are not the same as being a collector. What turns up from this process is funda-
mentally accidental, just like in the 'lost and found' office. Collecting, on the other hand,
though it contains the pleasure of wandering among things, is essentially accidental-less, inten-
tional in its drive. Providing refuge for residue does not necessarily transform it into value.
Things will make sense (probably) later, but even if not, they have value in how they are. Reject-
ed - this is what artists want, competing with those who are paid to remove rubbish.

EMILY SILVER AND MITHU SEN: OPENINGS
Emily Silver and Mithu Sen have both worked at various points with 'residue'. While Silver has
been interested in found objects ranging from road kill to her signature material, cardboard
packaging, Mithu Sen has explored the concept of the 'accidental' in relation to precious per-
sonal things. They are very different artists, of course, but something has brought them
together here. Their strategy could be summed up as an aesthetic of idiocy. Emily Silver and
Mithu Sen represent a new generation of artists (and non-artists), whose work represents
an alternative, but non-engaged, impulse within the art market (neither properly buying into
it nor fighting it heroically). Idiocy - risky and authentic Dostoevsky-style idiocy - is a new strat-
egy in contemporary art and should not be mistaken for irony or satire. This latter, ironic,
resistance is framed mostly by what has been called *prank art*. alike the famous reality show
Punk'd (MTV 2003-2007), many artists find irony (either through mimicry or satire) to be the

only remaining critical strategy today, especially with regard to capitalist art. The 'idiotic' aesthetic, I argue, is another alternative which cannot be easily replicated (unlike irony). Idiocy is different from irony as it does not operate within a complex rhetoric of tropes and styles, and it can be dead serious (un-ironically). Moreover, irony as one of the tropes is seen as reaching beyond realism and therefore claiming a higher intelligence: 'I play a prank on you because I am smarter than you, an idiot'. While an idiot does not claim any intelligence at all, be it realistic or figurative, she can easily be taken in by ironic art. Idiots do not judge but neither do they neutrally observe and record 'the world's evils as they are'. They are too much into themselves, by definition isolated, private, dis-integrated from contemporary society and its phallologocentric intelligence.

While artworks might not themselves reveal much about the level or quality of the artist's aesthetic of idiocy, their openings surely do. Mithu Sen (*It's Good to Be Queen*, Bose Pacia, New York, 2006) left her exhibition before the opening to wander wandered alone in the rain, and then sent her audience a letter apologizing for her absence:

'dear, i am sorry for not being sorry about my physical absence in my opening night… i am sad but not sorry for my act… it was a conscious decision. i know it was announced in the invitation card of doing an artist's discussion during that evening with my viewer… AND i was away. (i did not escape or run away)… i just took my physical presence off from that very gallery site on that evening… i will try to meet u before i leave. i promise. i again hope that u did not miss me that night coz i was really with you… thank u for bearing with me. i love you. yours and only yours, mithu.'

Without heroism and redemption, there remains a framing of the polis with its fortified walls and laws. Lonely, shy, kind and generous, an idiot insists on her way of doing things, while fully accepting public opinion and the law, refusing nothing, challenging nothing. In her attempt to host residue (Sen presented a number of found objects and photographs among her own drawings and personal paraphernalia) she goes to completely unnecessary extremes, rightfully idiotic and foolish. Without claiming an exceptional place in the public eye, without visibly seeking recognition, rewards or inclusion, an artist such as Mithu Sen claims to be queen. The word 'idiot' derives from the idea of someone selfish and distant from a community, a residual subject who ultimately defines our rules and regulations through not being concerned with them (the same rendering of an idiot one finds in Aristotle).

Emily Silver invited magicians to her exhibition opening (*Cannavillastic*, Zoller Gallery, Pennsylvania State University, 2008). Outside the gallery doors, they performed tricks. A large crowd watched while chewing on amusement park (rather than art exhibition) food served nearby. The author of this text volunteered to tend a hot-dog stall, giving away free hot-dogs. Emily Silver's opening fitted well with her work;'s questioning of what is valuable and what is residual in art making. Her ability to stage our stuff and our moment in her (un)balanced installations without judgment but also without forgiveness, feels at times unbearable.

Just as in Mithu Sen's aesthetic, this fundamental passivity of aesthetic statement today carries undeniable strength. There is a difference between passivity as accusation (earlier performance art comes to mind) and passivity as a *modus operand*i. In Mithu Sen's and Emily Silver's openings there is no catch. Their actions do not reveal any important truth about the inherent violence or goodness in man, neither do they ask to be remembered as a well-prepared and documented spectacle. The artists, probably, will protest my interpretation of their work through their openings. After all, openings do not make it into an artist's portfolio, they do not have value as art, there is, really, no-thing to buy and sell later (Money-Commodity-Money). But it is exactly at the openings, those events outside of the work proper, where transactions happen, where value is being established or being denied.

When Dr. Evil (in the 1997 movie *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery*) demanded one million dollars for not destroying the world, his team member recommended that he increase the amount. What he asked for was too little, and incongruent with the world's current value. No fool, Dr. Evil quickly corrected himself by asking for one hundred billion dollars. When artists find themselves in similar situations, they are not sure how much to ask for so as not to look like a fool (from asking too little or too much). Being called an idiot is nothing new to an artist. Now it is an aesthetic: artist represents herself as an idiot, sentimental, vulnerable and crazy protector of what is left.

INTRODUCING GAPS
IVANA FRANKE

I coleotteri

CHIAVE – (4–9) Modi di essere

M	A	S	T	I	C	A	T	O	R	I	O	P	A	C
A	T	E	I	C	A	V	I	V	I	V	E	R	E	E
S	E	C	M	A	G	G	I	O	L	I	N	O	T	R
A	N	I	P	I	S	I	R	U	C	S	O	R	E	V
T	E	B	R	R	A	S	T	U	C	C	I	D	R	O
O	R	M	C	E	R	N	I	U	O	C	E	I	O	V
R	B	A	T	M	I	L	D	B	A	C	S	N	M	O
A	I	R	E	I	A	E	A	L	A	Z	C	E	E	L
C	O	A	T	R	T	R	A	R	A	O	A	L	T	A
E	N	C	T	T	A	N	O	M	F	E	R	Q	R	N
C	I	E	O	C	D	T	P	P	L	R	A	G	I	T
O	D	F	C	R	O	E	S	A	I	O	F	E	R	E
C	I	I	A	R	S	R	L	P	S	L	A	R	E	L
C	P	N	P	M	O	A	I	I	E	O	G	E	M	U
I	S	S	R	A	I	F	L	A	T	C	G	C	A	C
N	A	E	R	B	B	G	O	E	C	R	I	S	T	C
E	L	T	S	I	T	R	L	R	T	E	E	E	N	I
L	O	T	V	E	R	D	E	I	I	T	I	R	E	Q
L	C	I	C	I	N	D	E	L	A	I	O	G	P	L
A	P	P	A	R	A	T	O	B	O	C	C	A	L	E

ALI
APPARATO
  BOCCALE
ARA
ASTUCCI
CALANDRA
CAPO
CARABO
CARRARECE
CERVO
  VOLANTE
CICINDELA
COCCINELLA
COLASPIDI
COLORE
CORIACEI
COSSALETTO
CRESCERE
ELITRE – ELISA
ETEROMERI
FAMIGLIA
INSETTI
LUCCIOLE
MAGGIOLINO
MASSTORACE
MASTICATORI
NECROFORI
ORDINE
PENTAMERI
PROTETTO
PROTORACE
REGOLE
SCARABACCI
SCUDETTO
SCUDI – SILFA
SPECIE
TENEBRIONI
TRIMERI
VERDE
VIVACI
VIVERE
ZAMPE

THE PIRATE BAY MANIFESTO
PIRATBYRÅN (THE BUREAU OF PIRACY)

LEGAL/ILLEGAL

Copying takes place everywhere and all the time. To use digital data is to copy it. No matter if it's from hard drive to RAM memory, from one portable device to another or from peer to peer. No matter if the physical distance of the copy is measured in millimetres or miles. Still some people prefer to speak for or against file-sharing, as if it was an isolated phenomenon. As if the alternatives were no more than two: file sharing networks or selling digital files.

Yesterday we walked around with megabytes in our pockets, today with gigabytes and tomorrow terabytes. The day after tomorrow, for a reasonable price, we will have tiny storage devices that contain more film, music, text and images than we can ever incorporate into our lives. Everything ready for immediate transfer to another person's device.

HERE/THERE

There is no longer an archive that is yours entirely. Nor an archive completely open to all. The divide between private and public networks, copies and performances does not apply anymore. There is no fundamental difference between a copy from your external hard drive and one from an open file-sharing network.

File sharing has a potential to create meaning, community and context—a bigger potential than most other forms of reproduction. We want to keep talking about how that potential may be realized in the best manner possible, how cultural circulation can be organized and how the unleashed forces of the open archives can be used for more than stacking a pile of objects which we care less and less about. However, we want to stop explaining why file sharing is righteous or not—as if there was a choice between copying and non-copying.

FREE/CHARGE

To ask if distribution of film and music should be free or cost money is like asking if it should be free or cost money to attend a party. Sometimes, someone manages to charge a toll for a party, but no one would even think of banning free parties. When do you actually have a party, and when are you just having some fun?

The files are already downloaded. The files are already uploaded. They've been going up and down and in and out in abundance. We want to talk about how to extract meaning from this abundance.

ART/TECHNOLOGY/LIFE

The digital networks make processes, identities, contexts and works infinitely connected. The division between creator, work and consumer is a bleak way of describing cultural circulation and digital life forms. The cost of upholding copyright's abstract relations between art, technology and life is a world that is mute and ever more depopulated. Hence, we are not about anticopyright but more—Thank you and good bay (sic!). Let's have a fucking party!

IN THE '90S, IN OSTIA, A SMALL BEACH TOWN IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF ROME, A VERY ACTIVE CREW CALLED 'OSTIA TEKNO RIOTERS' WAS WELL KNOWN FOR ORGANIZING EVERY YEAR AN ILLEGAL RAVE PARTY IN EX-INDUSTRIAL SITES. ON THE FLYER USED TO PROMOTE THE PARTY OF '99 THE SLOGAN WAS: 'FOR A SOCIAL RE-USE OF THE ABANDONED AREAS OF THE BRAIN'. IT WAS AN AMAZING DESCRIPTION OF THE FEELING RISING IN THAT PERIOD FROM THE TEMPORARY SQUATTING OF ABANDONED INDUSTRIAL AREAS.

Image selected by CandidaTV

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

David Adjaye is an architect based in London.

Irina Aristarkhova teaches at Pennsylvania State University (University Park) and writes about new media aesthetics and comparative feminist theory.

Stefano Bernardi is a freelance audiovisual professional and a rock musician. He lives in Bolzano.

Ursula Biemann is an artist, curator and theorist based in Zurich. Her work is particularly concerned with issues of migration, mobility, technology and gender.

Ingrid Book and **Carina Hedén** are artists based in Oslo. Their projects include *Temporary Utopias* (2003), *News from the Field* (2004), *Geschichten für leere Schaufenster/Stories for Empty Shop Windows* (2006), *Military Landscapes* (2008).

Kristina Braein is an artist based in Oslo.

Yane Calovski (Skopje, 1973) makes drawings, writes stories, develops narrative strategies for public spaces and believes in vernacular knowledge. He is the founder of *D*, a journal of contemporary drawing and, in collaboration with the artist Hristina Ivanoska, *press to exit project space.*

CandidaTV (Agnese Trocchi, Antonio Veneziano and Manuel Bozzo) is an extended group of videomakers, performers, mediactivists and aesthetic researchers based in Rome. Since 1999 it has promoted an unmediated approach to media: 'Make your own TV'. Among CandidaTV activities are: workshops, lectures, documentaries, VJing and video installations.

contemporary culture index (ccindex.info) is an online, open-access, multidisciplinary database of journals and periodicals that are either ignored by other database vendors or absent from the Internet. ccindex was set up in 2001 by a team of librarians with extensive experience in the academic research area. Its headquarters are currently located in San Francisco; nodes can be found in Barcelona and Manhattan.

Marcos Chaves is an artist based in Rio de Janeiro.

Neil Cummings and **Marysia Lewandowska** are artists and researchers based in London. They are the founders of Enthusiasts: archive (enthusiastsarchive.net), which resulted from the artists' extensive research into the films made by amateur film clubs active in Poland during the Socialist period.

Rana Dasgupta is the author of *Tokyo Cancelled*. His novel *Solo* will appear in February 2009.

Harold de Bree is an artist who mostly works on site-specific, full-scale industrial and military objects and machinery. He is based in The Hague.

Tim Edensor is Reader in Cultural Geography at Manchester Metropolitan University. He is the author of *Industrial Ruins: Space, Aesthetics and Materiality* (2005) and *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (2002). He is currently researching the rhythms of space, landscapes of illumination and the materialities of building stone.

Espen Sommer Eide is a musician, artist and philosopher based in Bergen.

etoy.CORPORATION SA was founded in 1994 and is known for its pioneering role in internet art, for controversial operations like the digital hijack, for its etoy.TANKS (mobile studios and exhibition units built in standard shipping containers) or for its latest venture: MISSION ETERNITY—a digital cult of the dead. etoy is all about sharing and distributing (through etoy.SHARE) intangible assets: cultural value, risk and passion.

Ivana Franke is an artist based in Zagreb.

Matthew Fuller is a writer and artist whose work straddles many domains, from software to architecture. He works at the Centre for Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London.

Francesco Gennari is an artist based in Milan and Pesaro.

Rupali Gupte and **Prasad Shetty** are architects, researchers and writers based in Mumbai. They are the co-founders of the Collective Research Initiatives Trust.

Anawana Haloba is a new media and multimedia artist based in Oslo and is currently a resident artist at the Rjiksakademie in Amsterdam.

Graham Harwood is an artist who has since the mid-1980s explored media systems from photocopiers to software systems, telephones and networks. His approach is to make media strange, allowing it to become a space of fun and experimentation. He works at the Centre for Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London.

Graham Harwood, Richard Wright and **Matsuko Yokokoji** have worked together since 2004, firstly as part of the internationally recognised artist collective Mongrel, in a fusion of art, electronic media and open networks.

Nikolaus Hirsch and **Michel Müller** are architects, teachers and researchers based in Frankfurt. Their work is focused on experimental art institutions such as the Bockenheimer Depot Theater in Frankfurt (with William Forsythe), Unitednationsplaza (with Anton Vidokle), the European Kunsthalle, the Cybermohalla Hub in Delhi, and, currently, a studio structure for 'The Land' in Chiang Mai (Thailand).

Denis Isaia is a curator based in Bolzano.

I. Helen Jilavu is an artist based in Germany, founded and co-curates with Erik Schmelz the Moguntia Projekt and the China Project, short-term, site-specific exhibition places for different works of art. She has worked together with andcompany&Co. on a number

of performances and audiovisual installations including photography, sound and text.

Hiwa K is an Iraqi artist based on his feet.

Lakhmi Chand Kohli is a writer based in Delhi.

Anders Kreuger is a curator and writer. He is Director of the Malmö Art Academy, Exhibition Curator at Lunds konsthall and member of the Programme Team for the European Kunsthalle in Cologne.

Reinhard Kropf and **Siv Helene Stangeland** work as architects and artists. They run the architecture firm Helen & Hard and are based in Stavanger on the west coast of Norway.

Ove Kvavik is an artist based in Trondheim.

J. Robert Lennon is the author of six novels, including *Mailman* and *Castle* (forthcoming), and a short story collection, *Pieces For The Left Hand*. He lives in Ithaca, New York.

Lawrence Liang is a legal theorist and founder of the Alternative Law Forum.

Charles Lim Li Yong is an artist with useful skills for surviving at sea that he picked up during his former profession as a sailor. He was last hired to sail for the China Team in the America's Cup 2007. He currently works in a squash court building, with the help of 72-13 Theatreworks. He is the cofounder of tsunamii.net and p-10.

Daníel Magnússon is an artist based in Reykjavik.

Teresa Margolles is an artist based in Mexico City.

Christien Meindertsma is a designer, artist and writer based in Rotterdam. She runs the design studio These Flocks, and is the author of *Checked Baggage* and *Pig 05049*.

Naeem Mohaiemen is a multimedia artist based between Dhaka and New York City.

Walter Niedermayr is a photographer. He lives in Bolzano.

Jorge Otero-Pailos is a New York–based architect and theorist specialized in experimental forms of preservation. His projects and writings present a new vision of preservation as a powerful counter-cultural practice that creates alternative futures for our world heri-tage. He is Assistant Professor of Historic Preservation at Columbia University in New York, and founder and editor of the journal Future Anterior.

Felix Padel is a freelance anthropologist, writer and musician living on a mountain in Wales. He is co-author with Samarendra Das of an upcoming book about the political economy of the aluminium industry and its impact on the Indian state of Orissa.

Professor Bad Trip was a cult figure in the world of underground music and comics. Punk musician and artist, his psychedelic draw-ings and paintings circulated all over the world in magazines and po-litical manifestos, on album covers and T-shirts. He died in 2006.

Piratbyrån is a group of theorists, artists, consultants, activists and pranksters, concerned with the impact of digital information abun-dance on the creation of cultural meaning and economies of urban life. They are based in Sweden and known for initiating The Pirate Bay, which also takes part in their Manifesta project.

Raqs Media Collective (Jeebesh Bagchi, Monica Narula and Shuddhabrata Sengupta) are artists based in New Delhi. They are curators of 'The Rest of Now' and co-curators of 'Scenarios' for Manifesta 7.

Shveta Sarda is a writer and translator based in Delhi.

Jeffrey Schnapp is Professor of Comparative Literature at Stanford University, where he occupies the Rosina Pierotti Chair in Italian Literature and directs the Stanford Humanities Lab.

Kateřina Šedá is an artist based in Brno–Líšeň and Prague. She uses provocative actions and the unlikely use of everyday materials to in-tervene creatively in the social life of the area where she lives.

Meg Stuart is a choreographer and dancer. Born in New Orleans in 1965, she now lives in Berlin and works in Brussels with her compa-ny, Damaged Goods. She has created over twenty works for the stage, and regularly collaborates with artists from the fields of video, plastic art, music, and dance.

Ashok Sukumaran studied architecture and art, and now carries out speculative technical and conceptual projects. He is a co-initiator of CAMP, a new platform for artistic activity based in Mumbai.

Ravi Sundaram is a writer and theorist and joint director of Sarai, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies in New Delhi. His work looks at the intersection of techno-cultures, globalization and the urban experience in contemporary India.

Jörgen Svensson is an artist based in Gothenburg.

TEUFELSgroup is a temporary, spontaneous ensemble interested in the 'fictional' architecture of the Teufelsberg in Berlin's Grunewald Forest.

Jeet Thayil is the author of four collections of poetry, most recently *English* (2003) and *These Errors are Correct* (2008), and one half of an experimental music duo, Sridhar/Thayil. He lives in Bangalore.

Alexander Vaindorf is an artist currently based in Stockholm. He was born in Odessa, Ukraine and grew up in Moscow in the former Soviet Union.

Cédric Vincent is a writer, art theorist and freelance anthropologist based in Paris.

Darius Ziura is a photographer and video artist based in Vilnius.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS